

THE EDUCATION QUESTION.

THE following is the encyclical addressed by the Pope to the American archbishops and bishops. We take it from the San Francisco correspondent of the *Otago Daily Times*:—

Rome, June 1.—To Our Beloved Son, James Gibbons, Cardinal Priest of the Holy Roman Church, Titular of St Mary's beyond the Tiber, Archbishop of Baltimore, and to our Honourable Brethren the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States of North America. Pope Leo XIII.

Beloved Son and Venerable Brethren: Health and apostolic benediction. We have often given manifest proofs both of our solicitude for the welfare of the faithful people and bishops of the United States of America and of the peculiar affection with which we cherish that portion of the Church, and now by sending our venerable brother, Francis, Titular Archbishop of Lepanto, an illustrious man, not less pre-eminent by his learning than by his virtues, as you yourselves in the recent meeting of the archbishops in New York have plainly testified, thus confirming the trust which we had reposed in his prudence.

Now, his legation had this for its first object: That it should be a public testimony of our goodwill toward your country, and of the high esteem in which we hold those who administer the government of the republic, for he was to assist, in our name, at the dedication of the Universal Exposition held in the city of Chicago in which ourselves, by courteous invitation of its directors, have taken part.

But his legation had this also for its purpose—that our presence should be made, as it were, perpetual among you by the permanent establishment of an Apostolic Delegation at Washington. By this we have manifestly declared not only that we love your nation equally with those most flourishing countries to which we have been accustomed to send representatives vested with our authority, but also that the bonds of mutual relationship binding you and your faithful people with us as children with their father should grow closer every day. Nor was it a small comfort to our heart that this new act of our care in your regard was followed by a great outpouring of thanks and affection towards us.

Now in our fraternal solicitude for your well-being we had, above all, given command to the Archbishop of Lepanto that he should use his endeavours and all the skill of his fraternal charities for the extirpation of all the terms of dissensions developed in the too well known controversies concerning the proper instruction of Catholic youths, a dissension whose flame was fanned by various writings published on both sides. These commands of ours our venerable brother fully complied with, and in the month of November of last year he repaired to New York, where they had assembled with our beloved son all the archbishops of your country, they having complied with the desire which we had communicated to them through the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda that after conferring with their suffragans they should join counsels and deliberate concerning the best method of caring for those Catholic children who attend the public schools instead of Catholic schools.

The things which you wisely decreed in that meeting were pleasing to the Archbishop of Lepanto, who bestowed merited praise on your prudence, and expressed his belief that these decrees would prove more useful. This judgment we also with great pleasure confirm, and to yourself and the other prelates then assembled with you we give decided praise for having thus opportunely responded to our counsel and our expectation. But at the same time our said venerable brother, wishing, as it was our desire, to settle the questions concerning the right of instruction of Catholic youth, about which, as above stated, controversy was being waged and writings published with excited minds and angry feelings, laid before you certain propositions put in shape by himself touching upon both the theological questions of the subject and their practical application.

When the meeting of bishops had seriously weighed the meaning and bearing of these propositions and had asked for certain declarations and corrections in them, all this the Archbishop of Lepanto cheerfully complied with, which being done the distinguished assemblage closed its session with a declaration of gratitude and of satisfaction with the way in which he had fulfilled the commission entrusted to him by us. All this we find in the minutes of the meeting which you have taken care to send us. But these propositions of our delegate having been inopportunistly made, public minds were at once excited and controversies started again, which through false interpretation and through malignant imputations scattered abroad in the newspapers grew more widespread and more serious.

Then certain prelates of your country, whether displeased with the interpretations put upon some of these propositions, or fearing the harm to souls which it seemed to them might thence result, confided to us the reason of their anxiety, and we, knowing that the salvation of souls is the supreme law to be ever assiduously borne in mind by us, and wishing, moreover, to give you another proof of our solicitous affection, requested that each of you should in a private letter fully open his mind to us on the subject, which was diligently complied with by each one of you.

From the examination of these letters it became manifest to us that some of you found in the propositions no reasons for apprehension, while to others it seemed that the propositions partially abrogated the disciplinary law concerning schools enacted by the Council of Baltimore, and they feared the diversity of interpretations put upon them would engender such dissensions as would prove detrimental to the Catholic schools.

After carefully weighing the matter we are intimately convinced that such interpretations are totally alien from the meaning of our delegate as they assuredly are from the mind of this Apostolic See. The principal propositions offered by him were drawn from the decrees of the third Plenary Council of Baltimore, and especially the decree that Catholic schools are to be most sedulously promoted, and that it is to be left to the judgment and conscience of the ordinary to decide according to circumstances when it is lawful and when unlawful to attend the public schools. Now, as the words of any speaker are so to be taken that the latter part of his discourse shall be understood to agree and not to disagree with what he had said before, it is surely both unbecoming and unjust so to explain his latter utterances as to make them disagree with the preceding ones. And this is the more true since the meaning of the writer was not at all left obscure. For, while presenting his propositions to the distinguished meeting in New York, he expressly declared (as is evident from the minutes) his admiration for the zeal as manifested by the bishops of North America in the most wise decrees enacted by the Third Plenary Council at Baltimore for the promotion of the Catholic instruction of the young.

He added, moreover, that these decrees, in as far as they contain a general rule of action, are faithfully to be observed, and that although the public schools are not to be entirely condemned (since cases may occur, as the council itself had foreseen in which it is lawful to attend them), still every endeavour should be made to multiply Catholic schools and to bring them to a perfect equipment.

But in order that in a matter of so grave importance there may remain no further room for doubt or for dissension of opinion, as we have already declared in our letter of the 23rd May of last year to our venerable brethren, the Archbishop and Bishops of the province of New York, so we again, as far as need be, declare that the decrees which the Baltimore Council, agreeably to the directions of the Holy See, have enacted concerning parochial schools, and whatever else has been proscribed by the Roman pontiffs, whether directly or through the Sacred Congregation, concerning the same matter are to be steadfastly observed.

Therefore we confidently hope (and your devotedness to us and to the Apostolic See increases our confidence) that, having put away every cause of error and all anxiety, you will work together, with hearts united in perfect charity, for the wider and wider spread of the Kingdom of God in your immense country. But while industriously labouring for the glory of God and the salvation of souls entrusted to your care, strive also to promote the welfare of your fellow-citizens and prove the earnestness of your love for your country, so that they who are entrusted with the administration of the government may clearly recognise how strong an influence for the support of public order and for the advancement of public prosperity is to be found in the Catholic Church. And as to yourself, beloved son, we know for certain that you will not only communicate to our venerable brethren in the United States, this our mind which it hath seemed good to us to make known to you, but that you will also strive with all your power that the controversy be not only calmed, but totally ended, as is so greatly to be desired, the minds which have been excited by it may peacefully be united in mutual goodwill.

Meanwhile as a pledge of our affection we most lovingly in the Lord bestow upon you and our said venerable brethren and upon the clergy and faithful people entrusted to your care the apostolic benediction.

Given at Rome from St Peter's on the 31st day of May in the year 1893, the sixteenth year of our pontifical reign.

Leo XIII, Pope.

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