

CHAP. VIII.

CATHOLICS DO NOT DESIRE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM—THEIR OBJECTIONS TO IT AS IT NOW STANDS—THE BIBLE TOO SACRED TO BE PROFANED IN THE SCHOOL-ROOM—CLARK ON CATHOLIC IGNORANCE—BANCROFT'S OPINIONS—CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT MISSIONS—PROTESTANT KNOWLEDGE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH—WHY CATHOLICS OBJECT TO READING THE BIBLE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS—CATHOLICS NOT WILLING TO SEPARATE SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION—DR. CLARK AND THE CINCINNATI SCHOOL BOARD—HE MISREPRESENTS THE CATHOLIC CLAIM—OPINION OF HARTFORD COURANT AND OTHER PAPERS ON THE "SCHOOL QUESTION"—PROTESTANT MINISTERS EXCITING THE PEOPLE TO TUMULT—THE WRATH OF THE "OBSERVER MAN"—DR. CLARK AS A WEATHER-COCK—"WHY DO CATHOLICS COME AMONG US?"

CATHOLICS do not wish to "batter down" or demolish the public schools, as your sectarian leaders assert; they only wish the public school system, which is as much theirs as yours, to be so modified as to meet the wishes of all. We object to having Protestant and infidel teachers to instruct our children; we object to text-books which contain sentiments not in unison with our theology, or reflecting on our principles; we object to lazy parsons, unauthorized laymen, and sickly sentimentalists, obtruding themselves into the school-

room, where our Catholic children are seated, and filling their young, susceptible minds with false notions of religious education, and material progress; and we object to the reading and studying of a corrupted Bible, or allowing our children to interpret it, according to their fancy, as Protestants do.

I have been, myself, in schools where the Bible was made a text-book, and its study imperative on every scholar in the institution, and yet I failed to discover that it made the students any better or more moral than where it was excluded altogether. In my opinion it made them worse, for "familiarity breeds contempt." It used to grieve me to witness the uses it was occasionally made to serve—from lighting a cigar or a fire, to the most menial office. I have often seen it side by side with the most obscene and scandalous publications that ever issued from a vile press. Many a time have I observed young boys pick out passages in the Canticles of Solomon,

and pass them over to the opposite sex, and vice versa. I was only young then, and never heard the question of the "Bible in the Common Schools" debated; but young as I was, I could not help coming to the conclusion, that had the holy book been read only in the family circle, by way of narrative or christian history, and its sacred character interpreted only by God's ministers, it would have been safer and more conducive to public and private morals; and both youth and old age would have a greater respect for it.

In refutation of Dr. Clark's calumny concerning the universal ignorance of Catholicism, by which he insinuates that the Church opposes the diffusion of useful knowledge, I need only point to the Catholic Almanac for the past year, and it will not only surprise his hearers to read therein what the church is doing for education, but make them ashamed of a man who could make such lying statements.

Nearly all the religious orders of this

Continent are engaged in the work of education. From British America to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific, in the cities and on the plains, along the mountain ranges, and down the Pacific slopes, they give every variety of education from the highest branches of philosophy to the common rudiments of knowledge.

George Bancroft, a son of Massachusetts, and from whom Catholics could not expect much favor, affirms, in his valuable history of the United States, that "religious zeal, not less than commercial ambition, had influenced France to recover Canada; and Champlain its governor, whose imperishable name will rival with posterity the fame of Smith and Hudson, ever disinterested and compassionate, full of honor and probity, of ardent devotion and burning zeal, esteemed the salvation of a soul worth more than the conquest of an empire."

Long before the stony-hearted Puritans placed foot on what Bishop Spaulding calls

the "Yankee Blarney Stone," the faithful ministers of the cross planted missions in the eastern part of Maine. The poor Franciscans, with their lives in their hands, penetrated into the land of the Mohawks and Wyandots, not protected by American counsels, or under the muzzles of English guns, like many of our modern sort, who have gone to India and China.

The Catholic missionary goes forth in the name of the God of Hosts, with his crucifix in his hand, and the word of divine power in his heart, willing to lay down his own life to save the souls of others.

Poor Father Le Caron led the life of a beggar, partaking of the charity of the savages as he journeyed through the wilderness of the newly discovered country, passing from one hostile tribe to another, sowing the seeds of christian truth and love among a race of people at once savage, powerful and warlike, until he gained the great waters of Niagara, and took up his abode with the Hurons.

