

which they cling for support as the ivy to the granite walls of some antique mansion. Evil-intent rulers may by coercive measures prevent the free use of that right, but they cannot destroy it any more than the laws that gave it existence. That paternal right of teaching and educating is not however absolute. Parents possess not the moral liberty to teach their children according to their own free will nor to have them taught by whomsoever they desire, if their wish or choice be unreasonable. They cannot, without being guilty of the greatest breach of their duty, inculcate vice and error. With regard to the teaching of their children, parents have the right to impart, either themselves or by means of others, only a lawful and moral knowledge ; which right is however under the supervision and control of the religious and the civil authorities in the sphere of their respective attributions. And so must it be ; for though it is possible for parents to be in the right order established by Divine Providence and the State not to be, we must admit it impossible for the State to be in the right order if parents are not. For if the constituent *parts* of a State—the families—are not sound, how can the *whole*—the State—be in the right order ? In our first hypothesis, that is to say, if we suppose the State to be walking in the wrong path, she cannot exercise her authority with regard to education. But in the latter case her intervention is necessary ; yet she must not reach beyond her grasp. “ If there were ” —and unfortunately there are—men who would not allot to their children a sufficient share of Christian and Catholic knowledge would it not necessarily fall to the lot of those who preside in the schools to apply a strong remedy against such parental malice and negligence ? ”* Justice and humanity demand it. Why not, then, say the same thing of the State ? Has she not the inalienable right to claim for children the education necessary to fit them for future honest citizenship ? But to come back to our point : parents are called by Divine Providence to give their children not only the sustentation necessary for their physical life but also that necessary to form and fortify their intelligence.

*His Holiness Pope Leo XII in a letter addressed to Cardinal La Valitta. January the 26th 1828. Quoted by Mgr Sauvé.