

made by the Legislature, in behalf of education, have been accompanied by conditions which have, up to the present time, deprived many meritorious teachers of the long expected rewards of their labors—rewards which should have been made dependent on their certified efficiency. Without faith it is impossible to please God; and what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? These are, in brief, the eternal truths which must govern our conduct in this matter, which directly concerns the eternal salvation of our flocks, and amid all difficulties and perplexities with which the question is surrounded, the heavenly simplicity of these words of God will be 'a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path;' and the 'law of His mouth will be good to us above thousands of gold and silver.' (2)

"On the other hand, with a uniformity which reveals a plan of united action and obedience to the same word of command, the infidel party in France, in Germany, in Belgium, in Spain, in Australia, in America, and in countries nearer home, has put forth a scheme of universal education, the essential feature of which is, that it shall be gratuitous, secular, and compulsory.

"What chiefly recommends these three qualities of the modern educational system is, however, that they ensure the exclusion of religion.

"The Catholic Church can never look with dislike upon a system of education merely because it is gratuitous. She loves too well Him who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not,' to allow any consideration of human interest to hinder the approach of the very poorest children to the sanctuary of her maternal bosom. If to be gratuitous be a merit in education, then should religious schools be admittedly the most perfect the world has ever seen, for they gratuitously give not only an education of the best kind, but they give also the unpaid, the unpurchasable service of holy men and women, who expend their energies and talents in teaching the poor of Christ without other reward than the insults heaped upon them by the well-paid patrons of gratuitous education. When the novel systems of education shall have produced teachers equal in silent, loving, patient unpaid, labour, to the members of the religious congregations, then, but not till then, shall we believe the new-born admiration of gratuitous education to be sincere. But as long as gratuitous education means that Catholic parents shall be heavily taxed to pay enormous salaries to an army of inspectors and teachers, whose chief work it will be to slay the Catholic faith in the souls of children, we cannot but consider the cry for gratuitous education to be a piece of mocking hypocrisy. And can that education be called gratuitous in which a Catholic parent is forced to pay for what he believes to be the moral ruin of his own child?

"It is unnecessary to dwell upon the evil consequences that must follow to faith from the second special quality of the new school; namely, their secular character. 'Without Christian schools,' say the Bishops of Germany, 'in which the Church can exercise the influence that belongs to her, there is no religious education. A school which is not in full harmony with the Church and with the Christian family is a most deadly foe of both; it is an anti-Church and an anti-family (school), which alienates the children from the heart of their parents and from the spirit of the Church, rendering them, in a fashion hitherto unknown in history, either irreligious, or, at best, indifferent to religion.'

"Finally, in open violation to the natural rights of parents and of the sacred rights of the Church and to leave to the rising generation no loophole of escape from anti-Christian influences, education must be compulsory. What a bitter satire on the vaunted liberty of the age is this, that the people must be compelled by fine and imprisonment to receive educational liberty! If the public opinion of the age be in reality enlightened, why should it be necessary to proclaim compulsory education as one of the great wants of society? And if it be as unenlightened as to deserve for its persistent ignorance and severe treatment awarded to thieves and evil doers, what are we to think of the pretensions of those men who make war on the Church in the name of the enlightened nineteenth century? These inconsistent compulsory educational laws would have been unnecessary had there been no fetters placed on the action of the Catholic Church. She binds her sacred ministers continually to impress on the minds of parents, that the education of their children is a duty imposed on them by God himself in the 5th Commandment of the Decalogue, and on the minds of children, that they are bound to devote themselves to such studies as may suit their state in this world, and prepare for eternity in the next. This is the sweet power of compulsion of which the Catholic Church possesses the secret, and when she places it in hands of some meek brother or gentle nun, whose hearts emptied of all earthly affections, beat only with love of Christ and His little ones, she promotes the spread of education more efficiently than can ever be done by a penal code bustling with fines and penalties. We cannot but look with alarm on these growing attempts to substitute physical for moral compulsion in matters of such sacred importance. When the sense of moral obligation has been awakened in the community, when men have forgotten how to obey for conscience' sake, when the jail and the police supply the chief sanction which is to protect the law, the dissolution of society is not far distant. And yet this will undoubtedly be the outcome of the system of gratuitous, secular, and compulsory education, for the moral force of law languishes where it is not sup-

