



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. VII.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, MAY 8, 1857.

No. 39.

A LECTURE BY THE CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER, ON CRIME AND EDUCATION.

The text that His Eminence assumed upon which to lecture, was taken from Psl. 110, v. 10—'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.'

Every human science, dear brethren, rests on a narrow foundation: some principles, obvious and simple, will support the weight of a magnificent superstructure.

So in the word of God, science is often unfolded, all parts of which are given, some here and some there; but so as to be capable of collection; that science which embraces in itself all human sciences, joins them into one, elevates and invests them with a more sacred character; and this science is known in Scripture by the name of Wisdom.

All this, Scripture tells us, it encourages us to investigate and ponder; it tells us God has given every created object to the researches and disposal of man: it places them within his reach in a double circle, but attached to one higher still; and all this forms that which comes to him under the simple name of Wisdom.

I have said, thus far, that it relates only to a lower sphere; but it likewise carries us beyond all that physical research makes known, introduces us to a higher state of things, and conveys us to a sphere removed beyond the cognizance of our senses, unfathomable, and indescribable, a sphere of eternal, spiritual, undying, unrenovated life, which was from the beginning, and shall be ever.

He it is, to whom we have to refer all things, because this wisdom goes beyond all that human research can attain. This constitutes the difference between divine and human science.

It is not only religion and science, and the beginning and the end, that form the wisdom God desires we should learn, but that when we lift up our eyes and gaze around us in the glittering skies, we may exclaim with David, 'The Heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands.'

the vicissitudes, contrasts, and varieties to which it is liable—than was the first.

My brethren, should you ask me whether I fear that education which perfects man's acquaintance in all departments of knowledge, which carries on a child from observation of the commonest things to the study of planets and comets, and the laws by which they are regulated, or teaches him to dig into the earth and discover every stratum down to the primæval rock, or to discourse of animals with their construction and destination. Do I fear, say you, this education which leads to rational and scientific investigation? I answer boldly, "No."

When we speak from the pulpit we must not care for or be foiled by popular prejudice, we must not be induced to pander to popular views. I therefore say at once that where science is founded on, and coupled with, the wisdom of God, and where its object is to extend the knowledge and spread of that wisdom, I fear it not; I fear it not, provided you never let go those invisible fibres and chords of the love of God which, they stretch to the furthest limit of investigation, yet all centre themselves in His Divine hand, which, however delicate and fragile individually, yet form together that golden chain which unites each one of us to Him.

I have already put before you, in my former lecture, the theories likely to prevail on the subject of education, whether in its broader or more limited aspect, z. e., education intended to extend to adult and infant training, or the more narrow circles of present and future generations.

Depreciated the system, adopted by many, of making criminality not the object of punishment, but simply of amendment. I classified, in a two fold form, the theories on this subject; and now, as it is my wish to go into detail on this important consideration, I shall keep before me a work in which this idea is fully entered upon. It appeared at the beginning of this year, and contains, therefore, the most recent views on this subject.

It is the work of one who has intimately studied, and is sincerely devoted to what concerns the condition and improvement of the poor and the preservation of the young. Sincerely, I say, because he has devoted himself personally, as well as by the lavish expenditure of the means at his disposal, to promote education. We may, therefore, take him as a competent advocate of the views he puts forward, and which he appeals to the whole of society to consider.

He divides it into two parts, as I did mine.—The first treats of the manner in which crime is to be dealt with, to try and discover the means by which it may be greatly diminished or entirely removed.

The crimes I have described as arising from too great a desire to possess wealth are brought under consideration—those crimes which have evinced themselves as so fearfully predominant during the last two years; and not only those of a commercial character, but such as proceed from violence against the person, or which intrude on domestic peace, troubling social security, and have become more or less the terror of all ranks.

He, firstly, considers these, and then proceeds to treat of juvenile education. He clearly lays down the principle that punishment, as a retribution for crime, is erroneous, and he argues that whereas the lessening of punishment has led to a diminution of crime, its total abolition would still further tend to the reformation of the evilly disposed.

