

confidence, and then irremediably abandoned; looseness and irregularities of all kinds, in lieu of discipline and order, the only guarantee of success; such are the consequences of an obedience half fulfilled. When shall we learn that officers are to stand or fall here, as in the world, by their energy and success, or the absence of either? and every other Religious, by the exemplary fulfilment of all that is covered by obedience; or the disorder created by its loose and irregular discharge? 3d, *What sort of Religious we are.* What response from the inner Community? From our own conscience? From God? Shall we allow this year to begin, and continue, and end, as so many others before? Will not each of us say: No! no! no: this time I begin earnestly, before God, a new life. I will redeem the past; I will be a Religious, or die in the attempt? May God bless our resolve!

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,  
*Superior-General.*

No. XCVI.

NOTRE DAME, IND., January 17, 1881.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

Although I thanked you already, and in advance, for your pious wishes of the season, I feel almost obliged to renew my thanks; for I had not anticipated such a number of exquisite epistles, every one of which I have read with more than ordinary gratification. Each one was to me, I may say, a most delightful interview with the writer of such beautiful sentiments. May God return you all an hundredfold every blessing you ask for me! This is not, however, the only reason of this new Circular; I have another, to which I wish to call your serious attention, after long consideration and humble prayers to our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph, and especially to the Divine Infant.

You will agree with me, I am sure, and acknowledge that we owe not a little, but more than we can ever express, to the Holy Mother of God. Can we say that we have all adequately shown our gratitude for what she has done for each one of us? I, for one, cannot; but I sincerely and most earnestly wish I could. More than one of you, certainly, will join with me and say and feel the same. Nothing would delight us more than a sure means to procure her glory. Here is one: We have it in our power, both as a Religious body and as individual members of the family of the Holy Cross, to glorify our Blessed Mother, to make her known and loved all over the New World—in a word, to erect to her sweet name a monument of gratitude such as single personal efforts could hardly accomplish anywhere. This is what I come to offer

you, as a power Divine Providence places in our hands to effect an immense good, by spreading around us the knowledge, the love and devotion, for which the AVE MARIA was first established here in 1865. That the foundation of such a Journal has pleased her, and that she has blessed us for it, these two last years alone would more than prove; and to receive indifferently such marks of her maternal love would simply show that we have no heart to appreciate even the greatest favors. I therefore write and make an appeal to every Religious of the Holy Cross for a simultaneous and earnest effort to increase at once the number of subscribers to the AVE MARIA. Until I see every Catholic family in the congregations entrusted to our Rev. Fathers, and every Catholic youth in our schools, on the list of our regular subscribers or readers I shall have to hold in painful doubt the love of pastors and teachers for our Blessed Mother; or, if I cannot doubt their love and zeal, I shall have to question *seriously* their influence, their ability, or the esteem in which I might have fancied they were held in the church or class-room. I wish to credit every one according to personal merit and success: each time a remittance is sent here for new subscribers I want to know to whose exertions the favor is due, that I may present the same to our Blessed Queen. Therefore I shall require the Secretary of the AVE MARIA Office to present me every Saturday with an exact list of the new subscriptions procured by our Religious; for I must know, week by week, what has been done by each one of them for the Journal.

As we intend soon to make some expensive improvements for the Journal—new buildings, new type, etc.—a card must be solicited from all commercial houses with which our Religious are dealing. To advertise in a weekly publication whose circulation is already so extensive, and daily increasing, must certainly be profitable to those we patronize: the favor must be reciprocal.

The prosperity of the country for the past twelve months, which has brought comparative ease and comfort to almost every family, the well-known ability and character of our contributors, the perfect assurance everyone may have never to meet an offensive line in the Blessed Virgin's Journal, the imperative necessity of supplying Christian youth and families with an antidote to the poisonous, pestiferous reading now inundating society, and to maintain principles of faith and piety, respect for the Church and parental authority; these, and many other reasons of vital importance, will make, I know, a deep impression upon thoughtful minds. They will feel that an effort in this direction cannot fail to bring blessings on their labors; they will introduce the Messenger of Mary as a weekly harbinger of joyous omen; they will refer to it daily, and quote it as often; and very soon they will draw from its admirable pages eager aspirations and abiding love.

