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PASTORAL ADDRESS OF THE CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS, Assembled in Dublin, on the 23rd April, 1861. TO THE CATHOLIC CLERGY AND LAITY OF IRELAND. (Concluded.)

Having treated at some length of the persecution which the Sovereign Pontiff has to suffer, and the dangers impending over the Church and society in general, let us now turn to the trials to which religion is exposed amongst ourselves. To that simplicity which teaches us to avoid all malice, deceit, and injustice, we are admonished by our Divine Lord to unite the prudence of the serpent. This divine admonition regards all, but it is addressed principally to those who are constituted the pastors and guardians of the flock, which has been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. We have been placed, dearly beloved, as watchmen on the towers of Israel, and it is our duty to foresee danger with a vigilant and ever wakeful eye, as having "to render an account for your souls."—(Hebr. xiii. 17.) Our duty it is to watch; it is yours to be obedient to our paternal admonitions, proceeding as they do from hearts anxious to discharge our duty towards heaven and towards you. "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls, that they may do this with joy and not with grief. For this is not expedient for you." (Heb. xiii. 17.)

By these sacred words of truth we adjure all parents, and those who have the care of children, as we shall all have to stand before the tribunal of an All-seeing Judge, to attend to the religious education of the tender lambs of the fold committed to their care. Fathers and mothers, why has God blessed you with children? why have we been all placed here upon earth? Is it merely to heap up riches, to satisfy ambition, or to gratify our senses? No, we have been called into existence in order to know God; to love and serve Him, and by the performance of good works to merit eternal happiness. This is the great end of man, to which he ought to direct all his actions, and which ought to be always present to his mind; it is the only important affair which can occupy him on earth. This is what we are taught by the words of Scripture, "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is all man." (Eccl. xii. 13.) Now, this being the case, any one that neglects this first of duties, any one that does not learn to know, to serve, and to love God, ceases to act in conformity with reason, and falls away from the end of his creation, by deserting his Maker, the first principle of his being and of his happiness. Were such a man to possess all that earth can supply, he would be still unhappy, and should cry out with St. Augustine, "Thou hast created us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless, until it rests in Thee."

Now, dearly beloved, no one knows the Father but through the Son, as our Divine Redeemer himself teaches us (Matt. xi. 27) and consequently we must know the beloved Son of God, we must make ourselves acquainted with his life, his teaching, his works, his Church, in order to form a proper idea of God and our relations with him. "This is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John xvii. 3).—If a man do not acquire this knowledge of the true religion, of its doctrines and practices, everything else will be of no value; for "what doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" Matt. xvi. 26.)

Acting on these holy maxims the Church has always inculcated the necessity of bringing up the rising generations in the fear and love of God, and teaching them to have their sanctification by religion, and the attainment of their last end, eternal happiness, continually before their eyes. "We declare," says the Council of Cambrai, held in the year 1565, "that a parent is as strictly obliged to give a Christian education to his children, as to preserve their lives." And, indeed, of what utility would their lives be to them, if, from the want of religious training, they were to fall under the yoke of their passions, to sit in darkness and the shades of death here below, and to pass away from this life without any hope of a blessed futurity?

The Council of Bordeaux, of the year 1583, declares that the influence is paramount which is exercised by education on the destiny of families and society, adding, in the words of an ancient philosopher, that nothing more divine can be undertaken than to procure a good education for youth, on whose welfare the hopes and fate of society depend: "nil est de quo consilium divinitus iniri possit quam de recta puerorum educatione; juvenis enim spes et soboles est reipublice."

The Council of Cologne, of the year 1536, says, that it would be fatal to consider education as an affair of slight importance; since on it rests the welfare of states or their ruin: "neque enim hæc res levis momenti est, à qua totius reipublice reipublica tum salus, tum pernicietas dependet."

These truths are so evident that it is not necessary for us to dilate upon them; they are admitted not only by the council and the pastors of the church, but they are also inculcated by profound statesmen and politicians. We quote the following passage from a late work of M. Guizot, for a long time one of the Prime Ministers in France, whose authority is of great weight: "In order," says he, "to make popular education truly good and socially useful, it must be fundamentally religious. I do not simply mean by this that religious instruction should hold its place in Popular Education, and that the practices of religion should enter into it; for a nation is not religiously educated by such petty and mechanical devices; it is necessary that National Education should be given and received in the midst of a religious atmosphere, and that religious impressions and religious observances should penetrate into all its parts.

