

March 9. 85

~~Reverend Father~~

In 5 days, we have made 2009 miles, & in less than 48 hours, we expect to reach Queenstown, & 17 hours later, Liverpool itself, if the same fervent prayers of so many loving hearts continue to soothe the waves of the sea before us. This heading will probably be the most interesting portion of this 2^d article. But, of course, you are not obliged to print a single line of it, nor of the one that preceded it, unless you actually had some thing to fill up space & corners.

I ^{return} ~~come again~~ to my subject, of late years, atheism has spread to such an extent & proved so ruinous in our own generation, that the more I am left to myself, the more I fear its deleterious & poisonous influence even on those young honest hearts entrusted

to our ears -

Now a day, we may say, infidelity is almost everywhere, à la mode. The great Bossuet was ^{once} heard to say in one of ^{his} Model Sermons: "The earth carries but few of such idiots, who, on the face of the globe, among the waves of His hands & the blessings of His Providence dare say "there is no God", & deny existence itself to Him by whom alone all nature subsists. Infidels & Idolaters themselves held in horror such monsters; but when in the light of the Gospel one is met, the meeting must inspire horror & trembling".

What would the immortal Creator say to our present generation? Infidelity has developed itself so widely & rapidly that those who deny ^{directly or indirectly} Gods own existence are without number. In our days, from

3 parts of the earth
from every land, ~~the~~ ~~current~~
of each land, the voice of infidelity
is heard & echoed in all directions.
God, says one of the scribes of the
age, is but an old word, somewhat mean
ingless! The world was formed by chance
or is the fortuitous result of some com-
bination of natural forces; unless one
prefers to call all these, by the more
general & heroic term of pantheism;
The world is God!! The most abject
Paganism of antiquity never fell so low.
The voice of the Successor of Peter tells
us the origin from which such absurd
New Doctrines clearly spring viz: Secret
C^ons^o command that God be ignored
that He must not interfere, either at
a man's birth, or marriage, or death,
or in the school room where instruction
is imparted. These Secret C^ons^o

jointly & energetically strive to guide
 the direction of the education of
 youth. Secret Societies, said recently
 by Leo XIII, trust they will easily suc-
 ceed in forming, after their own views,
 this tender age & train it up, in its
 flexibility, to anything they wish,
 this being the surest & speediest way
 to launch on society a race of citizens,
 such as they desire to impart ^{to} ~~to~~
 its inspirations & movements. Hence
 their common intolerance of any
 religious opinion, in public schools.
 Hence, already in more than one country
 their gain of this capital point to
remove from the child at school, even
the idea of God & every thought of the
fundamental duties resting man
 to his creator. Alas! confess it or
 not, we have reached, in our own

age of progress, this dangerous bourn,
 at which, now in our midst, the idea of God
is in danger. They will tolerate
 the teaching that man is the offspring
 of a mindless, but will not permit
 him to learn that God Himself
 made him after His own ^{image &} likeness,
 to know Him & serve Him, & be forever
 happy with Him in Heaven.

~~Common~~ ^{Prevalent} as it is, infidelity is now the most
 absurd ^{Common} Natural Sense tells us that every
 thing comes from a first cause. The bread we
 eat is made of wheat. Does that wheat come ^{from}
 out of a car or from a grain? admitting the latter,
 where did this grain come from? If nature
 produced it, why is it that nature whose
 laws are unchanged never gave us since
 another similar production? How much
 more consonant to human reason that
 either the one or the other came from the hand
 of God!

Infidelity is even more repulsive to the
 instinct of the soul, who, as we all know,
 in moments of surprise or danger, natural-
 ly turns to God. Listen to the testimony of
 your soul, says Tertullian: My God! Good
 God! O God! & when she thus fronts our
 her own instinctive deity, she does not
 turn up to the Capitol, but to Heaven.

Infidelity offends as directly against
 common sense which dictates beyond
 even the shadow of a doubt, that the
 admirable order of creation clearly reveals
 the infinite wisdom of an all powerful
 Creator. What nation, however degraded,
 ever denied the existence of a Creator?
 No man, says Plato, no human being
 will ever persuade us, that God is a mean-
 ingless name. It would be the height of
 absurdity. No ^{nation} says Cicero,
 however savage, has ever denied God's existence.