With a *will*, we may swell the list of subscriptions from 15,000 to 20,000 before the end of the scholastic year. As an encouragement in this labor of love, you will bear in mind that, besides the precious Apostolic Blessings of the saintly Pius IX and his illustrious successor, Leo XIII, you entitle yourselves and your pious subscribers to the priceless benefits of the Perpetual Daily Mass celebrated here. Need I say, to justify my appeal and fire your zeal, that every day increases, for good or for evil, the influence of the press on society. The AVE MARIA never stood higher than it does at this moment. Therefore, now is our time.

Every priest and teacher of our Congregation will receive gratuitously a copy which, I trust, will soon be made the right of the receiver in accordance with the rule governing clubs.

According to the devotedness and the success the above recommendations will meet among our religious, you will allow me to judge of the esteem and consideration in which they should be held themselves by their associates and by me. *Qui elucidant Me vitam æternam habebunt*—"They that explain Me shall have life everlasting." (Eccles., xxiv, 41.) Can we ever meet on more acceptable ground? I would pity any dissenter or indifferent Religious.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

*Superior-General.*

N. B.—Some of our Religious who are not engaged in teaching may have friends and acquaintances whom they will easily persuade to subscribe to the AVE MARIA. I will take upon myself to reward the more successful ones. A sample copy will be sent to any address which they designate, they to accompany it with a letter.

E. S.

No. XCVII.

NOTRE DAME, IND., February 6, 1881.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

After due consultation with the members of the General Council, I deem it my duty to convey you the result of our deliberations, which, I feel certain, will please you, as it will afford you a new proof that we neglect nothing to insure order, discipline and harmony, not only on distant missions, but particularly here, where our interests are more important by far than anywhere else.

As you are aware, Notre Dame is now the Mother-House—the Headquarters of the Congregation of the Holy Cross. It is also the centre of the Province of Indiana, and, in fact, of the United States; and as such it possesses here a Novitiate, a Scholasticate and a Professed House for the entire Province.

Again, this new Mother-House has radiated into several institutions, more or less important, but as distinct as independent from each other—a University, a Manual Labor School, a Parish with Church and graveyard, a Farm, a Printing-Office, an Old Men's Home; each one of them headed by a President or Superior, or Director, freely moving in his own sphere, without ever encroaching on the rights of another, and all equally looking to the same higher authority for help, when needed, or redress, etc.

You will readily understand that one of the first duties of the General Administration is to regulate in its own House as perfect an organization for the government of its various branches as possible: that every officer in charge may know the exact amount of responsibility resting upon him, as also the means given him to meet the expectations of the Community; that no one may claim more power than is required by his office, to the surprise or detriment of others; and that each one strive his best to succeed in his department with what means have been assigned him by competent authority. As a rule, model Religious seldom complain of not having enough of responsibility; they always fear the contrary.

We are all fast passing away: to-morrow our successors may see their labors more abundantly blessed; most probably because God will be better pleased with their humility, their true zeal for His glory and their utter disregard of human applause. It is something for a Religious to leave behind him a clear record, and no precedent which history may present, as it often does, to show a weak point instead of a virtue.

The Superior-General's long Rule (II) places upon him an awful responsibility, for the bearing of which it also confers ample powers. It would be well for some of our Religious to read it attentively; they would, at least, pity him a little more, for they would see that one of his duties is

“To preside wherever he is (395); to administer the goods of the Congregation; to determine the jurisdiction of Local Superiors, etc. It is his duty to set all in motion, through his assistants and the other functionaries, which supposes an acquaintance with the whole work, and devotedness and firmness in the highest degree, so that he may understand all, maintain all, and render all productive, within the limits of his powers (397).”

And, what is still more authoritative, the Constitutions declare (page 18, No. 59):

“He assembles the General Chapter; he presides it, as well as all the Provincial and Local Chapters, as he deems it expedient.”

He being first responsible for the financial state of his House, no debt should be contracted or money expended without his knowledge and sanction.

That all may harmonize in a House to which the other Houses

in the Congregation should look as to a model, there is every Friday morning, under his presidency, a Council at which all the heads of the various departments assist. It is desired that those who hold a weekly local meeting in their department, particularly the President (or Superior) of the University, the Directors of the Apprentices, the farms, and the Printing-Office, should bring with them the minutes of their Council last held. Through the week, any case requiring immediate attention is referred to Rev. A. Granger, appointed by the General Chapter Local Superior of all who are constituted under Directors; he also presides, in the Superior-General's absence, at the weekly Council on Friday. This leaves under the exclusive jurisdiction of the President or Superior of the College all Religious directly and wholly engaged in it; and this is surely enough for one whose every moment is required at his post; for, evidently, no other officer has less leisure.