"Religion is not a study or an exercise to be restricted to a certain place and a certain hour; it is a faith and a law, which ought to be constantly felt everywhere, and which, after this manner alone, can exercise all its beneficial influence upon our minds and our lives." (Guizot Memoires, t. iii, p. 60. Paris. 1860.) Religion, therefore, is to be made the basis of education, and any system that does not rest upon that solid foundation cannot produce beneficial results.

The pagan philosophers described by St. Paul were men of learning, but because that learning was not sanctified by religion, they became monsters of iniquity. In later times how many literary men, how many writers of profound thought and deep research, have disgraced themselves by the corruption of their lives, because their wisdom was not hallowed by the influence of heaven. Learning, when of a mere natural kind, becomes earthly, sensual, devilish (James iii. 4); but when it is from above, according to the same Apostle, it is chaste, then, peaceable, modest, consenting to the good, full of mercy and good fruits, without judging, without dissimulation."—(ib.) Education, to be what it ought to be, must be intertwined with religion; it must be sanctified by the doctrines and practices of the holy Catholic Church, and children, according as they grow in years, must, like our infant Saviour, advance in grace with God and men (Luke ii. 52.)

It is necessary, dearly beloved, that these principles should be continually present to your mind, and that you should carefully regulate your conduct towards your children according to them, because we are living in a country in which great encouragement is given to systems of education hostile to our faith, and opposed to the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church—systems calculated to leave children without religion in this world, and to blast their hopes of happiness in the next.

In the first place, there is a university, the bulwark of Protestantism in this country, endowed with immense wealth, founded by Queen Elizabeth, whose hostility to our religion it still keeps alive and manifests on every occasion. Alas, how many Catholic youths of talent and promise have suffered the shipwreck of their faith in that establishment, falling away into the abyss of indifference or error.

To the University we have to add the institutions called Queen's Colleges, which, being conducted on principles opposed to those maxims of reason and scripture which we have laid down, and banishing the salutary influence of religion from their halls, have been justly declared by the successor of St. Peter, intrinsically dangerous to faith and morals. Though supported at enormous expense from the taxes of the State, these colleges are only calculated to undermine the true faith, and to promote indifference to religion and infidelity through the land.

Besides the establishments already mentioned there are Royal Colleges, Diocesan and Parochial Schools, some Charter Schools, the Irish Mission Society Schools, and innumerable proselytising institutions, managed by Protestants, and in a spirit of hostility to our creed. Those schools are not all supported by the state, but the revenues, which the endowed schools alone possess, and which are nearly all in the hands of Protestants, amount perhaps to £70,000, whilst the yearly income of the University alone approaches £100,000. Thus Protestants, considering the paucity of their numbers in this country, are abundantly supplied with means of education provided for them in great part by the confiscation of Catholic property, by grants from the state, or by endowments secured to them by public authority.

Let us now see how Catholic education is provided for the mass of the people by the state in this Catholic country. We say nothing of past times, when Catholic schools were prohibited under the severest penalties, and when bigotry and intolerance were carried to such a pitch, that a parent could not employ Catholic masters, nor instruct his child at home; and it was a misdemeanor to send him for education beyond the seas. Such was the liberty accorded to Ireland

by men who proclaimed themselves the apostles of liberty, and pretended to grant to every individual the right of selecting a religion for himself. But coming to the present time, the only system supported by the state of which Catholics have been able to avail themselves of to any extent is the so-called National System of Education. Do the principles, however, on which this is now carried on give to Catholics the same advantages which are secured to Protestants in their schools? Does the present system meet all the requirements of a good Catholic education?

The mixed system adopted by the National Board proposes to unite children and teachers of every religious denomination together, and to banish all religious teaching and exercises from the common hours of class. St. Paul says, "whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you may do, do all to the glory of God."—(1 Cor. x. 31.) The National Board adopts a different view, and no prayers, no religious practices, nothing to make a salutary impression on the minds of children, nothing to inspire them with the fear and love of God, is allowed by their rules in the time of common instruction. In this view, education is not founded on religion, secular knowledge is not hallowed by the dew of heaven. The books are compiled on the principle that all special religious doctrines are to be excluded from them; they do not even hint at the divinity of our Lord, or at the existence of the true Church of Christ, and if any religious sentiment be found in them, it is derived from Protestant or Methodistical sources. In the actual management of a system thus devised, the teaching of religion may be either banished altogether, as happens in some cases, or may be given by some persons hostile to our creed, as it frequently occurs, or at least must be confined to a short period, when it is made a mere task for the children, who, after the long hours of class are fatigued and unfit for serious application.

The mixed system has been tried on the Continent in several countries, and especially in Prussia, and everywhere it has been exploded as unsuited for the wants of a Christian people.—Though it is forced upon us in this Catholic country, without respect to our feelings and our religion, it would not be tolerated in England. There, all the schools are of a denominational character, and separate Catholic as well as separate Protestant education is supported by the State.

