

if a New Zealander is a Catholic, or rather because he is one, he not only does not yield to any in his love of his native land, but, impelled by the teaching of the Church, will be more loyal and more self-sacrificing in time of peace or stress of war than others who are not of his faith.

The Catholic Church—we wish this to be clearly and emphatically understood by all classes—has no design on the public schools. She is satisfied to leave them as they are 'for all who wish them'; but she does not want, and she will not have for her children, in the period of their defenceless childhood, an education which she knows will ultimately make them a curse to their country by robbing them of those principles of morality which are indispensable for their formation into honorable and pure men and women. She has lost too many men by contact with irreligion; she has lived too long in the world not to be aware that religion is necessary to prevent the ruin of a nation, and she has too many horrible examples in crimes of the apostate governments of the day to allow her to sit idly by without a strenuous attempt to prevent similar disasters here. She will not be satisfied with the odious hour after school which in the child's mind makes religion penal, but she wants the atmosphere of her schools to be such that religion will enter as a motive and a guide of what is to be done or avoided. She wants the child to begin to be what it ought to be in after life, honest, pure, faithful in its duty to God and men, as the light of religion directs, and as her sacramental helps assist the child to become. She does not want the child to fancy that religion is an affair of Sunday, and has nothing to do with the rest of the week.

Faith is not Truth alone, but Life.

But we are told in positive and aggressive tones: 'Separate schools are absolutely out of the question. What we want is homogeneity of education to blend the diverse nationalities of the land into one common New Zealandism.' We reply: The homogeneity of education is absurd; it is undemocratic; it is un-Christian and irreligious. As well try to make the forest trees have the same sized leaves; or to make all men belong to the same political party, pursue the same occupation, live in the same kind of homes, wear the same style of dress, think the same thoughts, and reach the same conclusions with the same methods. Is not your great social danger the production of dead levels? Besides, who assures you that your type of the homogeneous is correct? And lastly, why are you continually proclaiming that your aim is to develop individuality, while in the same breath you demand homogeneity? The two qualities are contradictory. You are blowing hot and cold at the same time.

Again, the scheme is 'undemocratic'—violently so. If you must have homogeneity, close all expensive private schools, which are so many sacred and inviolable preserves, intended as they are for the children of the rich; or dismiss your private tutor or governess, or be ready to let the public official knock at your door and inquire if what he or she teaches corresponds in time and matter with the programme of the State. If your rich man does not send his children to the public school lest they should sit side by side with the children of his servants, or of the mechanic, or the laborer, why should not we Catholics be allowed to withdraw our children for greater than social or sanitary reasons? Or does the scheme propose that only the children of the poor should be thus homogeneously huddled together? If so, it is class legislation;

It is Undemocratic and Unjust.

Let us state the unvarnished truth. The homogeneity brought about by these godless schools is a homogeneity, a sameness of irreligion, a practical negation of all Christian beliefs during five consecutive days of every week of the child's life, with nothing adequate to counteract it on Sunday; for these children, like their parents, are not church-goers. It is the cannelling of Christianity from the life of the nation.

Again, we Catholics teach our children the same things that are taught in the public schools, and oftentimes teach them better, and add over and above of our own volition, and at our own expense, an element which not only improves their characters as men and women, but which is absolutely necessary to the country's salvation; we base their patriotism on a more solid foundation; while you are compelled to accept any teacher that may be foisted on you by political or other influence, whether he be a Christian or a scoffer, and about whose manner of life we have only your guarantee, which we possibly may not value, we can select those of whose abilities and exalted character we are almost absolutely sure; you are guided in your choice by men, whose whole time is mostly taken up in commercial pursuits or political schemes, while we are enjoying the privilege of the learning and experience of those whose whole life is not only devoted but consecrated to the work; with all that we are perfectly willing to admit Government inspection either of the structure of our schools or as regards the requirements of hygiene, or also of the studies (barring, of course, religion with which the State has nothing to do). Why, then, we ask, when we are conferring such inestimable advantages on the State, which even those who are not friendly to us acknowledge, why should we not get the benefit of the school-tax which we pay to the State? That we are Catholics is none of your business, but that we are New Zealanders ought to secure us our rights. The United States sprang from England because they were taxed without representation. We Catholics, in regard to the education funds, are left without the power of determining how the taxes levied on us shall be applied; nay, our money is given to somebody else. Yet we are not criminals, but, as a rule, honest, hard-working men and women, for whom every shilling counts, who have the true interest of our country at heart, who never can get away from it like our rich friends, who have never stopped at any sacrifice to bring up our children well; and if we have spent thousands and thousands of pounds for the education which the wisest men in this

and every other land, Catholics and non-Catholics, admit to be not merely the best, but the only safeguard of our country, because it inculcates religion, why should we not be fairly and squarely dealt with, and get the benefit of what is levied on us for education? Such a fair distribution to us is quite feasible. England, Germany, Protestant nations, have denominational schools supported by the public purse. With them education without religion is inconceivable. In the several hundred neutral or mixed schools in Germany religion is part of the curriculum. The same holds good for colleges, or gymnasia where religious education is obligatory.