In my earnest desire to do justice to all, I have ordered an annual summing up of receipts and expenditures for our six departments here. It will soon be ready.

I also gladly inform you of another resolution the General Council has recently taken for the honor of the Congregation, viz., to send to Rome and to Louvain four of our best subjects to finish their theological studies. I will see myself to their expenses while there. They are to be chosen from among those the Community declares the most deserving, not alone in point of talent, but even more in consideration of their religious habits and the entire confidence their conduct has inspired all around.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,  
*Superior-General.*

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No. XCVIII.

NOTRE DAME, IND., February 25, 1881.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

Yesterday, Feast of St. Matthias, I learned by a letter from Very Rev. Father Gastineau, Provincial of our Congregation in Paris, that all our property in France, including even our beautiful College and late Mother-House of Notre Dame de Ste.-Croix, in Neuilly, Paris, had to be sold immediately.

It is true that I had given all power to the Provincial Council to act there in these troubled times in my name as if I were present in person, but I did not dream that they should ever undertake any transaction I could not do myself; therefore I telegraphed at once "*Suspend all sales: I leave at once.*"

I must see the Holy Father and hear him on the subject before

sanctioning a step which threatens a death-blow to our forty-four establishments in France.

The General Council fully agree there is not a moment to lose; and, therefore, I shall take the first vessel leaving for France on Wednesday morning. Any letter forwarded in time to Sweeney's Hotel, New York, will be handed to me before embarking. Later on, for three weeks, my address shall be, *Ste.-Croix, Neuilly, Paris, France*. With the aid of your fervent prayers I hope to return for Easter.

Do not fret for the dangers of the season; when duty commands I never fear. As must appear evident to all, I never needed more the help of Divine assistance. For this I request every week a special Mass or Communion on Saturday.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

*Superior-General.*

No. XCIX.

NOTRE DAME, IND., February 28, 1881.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

You will learn from my last Circular what I intended doing, when the prompt arrival of Very Rev. Father Mariné, and a long interview, convinced the General Council that he might be sent as visitor in my place. Pray for him as you would have done for myself. He embarks to-morrow.

Although the Lenten regulations remain the same, I wish, if possible, that every one in the Congregation should strive to make of the holy season now at hand one of extraordinary blessings, somewhat in keeping with our actual and pressing wants both here and beyond the waters. Oh! let us all, and especially those among us who will be dispensed from the obligation of fasting, earnestly try to make up for such a bodily relief by the examples they will be expected to give of their love for their sacred vows and of all the virtues that constitute a Religious life.

Were it not for the Forty Hours we observe here, I would feel almost overwhelmed with sorrow. This very day, a year ago, I was receiving the last breath of our dear, venerated Father Champeau, the founder of the beautiful college of Notre Dame de Ste.-Croix, which he left in full prosperity and free from debt, and which an impious Government forces us to sell, or rather *sacrifice*, after scattering our Fathers from its beloved premises. Pray for dear Father Champeau, pray for

Yours devotedly,

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

*Superior-General.*

No. C.

NOTRE DAME, IND., March 5, 1881.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

Mt. St. Mary's teaches us a lesson we should never forget. The misfortune of this time-honored and celebrated institution is now the subject of public and private attention everywhere. I mean here no censure of any one individual connected with the venerated college; I take simply the declaration now made public of its failure and bankruptcy as an occasion for some important remarks which I intended presenting to all our Religious nearly twelve months ago. Emmitsburg is not, unfortunately, the only place from which we have heard of pecuniary embarrassments; but it is the most recent, and most painful for us as it is directly in our line. Such a warning should not be lost, but wisely profited by to bring reform wherever needed.

Such dreadful announcements, so painful to Religious and so humiliating for Catholics at large, make me feel more keenly than anything else the awful responsibility of my charge. Poor as it is, yet it is a relief to avail myself of this opportunity to confess that what terrifies me most since twelve years is the obligation, civil or moral, I have assumed before the public to shield us against debts. In presence of such a sad reality, no one will find it strange to be recalled to the strict rules of general economy, without which we should not deserve the name of Religious, especially in the administrative circles of the Congregation. Wherever a Religious Council is itself governed by due respect for its Constitutions and superior authority, there is no danger of any serious committal; but if this is set aside, who can foresee the result? Alas! we have made enough, and a great deal too much, of such ruinous experiments, prolific only in consequences of the worst nature. Weak minds always fancy they have only to erect such and such buildings, or to yield to the entreaties of such or such an interested adviser, etc., to see the outlay covered at once and made a source of profit. I leave you to qualify such *undertakers*.