Bancroft says, that "to confirm the missions the first measure was to establish a college in New France, and the parents of the Marquis de Gamache, pleased with his pious importunity, assented to his entering the order of Jesuits, and added from their ample fortunes, the means of endowing a Seminary for education at Quebec." Thus we see that Catholics established the first institution of learning in America. Let us make a few more extracts from Bancroft.

"The fires of charity being enkindled, the Duchess D'Aguillon, aided by her uncle, Cardinal Richelieu, endowed a public hospital dedicated to the Son of God, whose blood was shed in mercy for all mankind."

"From the hospital nuns of Dieppe, there were selected the youngest twenty-two, to brave the famine and rigors of Canada, in their patient mission of benevolence."

"The same religious enthusiasm inspiring Madame de la Peltier, a young and opulent widow of Alençon, she, with the aid of a nun of Dieppe, and two others from Tours,

established the Ursuline Convent for girls.
 * * * The venerable ash-tree still lives
 beneath which Mary of the Incarnation, so
 famed for chastened piety, genius and good
 judgment toiled for the education of the
 Huron children."

By a like spirit, and after the same man-
 ner, have Catholics continued their mis-
 sionary labors, combining education and
 religion, down to the present day. Their
 institutions are conducted by a self-sacrif-
 icing class of teachers, who have given up
 the world and all its allurements to devote
 themselves in an especial manner to glorify
 God; to secure their own salvation, and to
 instruct the ignorant and the depraved not
 only in what is useful in society, but to
 point out to them the ways of truth and
 holiness, the only road to Heaven. Beau-
 tiful, indeed, is such a life, and highly to be
 commended!

And now, dear reader, think you that
 such noble sacrifices are made to corrupt
 the heart and brutalize the mind, or compel

"universal ignorance," as the Reverend
 libeler, of the Dutch Church, asserts?

To hear this man rant about *education*,
 one would suppose that Providence consti-
 tuted him grand censor of the educational
 system. He makes one assertion after
 another, all of which are nothing more than
 cool assumptions; he never inquires about
 the right or wrong of a thing, but pitches in
 like a drunken bully, indiscriminately, to
 exhibit his strength at knock down argu-
 ments. He must entertain a poor opinion
 of the well educated portion of his flock,
 when he offers them such devil's venison.
 They cannot help knowing that such accu-
 sations are a fraud, and will not go down
 with any kind of relish; still the majority
 will accept these absurdities and swallow
 them down stock and fluke.

It astonishes me to think how wofully
 ignorant Protestants are, concerning the
 affairs of the Catholic Church; what she
 has done and is now doing for the welfare
 of society; unless they have adopted the

system of the old Greeks, who believed in anything and everything but the truth.

Protestantism is only a man-constructed system, take it as you will; it is of human authority, liable to err, and cannot, therefore, claim Christ for its foundation. Catholics, on the contrary, can prove their Church to be that repository of divine truth over which the Holy Spirit hovers, giving her light and holiness whereby to teach and govern with authority; deceiving no man, and claiming obedience from all. They cheerfully accept her kind offices, having full confidence in her teachings and declarations. Not so with Protestants, they keep floating about on an ocean of doubt and uncertainty—they have no faith, they have only opinions, and opinions differ.

It is neither fair nor honest in Dr. Clark to prejudice the people, by wrongfully informing them that it is the object of Catholics to exclude the Bible from the common schools; and that "the priests would rather have the children grow up assassins

than allow them to have recourse to the Bible." Now, if the people of the First Church have any regard for truth, they never would pay a man a large salary to uphold falsehood and calumny.

I do not suppose, for a moment, that they are so utterly blinded by this man's statements, as to believe with him that there is any Catholic priest in the world, who would prefer a little child to grow up an assassin, rather than to read the Bible. A man who would make such an assertion as that is no better than a murderer himself. If his people can stand such lies, their consciences must be as dry as autumn leaves, else they are as wicked as he is, and partake of his crime.

It is true, that both priest and people are opposed to reading what they deem a corrupted version of the Bible, and the singing of Protestant hymns in schools which they are taxed to support. What right have Protestants, any more than Catholics or Jews, to assume to themselves privileges which the Constitution does not

allow them? Is it fair for Protestants to insist on giving a religious bias to a school where the majority are Catholics, as is the case in our large cities? Catholic parents are bound in conscience, to train up their children in the faith which they themselves profess, until they arrive at the use of reason; and hence, their great objection to any system, public or private, which would tend to weaken their belief, or place the subject of religion unfairly before them.

