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PASTORAL LETTER OF THE ARCH-BISHOP OF DUBLIN.

[The following are the most important passages in the Pastoral just issued by his Grace the Archbishop of Dublin]:—

Whenever we speak of Catholic education in Ireland, the history of the penal laws, by which it was so severely prohibited, and the awful calamities inflicted by their operation on the country, necessarily present themselves to our minds. What, indeed, can be imagined that was not done to render the acquirement of knowledge impossible, and to shut up all the sources of science and learning? Under the influence of a rancorous hatred of our holy religion, it was enacted that no Catholic should keep a school or devote himself to the instruction of youth, and that if any Catholic sent his children to a Catholic school, at home or abroad, his property was to be confiscated, or, for so great a crime, he was to be made liable or severe penalties.

The penal laws against education were most unjust and iniquitous, but even they were surpassed by the odious measures by which Protestant education was established. The foundations and endowments destined by our Catholic forefathers for the instruction of their children, the schools and colleges, and the monastical institutions which their piety had founded, were seized on, diverted from their original objects, and handed over to Protestants. Moreover, out of confiscated Catholic property, or out of the taxes paid by the Catholic people, parochial schools, charter schools, and royal and other colleges, were richly endowed for the purpose of promoting the favored sect. Add to this the enormous wealth of the Establishment, arising from the rent of more than a million of acres of land, acquired also by confiscation; the rentcharge on all the land of Ireland, Ministers' money, and other sources, and you will find that within the last 300 years an amount of money has been levied from the Catholic people of Ireland, for the spiritual and literary education of a handful of members of the Establishment, which would appear fabulous were it stated. Could such a state of things be discovered in any other country, would it not be denounced as flagrantly unjust? Yet many who put themselves forward as lovers of fair play, justice, and religion, and are perpetually boasting of their efforts to relieve other nations from any apparent oppression which they suffer, speak loudly for the continuance of so monstrous a system in Ireland. But what result has been produced by so profligate an expenditure and by the extortion of such prodigious sums from the poverty of Catholics? Protestantism and Protestant education have not flourished in the country, and Catholicity has not lost its hold on the affections of the people, but has grown up and covered the land with the exuberance of its branches.

But we are not to forget, that besides other means employed to uproot the ancient faith, and to promote a system of religion so hostile to the Irish heart, a great Protestant university was established in this capital, which has gradually obtained possession of about 200,000 acres of land, with a total yearly income exceeding £70,000, and to it was given the exclusive right of teaching the arts in Ireland, so that it might be rendered impossible for a Catholic to learn anything liberal, or to acquire any knowledge, except from a tainted source. History, law, medicine, science, were accessible only in this way. To Protestants alone the right of teaching was conceded, and the Catholic was to learn from them the history of religion and law, and the doctrines of ethics—all tinged, of course, with anti-Catholic prejudices. In this way, for a long period, any one, not disposed to deny or conceal his faith, was excluded from a liberal education; and even at the present day, when the general spirit of the age is liberal and tolerant, no one professing the ancient religion of Ireland can aspire to the higher places of the University, unless he be prepared to stain his conscience with the guilt of apostasy. And here, again, we might inquire, has this great institution produced effects commensurate to its wealth? Has it raised the character of Ireland among the nations of the earth by its works of erudition, of science, and of art? We leave others to answer the inquiry; all we shall say is, that happily it has not been able to fulfil the mission for which it was principally established by its founder, Queen Elizabeth, namely, to extirpate Catholicity, and to impress a Protestant character upon Ireland.

However, the powerful agencies which we have mentioned, directed, as they were, to excite an implacable hostility against the Catholic Church, and holding out the highest rewards for apostasy, could not but produce evil. It is a cause of regret, though not of surprise, that some Catholics, who came under the influence of such agencies, and especially those who were educated in Protestant colleges, lost all respect for the doctrines and practices of their Church, or openly joined the ranks of Protestantism; and that others, carried away by ambition or a desire

of preferment, enrolled themselves among the Ministers of the Establishment, with the view of enjoying a wealthy benefice, or some higher dignity. Many sad instances of perversion are known to all.

