

EDUCATING THE CHILD

"GOD'S CLAIMS COME FIRST" SAYS FATHER GILBERT.

The Very Rev. Father Gilbert, S.M., Rector of St. Patrick's College, Wellington, preaching at St. Mary's, Christchurch, on Sunday morning, defended the maintenance and establishment of private schools by religious bodies so that Christianity may be taught in schools. He referred to the resolution passed at the conference last week of the New Zealand Educational Institute—"That a committee be set up to report to the executive on the undermining of the national system of education by private schools."

Father Gilbert queried whether the State system of education was a national system. If a child was to be educated in such a way as to fit him for the battle of life, he must be taught the things that were going to count. He must be taught that there was a God, and that God's claims came first. The Catholic Church had always understood her duty in this respect, and she had built, equipped, and staffed her schools and colleges. Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Nonconformists were also realising that religious teaching must be a part of a child's education, and those Churches were building and equipping private schools all over the land. This was a sign that the conscience of men was awakening to the fact that education was not merely scholarship. Those financially supporting these private schools were keen business men, and it was absurd to suppose they would sacrifice their money and pay double if there was not a vital interest at stake. The soul of New Zealand had awakened, but, unfortunately, the people lived in a little country far away from other countries, and their minds got cramped and narrow, and some thought their so-called "national" system of education must be the best. Scottish authorities said that no system of education was national that did not include every religious belief. At the opening of the Training College for Catholic teachers at Edinburgh, Professor Darrock (Professor of Education in the University of Edinburgh) was reported in the *Tablet* (England) to have said: "The National Committee of Education looked at this question (the establishment of such colleges) from a national point of view, and it thought it its duty, as far as possible, to support and aid colleges of this kind. The committee thought education was a national thing and not a communistic thing. By national education it meant a system of education which took account of all shades of religious belief. Each great religious community had an equal right one with the other to the support of the State." At the same function Sir Henry Keith, who represented the Education Authorities of Scotland, said: "If there was to be a proper atmosphere in their schools it must be an atmosphere emanating from moral law and Christian ethics."

Father Gilbert, continuing, said that the New Zealand policy of education did not represent a national system, nor did it represent all shades of religious belief—it only represented the shade of the Government. A pamphlet jointly signed by the principals of the King's School, Sydney Grammar School, Wellington College, Sydney Church of England Grammar School, and the Scots' College, stated "that the character of our schools offers a type of education necessary in Australia, and that the public has recognised the value of our work by entrusting to us the children in such large numbers." The preacher concluded by exhorting the people to loyally support their own religious schools.

OUR COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS.

Although we are publishing an eight-page supplement with this week's issue of the *Tablet* giving detailed reports of vacation functions and prize lists, we are still obliged to hold over a certain number. These will be inserted in the next and following issue if found necessary.

SANCTITY OF THE CHURCH.

Prof. A. M. Fairbairn is considered one of the great lights of modern Protestantism. His volume on *Prophecies* is found in nearly every intelligent Protestant preacher's library, and is looked upon as a standard work on that subject. Lately he has issued a volume in which he gives utterance to many fine things concerning the Catholic Church. Not the least interesting are those relating to its Sanctity.

I freely admit the pre-eminence of Catholicism as an historical institution: here she is without a rival, or a peer. If to be at once the most permanent and extensive, the most plastic and inflexible ecclesiastical organisation were the same thing as the most perfect embodiment and vehicle of religion, then the claim of Catholicism were simply indisputable. The man in search of an authoritative Church may not hesitate; once let him assume that a visible and audible authority is of the essence of religion, and he has no choice; he must become or get himself reckoned a Catholic.

The Church of Rome assails his understanding with invincible charms. Her sons proudly say to him: "She alone is Catholic, continuous, venerable, august, the very Church Christ founded and His Apostles instituted and organised. She possesses all the attributes and notes of Catholicity—an unbroken apostolic succession, an infallible chair, unity, sanctity, truth, an inviolable priesthood, a holy sacrifice, and efficacious sacraments!"

The Protestant Churches are of but yesterday, without authority, the truth of the ministries that can reconcile man to God: they are only a multitude of warring sects whose confused voices but protest their own insufficiency, whose impotence almost atones for their own sin of schism by the way it sets off the might, the majesty, and the unity of Rome. In contrast the Catholic Church stands where her Master placed her on the rock, endowed with the prerogatives and powers He gave her, and "against her the gates of hell shall not prevail."

Supernatural grace is hers: it watched over her cradle, has followed her in all her ways through all the centuries, and has not forsaken her yet. She is not, like Protestantism, a concession to the negative spirit, an unholy compromise with naturalism. Everything about her is positive and transcendent; she is the bearer of Divine truth, the representative of Divine order, the supernatural living in the very heart, and before the very face of the natural. The saints, too, are hers, and the man she receives joins their communion, enjoys their goodly fellowship, feels their influence, participates in their merit and the blessings they distribute. Their earthly life made the past of the Church illustrious, their heavenly activity binds the visible and invisible into unity, and lifts time into eternity. To honor the saints is to honor sanctity: the Church which teaches man to love the holy, helps him to love holiness. And the Fathers are hers; their laborings, sufferings, martyrdoms, were for her sake; she treasures their words and their works; her sons alone are able to say: "Athanasius and Chrysostom, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, Cyprian and Augustine, Anselm and Bernard are ours; their wealth is our inheritance, at their feet we learn filial reverence and Divine wisdom."

But rich as she is in persons, she is richer in truth; her worship is a great deep. Hidden sanctities and meanings surround man; the sacramental principle invests the simplest things, acts, and rites with an awful yet blissful significance; turns all worship into a Divine parable, which speaks the deep things of God, now into a medium of His gracious and consolatory approach to man, and man's awed and contrite, hopeful and prevailing approach to Him. Symbols are deeper than words; speak when words become silent; gain where words lose in meaning; and so in hours of holiest worship the Church teaches by symbols truths language may not utter.

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