We quote an extract from a report on popular education in England, drawn up by several Royal Commissioners, and presented some few days ago, by her Majesty, to both Houses of Parliament, from which extract we learn how hostile public feeling is in England to that sort of education which is encouraged in Ireland.

At page 310 of their report, the Commissioners state:—

"We think that the existing plan (the denominational one) is the only one by which it would be possible to secure the religious character of popular education. It is unnecessary for us to enter upon proof of the assertion that this is desirable in itself. It is enough for our purpose to say that there is strong evidence that it is the deliberate opinion of the great majority of persons in this country that it is desirable. Some evidence has already been given upon this subject of the feelings of the parents of the children to be educated. Those of the nation at large are proved by the fact that, with hardly an exception, every endowment for purposes of education, from the Universities down to the smallest village-school, has been connected by its founder with some religious body.

"The controversies which have occurred in the course of the last twenty years, the difficulties which they have thrown in the way of the establishment of any comprehensive system, and their practical result in the establishment of the denominational training colleges, and elementary schools, appear to us to place beyond all doubt the conclusion that the great body of the population are determined that religion and education must be closely connected; and we do not think that any other principle than that which is the base of the present system, would secure this result."

The Commissioners then proceed to make the following observations, which present a refutation of the principles on which the National system is based in Ireland:—

"It has been supposed [the Commissioners thus continue], that the object of securing the religious character of education might be equally attained either by restricting the teaching given in the schools to points upon which different denominations agree, or by drawing a broad line between the religious and secular instruction, and by providing that the religious instruction should be given at particular hours, and by the ministers of different denominations. We do not think that either of these expedients would be suitable to the state of feeling in this country.

"The plan [continue the same Commissioners] of drawing a line between religious and secular instruction, and confining the religious instruction to particular hours, would, we believe, be equally unlikely to succeed. The principal promoters of education maintain that such a line cannot be drawn, and that every subject which is not merely mechanical, such as writing and working sums, but is connected with the feelings and conduct of mankind, may and ought to be made the occasion of giving religious instruction. They maintain that the religious influence of the school depends no less upon the personal character and example of the teacher, on the manner in which he administers discipline, upon the various opportunities which he takes for enforcing religious truth, and on the spirit in which he treats his pupils, and teaches them to treat each other, than upon the distinctive religious teaching.

The Commissioners, in the next place, show that the sects who have spoken in favor of separating religion from education contradict themselves by the practical course prescribed in their schools, and quote a resolution adopted by one of those bodies which terminates with a declaration that the

"Community will never consent that the teaching of religion itself in their schools shall be subject to restriction. Their experience shows, that besides the Scripture lesson with which their schools daily open, and in which it is sought to make divine truth intelligible to children of all capacities, an able Christian teacher will find throughout the day, when teaching geography, history, physical and moral science, and the knowledge of common things, frequent occasions to illustrate and enforce the truths of religion, and that religious teaching may be made to impart life and spirit to the whole process of education."

This long extract shows the views of the Royal Commissioners and the feelings of the people of England in regard to mixed education. Why we should be obliged to submit to a plan unanimously exploded at the other side of the channel it is difficult to conceive, unless we be driven to suppose that our rulers wish to encourage the various sects in England by sanctioning the teaching of their doctrines, and to lessen or destroy Catholic feeling in Ireland by allowing no mention of the Catholic religion or its dogmas in the long hours devoted to general instruction.

Several times in past years we have complained of the grievances we suffer under this system in regard to the religious education of our Catholic people, and in the month of August, 1859, we explained at full length the many and unanswerable arguments, which prove in the clearest way that Catholics have to suffer great injustice, and that their fair claims are disregarded under the plan adopted by the National Board. We have also brought our grievances under the consideration of Government, but as yet they have not been redressed.

We have still to complain that poor Catholic children in many national schools are left without any religious education whatsoever, and that in other schools in which they are allowed or induced to receive religious instruction from Protestant teachers, they are exposed to the imminent danger of losing their faith and of being infected with error. We complain of the whole system of model and training schools, in which the instruction of so many Catholic children is confided to Presbyterian or other masters and mistresses who may infuse into them the spirit with which they themselves are animated. We complain that so many Catholic teachers are placed very often under the care of anti-Catholic masters, are instructed or trained in the art of teaching by open enemies of their own faith. We complain that the tendency of those training schools is to concentrate the education of the country in the hands of the Government, and to confide a most dangerous and anti-constitutional power over the Catholics of Ireland to statesmen who have displayed no ordinary degree of hostility against the supreme head of the Catholic Church, and the well-being of the Catholic religion. We complain that the national school books ignore not only the religion but the history and literature of our country, and that through the want of the religious principle they are calculated to spread apathy regarding religion, and to undermine that strong attachment, which our people even in the midst of persecution has always preserved for the true faith. We complain that an undue preponderance has been given to Protestants in the management of a system destined to educate Catholic children, and that the claims of the Catholic episcopate, to exercise a due influence over the religious education of their flocks, have not been regarded.

