

ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ;

WHAT IS TAUGHT IN THEM,

AND

WHO ARE THE TEACHERS.

A Letter

TO

PROTESTANTS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS

CONCERNING THE SUPPORT OF ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

UNDER THE

* PRIVY COUNCIL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.

BY

A PROTESTANT COMMUNICANT.

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ROMAN HISTORY

THE HISTORY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE
FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE CITY
TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EMPIRE
BY THE BARBARIANS
BY THE REV. JOHN BISHOP, D.D.
OF BATH

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ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, ETC.

A LETTER TO PROTESTANTS.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

I ADDRESS you upon a subject which must often have forced itself upon your attention ; but which, without a full knowledge of facts, can hardly have presented itself to your minds in its proper significance and importance. You are acquainted, I have no doubt, with the history and the characteristics of the Privy Council system of education. It was established to assist the children of the labouring poor in obtaining a certain amount of school instruction. For many years the aid which it afforded was confined to the scholars attending the National and British and Foreign Schools. In the course of time, however, the managers of denominational schools made a claim for assistance. The Presbyterians were accordingly admitted to a share in the grant, and they have availed themselves to a very considerable extent of the privileges which it affords. The Roman Catholics next asserted their right to dip their hands into the mess of pottage, and the Privy Council Committee recognized the justice of the demand. Since then the Jews and Wesleyans have made good a similar claim ; and, now, with the exception I believe of the Independents and Baptists, who for the most part object on principle to receiving any aid from the State in such matters, there is scarcely one out of the fifty denominations into which religious parties in this country are divided, who may not obtain, in proportion to their wealth, a share in that part of the proceeds of the general taxation which is applied to educational purposes.

Theoretically, of course, this is only just and proper. As citizens we all stand, or ought to stand, in an equal position. If Wesleyans as citizens and tax-payers are entitled to draw any money from the public treasury to educate their children, Roman Catholics, as citizens and tax-payers are equally entitled to the same privilege. The State can take no account of denominations as such ; and it therefore does rightly to treat all on one and only

one principle. I have no argument therefore to bring against the Committee of Privy Council, nor can I charge them with any inconsistency in relation to this matter. But what of the consistency of the Protestant Churches? Let a few facts answer this question.

It is not ten years since the Roman Catholics were admitted to a participation in the parliamentary grant for education. During this period they have received the sum of £148,731 for the support of their schools. Last year the amount received was

In England and Wales	£30,881	3	11
„ Scotland.....	2,152	19	0

Total	£33,034	2	11
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This amount, considering their numbers, is beyond the proportion received by other denominations, but no complaint can be made on that head. The grant is administered according to fixed rules, and it has happened that these rules have not been unfavourable to the circumstances in which Roman Catholic schools have been placed. The result, however, of their operation has been a virtual endowment of Roman Catholicism to the extent of £33,000 per annum; I say of *Roman Catholicism*, because the education given in the Roman Catholic schools that are supported out of the Privy Council grant is as intensely and characteristically Romish as is the teaching from Roman Catholic pulpits. The children are educated, not mainly to be intelligent citizens, but to be *good Catholics*.

Neither the Roman Catholic inspectors nor teachers make any concealment of this fact. Thus, in his last report, Mr. J. Reynell Morell, inspector of the Roman Catholic schools in the North of England and in Scotland, and himself a Roman Catholic, writes:—

“From observation and inquiry, I infer that secular education is only very partial among the population that I visit, who belong almost entirely to the poorest class. On the other hand, some religious instruction is conveyed to all, and many are well grounded in it.”

Again:—

“The managers and teachers lay the greatest stress on teaching them their religious and tidy habits, with probably a little reading and writing. This is often the utmost that can be attempted with any advantage. I generally find that the great mass of children are fairly instructed in their catechism, if in nothing else, and being taught to sing religious hymns at an early age, a certain humanizing influence is thus produced.”

And here is Mr. Morell's testimony concerning the results of this education :—

"I should anticipate that few would avail themselves of literary facilities and intellectual recreations in after life. These remarks do not extend to religious matters, as I can testify that strong and sound religious influence brought to bear early on the young mind leaves enduring effects of a very valuable kind."

