

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND LIBERAL EDUCATION

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The natural way for teachers to insure accuracy in transmitting a whole cycle of knowledge is to help their memory by the aid of written documents. This implies literature and literature implies education. Hence, the Providence of God when He wished to give His chosen Jewish people a complete law and liturgy which would prepare them for the perfect Christian revelation which was to come, foreordained that His servant Moses through whom He would transmit His word, should first of all be "instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii, 22). The record which heralded the discovery of the tomb of King Tut-Ankh-Amen at Luxor, during whose dynasty, it is not during whose reign, the Israelites were in Egypt, brings home to us very vividly the culture and the education possessed by the Pharaohs in whose court Moses was brought up. It can be said without hesitation that since the day, the Lord commanded Moses to write the book of the covenant "Exodus xxiv., 4-7", erudition has been required for the teaching of religion.

As the language in which the books of the Old Testament were written, namely Hebrew, became obsolete a few centuries before Christ, the Providence of God provided that they should be translated into that language which was rapidly becoming the universal medium of educated men, namely Greek. It was this Greek language, containing the most beautiful literature and the most wonderful philosophy that the intellect of men had ever conceived, that became the first official language of Christianity. It was in Greek that the Apostles preached to the Gentiles and composed the Books of the New Testament. It was in Greek that the Old Testament was read in the primitive Church. Greek was the first liturgical language even of Rome and to this day at a solemn Papal Mass the gospel is read in Greek as well as in Latin. Greek erudition became from the first, part of the Church's equipment. Greek was the language in which the majority of the important writings of the Fathers of the Church were composed till towards the end of the fourth century and, for seven hundred years after that date, important theological or exegetical works continued to be produced in that language.

While Greek, the language of the Septuagint, of the New Testament and of half of the Fathers, will ever be studied in the Catholic Church, from the third century onwards the language generally used by the Church in the West was the other great language of antiquity, namely Latin. The Greek Septuagint Version of the Old Testament was replaced first by the Old Latin versions, which were translated from it, and then by St. Jerome's Vulgate, translated directly from the Hebrew, and surpassing in accuracy and importance the Septuagint itself. The Greek text of the New Testament ceased in general use to its Latin translation. From the end of the fourth and especially from the end of the fifth century, the greatest Doctors and Theologians of the Church have written in Latin rather than Greek. The Church, except in the dwindling and eventually schismatic Eastern patriarchates, adopted the language of Virgil and Cicero as its official one. Hence it is, that for the last seventeen centuries Latin erudition, except in the Eastern patriarchates, has been required of the priests of the Church. For this reason, the first branch of secular knowledge to have been taken over by the schools of the Church was necessarily the classical languages and literature. From her infancy, the Church has spoken Greek and Latin, and, in circumstances permitted, her biblical scholars, at least, have not been ignorant of Hebrew.

Literature, however, is not the only branch of secular learning required by the Church in teaching mankind revealed religion, nor are her priests the only Christians who need education. St. Augustine, in his treatise on "Christian Doctrine" pointed out that while Hebrew, Greek and Latin are keys to unlock the Scriptures, other branches of secular learning, such as philosophy, history, rhetoric, mathematics and physics are required for their understanding and explanation and for the multifarious needs of Christians. It will aid us in obtaining a clearer idea of the true attitude of the Catholic Church towards secular learning, which even in 427 when St. Augustine wrote this treatise was obtainable very largely only through pagan writings, to cite the very words of this greatest of the Latin Fathers. The following excerpt will suffice:

"Moreover, if those who are called philosophers are to have taught that is true and in harmony with our Faith, we are not only not to shrink from it but to claim it for our own use from those who have unlawful possession of it. For, as the Egyptians had not only the idols and heavy burdens which the people of Israel hated and fled from, but also vessels and ornaments of gold and silver, and garments, which the same people when going out of Egypt appropriated to themselves, designing them for better use,

not doing this on their own authority, but by the command of God, the Egyptians themselves, in their ignorance, providing them with things which they themselves were not making a good use of; in the same way all branches of heathen learning have not only false and superstitious fancies and heavy burdens of unnecessary toil, which every one of us, when going out under the leadership of Christ from the fellowship of the heathen ought to abhor and avoid; but they contain also liberal instruction which is better adapted to the use of the truth, some most excellent precepts of morality, and some truths in regard even to the worship of the one God. Now these are, so to speak, their gold and silver which they did not create themselves, but dug out of the mines of God's Providence, which are everywhere scattered abroad, and which they are perversely and unlawfully prostituting to the worship of devils. These, therefore, the Christian, when he separates himself from the miserable fellowship of these men, ought to take away from them and devote to their proper use in preaching the Gospel. Their garments, also, that is, human institutions such as are adapted to that intercourse with men which is indispensable in this life, we must take and turn to Christian use." 5