Secondly—He urges that society has no right to punish, but only to reclaim or reform; therefore, all that is necessary is to remove the culprit from temptation to crime, to isolate him, so as to enable him to devote his undivided attention to the great object of self-reformation; and further maintains that this is essentially necessary; that no idea of vindictiveness, of anger, or of revenge should interfere with the process he undergoes; that he must consider himself only as put aside and segregated for a time, for this object—till he has proved himself worthy of trust—for the safety of society to which, as a man of crime, he is obnoxious. It is, therefore, quite lawful to imprison him, in order to attain all these objects, and to lay him open to right influences for his ultimate benefit; therefore it follows there should be no aggravation of the simple act of detention. Nothing to punish—nothing to chastise—no hard labor—nothing to make that detention unpleasant—nothing that proposes to proportion punishment to guilt.

It will not do to say to a criminal, "You have

stolen a large sum with violence, therefore you must receive hard labor with imprisonment; and you who have stolen a small sum, under extenuating circumstances, must be imprisoned but without labor." Though the two crimes are different; because of the circumstances, the two criminals are to be treated similarly; because there is to be no punishment included in the treatment, only both are to be separated from society which they are disposed to injure.

To this system he objects, because it makes labor a great punishment; and that view, he considers, counteracts the whole effect of penal justice; because labor can and ought to be represented as a benefit; and if employed as a punishment, it loses its character as a good to be desired, and becomes an evil to be shunned.

He then analyses the various sources of crime, and dwells more especially on two ordinary forms; 1. Want of industry, or idleness.

2. Want of economy, or extravagance.

One man has led an idle life, and, work being distasteful to him he has chosen a shorter way to gain. He has got into confinement, and the question is—How is he to be reformed? If by work, work is distasteful, and he will only labor as long as he is compelled, and will, when sent back into the world, only conceive an increased dislike of that which has been imposed upon him as a punishment. Therefore simple imprisonment is the remedy proposed; but that there is to be no indulgence—nothing he can covet or desire—nothing but what is necessary to preserve life—and he is to be given to understand that if occupation is allowed him, it is to be as an indulgence, and that he must first have done something to merit it. That if on trial he is found to exert himself in his labor, he will be rewarded in proportion; he will get better food, better treatment, or even payment, and will finally be released.

The other has been extravagant. He has stolen or forged, to supply his expenditure and to increase his means. He must be taught economy and thrift by a simple process. He must find that the more he labors, the more he can make and the more he can save. He must go on till he acquires new habits, and be fitted to return into society, and to begin a new course, honestly and steadily.

These two illustrations will help us to arrive at the result. The moment the reformation can be considered complete, the culprit is to be set free, whether after an experiment of one week or ten years. The only object for which confinement was inflicted has been attained; he has as much right to liberty as any other person; we have no longer any title to detain him.

Other classes of crime, such as drunkenness, anger, we have no means of reforming. There is no test whereby the culprit can be judged during his probation; and therefore these are more difficult to cure.

Therefore we have another system to discover; or there is the alternative of dealing with criminals as if they were maniacs, of which I spoke before. They must be placed in asylums to prevent them from injuring others; and there they must be kept till cured. If not cured, or incapable of reformation, they must remain there for life. Therefore, those who have returned to their crimes, and have partaken of the character of monomaniacs, after being supposed cured, must be brought back as incurable, without any hope of again visiting society. There is no term by which the chastisement is to be limited, but the criminal is to be kept in prison till the work of reformation is accomplished.

Whatever the crime, however great or small, no judge, on this system, has a right to award punishment according to the gravity of the guilt. However small may be the guilt, as we regard it, yet, if the person be incapable of reformation, he must be immersed in prison during the remainder of his life. However heavy the guilt of another, if, after a month or two, he is pronounced cured, the paroxysm is considered past, and he is let loose once more on society.

Let us now observe the result. What will the effect be on persons of feeble moral principles when you teach them this?

Let us consider how it will operate.