ported by the force of conscience, and in the souls of those who depend on us, from the pernicious influences of dangerous reading. When you know that a book, however remarkable, or a journal, however brilliant, is openly or covertly hostile to the spirit of faith, let no weak diffidence of public opinion induce you to run the risk of perusing it. And besides protecting, you must strengthen your faith. For this purpose, to prayer and to constant hearing of the Word of God you should add the reading of works written in defence and explanation of the Catholic doctrine. Be not led away by the example of those who defend the reading of dangerous books on the ground that in these days it is necessary to know what is said against religion. When men, the whole amount of whose Catholic knowledge is limited to indistinct recollections of the Catechism, learned by them in childhood, spend the best part of their lives over books in which infidelity parades its blasphemies, now with assumed gravity as scientific conclusions, now brilliant with wit and literary grace, is it wonderful that many should suffer the sad shipwreck of their faith? The more so, seeing that while they unceasingly expose themselves to the influences hostile to faith, these unhappy persons sedulously avoid the sermons and other religious instructions which our Holy Mother the Church provides for her children. Finally, we should avail ourselves to the fullest extent of all our rights as citizens to protest against the attacks made on the authority of the Church, and especially against the injustice done to us in the matter of education.

"But, beloved brethren," says St. Cyprian, we ought not in this matter to overlook the truth, nor should the shadow of this fell persecution so blind our mind and sense as to leave us without light to understand the divine ordinances. By learning the cause of these calamities we shall discover the remedy for our wound. The Lord has wished to try His household, and as long repose had corrupted the discipline which had come down to us from God, the Divine judgment has awakened our faith from a declining, and if I may so speak, an almost lumbering state; and whereas we deserved yet more for our sins, the most merciful Lord has so moderated all, that what had passed seemed rather a trial of what we were than an actual infliction. Thus spoke St. Cyprian (2), when he sought to explain to his stricken flock the designs of Divine Providence in permitting the terrible persecution of Gallius; and if the sins of the faithful, in the third century were not without their share in bringing sufferings on the Church, can we flatter ourselves in the belief that the sins by which we daily provoke the Divine anger have no part in causing the persecution that rages to-day. 'Long ago it was foretold,' says St. Bernard, speaking of the Church 'and the time of fulfilment, has now come; behold, in peace is my bitterness most bitter: it was bitter when the martyrs were slaughtered, more bitter still when hereby raged, but most bitter at the present time on account of the morals of her own children.

"In these our days is heard the voice of the Church lamenting aloud; I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised me: they have despised me and dishonoured me by their shameful lives, by their foul greed of gain, by filthy intercourse, by the business that walketh about in darkness." Oh, this mother of our souls mourns over the guilt of those Christians who, not only among the disobedient Armenians in the East, but elsewhere, to the scandal of the faithful, dare, with sacrilegious hand, to rend by schism the seamless robe of the Church's unity. How she mourns for the thousands who in Ireland render fruitless all her maternal care for their salvation, by their persistence in the awful crime of drunkenness, which is the fertile source of so much sin. Dearly beloved brethren, let us no longer cause our mother's tears to flow, or strengthen the arm of her persecutors by our sins, but rather in the spirit of humility, and in a contrite heart, let us strive to appease the anger of the God of Justice. The rains, the tempests, and the epidemic diseases with which the world has been so continually visited, bear evident marks of a chastisement from heaven, and make our present position and future prospects gloomy in the extreme. Let us, then, humble ourselves under the powerful hand of God, and by frequent supplications to the Virgin Mother, and to St. Joseph, the protector of the Universal Church, let us endeavour to avert the calamities that impend over us. And since the enemies of the Church have refused to allow the Sacred Host of our Divine Lord to be invoked by the victims of their persecuting laws, how better can we show our grief for His injured honour and our grief for His suffering Church, than by the solemn consecration of Catholic Ireland to the most sacred Heart of Jesus. To this act of devotion and reparation we now invite you. The Heart of the Word Incarnate is the fountain whence flows the blood that cleanses us from all sin. Let us place as a sign on our sin-stained souls the blood of the Lamb, and the exterminating angel of persecution will not be able to hurt us. Then shall we see the 'woe that shall come upon the nation that riseth up against our people; for the Lord Almighty will take revenge on them, in the day of judgment he will visit them.' Then shall be fulfilled in our regard the Church's prayer that we may not be disheartened by the tribulations which she may have to bear for our sakes; they rather shall be our glory, for 'none of us shall suffer as a murderer, or a railer, or a thief, or a coveter of other men's things; but if as a Christian let us not be ashamed, but let us glorify God in His name.' To the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, then, dearly beloved, we, your unworthy pastors, this day commend your souls, so dear to Christ, who redeemed them with His precious blood; so dear to us, who must so soon give an account