

when we enact rules destined to prevent the weakening and loss of that faith which should be dearer to us than life itself.

Far be it from us likewise, that we should grieve those who are already united by the bonds of a mixed marriage, and who, not satisfied with the fulfilment of their strict obligations as Catholics, devotedly exercise in their home the duties of a true apostolate. Unions such as we now denounce, may have sometimes procured God's glory and the conquest of a few souls ; but these are very rare exceptions. Unhappy results are by far more frequent, and therefore, we are confident of protecting the dearest interests of all those whom the Lord has intrusted to our care, when we dissuade them from those unions so formally, and so frequently censured by Holy Mother Church.

You will help us, dear Co-Workers, in this very important work, by your preaching, your advice, your wise direction to the families and young people confided to your pastoral care. We would repeat to you with St. Paul the Apostle : " Preach the word : be instant in season, out of season : reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine " (1).

Is it necessary to quote the documents of the Sovereign Pontiffs on this momentous subject ? Benedict XIV bewails the fate of those benighted Catholics who do not abhor those unions which have, at all times, been condemned, whilst he praises the pastors who make it their duty to resist them by every means in their power (2).

Pius IX, in a famous instruction, speaks with no less energy against such marriages which so much endanger the faith of the catholic party and still more the religious education of the children (3).

(1) II Tim., ch. iv, v. 2.

(2) Instruction for Holland, Nov. 4th, 1741.

(3) Instruction of Nov. 15th 1858.