So you see that reading and writing, which the managers of these schools are paid by the State to teach, are kept in the background. "The greatest stress is laid on teaching them their religion," and the Government money is successfully used to cultivate "a strong and sound religious influence." The secular education, Mr. Morell states in another place, is so superficial, that the children "soon forget" it; but the religious education is so well attended to, that it will last for life. Whether the promoters and manager of the Privy Council system (the author of the famous Durham letter is one of its most zealous supporters) intended this result, cannot be said with certainty, but it is very much to be questioned if they did. The system was established, not to make children Roman Catholic, but to make them intelligent. In Catholic schools it confessedly fails to do the latter, and succeeds to perfection in doing the former.

Let us now see what is taught in these schools. I have before me a little book, entitled, *A Catechism of Christian Doctrine approved for the use of the Faithful in all the Dioceses of England and Wales*. The "approbation" of this book is conveyed in the following terms :—

"We hereby approve of this edition of the Catechism, in our own name, and in that of the other Bishops, and prescribe its exclusive use.

"Westminster, August, 1859.

"N. CARD. WISEMAN."

"+ Imprimatur

"RICHARDUS, *Episcopus Nottinghamiensis*."

This is the catechism which is taught to the children in such Roman Catholic day-schools as are supported by the Government. Its use is "prescribed" in all of them. For the information of those Protestant Christians who participate in the Privy Council grant I quote the following from its pages :—

THE BIBLE.

"Q. How are you to know what the things are which God has revealed ?

"A. By the testimony and authority of the Catholic Church, which Christ has appointed to teach all nations."

THE POPE.

“Q. Has not the Church a visible head on earth ?

“A. Yes ; the Bishop of Rome, who is the Vicar of Christ.

“Q. Why is the Bishop of Rome the head of the Church ?

“A. Because he is the successor of St. Peter, whom Christ appointed to be the head of the Church.

“Q. What is the Bishop of Rome called ?

“A. He is called the Pope, which word signifies Father.

“Q. Is then the Pope our spiritual Father ?

“A. Yes ; he is the spiritual Father of all the faithful.”

INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.

“Q. Can the Church err in what she teaches ?

“A. No ; she cannot err in faith or morals, for she is our infallible guide in both.”

AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

“Q. Are we bound to obey the Church ?

“A. Yes ; because Christ has said to the pastors of the Church, ‘He that heareth you, heareth me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.’ (Luke x. 16.)

“Q. Which are the chief commandments of the Church ?

“A. 1. To keep certain days holy, with the obligation of resting from servile works.

“2. To hear Mass on all Sundays and Holy-days of obligation.

“3. To keep the days of fasting and abstinence appointed by the Church.

“4. To go to confession at least once a year.

“5. To receive the Blessed Sacrament at least once a year, and that at Easter or thereabouts.

“6. Not to marry within certain degrees of kindred, nor to solemnize marriage at the forbidden times.”

PURGATORY.

“Q. And are the souls in Purgatory helped by our prayers ?

“A. Yes ; for ‘it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.’ (2 Mach. xii. 46.)

“Q. What do you mean by Purgatory ?

“A. A place where souls suffer for a time on account of their sins.

“Q. What souls go to Purgatory ?

“A. Those souls which depart this life in *venial* sin, or which have not fully paid the debt of *temporal* punishment due to their sins, the guilt of which has been forgiven.

“Q. What do you mean by temporal punishment ?

“A. That which will have an end, either in this world or the world to come.

“Q. Have you any proof from Scripture that there is a Purgatory ?

“A. Yes ; the Scripture teaches that God will render to every man according to his works, and that nothing defiled can enter heaven ; and that some Christians shall be saved, yet so as by fire. (1 Cor. iii. 15.)”

ABSOLUTION.

“Q. To whom has Christ given power to forgive sins

“A. To the Apostles and their successors, the Bishops and Priests of His Church.

“Q. By what sacraments are sins forgiven ?

“A. Principally by Baptism and Penance.

“Q. What is sin ?

“A. An offence against God, or any thought, word, or deed, against the law of God.”

PRAYERS TO SAINTS.