For ourselves, we can never forget one unhappy case which came under our notice many years ago in a foreign land. A young man of a respectable Catholic family had been sent at an early age to the University; his parents, as it often happens, flattering themselves that the lessons of piety which had been instilled into his tender mind, and his own good dispositions, would preserve him from every danger. The young man distinguished himself in his studies, but the example or the sneers of his companions soon induced him to give up all Catholic practices.—Prayer was neglected, the Sacraments were not received, fasting and abstinence were not observed. Thus his heart was closed against the graces of God, his faith had nothing to support and enliven it, he soon sank into the abyss of infidelity, and whilst endeavoring to silence the voice of conscience, devoted himself to pleasures and dissipation, which broke down his constitution and compelled him to seek for health in a southern climate. There the approach of death was soon apparent; and several Clergymen charitably visited the young traveller on his bed of sickness. But what was their horror when they heard him profess that he did not believe in the immortality of the soul, nor in the existence of a future state of punishment or reward, nor in the providence of God? What, indeed, could be more deplorable than the sight of a young man at the point of death, and about to appear before his Judge, yet manifesting such frightful dispositions! However, we may offer up a prayer for the repose of his soul, for some few minutes before his death a spark of religion seemed to revive in him, and he asked for pardon and reconciliation. But whether God looked on him with mercy, and restored to him the graces he had formerly despised, or whether his conversion was too late, shall not be known until the day of judgment.

As we have said so much on the direct attempts made to impose a purely Protestant education on Ireland, we cannot avoid alluding to the change of system adopted in this respect, and the liberality manifested within the last few years. The old spirit of bigotry and intolerance could not be upheld any longer, and at length it was determined to open to Catholics the advantages of a university education by the institution of the Queen's Colleges. But here, unfortunately, our lawgivers passed from one extreme to another. Trinity College was founded in a spirit of intolerant Protestantism, and false religion was to be at the bottom of all its proceedings. The new colleges were established on a principle equally wrong; the superiors, the professors, the scholars were to be of every persuasion, or of no persuasion, and the teaching adopted for such a chaotic mass was to rest upon definite religious belief. Lectures were to be given upon history, law, and moral philosophy, but in such a way that a Catholic pupil should never imagine that these sciences had any connexion with his holy religion. The doctrines of revealed religion could scarcely be mentioned lest anything should be said repugnant to the views of the Arian, the Socinian, the Unitarian, the Baptist, and the Anabaptist, &c., who are invited to attend, and whose religious scruples were to be respected. On this plan, the Mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation, the Divinity of Our Divine Redeemer, His atonement for our sins, the eternity of the pains of Hell, original sin, the sanctifying effects of Baptism, the indissolubility of Matrimony, and other doctrines connected with the blessings of Christianity, and exercising a great influence on mankind, could scarcely be mentioned, because all these tenets are impugned by one religious sect or another. The examination of such a plan would induce an attentive observer to imagine that its object was practically to proclaim that all religions were of the same intrinsic value, and that it was a matter of no importance which was to be professed, thus spreading the seeds of indifference to every religion—the most fatal error that has ever been produced by the malice of the human mind. Hence, from the beginning, the institution was denounced, even by Protestants, as a gigantic scheme of godless education. The principles on which these colleges were established were afterwards examined by the Successor of St. Peter, to whom Jesus Christ gave the power of feeding His lambs and sheep, and driving them away from noxious and poisonous pastures, and by him the system was declared to be dangerous to faith and morals, which decision was solemnly published by the Bishops of Ireland, in their Synodical Address from the Synod of Thurles, whilst the Catholics of Ireland were emphatically warned of the responsibility which they would incur, were they to expose their children to the imminent risk of corrupting their faith or morals by sending them to condemned colleges.

Censured by the Holy See, and repudiated by

the Irish Hierarchy, the Queen's Colleges will never take root nor permanently flourish in this Catholic country. Founded on the principle of indifference to religion, and placing religious doctrines, true and false, on the same footing of equality, they will never gain the confidence of the people of Ireland, who believe that there is but one faith, as there is but one baptism and one God. Some Catholics, over anxious about the good things of this world, and not sufficiently conversant with the importance of salvation, will send their children to those colleges, as they send them to Protestant schools and universities. This should not surprise us, for our Divine Redeemer foretold that scandals must come; but probably such parents will have great reason for regret, even on this side the grave. Their children may acquire knowledge, but will it be the wisdom from above—chaste, peaceable, modest, full of mercy and good fruits, and not rather that which is described by St. James as "earthly, sensual, devilish?" What fruits have hitherto been produced? The first production that has issued from these colleges, a work entitled "Historical Analysis of Christian Civilisation," by Professor Vericour, Queen's College, Cork, has merited the unenviable distinction of being placed on the Index and condemned by the Holy See. Mr. Vericour still holds his chair, and is too candid a gentleman not to endeavor to disseminate in his lectures the opinions with which he thought fit to enlighten the world in his essay. Now, if this work be a specimen of the philosophical views and historical research which we are to expect from the Queen's Colleges, and of the teaching of its professors, every Catholic, and we may add, every Christian, must look with alarm on the effects likely to be produced by these institutions. Indeed, in every page of that work we find errors of the gravest kind, and it tends to distort and misrepresent even the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. Perhaps it is well that such things have happened—for they show what poisonous fruits may be expected from the system of mixed education, and leave no excuse to those who may have the temerity to approach and partake of its fatal produce.

