

Sacraments, of the Word of God, of the Holy Mass, and other fountains of sanctification, one continuous Mission? Is not the Sacred Heart of Jesus always open to the repentant sinner? Come then, seize the golden opportunity and redeem your sinful neglect. The Church summons you once more to her standard. Take up the weapons of fasting, abstinence, prayer, and penance; "redeem your sins with alms and your iniquities with works of mercy," (Dan. iv., 24). and we promise you the victory over your spiritual foes, we warrant to you peace of heart and solid happiness.

2. We again call your earnest attention, Beloved Brethren, to the all-important subject of Catholic Education, and exhort you to ponder well the following noble and deeply instructive letter recently addressed by the present Pope Leo XIII to his Cardinal Vicar. Its far-reaching observations and paternal warnings are so applicable to our present situation, that we deem its perusal most fit to intensify your zeal for the establishment of Catholic Schools, wherever they are possible, or for the organization of Catechism classes, or other arrangements—such as, in remote districts, the co-operation of Catholic men and women—whereby our rising generation may receive adequate religious instruction, and learn the way of eternal life.

His Holiness writes,—

"A decree has recently been issued by those the duties of whose office should have bound them to guard the true interests of the inhabitants of Rome, banishing the Catholic Catechism from the municipal schools, and, by this most reprehensible measure, throwing down the bulwark against the eruption of heresy and infidelity, and leaving open the way to a new kind of foreign invasion, much more deadly and perilous than the old, as it more directly tends to tear from the hearts of Romans the precious treasure of the faith and the fruits which it brings forth. This new attempt against the religion and piety of our people fills our soul with a deep and pungent sorrow, and constrains us to write to you, my Lord Cardinal, who fill our place in the spiritual government of Rome, the present letter upon the melancholy subject, to complain loudly in the presence of God and man.

"An I here from the very beginning, in virtue of the pastoral ministry, we must recall to the mind of every Catholic the very serious duty which by the natural and the divine law, is incumbent on him of instructing his offspring in the supernatural truths of faith, and the duty which, in a Catholic city, binds those who rule its destinies to assist and promote its fulfilment. And whilst in the name of religion we raise our voice for the guardianship of its most sacred rights, we likewise desire that it should be shown how this ill-advised measure is contrary to the well-being of society itself.

Certainly no one could imagine what pretext could have counselled such a measure, except, perhaps, that unreasonable and pernicious indifference in matters of religion in which it is now wished that the people should grow up. Heretofore reason and natural good sense have taught men to set aside and put out of use that which experience has not approved, or which has become useless through the changed conditions of society. But who can affirm that the teaching of the Catechism has not heretofore been productive of great good? Was it not religious instruction which renewed the world, which sanctified and softened mutual relations amongst men, which made the moral sense more delicate, and educated that Christian conscience which represses excesses, reproves acts of injustice, and raises the people who are faithful above all others? Will it be said that the social conditions of the present age have rendered it useless or noxious? But the safety and prosperity of nations have no secure protection apart from truth and justice, of which society at present so deeply feels the need, and whose rights the Catholic Catechism preserves in their integrity. Through love, however, of the precious fruits which have already been gathered and are expected with such justice from this instruction, it should not only not have been banished from the public schools, but it should rather have been promoted by every means.

"Likewise the nature of the child, and all the special conditions of the times in which we live, require this. By no compact can the judgment of Solomon on the child be renewed, and he cannot be divided by an unreasonable and cruel division between his intelligence and his will. If the cultivation of the first be undertaken, it is necessary to direct the second to the pursuits of virtuous habits and of its last end. Whosoever in education neglects the will concentrating every effort on the culture of the mind, makes instruction a perilous weapon in the hands of the wicked. For it is the working of the intelligence which sometimes, strengthening the evil inclinations of the will, endows them with a force which it is impossible to resist.

"The teaching of the Catechism ennobles and raises man in his own idea, teaching him to respect at the same time himself and others. It is a great misfortune that so many who would banish the Catechism from the schools should have forgotten, or are unwilling to reflect, that they themselves learnt the Catechism when they were children. It would have been easy enough for them to understand how by teaching the child that he issues from the hands of God and is the fruit of His love; that all that he sees is ordained of God, King and Lord of Creation; that he is so great and of such worth, that the Eternal Son of God to redeem him did not disdain to take his flesh; that by the blood of the Man-God his forehead is bathed in baptism; that by the flesh of the Divine Lamb his spiritual life is nourished; that the Holy Spirit dwelling in him as in His living temple infused in him life and virtue wholly Divine. This is that which gives him efficacious impulses to keep the glorious character of son of God and to honour it by virtuous conduct. They would likewise understand that great things may be expected from a child who in the school of Catholic Catechism learns that he is destined to a most high end in the vision and in the love of God; that he is taught to watch over himself continually and comforted by all manner of helps in sustaining the warfare which his implacable enemies wage against him; that he is induced to be docile and obedient, learning to venerate in his parents the image of his Father who is in heaven, and in the Prince the authority which comes from God, and from God draws its existence and its majesty; that he is drawn to respect in his

brethren the Divine likeness which shines upon his own forehead, and to recognise under the miserable appearances of the poor the same Redeemer; that he is saved in good time from doubts and from uncertainties by the benefit of the Catholic doctrine, whose title to infallibility and authenticity are its Divine origin, the prodigious fact of its establishment upon earth, the abundance of the most sweet and salutary fruits which it brings. Finally, they would understand that Catholic morality, armed with the fear of chastisement and the certain hope of the most high rewards, runs not the risk of those civil ethics which they would substitute for the religious; nor would they ever have taken the fatal resolution of depriving the present generation of so many and of such precious advantages by banishing the teaching of the Catechism from the schools.