Not only will they go lightly, ornamenting, enlarging and living beyond their means, but they will scarcely stop at any bounds to secure patronage and fill up their halls. They will reduce their prices, and make reductions at that, rather than miss an opportunity to increase their number, upon the principle of that celebrated merchant who sold everything under cost, expecting to find his profits on the quantity. At least, you will say, we make friends, and grateful ones! Are you very certain of this? Experience has taught me a different lesson.

Two weeks after our disaster of the 23d of April, 1879, I made a personal appeal to nearly 200 families indebted to Notre Dame, not

from reduced terms, but from actual acknowledged accounts standing unpaid—due, many of them, from responsible and able parties, one of them having even a deposit of funds with our Treasurer here; I made said appeal as strong and moving as I could, for I knew it covered an amount of \$75,000. Shall I say how much I received? Why not? We may all turn it to profit. I received twenty-two dollars (\$22)! Ah! this is the lesson *I then learned*: We expected to make friends by patiently waiting, as we had by reducing terms and sometimes foregoing all payments. *We failed*; and, what is worse yet, we made of those pretended friends, under obligations, *ungrateful beings*—the worst class of people; we have nothing to expect from them, but something to fear. What conclusions shall I draw from such premises? Here they are:

1. I absolutely forbid, for all our Houses, going into expenses beyond the approved budget.

2. I strongly advise you to postpone all new and unnecessary outlays of money until you are free from debts. You may all rest assured of one thing, which everyone can see in the air and everywhere, viz.: that a *debt-maker* will soon be looked down upon with more than general contempt. After such striking and deplorable warnings, no excuse, nothing but downright universal condemnation can be looked for by new endorsers of such a pitiable system. Such will be the verdict of every honest man in the world. But in a Community, I tell you, the time has come already when any member creating a serious debt, and leaving it unpaid, shall be disgraced for life. But why not leave them in charge until all is paid? Simply because bold debt-makers are the poorest debt-payers. They deal with the Community funds as if they were their own, or rather the reverse.

3. I must add here, as a result of my forty years' experience, that, instead of favoring the method apparently forced on Catholic schools in this country, of filling up our halls at any price, on any terms, and even gratuitously, *I condemn it for our Houses*, of which it is a ruin, and, as a rule, no profit to anyone. Having never received endowments of millions, as Harvard University declared last week (of three millions already cashed and as much more expected soon), we must provide, if not for a decent living, at least for the continuance of our establishments; a strict adherence to reasonable terms (they are generally too low) will alone remove all danger of debt-making, and enable our Religious to do justice to their pupils, to themselves and their Congregation: a triple obligation, mostly overlooked, although forming a basis evidently indispensable to the permanency and usefulness of any educational establishment. We are, thank God, in a fair way to pay up what we owe; but to pay the last dollar requires a will. I could not die *in peace, if in debt*.

4. Let our watchword be for some time, "saving! saving!" Let



me ask a question: How long will you be able to aid your Congregation? Next year, possibly next week, you may be disabled, sick, an invalid. Have you laid up enough to support you for the rest of your life? Be not offended at my plain manner of writing to Religious. I speak in the name and in behalf of the best members. Should anyone take offence, I could only regret the moderation of my remarks for such. Personally, I always dreaded and shrank from the thought of being some day a *burden* to the Community. What claim can we have, otherwise, to the esteem and friendship of the Congregation? You may say or imagine anything you please; but I assure you the Community values you as it values me—at our *worth*. Let us all then show we are worth something.

5. I recommend more than ever the most minute attention to the daily record of receipts and expenses in each House, and the regular sending to proper quarters, of the quarterly accounts, duly signed by the members of Local Councils. On this point, no indulgence should be expected: I charge the Secretary's conscience with its scrupulous observance. Why keep money for months instead of sending it where it ought to be sent?

Will useless, everlasting travelling ever cease in view of these decisive words: *Qui multum peregrinantur raro sanctificantur*—"Those who travel much rarely sanctify themselves?"