“Q. May we ask the Saints and Angels to pray for us ?

“A. Yes, we may.

“Q. What is the prayer to our Blessed Lady which the Church teaches ?

“A. The Hail Mary.

“Q. Say the Hail Mary.

“A. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee ; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

“Q. Who made the first part of the Hail Mary ?

“A. The angel Gabriel and St. Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Ghost.

“Q. Who made the last part ?

“A. The Church of God, guided by the same Holy Spirit.”

RELICS AND CRUCIFIXES.

“Q. And is it allowable to honour relics, crucifixes, and holy pictures ?

“A. Yes ; with an inferior and relative honour, as they relate to Christ and His saints, and are memorials of them.”

THE EUCHARIST.

“Q. What is the Holy Eucharist ?

“A. It is the true body and blood of Christ, under the appearances of bread and wine.

“Q. How are the bread and wine changed into the body and blood of Christ ?

“A. By the power of God, to whom nothing is impossible or difficult.

“Q. When is this change made ?

“A. When the words of consecration ordained by Jesus Christ are pronounced by the priest in the Mass.”

THE MASS.

“Q. What, then, is the Mass ?

“A. It is the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ.

“Q. What are the ends for which this sacrifice is offered ?

“A. 1st. For God's honour and glory. 2ndly. As a thanksgiving for all His benefits. 3rdly. For obtaining pardon of our sins. And 4thly. For obtaining all graces and blessings through Jesus Christ.”

Lastly, let me quote the form of Evening Prayer, the use of which is prescribed to the children in these State-supported schools :—

“I confess to Almighty God, to Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to Blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed ; *through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.* Therefore, I beseech the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, the blessed Michael the Archangel, the blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and all the Saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

“Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit : Lord Jesus, receive my soul.

“Holy Mary, be a mother to me.

“O my good Angel, watch over me this night.

“All ye Angels and Saints of God, pray for me.

“May our Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and bring us to life everlasting : and may the souls of the faithful, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.”

So much for the subjects taught : next with respect to the teachers. In National and British Schools, and, I believe, in most other schools, the religious instruction is left to the ordinary teachers. It usually amounts to nothing more than reading a few verses of the Bible, and in Church-schools learning the Catechism ; but both Bible and Catechism as commonly taught in the most perfunctory manner. The Roman Catholics however are “wiser in their generation,” and commit the teaching of religion only to the most zealous and devoted priests and nuns to be found in the Church. With what diligence and success this duty is performed may be gathered from the following testimonials from the Roman Catholic inspectors :

Mr. Marshall :—

“School managers must resemble the authorities at the Hammersmith Training College, who, in addition to all their other labours, direct such a school ; or the Clergy and Sisters of Compassion at Charles Street, Drury Lane, who seem to live only for the happiness and welfare of the children under their charge ; or the genial and energetic director of the Tudor Place schools.”

Again :—

“The schools of the *Sisters of Mercy at Chelsea, St. Joseph's, and Moorfields* are also taught with much ability ; while those at Charles Street and Brompton, under the Sisters of Compassion, are of a kind which I can hardly venture to praise : in the presence of such astonishing labour and devotion one can only maintain a respectful silence.

Mr. Morell is equally enthusiastic on this subject:—

“Nothing is more remarkable than the great readiness shown by parents in my district to send their children to schools taught by nuns. Indeed, the introduction of teaching orders in any part of my district creates a change in the habits and character of the population. This is observed chiefly in the night schools, and the parents, who are visited and instructed in their homes by these excellent and devoted women, who having no worldly ties, and few financial embarrassments, and being supported by an esprit de corps and higher religious motives, are doing a work among our adult poor that must be seen to be appreciated. *In few ways have your Lordships’ grants been more usefully employed than in promoting the spread of these teaching communities.*”

Once more the same writer:—

“In the case of infant and of night schools *in the hands of nuns* highly satisfactory results are produced in this respect [of religion].”

Is it or is it not a question (I ask it by the way) whether, priests and nuns being teachers, this grant is not a direct parliamentary vote for the support of Roman Catholic Chapels and other religious houses?

