

we can for securing and maintaining the efficiency of our educational institutions.

As Christians we have a special interest in the work of education. In many cases it is the real preparation of the soil for the reception of the incorruptible seed of the word. In all cases it is the trimming and adjustment of the lamp which, when lit at the altar of Christianity, intensifies the light of life, and vastly increases its usefulness. The more intelligent men are the better Christians they make. The more they know the better they are qualified for serving God. Ignorance is the mother of superstition. Knowledge of the right kind is the life germ of religion. The progress of the Church of Christ is intimately connected with the success of education among the people.

WHAT WE MAINTAIN.

Let us glance at the educational system which as citizens and Christians we are called upon to support and defend. The school system which prevails in all the Lower Provinces with the exception of Newfoundland is *national, free and unsectarian*. In various particulars the laws may be defective, and in the administration of them, culpable mistakes may be made, but the principle of providing by law a free, unsectarian education for every child in the country, is one that meets with the entire approval of the vast majority of the people of this country. Such a system of education as that which we enjoy we believe to be the only *rational, just, and practicable* one for a free country.

REASONS.

1. *This system recognizes not only the right but the duty of the State to educate its citizens.* Education comes within the legitimate sphere of state control. Every subject of the realm is to a certain extent the property of the State which has to restrain, to protect or develop for the public welfare. The whole commonwealth has an interest in the physical force, mental ability and virtue of every citizen. In accordance with this view the material property of the country is taxed for the purpose of educating men to perform the duties of citizenship. This object, we maintain, is a perfectly legitimate application of the public taxes.

2. *This system puts all religious sects upon a perfect legal equality.* By our free constitution no one religious denomination takes precedence of another. We are all free to educate our children in any religious beliefs we like. This is a privilege in regard to which we are all equal. This equality however ceases whenever any religious denomination gets the benefit of special legislation in its favour. Such legislation is a viola-

tion of the principle of religious equality, and is equivalent to making the sect so favoured, the established church of the country.

3. *This system economizes the public funds and secures the most efficient schools.* The separate schools of Ontario are generally so burdensome or so inefficient that the Roman Catholic people of that Province prefer sending their children to the common schools. More than two thirds of the Roman Catholic children of that Province attend the same kind of schools which in this country are so virulently denounced by the priests. In the Province of Quebec which according to the Bishops' late pastoral is held up before us as an almost perfect educational model, nearly one half of the adult population is unable to write. This is a fair specimen of a country in which the separate school system has reigned supreme and has been fostered by the state at great expense for nearly a century. A few years ago it was ascertained that of the 22,000,000 of inhabitants in Italy, 16,000,000 could neither read nor write. Of the 15,000,000 in Spain, 12,000,000 are in the same condition. Such a state of things is the legitimate fruit of a separate or ecclesiastical school system. Compared with the public system of the United States, after which ours is modelled, the sectarian schools of Europe while they cost the people more than ours, produce according to the statistics four times as many illiterates, two and a-half times as many paupers, and more than twice as many criminals. By their fruits ye shall know them.

4. *This system is the only which is fairly practicable in a community composed of various religious denominations.* If one sect has a right to get the public funds for the propagation of its peculiar doctrines, every sect has the same right. These different demands which in the name of sects may and will thus be made, must eventually grind up the educational institutions into a state of sectarian disintegration. The contention over the division of the funds will perpetuate denominational jealousy and strife, and engender a spirit which will be detrimental to the success of education. A separate school system instead of allaying, will tend only to excite and foster sectarian bickerings over the subject of education—a result which we most earnestly desire to prevent.

This then is the position we have taken as a Synod—to maintain a system of education which is a national institution, which is unsectarian in its character, which is most economical and efficient in its operations, and which is the only one practically consistent with the equal rights of different sects in a free country.