Religion is Indispensable for the Salvation

of the nation. Now it is not taught to the vast majority of the people by the Churches. It can be taught only in the schools. And the religion which must be taught is not a common medley of all religion, or a neutral religion, which the most competent authorities pronounce to be 'fatuous,' and, after being tried, a miserable failure. Lastly, it is beyond all question that the establishment of separate religious schools is feasible; for the most intensely Protestant nations in the world insist upon them; have no difficulty in adjusting themselves to the diversity of creeds; and have found by experience that instead of dividing the country they weld it together, by permitting men to have their dogmatic differences, and thus inciting these very divergences to send from every direction their multitudinous streams that pour down from a thousand different sources, and swell each in its own way the great common current of morality, which thus reaches every condition of society. Something is enormously wrong in our public educational system, and must eventually be righted.

Public opinion in this country is not yet prepared to redress this great grievance, and seems callous to our efforts to bring it to a sense of the glaring injustice which the present public school system inflicts upon one-seventh of the Colony's best and law-abiding citizens. But we need not despair; taught by sad experience, society in many places is becoming alive to the evils brought upon it by the non-religious character of the schools, and a change will some day certainly come. As far as our schools are concerned, we have often indicated an easy course for the Government to satisfy us. It would be to acknowledge our schools as public schools, paying them, under Government inspection and examination, for their results in purely secular instruction, leaving their religious teaching entirely to ourselves. By this proposal we claim 'an equal wage for equal work'; we claim that public moneys contributed by all classes of the community, from whatever source they come, shall be paid equally to all schools which fulfil the standard educational requirements; we claim that no one should be compelled to pay taxes in support of schools of which he cannot conscientiously make use; that no one should be fined by reason of his religious opinion; that schools doing the common work of the nation must be placed, as far as secular instruction is concerned, on the same basis, and not be fined because they give instruction in one extra subject—religion.

Meanwhile, we enjoin our Catholics to be registered, and to be ready to take an intelligent interest in all public matters; we enjoin them to exercise most faithfully and conscientiously their rights and discharge their duties as good citizens.

Any candidate of our faith who by word or act opposes our just claims in educational matters is wholly undeserving of our support, and should be treated as an enemy. As for non-Catholic candidates, many earnest-minded men recognise the injustice done to the Catholic body, and are willing to redress this injustice without interfering with the present Public System of instruction; we exhort all Catholic voters to give their support to such honorable and fair-minded men.

Not a few of our non-Catholic friends, who looked some years ago with folded arms at the introduction and progress of secular education, are to-day making an effort to remove from themselves the reproach which they had deservedly incurred. They are striving for the introduction of Scripture lessons or Bible reading into the State schools. This we deem

A Decidedly Ineffectual Remedy

for the absence of religious education; we also consider it as dangerous to Catholic children, because if any State school happened to have a teacher of another denomination strongly attached to the tenets of his own Church, there is every reason to believe (human nature being what it is) that he would not unconsciously use the opportunity of inculcating the special religious principles which he himself liked, and which he believed were contained in the Scripture lessons. Catholic children, as well as others, would come under such teaching, and therefore would rightly object to the introduction of such lessons within school hours. If such lessons were given outside school hours, we should not think of opposing them, provided that Catholic children were not affected. On the contrary, we should rejoice that non-Catholic parents were thus enabled to adjust the course of instruction to their requirements. Our great and supreme aim is to keep the faith of our children intact and stainless. A conscience clause would be no effectual protection to our children, because, as we know by experience in the schools of the North of Ireland, where there are people of mixed religions, the people might openly defy the rule respecting the conscience clause, stating (as they did in the above locality) that they could not conscientiously request any child not to attend whilst the Scripture lessons were being read.

In conclusion, we again remind all Catholics of this Colony that they are bound to manfully follow their conscience and do their duty by sending all their children to schools where religion can have its rightful place and influence. No parish is complete till it has schools adequate to the needs of its children, and the pastor and people of a parish should feel that they have not accomplished their entire duty until the want is supplied. But we must