I have now stated how much money is granted to Roman Catholic schools, what is taught in them and how it is taught, and who are the teachers. It only remains to produce a few statistics in order to indicate the precise character and extent of the agency which is thus supported.

1. SCHOOLS.—Thirty-six schools have been erected with its aid; twelve schools have been enlarged; nineteen teachers’ residences have been built.

The number of schools now in receipt of annual grants is upwards of four hundred.

2. TEACHERS.—The number of teachers in these schools who are paid out of the Parliamentary grant is 306; the number of pupil teachers is 809.

3. CHILDREN.—The number of children present in the schools inspected in 1859 was 45,860. It may be remarked that these children pay the smallest sum for their education of any children in any schools. The average annual income for scholars in attendance is only 11s. 3d., while in all other schools the average is 17s. 3d.

It is only necessary to add that the Roman Catholic bishops exercise an absolute control over every matter connected with education. The Model Trust Deed drawn up in 1852, under the

supervision of the Privy Council Committee, provides that no school or teacher's residence can be built or altered without the express consent of the bishop, and that "the priest or priests for the time being, having care of the congregations assembling for worship at the respective Roman Catholic churches or chapels, under and by virtue of faculties duly received and confirmed by the Roman Catholic bishop, shall have the management and superintendence of the religious instruction of all the scholars attending the school, with power, on Sundays, to use, or direct the premises to be used, for the purposes of such religious instruction exclusively;" that the priest shall be chairman of all meetings of Committee, and that he shall have the power of suspending teachers. In other words, authority is given to bishops and priests as arbitrary in its character as any that is exercised in Rome, Spain, or Austria.

I now return to the question which I put at the commencement of this letter:—What of the consistency of Protestants in this matter? The Privy Council system may, in its general results, be good or bad, sound or unsound; I have nothing to do with these questions in this place, I am only anxious to inquire, Have those Protestants who participate in the Privy Council grant at all considered their responsibility in relation to it? By drawing money from the Privy Council purse, they are upholding a scheme of education, whose object it is to sap the very foundations of their religion. If *they* did not support it, it would fall to the ground. As it is, they cannot divest themselves of their responsibility for the teaching that is sanctioned by it. They voluntarily and deliberately pay for and support all the errors of Romanism. They preach, and preach truly, that the Bible only is the rule of Christian faith; that Christ alone is Head of His Church, and that Rome is the "Mystery of Iniquity;" while at the same time they are doing their best to propagate a system which derides the authority of the Bible, and supersedes the Headship of Christ, which is the Mystery of Iniquity. Ought these things to be so? Would Latimer have done this? Would Luther? Would Chillingworth? Would Baxter? Would Owen? Would Knox? Would Whitfield? Would any of the old faith, who knew what Romanism was, have done such evil? I trow not.

I can imagine no other defence for the position which many Protestant ministers and others occupy in respect to this matter,

than the Jesuitic principle of doing evil that good may come. They will say that their schools cannot be supported without Government aid. Well, what if they cannot? Will they say that they cannot be supported without violating conscience and committing sin? If the taking of Government aid involves a responsibility for the teaching of Romanism, are they not violating conscience and committing sin? Do they ask, What, then, shall we do? Do? What *can* you do but forsake your sin? Loyalty to your principles, loyalty to your faith, loyalty to your Master, demands that you do this. At present, it seems to me, you are supporting a system which is paying priests and nuns to teach diligently and successfully what you believe and pronounce to be damnable error. How can you do it? How? I know not, unless the miserable doctrine of expediency has warped your judgments and defiled your consciences. I have written to lay the facts of the case before you, and to beseech you to consider them. You ought, I think, to come to only one decision with respect to them—that whatever others may do you will withdraw your countenance and support from the immoral system with which they are bound up. May you have grace given you to do this, and to commit the result to Him, who will most assuredly uphold you, if, with a pure conscience and an unwavering faith, you act in His name alone, and for His exclusive honour.

I remain,

Your faithful servant,

A PROTESTANT COMMUNICANT.

London, November, 1860.

1861
The first of the year
was a very dry one
and the crops were
very poor. The
winter was also
very cold and
the snow was
very deep. The
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