6. Henceforth it must be clearly understood that no one has a right to order or cause any expense *not authorized by the Council*. Any violation of this prohibition is a matter of confession. I tremble for some of our Religious whose vow of poverty is registered in heaven; I tremble for myself; but, with God's help, I solemnly promise to see, at any cost, our sacred engagements on holy poverty respected by all. Here I make a most earnest and conscientious appeal to every devoted member of our beloved Congregation to join me in unanimous efforts to secure everywhere a scrupulous observance of holy poverty. Here is the danger, here is the enemy.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,  
*Superior-General.*

P. S.—The Council in each House decides who is able to fast in Lent.

No. CI.

NOTRE DAME, IND., June 20, 1881.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

Within a few weeks the scholastic year shall have closed, and most of the children of the Holy Cross will once more enjoy the delights of a happy home, where their labors, their unceasing devotedness and their consoling success are already known and duly

appreciated. Well, indeed, may they fancy to hear already the glad, welcoming voices of a loving parent and entire family thus made happy by the joyful return of beloved ones whose absence has only doubled the affection in which they were held before. Happy those, in particular, whose conscience bears them testimony that they have fulfilled their obedience in a manner truly deserving the approval and blessing of God, and the gratitude of their Superiors! If I judge right, such precious and beloved children will find on their joyous return home an anticipation of what is promised in the Gospel—*Euge, serve bone; quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, . . . intra in gaudium Domini tui!*

And yet, well-merited and encouraging as it may seem, this gladness will be but a feeble image of what awaits us all in heaven, provided the word of the Sacred text—*fidelis*—may apply to our labors and secure a reward. *Faithful* Religious are models of all virtues, and especially of obedience and devotedness. How easily they are made happy! Their humility endears them to all. They find God's holy will in their obedience, in their Rules, in their Superiors' orders or directions. Their faith reveals to them the secret of happiness in life and forever. Oh, with such we love to associate! We feel safe in their company; they love their Community; they cheerfully spend themselves for it. Would to God that a Congregation had none but such members! What a delight would such an association prove to all its happy members!

But, alas! we may be doomed sometimes to see the very reverse of what we had a right to expect. We may even see some who owe all to their Community repay it with ingratitude, insolence, open contempt of their associates and Superiors, and claim for themselves superior wisdom, ability, etc.; arrogant, nominal Religious, leaving behind them neither blessings nor fame or confidence, but rather increased debts, and a poor name to the Congregation which they have lowered in public esteem; Religious whom God does not bless for the well-known reason that "He resists the proud"—*Deus superbis resistit!* We have all seen such members, living for themselves, and caring for little else; finding fault with everything, respecting no living authority, and ever complaining of injustice. Even to common observers, such dispositions can never appear but as visible signs of non-vocation. Whatever were the reasons why such members were kept, deep regrets always followed. Such members receive no benefit from a Community life, to which they are a perpetual threat and an undermining element. Charity may dictate a trial; but when it is evident that no amendment can be reasonably expected, charity ceases to be a virtue, and takes the name of an unpardonable weakness.

Had I not seen with my own eyes letters I cannot qualify, I would, perhaps, express my convictions in milder terms. But after

such evidences, I feel in duty bound to say to each and to all: "Beware of irreligious spirits, if you care at all for the fundamental principles of a Community life, for your own happiness in time and in eternity." Compare them with the glorious Saint Aloysius of to-morrow, the living model of modesty, of purity, and obedience. But, alas! how can we compare the personification of humility and mortification with embodiments of vanity in search of personal ease and comfort? Or, rather, read attentively the Lesson we had at Mass this morning from St. Jude: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. For certain men are entered in—ungodly men feasting together, feeding themselves; clouds without water, trees of the autumn, unfruitful. These are murmurers, full of complaints, walking according to their own desires; and their mouth speaketh proud things." Read the whole chapter 1st; it will be no waste of time for any one of us.

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,  
*Superior-General.*

## No. CII.

NOTRE DAME, FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER-PENTECOST, 1881.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

The terrible act which a few days ago startled the whole world with horror and amazement, shocked us all, even more than the rest of our fellow-beings; and no wonder: for, if to the people of the world, rightly disposed, an attempt—as unexpected as unjustifiable—on the life of the lawfully-elected chief of a great nation, in perfect peace and unprecedented prosperity, sends a dart to 50,000,000 hearts, it seems that we Religious, so little prepared for such dreams of horrible blood-sheddings, naturally find, in our respect for lawful authority—which we know comes from God, and which we make an elementary and loving duty to venerate and obey,—a convulsive horror and shudder we cannot express.

During the forty years I have lived joyfully on the American soil, no deed has horrified and prostrated me as the cold-blooded shooting of our worthy President on the 2d of July, Feast of the Visitation. And when I say this, I feel confident I express what was experienced by every member of our Congregation in the world.