We have seen that Protestant secular education had been abundantly provided for by the appropriation, or rather confiscation, of Catholic property, and by endowments granted from the public taxes. We also observed that an immense amount of property was taken from the Catholics of Ireland, and devoted to the religious instruction of Protestants; thus more than ample, and even an exorbitant provision had been made for their educational requirements, secular or spiritual. In fact, the Protestants of Ireland, even when most numerous, never exceeded 800,000, and for the education of this small fragment of the population parochial and endowed schools, charter schools, and royal colleges were spread over the country, and connected with the University, with its income exceeding £70,000 per annum, and with the Protestant Establishment possessing incalculable resources. We say nothing of the ragged and proselytising schools, that owe their origin to the cloud of locusts that have covered the land.

Under these circumstances, when new grants for public education were to be made, was it necessary to provide for a class already so amply endowed? Might it not have been expected that the chief object of any legislation would have been to relieve those who, for the past, had not only been neglected but spoiled and persecuted? Was this equitable mode of proceeding adopted? No; but everything was fashioned in such a way, as if nothing had been previously done for the members of the Establishment, or as if provision was now, for the first time, to be made for the education of the Protestants of Ireland. Hence, it was determined that every school should be managed on the principle of mixed education, and conducted in such a manner that it would be suited to receive Protestants even in parishes and districts where no Protestant had ever existed, and where, in all probability, no Protestant would ever pass the threshold of the school.

The books were also to be compiled on the same system; so that, though Protestants had already their own school books, inculcating everything favorable to Protestantism, and though the compiling and publishing of Catholic books had been rendered almost impossible in the penal times, the new books were to contain no special doctrine of Catholicity, and not even to mention the name of Catholic. Indeed, this plan has been carried so accurately into effect that a pupil might read, perhaps, all the historical treatises of the National Board without learning that there ever existed such a body as the Holy Catholic Church, or such an institution as that of the Roman Pontificate, which has spread the blessings of true religion, and civilisation over a great part of the Globe. Nay more, in these books, the history of our own country and Church is almost totally ignored, and it is to be

observed that, whilst in the extracts prepared for the pupils the praises of England and Scotland are held forth in the enthusiastic language of their writers, we find in them very little to excite affection for our own dear country. Indeed, all these books bear on them the mark of the Protestant dignitary now enjoying the see of Dublin, who could not communicate to them any of the spirit of the faith of Ireland. Publications so devoid of everything dear to the heart of our people should give way to works of a different character.

The plan adopted of excluding the appearance of everything Catholic—even from schools frequented only by Catholic children—appears to be considered by the board of so much importance, that of late urgent instructions have been given to carry it into effect. In fact, orders have been sent to schools, even in this city, to remove the venerable image of the cross from the exterior of the building, and children have been prohibited to make that sign on their forehead at certain hours.

For the present, it is not our intention to make any remarks on the constitution of the Board of Commissioners, on the appointment of resident commissioners and head and inferior inspectors, nor on the preponderance given to Protestant interests in all such matters, but we feel it to be our duty to direct your attention to a portion of the system, which has been gradually developed, and is now assuming a character of such a nature that every Catholic anxious to preserve the liberty of education and the rights of his Church on so important a subject, must look on it with a jealous eye. We refer to the so-called Model Schools. Many of these institutions have already been established, and from a late report it appears that their supposed advantages are to be extended to a great number of the towns in Ireland.

A characteristic mark of these schools is, that they recognise no Ecclesiastical control. The masters and mistresses are appointed and removed; the books for the classes are selected; the plan of instruction is laid down solely by the authority of government commissioners. If, therefore, the number of these schools be increased—if they be established in every town in Ireland—it is clear that the education of our Catholic youth may at any time be removed, to a great extent, from the control of the Catholic Clergy, and placed under the care of a Protestant government, acting through commissioners, whom it can appoint or remove at its good pleasure, and who, even were they fairly selected at present, may, in progress of time, be chosen from among the most active enemies of our religion. Can such an uncertain state be looked on with indifference by Catholics? Have we any guarantee that the teaching in these schools may not gradually become dangerous? May not the care of Catholic infants be given to Presbyterian mistresses, who can scarcely avoid communicating to them some of the dark spirit of Knox or Calvin? May not Protestant professors insinuate some of their errors into the minds of unsuspecting children? And even if a Catholic is to fill a chair, may not one of those who have no true respect for the doctrines and practices of the Church, and who trample on its discipline, be selected, at a future day, by commissioners appointed by bitter enemies when in power?

