

In the declaration of the English Catholic hierarchy in 1914, we find the following:— 'Catholic parents cannot in conscience accept or approve for their children a system of education in which secular instruction is wholly divorced from education in their religion.'

2. *Religion must be the very soul of education; it must not be regarded as an adjunct to secular instruction, or an 'extra' in the curriculum of the school.*

Systems of education in which religion is ignored or relegated to an inferior place originate in the minds of men to whom this world is all-in-all, who live with little or no regard to the future life, and to whom the things of eternity are but a dream. Far different is the view taken by the Catholic Church. The souls of men and their eternal destiny are ever before her eyes. While worldly-minded men exaggerate the importance of the present over the future life, she ever strives to hold a just balance between the things of time and those of eternity. In doing so she is guided by the teachings of the Son of God:— 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? What exchange shall a man give for his soul? Be not solicitous, therefore, saying: What shall we eat and what shall we drink? . . . for after all these things do the heathen seek. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

Hence the Church holds that it is a sad mistake to make it the principal object of education to enable the child to get on in this world, and to pay little or no heed to the soul which must live for ever. While she knows well that ignorance is an evil, she contends that vice is a far greater evil, because it leads men's souls to destruction. If secular knowledge be necessary for a man's happiness in this life, much more necessary to the mind of the Church is a religious education for a man's happiness in the never-ending ages of eternity.

Religion, then, must hold the first place in the school since it is the first and chief duty of every man to work out the salvation of his immortal soul. In the words of Pope Pius IX.: 'Religious instruction should so predominate, and so direct all the other branches of education, that, in comparison with it, they should be looked on as mere accessories.'

'What the Church consistently maintains is, that life here gets its highest value by serving as a preparation for the life to come. The question is not whether one should live now without any regard for the future, or look forward to the future with no concern for the present; but rather how one should profit by the opportunities of this life, in such wise as to secure the other.'

'The problem, then, is one of establishing proportions—i.e., of determining values according to the standard of man's eternal destiny.'

'Where education is defined as "preparation for complete living" (Herbert Spencer), the Christians can take no objection to the words as they stand, but he will insist that no living can be 'complete' which leaves out of consideration the ultimate purpose of life, and hence that no education really 'prepares' which thwarts that purpose, or sets it aside.'

'It is just this completeness—in teaching all men, in harmonising all truths, in elevating all relationships, and in leading the individual soul back to the Creator—that forms the essential characteristic of Christianity as an educational influence.' (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, 'Education'.)

In conformity with these principles, it is the aim of the Church to train up children to be true men and women. This training must begin with the dawn of reason, must grow with the child's growth, and strengthen with its strength. Religion must be the presiding spirit of the school, so as to continually season and imbue the mind with its wholesome influence. Hence it must be taught by word, and by the example of the teacher. The very surroundings—such as the religious symbols on the walls—must have their bearings upon it. Hence the necessity of a 'Catholic Atmosphere' in the school; for just as if the air we

breathe were taken away for a moment we should die, or if it be vitiated we grow pale and pine away; so if a child does not breathe a Catholic atmosphere, it cannot have the rich glow of Catholic health beaming from its soul, and the warm spirit of Catholic faith, and hope, and charity beating in its heart.

Throughout his school life, the child must be more-over trained in the practice of religious exercise, such as prayer, the reception of the Sacraments, etc., so that his religion will become a second nature. It is by these means and by such influences that the child leaves school fully prepared to live the life of a good Catholic and of a good citizen, fully equipped to battle against the dangers and temptations of the world.

Relying on the words of Scripture, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and he will not depart from it in his old age,' the Church hopes that his early training will keep the child faithful to the end to all his duties to God, to his neighbors, and to himself, and thus secure his eternal felicity in the life to come.

5. THE SECULAR SYSTEM UNIVERSALLY CONDEMNED.

The most enlightened men in educational matters the world over, clerical and lay, Catholic and non-Catholic, alike reprobate the secular system of education. Archbishop Spalding of Baltimore writes:— 'Yes, we may not longer deny it: the great defect, the gnawing canker, the blighting curse of our educational system is the absence from it of a wholesome religious instruction. Under it our children are practically reared up more like enlightened pagans, preparing merely for this world, than as instructed Christians, well and thoroughly grounded in their faith, and making their novitiate for heaven. And such being the case, can we wonder that when they grow up and enter upon the busy scenes of life, they accordingly act more like pagans than Christians, and fill the land with crime and iniquity?'

Archbishop McCloskey of New York wrote in 1869: 'I am deeply and painfully convinced that our common schools as now organised and conducted, are gradually undermining Christianity in this much favored land. Home influence and Sunday-school training are all that are left to check the growth of infidelity in the minds of the young, but these are insufficient. Protestant clergymen admit it, and in many places are calling upon the people to establish their own parish schools.'

During a debate on education in the House of Commons in the year 1847, three English statesmen expressed themselves thus:—

Sir Robert Peel: 'I am for a religious education as opposed to a secular education. I do not think that a secular education would be acceptable to the people of this country. I believe as the Noble Lord (John Russell) has said, that such an education is only half an education, but with the important half neglected.'

Lord Mahon: 'The second question was, whether they would have a system of secular education solely, or of secular and religious education combined? For his own part, he considered that if the State should confine itself to secular education, without associating it with religion, it would be doing absolutely worse than nothing.'

Lord Sandon: 'He was glad to hear the admission that religion was an essential part of everything worthy of the name of education. He thought that religion ought to be interwoven with every part of their education.'

M. Guizot, Minister of Public Instruction in France under Louis Philippe, says: 'In order to make popular education truly good and socially useful, it must be fundamentally religious. I do not simply mean by this, that religious instruction should hold its place in popular education, and that the practices of religion should enter into it: for a nation is not religiously educated by such petty and mechanical devices. It is necessary that national education should be given and received in the midst of a religious atmosphere, and that religious impressions and religious observances