What a sad and mysterious electric change! Only a few brief hours before, we were all spellbound, listening again to the most admirable canticle ever issued from human lips—the wonderful *Magnificat* of our Blessed Mother, after saluting her venerated cousin, St. Elizabeth; witnessing again that ineffable embrace of two hearts such as the world had never seen, bearing actually—the one, the

Author of peace Himself, and the other the forerunner of Him who came take away the sins of the world! What an unspeakable scene of heavenly peace! An unearthly, delightful, and enrapturing calm had permeated and filled our souls. The mystery of the reconciliation between God and man was now proclaimed. Happy, blessed prelude of the solemn declaration soon to be heard from the skies above: *Glory be to God in the highest, and peace on earth unto men of good will!* When all at once a cry flashes over the land—"The President of the United States is assassinated!"

Oh! what a horrible contrast! What a painful, heart-breaking evidence that, even at the hour when God should receive the warmest thanks from all men for His infinite mercies, there are men, who, Satan-like, will unexpectedly rise to disturb the designs of Divine Providence and, by a monstrous perfidy, cast a gloom again on mankind!

On any day in the year such an execrable deed would have plunged us all into a wild stupor. But on such a feast—so lovely, so replete with charming and heavenly teachings—the cruel, the barbarous, the devilish attempt on the life of the universally admired chief of our great Union, whose administration thus far has given unprecedented guarantees of unflinching justice,—such an act, I say, cannot be qualified by any pen.

God has permitted it. God's designs are inscrutable. Far from me to attempt an unwarranted explanation of a monstrosity which even our shrewdest diplomatists have not hitherto offered to explain. I may say, however, that we must pray that such a visitation on the gallant chief of our nation, or, rather, on the fifty millions of its citizens, may not be one of anger, but, like all Divine visitations, one of warning and mercy. May God Himself show us all clearly that He intended it as a visitation of salvation for our noble and dear country! We have already prayed much for the restoration of our worthy President to life; let us continue to the last in the same laudable effort.

Should there be any need of arguments to prove how well-grounded is our execration of the deed that has shocked the whole world, I would refer to the striking Lesson given by the Church in the Office of this very Sunday. Where could our feelings meet a better justification? [Read the sixteen first verses of the II Book of Kings, chapter 1.]

When I speak of visitations from Divine Providence, whether they apply to individuals, or families, or nations, we Religious readily understand they are always merciful means which our Heavenly Father uses for the salvation of His children. However severe they may appear, if properly received and acted upon, they never fail to create amendment and reach their intended ultimate

result. Each of us can gratefully point out to such loving marks in life to which is due more than can be expressed.

Such a visitation as the one engrossing the attention of a whole nation for over a week should not be lost on any one; but should open the eyes of our people, and cause serious inquiries on the due acknowledgments we show to Heaven for the extraordinary blessings of almost every kind bestowed upon us, of late years especially, to such a degree as to make us a subject of wonder to the rest of the world. Ingratitude, says a great saint, dries up even the source of Divine favors. Common sense tells us the same, and daily experience proves it. Can we say that religion has increased among us, in the same ratio, as the ever-increasing flow of heavenly blessings? Let every honest heart answer.

We all know that a great injustice is done, day after day, year after year, in the School Question, not only to our Church, but even more to the entire nation; and that, as long as the present system will be insisted upon, the morality of our people must unavoidably grow worse and worse; a frightful prospect, indeed, which men of sense cannot fail to see, unless completely blinded by abject prejudices. The outcrop of our public schools is confessedly (and can be nothing else) a new generation of infidels. Our feeble exertions will not, we feel, counteract, but in a comparatively puny way, the alarming results of a national treasure extensively poured out on the children of an entire nation, with the undeniable consequence—atheism; which means no restraint even on the worse passions of nature. Feeble as our resources are in this unequal contest, our consolation is to know that we fight on the right side, and therefore that God is with us, and that ultimately we must win.

Shall we close the subject as one from which we Religious have absolutely nothing to learn for ourselves? If it be true to say that "all may turn unto good," we may draw from it useful warnings, even in a Community. Alas! in our days, three archbishops of Paris fell victims as archbishops, and one of them from the hand of one of his own priests. The great founder of monastic life, St. Benedict himself, would have died from a poisoned cup, presented him by one of his monks, had not a miraculous Sign of the Cross over it saved him. Horrible crimes are recorded of all ages and of all nations, but none of them can ever compare with that of Judas betraying his Divine Master with a kiss!

