

The Idea of a University.



THE title of the discourse which has been assigned to me is one which, at first thought, would seem to suggest a mere summing up of the aims and endeavours of the ordinary, everyday University; but, after a little serious reflection, it becomes obvious that it embraces something higher and more extensive, that of a University as it should exist under the guidance of the Church. And this is the topic upon which I am to give my views, with whatever substantiating proofs as seem necessary, and which time and place will admit.

It is far from my intention to treat the subject from all aspects, as it is too extensive, and embraces such a field as will lead the mind into deeper subjects, all of which require lengthily discourses and argument. I will, therefore, generalize as much as possible regarding the one idea, a University as it should be; and even in this, that I may not be too long, I will be compelled to rely considerably upon those sound principles of faith, which I know you to possess.

In endeavoring to give this general view of a perfect University, you will kindly pardon me, if I seem harsh in my criticisms of so-called Universities, and energetic in my upholding of the former; but Religion teaches us that education goes hand in hand with itself, and the very philosophy of education is founded on truth in the natural order; which, if we follow to the utmost, pleases God; and, beyond nature, we must rely upon faith and hope. If we are to be guided by religious principles in the acquirement of education, we must give credence to the decision of the Pope, who is the supreme ruler and guide of all Catholics in matters of religion. He, long since, manifested to the world, his feelings for a pure University system for the Catholic youth, and forbade compromise or accommodation of any kind, no matter what purposes they satisfied. If we were to be guided by example in this matter, we would but have to recall the schools of the Middle Ages, which have made them famous. All these were founded upon religion.

To-day Universities exist throughout the world, or so-called Universities, which make no pretence at teaching religion. By a brief argument I will endeavor to show the absurdity of such institutions. By a University, as the word itself implies, is meant an institution wherein universal knowledge is taught. No one in