For the same reason they object to institutions of learning, where religion is entirely excluded. They hold that education without religion, as before proved, is unreliable if not wicked—they hold that moral and religious principles are the true basis of human society, and the earlier their children are so instructed, the better for their own being, and the welfare of the State.

This is the whole matter in a few simple words, and if Protestants attach any other motive to the Catholic claim, they either misunderstand it or willfully corrupt the

aims of the Church. We know and appreciate the value to the State of a good system of public schools, and it has always been a cardinal doctrine in the economy of the Church, to combine religious instruction with secular education, feeling assured that upon such a basis, the nation is most secure. Man is naturally a religious being, but subject as he is to the corrupting influences of his own weak nature, and the depravity of society, the training of his youth must have a religious bearing, in order to be beneficial and lasting. This is why Catholics have been making such efforts to establish schools of their own, and for which they have made very great sacrifices. They prefer their children to have a small share of worldly knowledge, with sound religious principles, than to have them converted into polished Pagans, with their heads full of science and no love of God in their hearts.

Dr. Clark has allowed himself to become so inflated lately, on the "school question," that he swelled out like a balloon, but the

least prick of common sense would let out all the gas, and his great swelling words of vanity would vanish into thin air, leaving nothing behind save a bad odor.

The action of the school board of Cincinnati, has been haunting him like a ghost, so that his brain has become addled. He rants and raves in his pulpit concerning the question of the "Bible in the common schools" so much, that if another city would follow the example of Cincinnati the Doctor would either have apoplexy or be sent to the State Lunatic Asylum.

The reverend gentleman is not just in his allusions to the *Western Watchman*. Why did he not quote the whole article from that paper (which for the most part was ironical) instead of culling passages from it, and stringing them together as best suited his purpose, giving a wrong interpretation of said article, and changing the sense entirely, thereby doing great injustice to the editor of that paper.

German infidelity had more to do with

casting out the Bible and all other religious instruction from the schools of the "Queen City," than Catholics had. The latter, if compelled to send their children to public schools, would much rather retain the Protestant Bible than have all religious instruction banished from them.

None but a madman would dare to make such assertions as Dr. Clark has lately. He has not put the question fairly before his people, he was so one-sided in the whole matter, that it was a wonder he did not tip over. As we have said before, the community being composed of different denominations having the same political rights, the government is bound to protect them; so that Catholics and Protestants are on an equal footing before the law, and the State is obliged to protect both in the free exercise of their religious tenets. This being the case, Catholics have a perfect right to make demands upon the Legislature to alter any enactments which curtail them in the free exercise of their faith. The school question

with us is a matter of conscience. But the Doctor says, if you grant such privileges to Romanists you must grant them to all other denominations, if they desire it. This does not follow, for the Church views all sects, from Calvinism to Atheism, as protesting against the religion of Jesus Christ, so that all the sectaries are Protestants to us. What difference does it make to Protestants if their children are educated with spiritualists, infidels and nothingarians—they all go on the progressive principle, and the public school as now constituted is just the thing.

The chief aim, however, of Protestants is to use the State against the Church, hence they cry out "public instruction," as a blind to destroy Catholic faith. It is a hatred of the Church that makes them so clamorous for public instruction as it is now devised. If they profess such a love for Jesus Christ and His inspired word, how comes it that they fraternize so easily with Unitarians, Universalists, and Free Thinkers

of every grade? If they desire the perpetuity of the Christian religion, let them lay down the arms of their warfare and submit to the mild authority of the Holy Roman and Apostolic Church—listen attentively to her sweet and gentle counsels—obey with Christian fortitude all her mandates, and enlist with us under the banner of the cross in making common cause against infidelity, which threatens to demoralize society. As it is now, Protestants are only strengthening the citadel of unbelief, and in no way can they accomplish that result better than in seeking to make the State, instead of the Church, the educator of the rising generation.

There are many able and right minded Protestants who concur with us in the belief that religion in society is its only safeguard, and to make that sentiment popular and lasting it must be diffused into the common schools. Many of them, too, call for a modification of the school system, in order to relieve Catholics from a Protestant or infidel ascendancy.