My relations of late with the deepest minds in the Hierarchy fill me with sad forebodings of troubles in the American Church and in American communities. Whence such apprehensions? From insubordination; not from want of knowledge, but from practical contempt of the Rule. One such pretentious, unscrupulous subject in a diocese or Community, they say, is enough to disturb all peace. Now, such troubles can only be avoided, as far as we are concerned,

by a closer adhesion to the elementary principle of obedience and submission to authority. The *non serviam*—"I will not obey!" uttered by the arch-rebel in heaven, in the beginning, never was, during six thousand years, so universally the motto of the world as it is to-day. No wonder if it has passed from the world to those even who should be the salt of the world. Instead of drawing the world to ourselves, we are drawn insensibly to the spirit of the world, because we lose our only safe ground—the spirit of obedience, to which faith led us at first, and upon which faith founded us as the only basis, or rock, against which the gates of hell can never prevail.

My beloved friends, be not carried away by the illusions of a deceitful and crafty spirit, but listen to the warnings of one who, for forty years, has devoted himself—God alone knows at what cost!—to the establishment of a Community, now resting, with God's grace, on a safe basis, and never encouraged by brighter prospects. My love for our dear Congregation increases, as age daily tells me more clearly that I must soon part with it. You know my preferences: they were always for the obedient, the devoted, the model Religious. The irreligious, the haughty, the proud, the sneerer, the gossip, the opponent of authority, the debt-maker, I could never support. But now such spirits appear to me so dangerous, not only to the peace but even to the very life of the Community, that I deem it my duty to warn the Councils which are to be held throughout vacations and retreats to *examine well* into the conduct of each member to whom they have to assign a new obedience. I recommend an impartial justice to all. Much as I pray for an increase of subjects, when so many demands have to be declined, I feel even more anxious to protect our good and worthy members from any contact with irreligious spirits. Oh, the baneful influence they exercise! May God preserve us from their pestiferous communications!

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

*Superior-General.*

No. CIII.

NOTRE DAME, October 14, 1881.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

After all I have seen and heard and read during the past twenty-four hours I cannot deny what has been repeatedly declared here, namely, that St. Edward's Feast has never been celebrated at Notre Dame and St. Mary's as it was yesterday. The numerous letters, pouring in by mail testify to the same.

Much as I protest against being made the hero of this glorious anniversary, the return of which never fails to humble me profoundly, as it brings in clearer contrast the poor, unsightly copy I

am making of such a splendid original—still, I shall not conceal that I feel deeply moved by the kind manifestations and expressions of filial sentiments, to the utterance of which the Feast of my Patron Saint gives, as it were, a natural occasion, not only because they please me, but also because they are more creditable to you than to myself. Let me then assure you, one and all, that not a word or line has been received with indifference. On this joyous occasion, especially, I realize that your affectionate regards are more than reciprocated.

The peculiar charm of the Feast yesterday was manifestly due to the special and unprecedented success of our Congregation of the Holy Cross in this New World; while the horizon over the waters is becoming, from day to day, darker and more threatening, our Blessed Lord consoles us here by a greater abundance of blessings on this Continent. May He find in our hearts the grateful acknowledgments with which we should receive all His favors!

Let it be well understood that every new gift from above obliges us to a greater devotedness. I cannot express in words how much I fear ingratitude to God. I fear it for myself; I fear it for every soul I may have to answer for in the Congregation. Ungrateful hearts are an abomination, as we know, before men as well as before God. Ungrateful hearts remind us of that wicked servant whom our Lord declared condemned from his own mouth: "*Serve nequam! ex ore tuo te judico!*" I leave out the two first categories of the five and two talents, doubled by the industrious recipients. I take the 3d one, of a single talent, to which most of us belong. But, little as we may have received, we shall all have some day to account for it. Whoever has received an obedience, however insignificant it may appear—a common employment—were it only to wash the dishes, or sweep the floor, has to fulfil it in a religious manner; not indifferently, or loosely, or carelessly; for in it angels see the will of God; and whoever does the work of God negligently is cursed for that alone. Here is the source among us of incalculable mischief, disedification, annoyance, scandals, losses and miseries. O! what a change in the actual state of each House and in the destinies of the Congregation, if every member of it could understand and learn how to be strict and diligent in carrying out fully and absolutely what is contained in an obedience, whether of a Superior, or of an assistant cook!