One man has committed a midnight robbery; he has broken into a lone and unprotected house, taken the little sum penuriously hoarded against the approaching rent day, has seriously alarmed the inmates, injured the master by violence, and possibly rendered his wife ill, and one or two of his children idiots for life; destroyed his peace, invaded his prospects, and ruined his family, and yet he is brought to the bar, side by side with another who has thoughtlessly picked up a worthless piece of lead from the sewer. One not more guilty than the other! Both stand equal chances as to the severity of their retribution, and it will depend on themselves which undergoes the greater.

Again, a man of high education and mental culture, who has spent months in planning and organizing a systematic fraud, and the extent of whose injustice dishonestly aims at the possession

of thousands, tens of thousands, or millions, and whose plot is executed with all the coolness of a long-inured and practised hand, ranks with the ignorant boy who, for the first time in his life, has been tempted to snatch a handkerchief he sees hanging from the pocket of a gaping countryman.

To these two crimes falls the same award: each perpetrator has an equal chance of escape.

What must be the consequences which will follow from this virtual equalization of crime? I do not allude to murder, because, though not expected, it is not specifically mentioned; but is probably intended to be treated in the same way.

The criminal is to be put into a penitentiary, to qualify him to return to society. Here, it is expected, he will be cured of idleness; but is that his crime? Idleness! Has that man been idle whose most active energies have been turned to the study of fraud in the counting house, to create enormous sums. This is not idleness, it is over industry; and if the object be to imprison, in order to cure him of idleness, he is reformed before he enters there.

But extravagance—Is this allowed to be the root of systematic dishonesty? By no means; in many instances it is not what we mean by extravagance at all. The man who becomes a sad example to the world, after being the author of immense fraud, is not a spendthrift. He had only lived as others in his position, and no extravagance would have to be cured there. We must remember that this idea of extravagance is relative.

A man of good family, engaged in the business of a banker, if he maintain the same state as his father did before him, and all is right in his mode of life, cannot be said to be extravagant, but by degrees misfortune creeps in upon him; he sees his expenses are now disproportionate to his means, but he reflects thus—"It will not do now to cut down my expenditure, because if I retrench one servant or keep one carriage less, false or exaggerated rumors will spread all over London, the credit of my establishment will be endangered, and inevitable ruin will be the consequence; if I dispose of my country houses, part with my pictures, or sell my plate, I must recollect that it is not only the interests of myself and my partners that would be staked, but those of the numbers who have confided their money to my keeping; and who, unless I maintain the same appearance of solidity, will fall with me to destruction. The chances are, we can go on till the market rises, or some other accident occurs to enable us to set all straight." Thus he temporizes, with the fair and honest intention of paying all. This can scarce be called extravagance, so difficult is it to define the crimes of these men. The crime which made them guilty before society might have been discovered by the theological eye long before, and every stroke of the pen, after the first suspicion of danger would, according to the law of conscience, have endorsed their own condemnation; but society judges differently—and if they could at the close of their account have produced a fair balance-sheet, the world would have held them blameless.

Could we suppose these frauds the effects of drunkenness, rage, or indulged passion? Who can dream of them as the results of such? No; they were the fruits of skill, of acute judgment, of unwearied perseverance.

The culprit is sent to be reformed. What happens? After a week he sets himself with ease, satisfaction, nay, even pleasure to the work allotted to him.

A moral man—I mean a man not religiously but socially moral—who has erred in this way, and who would not deliberately have been guilty of an act called crime, is soon penitent. He goes into a penitentiary in the same spirit as that in which a man retires into Cîteaux or the Chartreuse, with the idea that he will expiate his guilt—because the idea of expiation is one which cannot be uprooted from the human mind. He does not seek to enter a prison from the same motives as a poor man, for the sake of the improved condition in which he would be placed, or the luxuries he would gain by being there. As to extravagance, there is no chance of that now; that man's character is entirely changed in a week—while the wretched creature who purloined a few shillings to pay for a meal and a night's lodging may take ten years to reform in the same penitentiary. At least that, to get rid of bad propensities, bad habits, and bad words—one a week, the other his whole life in a dungeon.

Does this system appear one likely, I ask you, to act on social crimes? and yet it is put forward by a man of good intentions and great experience.