"And we say *banishing*, since the proposal to bestow religious instruction solely on those children for whom their parents make express demand is thoroughly illusory. Nor, in fact, can it be understood how the authors of this ill-omened proposal have not been aware of the sinister impression which must be made upon the mind of the child by seeing religious teaching placed in conditions so different from all other instruction. What inducement can a child—which will only apply itself with ardour to a study the necessity and importance of which it can appreciate—have to pay attention to instructions towards which the school authority is cold or hostile, and which are only accorded a half-hearted toleration? And then, if there should be (as it is not difficult to find) parents who, either through wickedness of mind, or more probably through ignorance and negligence, should not think of requiring for their children the benefit of religious instruction, a great portion of youth would remain deprived of the most salutary precepts, with extreme prejudice not only to those innocent souls, but to civil society itself. And this being so, would it not be a duty of whoever presides over the school to remedy the malice or heedlessness of parents? Hoping for advantages undoubtedly less important, it was lately thought to render elementary instruction compulsory by law, obliging the parents, even with fines, to send their children to school; and now, how can they have the heart to withdraw religious instruction from the Catholic youth, which is without doubt, the soundest guarantee of a wise and virtuous direction given to life? Is it not cruel to allow children to grow without ideas and sentiments of religion, until overtaken by fervid adolescence they are found in presence of seductive and violent passions, disarmed, unprovided with any curb, with a certainty of being drawn down into the slippery paths of crime? It is a pain to our paternal heart to see the deplorable consequences of this senseless scheme; and our pain is increased, considering at the present day the incitements to all kinds of vice are stronger and more numerous than ever. You, my Lord Cardinal, who, by your high office of our Vicar follow closely the development of the war which in our day is waged against God and His Church in our Rome, know well without our speaking of it at length, what and how many are the perils of perversion which youth encounters; pernicious doctrines, subversive of all constituted order; audacious and violent proposals to the prejudice and discredit of every legitimate authority; finally, immorality, which without hindrance proceeds openly by a thousand ways to contaminate the eyes and to corrupt the hearts of youth.

"When those and similar assaults are made against faith and morals, each one can judge for himself how opportunely the moment has been selected to drive religious education away from the public schools. Is it, perchance, sought by these proposals, instead of the Roman people, which was celebrated in all the world for its faith, even from Apostolic times, and was until the present admired for integrity and the religious culture of its morals, to form an irreligious and dissolute people, and thus lead them to a condition of barbarism and savagery.

"We do not doubt that the clergy of Rome will not at all be found wanting to the sacred duties of their sacerdotal ministry, and that they will employ themselves with the most affectionate care in preserving the Roman youth from the perils which threaten its faith and morality. We are certain, likewise, that the Catholic Associations, flourishing in this city with such advantage to religion, will contribute all the means placed in their hands to the pious undertaking of saving their holy city from losing the sacred and august character of religion and the envied boast of being the Holy City, and becoming the victim of error and the theatre of unbelief. And you, my Lord Cardinal, with the wisdom and firmness with which you are adorned, strive that oratories and schools may be increased, where the young may be gathered together to be instructed concerning the most holy Catholic religion, in which, by a particular grace of God, they have been born. Seek, according as it has already brought good fruit in some churches, that virtuous and charitable laymen, under the vigilance of one or more priests, may lend their labour to teach the Catechism to the children, and strive that the parents be exhorted by their respective parish priests to send their children, and that they be reminded likewise of the duty incumbent on all of requiring religious instruction for their children in the schools. It will be useful likewise that catechetical instruction for adults be established in the places which are believed to be the most fitting for them, in order to maintain ever living in souls the salutary precepts which they learned in their childhood's days. Never fail to enkindle piety and to direct always still better the labour of the priests and laity, placing before their eyes the importance of their work, the merits which they will acquire before God, before us, and before the whole of society, and which most strenuously we will study to hold in due consideration."

Now, Beloved Brethren, this mixed education so strongly condemned by our Holy Father is the public school system of this colony. Adequate Catholic religious instruction cannot be imparted by schools which close their doors on religion, much less by teachers who are, or may be, the bitterest foes of the Catholic Church. Wherefore, that secular education which brings together into one school teachers and pupils of every creed, or no creed, and systematically professes to teach the doctrines of no church, has again been vigorously reprobated by the Holy See, and declared unfit for Catholics, being the straight road to scepticism and infidelity. Let us then renew our zeal to provide for our rising generation a thoroughly Catholic training, and