Dangers may have arisen or not for the past, but the system, of its own nature, is liable to cause them, and its progress in time will cause them. The mixture of Protestant, Presbyterian, and Catholic teachers, cannot act beneficially on the mind of children, who are guided very much by the example of those who preside over them, and are too ready to embrace their opinions. The mixture of Catholic and Protestant pupils must exercise an evil influence on their religious persuasions and practices. Protestants, indeed, may not care much about such matters, for they care little about changing their religious opinions, and they have none or few sacred practices which they consider obligatory. But Catholics must look on things with quite a different feeling, for if they begin to entertain doubts about their faith, or if the example of their masters, or the sneers of companions, induce them to forget the practices of their religion, their souls will be in imminent risk of eternal perdition.

The dangers arising from that system of mixed education which is practically established in the Model Schools are so worthy of attention that I cannot refrain from communicating to you an extract of a Pastoral Letter, published some time ago by the Bishop of Viviers, containing several excellent reflections on that subject. After speaking of the necessity of faith, he adds:

It is to be observed that an attempt was made to compile books of a religious character suited for pupils of every religion. Of this character were the "Scripture Extracts" and Dr. Whately's "Lessons on Christianity." This last work, translated into Italian, and published at Florence, was condemned and put on the Index; the "Scripture Lessons" were also examined and condemned by the Holy See. They are altogether unfit for the use of Catholic children.

"It here becomes my duty to point out to you a rock, on which this faith, so precious, may suffer a most disastrous shipwreck. The rock I allude to is that indifference in matters of religion which is practised in public, and, as it were, in an official manner in certain educational establishments. In these houses heresy and Catholicity have, without hesitation, been placed in presence of each other; there is a temple for one, and altars for the other; one portion of the youth is obliged to receive instruction in the true faith, the other in heretical teaching. What disastrous impressions must not be produced on the yet scarcely awakened reason of the Catholic youth by this even-handed favor, or rather by this indiscriminating indifference, with which creeds the most opposite have been treated? What value will he attach to the dogmas and practices of his worship when he will know that under the same roof and same protection these dogmas and these practices are represented to some of his fellow-students as so many superstitions?"

We have latterly heard a great deal of the unhappy dissensions excited in Belgium, on the question of mixed or godless education, which has been tested by experience, and thoroughly examined in that country. The learned and holy Bishop of Liege, Von Bommel, whose loss the Church of Belgium had some time ago to deplore, thus describes its fruits:—"What were its results?" says he, "a teaching frequently at variance with religion and morality, a spirit of independence and incredulity in youth, and a deplorable licentiousness of morals." And, again, "From the privileged colleges of the state the young men generally came out corrupt and ready for impiety. That bitter Liberalism which now assails religion and the government of Belgium is the offspring of those colleges."—(Memor. di Religione, Modena, 1844, p. 44.)

We have written more at length on mixed education than we intended, firstly, because the establishment of Model Schools, and their extension through the country, deserve our serious attention in connexion with that question; and, secondly, because reports are now generally in circulation to the effect that the commission examining into the state of endowed schools in this country, will recommend the application of the enormous funds which have come under their notice to the erection of mixed academies or higher classical schools in every county, with the view of uniting Protestant, Presbyterian and Catholic boys under the same roof, and smoothing away any religious differences that may exist between them. If this project be realised we shall have mixed education in every shape amongst us—in the Queen's Colleges, in the Model Schools, and in the county academies; so that we shall be compelled to study and examine the tendencies of this system more particularly than at any previous period.

But some one will ask, what are we to do!—Are we to abandon our claim to a share in those educational grants made from the public funds, to which we contribute so largely, because there are abuses or defects in the way of managing them? We are far from giving such an advice. We think that the Catholics of Ireland have a full claim to expect a share in every public grant in proportion to their numbers and their wants, and we should never renounce so important a right. But, at the same time, it is our duty to insist on having our claims recognised without any interference with our religion. From mixed education we can expect nothing but evil—we should not acquiesce in it or encourage it. It is highly dangerous to give over the instruction of Catholic children to a Protestant government; we are bound to oppose encroachments on this head.—Whilst giving a thorough Catholic education to Catholic children we have a right to insist on participating in every public grant, without consenting to any clog on the freedom of education. The influence of the great Catholic population of Ireland should be exercised in asserting their rights, and even our electors should use their votes to return men to parliament determined and able to support unimixed education for Catholic children, and freedom of education from state control for all. Our Catholic brethren in England have obtained a separate grant for their schools from their public funds under Catholic management. They have Catholic inspectors, Catholic books, and Catholic training schools.—We rejoice in their success; but ought we, whose numbers and influence are so much greater, be satisfied with anything less than the measure of justice they have obtained?

But let us return again to the good works of our charitable people, and console ourselves by the consideration of all that they have done.—We have already referred to the innumerable parochial and poor schools that have been erected without any public assistance.—We cannot now pass over in silence the admirable poor schools conducted by Christian Brothers and religious ladies, nor our colleges and seminaries, which afford a most excellent education to the sons of