The next great question is that of the reformation of youth, or rather the prevention of crime in youth. This is simply treated. The whole system of instruction by which a child is to be armed against these crimes is detailed. The child in the infant school is to be trained by a series of lessons. He is to be told that worldly prosperity, money, comforts, respectability, and

the like, are to be attained by labor; therefore labor is good, and therefore labor is to be loved; he is to be taught the advantages of parsimony; he is taught the putting by of money, accumulation of means. All this is enforced by example, by practical lessons; but, chiefly, by the constant insinuation of principles. He is to be taught to have a horror of drunkenness and vice of all sorts. Mutual duties of parent and child, brother and sister, teacher and pupil, governor and subject, by a series of didactic lessons, inculcated simply on the principles of the advantages which will occur to themselves by the due fulfillment of these respective obligations. Thus: every one wishes to be well. If industrious, parsimonious, orderly, and obedient, they will be happy; if wasteful, profligate, idle, and irregular, they will have less enjoyment; and you are to make them, by this alone, truly laborious and truly economical. The whole system is based on this; and throughout the hundred pages which compose the pamphlet, the name of God does not occur once, and religion is only alluded to in one place; where the divine precept which formed the text of my last lecture is quoted as a principle which no one opposes. In another page, in a passing remark, the Bible is mentioned as the "Book of Life;" but it is manifest the whole system of education, as prevention of crime, is not founded on purer motives than the one I have given. These principles are reduced to one—that of self love. Now, I will ask you, would you, in families, admit selfishness to be the principle of education; would you teach children that they were to do all for their own good; to love their parents for their own sake, because that would make them more happy? Is there any principle on which you would less willingly bring up brothers and sisters to be kind to each other, than simply on consideration of bringing more well-being to each individual himself?

We are accustomed to cultivate a more Christian view, to encourage a holier impulse than this exclusive and narrow principle. We teach our children to forget themselves in habitual and daily acts of self-sacrifice and self-devotion to others. We believe in a higher and nobler standard of virtue, and desire to see them aim at a greater degree of "happiness," likewise, it is true, but unsullied by the agency of a sordid and unworthy motive.

And now, brethren, we have seen how unfavorable to adults is this system. We will proceed to examine into its effects as applied to youth.

Let us imagine the utmost to have been effected, beginning with the infant, and advancing to the moral and physical development of the child; giving continued lessons on the disadvantages, rather than the intrinsic and essential evils of crime; and that the child so trained is thoroughly convinced; what have you done? You have been making him move in a different path from that in which he will have to tread by and by. You have heard of the tale of the luxurious Eastern monarch, who, wishing to add to his accomplishments the art of swimming, ordered a basin of water containing a frog to be placed before him, and laying himself flat on a table, attempted to imitate the muscular evolutions of the animal. But how, think you, had he proceeded to transfer himself to the waters of the rolling deep, would he have been qualified, by the abstract instruction he had acquired, to resist the perils he would have to encounter?

Thus a child is told that drunkenness is a great vice; but he has no temptation to try it. He is told that stealing is a great sin, but he is well watched, and has no opportunity. He is warned against idleness and extravagance, but he has no companions to tempt him to the exercise of these propensities. However, when he comes out, into the world, he meets with those who are always ready to corrupt the innocent, to seduce the little one on the highway, and conduct him to the paths of vice. He begins to feel that his means are not sufficient for the gratification of those artificial wants which arise in his heart under the stimulus of those causes calculated to beget excitement, when he is thrown into the companionship of unprincipled and wanton men. Think you that the dry precepts of such things being naughty and wrong, and wicked, will be remembered in that hour, or that they would be very sufficient if they were, against the pleasurable gratification which beckons him on, for that, after all, is the great charm which forms the basis of temptation. Do you think that, when you have read the history of Adam, and have found that, after the Divine warning, he could not forego the temptation of tasting the fruit, that this child will be able to withstand the temptation of living vice, when brought before him in the most winning and ensnaring colours? Oh, brethren, he is but weak to meet that which he has to resist.

All this instruction I am willing to allow, is good, and should be given to the utmost. It is its insufficiency I combat. We have been too well instructed, of late, in the mysteries of everyday life not to appreciate the analogy. You are