

"Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. IV 16.)

To our privileged youth of Canada, for whom the Church has multiplied Catholic Colleges and founded Catholic Universities, I would address words of encouragement, lest the prospect of such a long and difficult undertaking as that of following out successfully a complete course of study should damp their courage and thereby prevent them from persevering to the end and attaining the honor, influence, and smiles of fortune, which a complete educational training usually insures, together with refinement of mind, of manners, and of heart, when such training is not divorced from religion, an evil which is constantly guarded against in Catholic educational institutions. The length of the route that leads to virtue and knowledge, and the difficulties to be met with in the way, should not, dear youth, for a moment discourage you, nor slacken your energies; for the farther you travel along this route, the more powerful, active, and delighted your various faculties will become; and when the difficulties which you may now dread, are overcome, their remembrance will render still more delightful the possession of the treasures of virtue and knowledge, for which you shall have labored. We prize but little what we can pick up without toil. By a wise dispensation of the Almighty, who loves laborious activity, and detests sloth, the source of many a loathsome vice, everything truly great, grand, and noble has to be toiled for long and earnestly. And why not virtue, the brightest jewel of the soul, the most precious in the eyes of God; a jewel destined to purchase and adorn our heavenly crown? And why should we not toil hard for knowledge, the brightest ornament of the mind, a never-failing source of the purest and most refined pleasure, even when friends and cheery companions are absent; even during those hours of leisure, which often weigh so heavily on the hands of those whose minds are not sufficiently cultivated and stored with knowledge to enable them to converse with their own thoughts, to enjoy, by means of choice books, the delightful and instructive company of the saints and sages, the refined and learned of the past and present?

The noble task, you are called upon to accomplish is, as I have already said, to cultivate, to educate your mind and heart; to train your heart to the love and practice of virtue, and to store your mind with useful knowledge. Religion is the great educator of the heart. It is our holy religion that reveals to us the heavenly beauty of virtue, and the rich eternal reward with which it is crowned. You will, therefore, pay great attention to the study of our holy religion and the duties it imposes. Look upon this as your most important duty, a duty which you owe to God and his Church; to yourself, for your happiness in this world and the next greatly depends upon it, and finally to those whom the Almighty will hereafter confide to your teaching and care. You are next to apply well to the various

studies whose object is to educate the mind, to cultivate and develop its various faculties, to dispel the mists and clouds with which ignorance fills the understanding; in fine, to store the memory with the treasures of knowledge which the wisdom and learning of ages have collected. These grand results are obtained not so much by cramming the memory with a multitude of disconnected facts and ideas, as by studying thoroughly and leisurely those well chosen books placed in your hands by experienced instructors, in which strict order and logical connection are everywhere observed; for knowledge acquired in a hurried, careless manner, soon vanishes, leaving the mind almost a blank, and has little or no training influence on the mind, which still remains cloudy and embarrassed.

Education is a slow process. The mind, like a young plant, slowly and gradually develops itself, and is all the more healthy and vigorous when nature is not forced, when the mind is not burdened beyond its age and strength. What a foolish illusion, therefore, many young people labor under, who imagine, that universal knowledge can be imparted in a few short years, that after two or three years spent at school or at College, they know enough to insure success and eminence in after life. And unhappily they are too often confirmed in this vain conceit by older heads, to whom they naturally look up for counsel and direction. We cannot otherwise explain the distressing fact that very many of our Catholic youth, whose parents could well afford to give them a thorough education, are withdrawn from College before completing their collegiate course, during which the varied excellences of the classic writings of the Latins and Greeks, their natural and graceful elegance, their harmony and polish, their originality of thought and noble simplicity, are imitated and appropriated. They are thus deprived of the advantage of studying those immortal unchangeable models of genuine literary taste, which are beyond the reach of degenerating influences, and never yield to the whims of fickle fashion that ever sighs for change. They are moreover deprived of the key to the sense of a multitude of words in their own language, which is largely drawn from Latin and Greek sources, and can therefore never attain the propriety, precision and clearness of style of a classic student.

But what is most to be regretted, they are by this speedy withdrawal from College, prevented from acquiring that solidity of judgment, that logical and methodical turn of mind, that keenness of perception, that depth and expansion of intellectual vision, which the study of Philosophy begets. Philosophy is the study of the human mind and its various relations to the material and spiritual world, the study of the First Cause and his creative act, that is, of God and creation; the study of the principles on which certitude, religion and equity rest; all which enable the young Christian philosopher at once to detect