Another Pagan, Plutar^{ch}~~ch~~, rises to a
 new eloquence on this strange subject:
 you may find, he says, Cities without
 fortifying walls, with no palaces and Houses,
 gymnasiums or colleges of Law, or Schools
 of Letters; but a people without God,
 without prayer, religious Rites & Sacri-
 fices, has never been known or heard of.
 I hear folly! a man who wants an effect
 without a cause! or ^{who} with his eyes opened
 at mid-day, sees & denies the light of
 the Sun, is a fool - Plato affirmed
 that a citizen who ignored God, ^{a danger} was a
 pestilence in any City. Aristotle thought
 that an atheist should never be
 honored with a discussion: a stick
 was the only thing that sh^d be applied
 Cicero with him 5th Augustus & St. Jerome
 did not hesitate in declaring atheism an
 Evidence of ^{an} unsettled, softened ^{abnormal} abnormal brain

The celebrated Currier was once heard
 solemnly declaring, ^{before the whole} in full academy,
 that atheists can be reckoned but
 among crazy or dishonest people by class,
and on all frissons. Therefore, it must
 be said, that in the judgment of Mora-
 lists & Naturalists alike, atheism is a
 monstruousity & an abomination, in our own age
 of inventions & unexampled progress & by
 discoveries, the world is filling with
 such numerous intellects, not all athei-
 tic to the same degree, but all unbe-
 lievers in one or another essential of
 Divine Revelation -

Where shall we seek for the reason or
 the cause of such deplorable blindness?
 as a rule, we find it in the perverseness
 of the heart: no one denies the existence
 of God before finding his interest in this
 denial. None is infidel but thro' the corrup-

tion of the heart. Prudence & caution
will often send a help, but in the
whole, a vitiated heart is the shame-
ful spring of infidelity or atheism.

The worst feature of it, however, has
not to be drawn or described, it is simply
disastrous, as it opens a wide door
to all vices - with atheism, no more
law or justice or equity; no fidelity
in social transactions. It is the ruin
of all order or peace, just punishment
of the insult offered to God! with infide-
lity comes a frightful series of con-
mittent evils, as thirst after gold &
honors, imprisonments, crimes, disorders,
revolutions, leaving no security, no
peace, as the general rule is to respect
none. Voltaire himself has left on this
subject a declaration ^{now} worth attention.
I would not wish to have any thing to

do with an atheistic Prince who would find his interest in brewing me in a mortar; for I would surely be brewed. If I were a King, I would not wish to see at my Court ^{atheistic} any Courtiers, whose interest would be to poison me; for, I should have to take Courtier poison every day to save my life. Most assuredly, it is equally necessary for Princes & people, that all firmly believe in the existence of God, Creator, Governor, remunerator or avenger of all human deeds."

§ 2. I close with a remarkable declaration from a celebrated genius of our times: ^{Victor Hugo}
 "Religious teaching, in my opinion, is more necessary than ever. The higher man rises, the deeper his faith must grow. There is in our age a serious evil, I would almost say, only one evil: a general tendency

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to call everything in a doubt. To give
man, as an end, this material life, is to
aggravate immensely the weight of un-
avoidable sufferings, by the delegation of a
future; on a tried heart nothing is more
crushing than the thought of annihilation,
what was a trial made bearable by hope,
becomes sheer despair, ^{ending in self destruction.} ~~even~~ the profound
conviction of society, in our age. Most
certainly, I desire to amend the lot of
sufferers; but I can never forget, that
the best most soothing remedy, is a firm
hope grounded on undoubting faith -
I therefore sincerely wish; I go further,
I ardently want Religious Teaching
in the School room."

What a subject for reflection! I find the
same avowal, with the same apprehensions,
whenever I meet with a superior mind.
The cloud of incredulity is spreading dark-
ning the serene interior of countless hearts.

Never in my life, did I understand, as I do
 the importance, the immense value, the blessing
 for youth, of a pure religious atmosphere.
 Since more than 40 years, I may truly
 say, this has been my first, my absorbing
 thought & ultimate end, in the foundation
 of Notre Dame & St. Mary's - when my work
 by career is over, I shall have the consolation
 to feel that my efforts & those of my devoted
 associates have been blessed, & that a
 number of young, ^{precious} souls in search of a healthy
 atmosphere for mind & heart, have found
 & actually enjoy all they looked for, in
 these faithful firm Institutions. What
 a delightful oasis they will ^{soon} appear to
 the weary traveller thro' the burning sand
 of the desert! — From the beginning I was
 satisfied to be buried in the foundations of
 the work. My Successors will see better than
 I can, we could anticipate for ourselves a
 your dear Scholastic, already so deserving

of public esteem, with growing energy
 in real importance, & contribute its
 share towards developing the shi-
 ning & glorious future of Notre Dame
 St. Mary's -

May Heaven continue to bless
 abundantly your fruitful labors
 as Editors of a Periodical Sheet
 which, I trust, will long remain
 second to none in the country

Yours devotedly

F. P. ...

Schulstic