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,  
*Superior-General.*

No. CIV.

NOTRE DAME, December 22, 1881.

REV. FATHERS AND BELOVED CHILDREN IN JESUS CHRIST:

Much as we may regret to see our boarding institutions well-nigh

emptied for some weeks at Christmas, we can scarcely condemn a habit becoming yearly more and more universal, when we look to the real and honest cause whence it springs, namely, the longing and irresistible desire of loving parents to see their dear children at home and press them to their hearts on the day, *par excellence*, when childhood, from its Divine Author and Model on the bosom of His Holy Mother, became an object of love and adoration for all men. I understand such honorable impulses, such cravings of the heart on both sides; I respect them, provided they are not abused and turned into an undue loss of time and studies, and would much rather help to secure and extend than to reduce or alter them. St. Paul himself reckons among the signs of the worst times children without affection—*sine affectione*. Indeed, daily experience confirms the apostolic declaration; what we look for in a child is a tender, loving heart. For my part, I could never see a new-comer really homesick, without feeling at once a special regard for the interesting little sufferer. The best recommendation a child can bring is read in his tearful eyes, after parting with his dear mother. Upon such loving young hearts the Fourth Commandment will be sweetly implanted, and with it every other duty will soon be welcome and enjoyable.

It seems to me that one of the greatest services we may render to society at large is to return youths to their families, not only with improved minds, but, above all, with hearts so enlarged by temporary separation and a constant attention to cultivate, develop and perfect their first and best affections as to convince, *prima facie*, their dear parents and home-circle that they return to them more affectionate and more loving than they left them a few months before.

This is not simply sentimental; there is a philosophy in this. In such a faithless age as ours, one of the surest and safest means to prevent the collapse of society is to bind, and to hold more and more strongly bound, the child's heart to the parents' heart, to the family, to home, to primitive and innocent affections. Any real educator with a comprehensive mind must feel that there is nothing so powerful in our days, in order to bring a student to the prompt fulfilment of duty, as to keep prominent before him the joy of delighting, and the pain of grieving, the heart of a dear father or mother at home, as they learn of his noble or mean behavior at school. But, as little passions and difficulties arise, this motive must gain constantly likewise in weight and in efficiency, from an ever-increasing sentiment of filial attachment in the child's breast towards loving parents at home.

Such is the first training a child must receive at school—the full observance of the Fourth Commandment. A young heart formed after this precept, growing daily in love for his dear parents, will



be blessed, not only with a long life, but with success through life, honor and glory to his own name and family, and often, with important services to his country. Hence, again, let us make it a point, day by day, to keep our children's affections more lively towards their beloved parents as a most prolific source of true happiness at home, a security for society at large, and a strong barrier against the contagion of seductive examples.

From the above you will readily understand that the Fourth Commandment should not be entirely a *dead letter*, even to Religious. Although most of them may never again see their parents in this life—forget them in their daily prayers they never will, I am sure.

In your charity, I trust you will extend the fervor of your prayers even to your spiritual parents. For myself, it would be a real joy to meet you all at Christmas and to spend with you the few days which loving parents are so anxious to pass with their families. But such an enjoyment being out of the question, I give you all the best *rendezvous* we can assign—in the Holy Stable of Bethlehem where, in spirit and in heart, we may assemble and kneel around the Divine Child in the Manger, in company with Mary and Joseph, there to present Him the homage of our hearts, with the best wishes we can form and express for the happiness of each other. Oh, what a consolation! to be admitted into that sacred recess to wish the Holy Family a happy New Year, and beg, in return, for our dear Congregation, and especially for its oldest branch, now so severely tried in France, all the blessings we need to accomplish Heaven's designs upon each of us! Ah! let us pray with our whole hearts that these holidays may bring down upon us all the most abundant graces, and enable us to begin the New Year—perhaps the last one for some of us—with a renewed resolution to lead a life worthy of our noble name—the children of the Holy Cross.

As you see, I have succeeded this year in anticipating the promptings of your pious souls; I come first with my happy greetings: May God bless you all! Oh! what a delight if I could express the same in person to each and to all the dear absentees, especially to the veterans of our little army! Once more, let my heart breathe into the ear of each its most ardent prayer: Sweet Jesus, be a Saviour to all! Dear Holy Mother, fold them all to thy Heart! St. Joseph, be our Foster-Father to our last moment!

Your devoted and most affectionate, in J. M. J.,

E. SORIN, C. S. C.,

*Superior-General.*