

bearing, has a general value as an excellent means of awakening and cultivating the mind, and it is strange that its very great importance should have failed to be recognized by the superiors of ecclesiastical seminaries. The best minds, as well as the most philanthropic souls, from Socrates and Plato down to those of our own day, have occupied themselves with questions of education, and the literature of the subject is in interest second to no other.

The history of education may be said to be the history of human progress and culture. Is not the church the school of Christ? Is not religion a heavenly discipline? The Gospel is the doctrine of eternal life and every priest is a teacher. How shall he teach unless he has learned not only what is to be taught but how it is to be taught? The *dabitur vobis* was a temporary or exceptional dispensation, and now inspiration is given only to him who is prepared. To neglect the natural means of enlightenment is to be unworthy of divine illumination. The introduction of the study of the science and art of teaching into ecclesiastical seminaries will be the beginning of a new era in the Church. It will modify both our method of teaching and our method of preaching. Better than our treatises on sacred eloquence, it will give to priests the skill to speak of eternal life like a living man to living men. But the Plenary Council goes further. The priest, though his office requires him to be a teacher, is only in exceptional cases a school-teacher. The burden of school-work is borne by others, and if our schools are to be improved, the teachers must improve. Hence the decrees of the Council require that normal schools, teachers' seminaries, be established; and, if necessary, that to this end the authority of the Sacred Congregation be invoked. Such invocation, however, ought not to be necessary, and might be found ineffective. Our faith in education is firm and unalterable; and though we know the teacher is not the only educator—that nature is a school, the State a school, the Church a school, the social environment a school, life a school—yet are we nevertheless convinced that the conscious efforts of man to develop human endowments are indispensable, and that without such efforts wisely directed, neither nature, nor the State, nor the Church, nor the social environment can make us capable of complete living. When the school fails, the fault lies in the