St. Augustine does not propose this as a new doctrine but as the traditional rule practised by the leading Latins and innumerable Greeks. 6 As an example of the views of the fourth century Greek Fathers, that galaxy of geniuses which includes an Athanasius, a Basil, the Gregories of Nazianzos and Nyssa and a Chrysostom, all of whom had made their own the whole culture of their age, may be cited the following words from "A Letter to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature" composed by St. Basil:

"Unto the life eternal the Holy Scriptures lead us, which teach us through divine words. But so long as our immaturity forbids our understanding their deep thought, we exercise our spiritual perceptions on profane writings . . . in which we perceive the truth as it were in shadows and mirrors. . . . For just as bees know how to extract honey from flowers, which to men are agreeable only for their fragrance and colour, even so here also those who look for something more than pleasure and enjoyment in such writers may derive profit for their souls. Now, then, altogether after the manner of bees must we use these writings, for the bees do not visit all the flowers without discrimination, nor indeed do they seek to carry away entire thorns upon which they light, but rather, having taken, so much as is adapted to their needs, they let the rest go. So we, if wise, shall take from heathen books whatever befits us and is allied to the truth, and shall pass over the rest. And just as the roses we avoid the thorns, from such writings as these we will gather everything useful, and guard against the noxious. So, from the very beginning, we must examine each of their teachings, to harmonize it with our ultimate purpose, according to the Doric proverb, 'testing each stone by the measuring line'.

The greatest Christian educator of the fifth century was Origen. He described the goal of education in his letter to his pupil St. Gregory. Seeking Christian doctrine as the end, one should employ the whole circle of the sciences, with philosophy at their head, as a prelude and a help. Even as philosophers rightly claim that geometry, music, grammar, rhetoric and astronomy are ancillary to philosophy, so likewise we affirm that philosophy is ancillary to Christianity. This method was prefigured in the divine command given the Israelites to strip the Egyptians of the riches which they abused, that they, the Israelites, might by the wisdom of God utilize them for divine service. Origen concludes by the salutary warning that more use the riches of the Egyptians to make golden calves than to make vessels of the tabernacle; and even as Jeroboam returned from Egypt to divide Israel, many utilize Greek thought to beset heretical opinions. The true method outlined by Origen, he himself practised. First in Alexandria and afterwards in Caesarea, he gave his pupils a Christian liberal education in theology, Scripture, philosophy, literature, history, mathematics and natural science. St. Gregory the Thaumaturge, in a farewell oration to his master composed in the year 234 or 239, described eulogistically the all round excellence of his educational programme and method, and Pope Leo XIII., without condoning Origen's incidental errors, repeated in our own day this praise given him by St. Gregory of Neocaesarea, 6b

Finally, to the words of St. Augustine as representing the fifth century, and of St. Basil as repre-