A writer in the *Hartford Courant* speaks to its readers as follows: "Although a Protestant, I sympathize very much with those honest Romanists who deplore the present purely secular aspect of our public schools, and believe with them, that the shutting out of ethics and Christian doctrine from them makes us virtual pagans, and gives the support of the State to virtual paganism. Whether a few verses of the Bible shall be read, or not, at the opening of the daily session, is, I think, a purely superficial question, and may well give way to deeper issues. For my own part, I feel that we are miserably short handed in our efforts to impress such religious truth on the young, as shall prepare them to enter upon life with a wholesome desire to conform to the laws of God. And seeing how little good ethical teaching there is, and how feebly religion gets any hold on our youth, I cannot wonder at the excesses which are displayed; at the want of honor,

respect for law, and at the practical atheism which abound."

The wrathful old gentleman of the *New York Observer*, notwithstanding he talks about the "coming fight," favors a reformation in the school system. He says, "the State teaches too much. What the State is required to do is to see to it, that all its children are taught to read and write, and to understand such things as are essential to good citizenship. There is no good reason why A should be taxed to enable the children of B to learn Latin, music, or drawing, or any one of the twenty studies now taught in the public schools. Our public school system needs to be overhauled. The religious question is pressing hard upon the popular mind and heart. Perhaps the solution of all these questions will be found in leaving the subject of education to the voluntary action of the people, as religion is now left. This plan is finding able advocates.

The whole subject needs to be examined carefully and speedily."

The New York Journal of Commerce advocates "the entire separation of the educational process from State authority. Youth needs the higher sanctions of religion in every department of culture, and this cannot be secured in a State school where there is no State church."

The *New York Tablet* claims "two ways in which the State can honestly and justly deal with the school question. It must either divide the schools in fair proportion, and give to Catholics the control of their division, and to Protestants or non-Catholics, the control of theirs; or adopt, in education as in religion, the voluntary system, and leave to each denomination to establish, support and manage schools for itself in its own way, without any more public support or interference than is lawful in ecclesiastical matters. The last is the proper way; indeed, the only consistent method of dealing with the question, be-

cause education is a function of the Church, not of the State. As we have, and can have, no public or State church, so we can consistently have no public or State schools."

And the *New York Daily Times* remarks: "It may be doubted, whether it is the business of the government to teach school, any more than to teach religion."

Catholics do not desire the system of common schools abolished; all we want is our proportion of the public moneys — the selection of our teachers, and course of studies, such as would meet the approbation of our spiritual counselors. In all other respects let them remain under the boards of public instruction. In the present system, I fail to discover religious equality, but I can very easily see a Protestant and Infidel ascendancy. The State has no right to educate our children — we hold it to be the office of the Church. This is nothing new — the Church has been the educator from the beginning.

If the State Legislature will not grant us

the reform we need, let it not tax us to support a system at variance with our religious convictions. Supposing the school law was modified, so as to grant Catholics separate schools, it would in no wise abolish the system as it now is for Protestants. To them it would be just the same. I think it would be better for both parties, Protestant as well as Catholic, to have a change, as there would arise a competition which would stimulate to excellence and proficiency, and place the standard of education higher than it ever was before.

Protestant ministers are afraid that this question will come fairly and squarely before the people. They know and feel that Catholics have the best end of the argument—that all the logic and justice is upon their side, and when they find themselves driven to the wall, they threaten vengeance if we persevere in our just demands. Hear the *New York Observer*, the bluest sheet of Calvinism now in existence. “We say again, let Romanists and their friends beware;

there is fire slumbering under the dead ashes of the present. It is not safe to drive Protestants to the wall, and batter down their institutions in their very faces. Provoke not—rather we would say, compel not—an attitude of hostility that all good men would deplore.”

Another choleric gentleman in New York who styles himself a Reverend Doctor, but does not believe in the divinity of Christ, threatens as follows: “We warn our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens of what is in store for them, if they continue to press their claim to break up our national system of public schools. They will sooner or later bring on a civil war, in which they and their churches will be swept, as by a whirlwind, from the land.” And the great Dr. Clark, who turned his back on Congregationalism, to become a Dutch Reformed parson, has uttered the same in substance, though we cannot give his precise words, for he spoke as fiercely and with as much vehemence as