Until those many grievances shall have been redressed, and the education of the Catholic children put on a proper footing, we shall not cease to complain, and to make every constitutional exertion to preserve our flocks from the dangers with which any system of education not based on religion must be fraught.

We exhort you, dearly beloved, to aid us by your prayers in the arduous struggle in which we are engaged, to co-operate with us and your zealous clergy in increasing the number of Catholic schools, such as those of the Christian Brothers, and of the various communities of nuns already so numerous and so flourishing in the country, and above all, to implant and to cherish strong Catholic feelings, a devoted attachment to the practices and doctrines of our holy Church, an unbounded respect for the Apostolic See in the tender minds of your children. Aided by your prayers, co-operation, and good works, we trust we shall be able to succeed in securing for future generations, the blessings of a Catholic education, and averting the dangers with which the faith planted in our island by St. Patrick, and handed down as a most sacred deposit and inheritance, pure and unsullied from age to age by our forefathers, has lately been menaced.

We cannot close this address without calling your attention to the state of the poor, who are at present in many districts suffering the severest privations and pining away in misery and want. Unhappily, many a proprietor seems willing to avail himself of their misfortunes, to aggravate their evils, and to consign them to inevitable destruction, by banishing them from the little holdings in which their forefathers had lived from time immemorial. And are not the poor made to the image and likeness of God? Are they not members and brothers of Jesus Christ? Have they not been redeemed by his precious blood? Are they not destined to reign with God in heaven? Is it then meet that they should be persecuted and trampled on? Is it not a crime that cries to heaven for vengeance, to leave them unprotected by law the victims of a system of cruel and unchristian oppression?—Were Naples or Rome the theatre of such acts of cruelty and inhumanity as have disgraced many parts of Ireland, with what fiery eloquence would they not be denounced by statesmen who cannot find a word of sympathy for their own suffering countrymen, nor a word of reprobation for the heartless men who persecute them.

Though the afflicting scenes which occasionally occur show how necessary it is that all should exert themselves in the cause of afflicted humanity, yet, perhaps, some may persuade themselves that by contributing to the poor rate they are exempted from other obligations of charity, and that they are not bound to take any further interest in the wants of the poor. This would be a serious delusion. If it is true that the poor law taxation presses heavily on you, it is equally certain that the poor are not adequately relieved, and that the whole administration of the system has been carried out in such a way as to render it irksome and odious to those for whose relief it was introduced. The poor in the workhouse are almost universally left without a chapel, in which they might, from time to time, find consolation by communing with their God. The system of education is most unsatisfactory; in many places Protestant masters and mistresses are appointed over children almost exclusively Catholic, and thus those children cannot learn their prayers, nor obtain a knowledge of their faith, and they are deprived of the means to which all Catholic children have a right, of learning the rudiments and the holy practices of their own religion. The want of classification in the poor houses, the absence of proper employment, and consequent idleness and vice, the bad character of many of the inmates, the reckless disregard of human life and comfort, and the total absence of Christian consolation in their administration, have made such unfavourable impressions on the country, that many persons, reduced to want, remarkable for their past good conduct and industry, and more deserving of relief than any other class, look with horror on those receptacles of wretchedness and vice, and even in the moment of the direst distress, even when almost at the verge of starvation, they abhor the idea of taking refuge in such degraded abodes.

We trust that the Parliamentary Committee, now sitting, will remedy these and innumerable other abuses, and appoint persons acquainted with our religious feelings and the condition of the country to carry out the benevolent intentions of the legislature. We exhort you, dearly beloved, to give proof of your Christian charity, by using every means in your power to alleviate the miseries of your suffering brethren; endeavor to have men of humanity and benevolence, and inspired with proper feelings, appointed to the office of Poor Law Guardians; send petitions and remonstrances to the house of parliament, for the removal of the grievances which the destitute have now to suffer, and call loudly for the introduction of a system calculated not to demoralise and degrade the poor and render them unfit for any purposes of society, but to preserve them, to assuage their innumerable woes, and to relieve their wants in a spirit worthy of followers of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We exhort you also, to contribute to the increase and the support of the many charitable