

knew; he is, in fine, a perfect nonesuch! After all this arrogance, he very often comes out a minus quantity; he enters the field of polemics like a lion, and comes out like a whipped kitten! His powers of invention are inexhaustible; if beaten by the facts of history or the sword of logic, he invents new themes and fresh accusations against his opponent, until, at last, he comes down to a regular system of religious black-mailing!

## CHAP. VII.

THE BLESSINGS OF EDUCATION WHEN ACCOMPANIED BY RELIGION—  
PAGAN EDUCATION—THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH—ITS  
BENIGN INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY—THE OBJECT OF EDUCATION—  
EARLY TRAINING OF YOUTH.

ONE of the choicest blessings given to mankind is a good, thorough education, guided by correct religious principles. It is religion, after all, that softens the obdurate heart, polishes and refines man's rude nature, and hallows and sanctifies his whole being. It is the spark which illumines the soul, warms the affections, and sheds a lustre over the whole character. Education, without religion, is not conducive to the real happiness of man. It too often puffs him up with pride and vanity; it makes him selfish and egotistical; it causes him to refer the products of the genius which God has given him to some superior or inherent quality which he fancies to be peculiarly his own, so that, instead of humbly acknowledging his indebtedness to the Author of every good

and perfect gift, he haughtily seeks the homage and reverence of his fellow men.

To impart instruction is a very sacred office, and ought not to be intrusted to the careless, the bigot, or the unbeliever; rather should it be to the work of religious teachers, who know and feel the weakness of our humanity, and our dependence on a power superior to the natural instincts of our own nature. If you instil into the expanding mind of youth nothing but the idea of a gross materialism, your labor is vain and fruitless.

Let us turn over the pages of history, and what do we find but the vilest immorality, degradation, and slavery, springing out from ancient Grecian and Roman civilization, which our modern historians, lecturers, and preachers admire so much, and with great show of learning, and not a little bombast, deal out to their admiring audiences in glowing eulogy; but not a word of the struggles of the Catholic Church, amid the raging torrents of perse-

cution, with which kings and tyrants threatened to engulf her; but, thanks to that august Being who preserved her, despite the malice of her enemies, she still lives, fresh and vigorous, pursuing her sacred vocation, that of teaching and proclaiming man's duty to his God.

In the days of Pericles, Thucydides, and Sophocles, the most classic of the ancients, the brilliant Euripides, Zeno, and the divine Phidias, the public school was a theatre of vice, where the worst instincts of the human heart were nurtured. The animal passions became so gross, that cannibalism was not only practiced, but taught. The Stoics deemed it not unlawful to eat human flesh, and even permitted children to devour their own parents.

In the age of Rome's greatness, Julius Cæsar and Augustus were patrons of the arts and sciences, and representatives of the civilization of their time, yet, with all their learning, elegance, and grandeur, their depravity sounded the lowest depths.

Julius Cæsar knew nothing of the divine attribute of mercy. Read his character as portrayed by Suetonius, and then boast of the splendors of the golden age! Sitting on his throne of gold, he would, with his own hands, pluck out men's eyes, break their limbs, cut their throats, and have their bodies thrown to the dogs and birds of prey. Behold, on the Ides of March, altars erected in honor of Julius Cæsar, stakes and inflammable materials made ready, and three hundred young men, the flower of Rome's nobility, are slaughtered without reserve on that infernal day.

What has been told of Greece and Rome, may be said of Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Lydia, Persia, Carthage, and the whole of Asia Minor. Blood and carnage, cruelty and oppression, marked every step of their progress, until all vestige of primitive truth had disappeared from the people.

No one can deny the material civilization of those classic ages. Science produced ingenious inventions, and noble and vast

discoveries—history, eloquence, poetry, architecture, music, painting, and sculpture flourished with amazing sublimity; yet what did they accomplish for poor humanity? Nothing, absolutely nothing. The standard of decency was reduced to the level of the brute creation, and below it. Homer never sang a strain of purity, nor Virgil a plea for mercy. Woman was debased, childhood forsaken and cruelly butchered, the aged and infirm cast into the Tiber, or converted into targets to be shot at. The youth of both sexes were demoralized to the most shameful degree.

This is but a mere glimmer of the condition of Pagan society down to the establishment of that Church which was founded upon a rock, and to which our blessed Lord gave the promise that the gates of hell should never prevail.

And now began the healing of the nations, the regeneration of mankind. The sunshine of peace dawned upon the quivering, persecuted heart of humanity, and the long

night of Gentile barbarism began to recede before the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Catholic charity began to extend its benign influence everywhere in spite of heathen opposition and the prestige of the powerful ones of the earth; compassion and benevolence went forth side by side, instructing the ignorant, giving hope and consolation to the helpless and forsaken, and thus establishing a new era of peace and love throughout Europe and the East. Blessed be God that we live under this dispensation, and forbid it that our earth should ever again be cursed with a civilization without a Christ in it, as the teachers of modern infidelity are laboring hard (perhaps unconsciously) to bring about. False teachers are abroad in the land, with a lie in their mouths, deceiving the people; trying to seduce Catholics away from the faith which was once given to the Saints, and otherwise corrupting what is pure and holy in society; and all in the name of liberty and progress! In every age the Church

has been attacked by Pagan philosophers, Jews, Infidels and heretics of every grade and condition, from Simon the Sorcerer, down to Rufus W. Clark, D. D., of Albany; and yet she stands a tower of strength against the assaults of the enemy — “a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night.” What but the power of Jehovah sustained her despite the wasting hand of Time, while thrones and principalities have passed away like things that are told? Her fair proportions might for a time be shaded with gloom, and to human vision lost to view; but, like the glorious sun in the heavens, she emerges from the surrounding darkness, and sheds a warmth and a lustre over the face of Nature, bringing faith and hope and consolation to the inhabitants of earth.

The chief object of education is to make man better and happier in this life, and to fit him for Heaven. As well might you expect pure water from an impure fountain, as to find a well-cultivated, happy mind in a

school not established upon a religious basis. The old proverb, "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," is as true now as when it fell from the lips of King Solomon. The world has given us proofs innumerable of its verity. When Moses was brought up in the royal court of Pharaoh, amid the splendors of nobility, surrounded by the wisdom and learning of Egyptian philosophers, what was it that ennobled his mind, purified his heart, and shielded him from the contaminating influences which surrounded him, if it was not the voice of God, speaking to his young heart, through the person of his mother, who not only nourished him, but instilled into his mind the faith of Abraham, and the promises of the Almighty; so that when he grew to man's estate he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter? Rather would he suffer affliction with the people of God, for a time, than enjoy the luxury of an idolatrous court.

Now, behold the contrast: King Nebu-

chadnezzar, nourished by a wild goat, grew up with low animal passions, perpetrating all manner of sin and crime against God, until, by a just judgment from Heaven, he was turned from a royal palace to associate with the beasts of the field, the companions of his early life.

The Emperor Caligula, though born of reputable parents, was nursed by a rude masculine woman, with brutish strength, and a bearded face, ferocious and vindictive in disposition. The child partook of her depravity, and all history records no greater monster.

Youth is by far the most important period in the life of man; it is the season of early impressions, when character is formed for good or for evil, for honor or for shame. How necessary, therefore, to shield it from the contamination of sinful actions, and make it acquainted with the science of salvation, which consists in knowing, loving and serving God.