sented the fourth, and of Origen as representing the third, may be added those of Clement of Alexandria as representing the second century. Head of the first school of universal learning established by Christians—the Catechetical School of Alexandria—he summed up the views of the great martyrs and apologists of his age. In the Stromata he makes frequent references to the position of Christians towards secular knowledge. Philosophy, he teaches, is useful for religion and necessary for theology. Making his own a phrase of Philo, the Jew, he says that even as the liberal arts, or encyclopedic branches of learning as they are called, lead to philosophy, so philosophy leads to wisdom—that is, to religious knowledge. "I call him truly learned," he concludes, "who brings everything to bear upon the faith; so that from geometry and music and grammar and philosophy itself, culling what is useful, he guards the faith from assault." 7 How profoundly convinced were the Fathers that the Church had the right to embody in her schools whatever was true and noble in pagan philosophy, science and literature is evident from the fact, which is as impressive as a parable, that Heraclitus, as we learn from a letter of his fellow pupil Origen preserved by Eusebius, 8 wore his philosopher's pallium even when bishop of Alexandria. Times have changed; Alexandria long since fell before the Arab and her younger sister, Constantinople, fell victim to the Turk, but throughout the centuries the one and the same perpetual home of what was wholesome in Greek philosophy and classical literature has ever been the Catholic Church, the Teacher of all nations.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Since the Church is interested in secular knowledge in order to show its relation to Uncreated Truth, in order to employ it for the propagation and defence of the gospel, and in order that her children may acquire without injury or unnecessary danger to their faith the education they require for their mundane duties, she needs schools. On account of the Church's essential duty of teaching the doctrine of Christ she has necessarily the right to establish schools of theology for her priests and to control the religious instruction of Catholics in all types of schools. Moreover, if the schools available, whether elementary, secondary or higher, are not imbued with a Catholic spirit, the Church considers it her duty, for the sake of her priests and laity alike, to establish Catholic schools covering the whole field of secular education. Just as the Church was established for the salvation of souls not of bodies, and yet, in her great love of men for Christ's sake, has covered the earth with her hospitals, so also, the Church, though not directly interested in secular knowledge, has out of her great love of God's truth, filled the earth with her schools, colleges and universities. The Church not merely warns parents that they must provide their children, as well as they can, with a proper religious, moral, physical and civil education, but she helps them to fulfil this obligation. The Church has at all times claimed and exercised the power of establishing any form of school a Christian may need. She obtained this authority from Him Who alone could say: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth, g., therefore, and teach ye all nations." No human being, no State nor Empire, can destroy or lessen this divinely given authority of the Catholic Church to establish Catholic schools.

Canon 1375 of the Code of Canon Law reads: "The Church has the right to establish not merely primary but also secondary and higher schools in any branch of learning." In the same XXII. Title of this Third Book of the Code of Canon Law, we find that the Church commands that in every Catholic school religious instruction be given; that in secondary and higher schools the religious instruction be in the charge of priests noted for their zeal and learning; that when such primary or secondary schools are lacking they should be established; that this duty rests in a special manner on the bishop; that the faithful must not omit to lend a helping hand towards the erection and support of such schools; that the canonical erection of Catholic Universities is reserved to the Holy See; and that if the State Universities are not Catholic in doctrine and spirit, it is very desirable that a Catholic University be established in every nation and region. Finally, according to Canon 1374, Catholic children must not attend non-Catholic schools and it is for the Bishop of the diocese alone to determine, in conformity with the instructions of the Holy See, in what circumstances and with what safeguards against the danger of perversion, the frequentation of such schools may be tolerated. As a matter of fact, where Catholic primary and secondary schools exist, there is no justification in sending Catholic children to non-Catholic schools which prepare their pupils for the same examinations but which do not give them the Catholic moral and religious training which is the most important part of education.

How cruel are those foolish worldly parents who in the hope of a mess of pottage deprive their child of his birthright—a Catholic education. Such a parent will be fortunate indeed if his own child will rise on the day of general judgment not to condemn him. On the other hand, where no Catholic schools are available to impart the education required, permission will be granted by the Bishop to attend an undenominational day school with the necessary safeguards for the faith and with provisions for Catholic religious instruction elsewhere.

As regards the frequentation of non-Catholic universities the Code of Canon Law contains no explicit legislation, but the Church expressed her mind in the case of Oxford and Cambridge in 1895. 9 Anxious as she is that her children for their own great advantage should receive their University education at the hands of Catholic teachers, who alone can give them Catholic history, philosophy and apologetics, she permits Catholic youth, who have acquired during the period of their primary and secondary education a thorough and exact knowledge of their religion and who are of a sufficiently solid and formed character to fit them for university life, to frequent the non-Catholic English universities, provided they are prepared to avail themselves of such instruction, to be offered to them during their University course, as shall equip them with such further suitable and adequate Catholic training and knowledge as may be deemed re-quirable. One may add that the duty of providing this supplementary instruction falls upon the bishop of the place.

One reason why the Church has no ban on Catholic youths attending English secular universities though she has a ban on Catholic children frequenting non-Catholic primary and secondary schools is lucidly stated by Cardinal Bourne in his this year's Lenten Pastoral. The Cardinal shows how the rule as regards university studies is not as alleged as a justification for sending Catholic children to non-Catholic secondary schools, even when such a school enjoys the social prestige of an Eton. "Clearly the religious needs of the young adolescent," he writes, "are far different from those of the young men of eighteen or nineteen who surely by that time ought to know their religion and be able to hold their own in religious principle and conviction. A school-boy is still *sub tutela parentum*. His parents are still largely responsible for his education and upbringing, and they cannot legitimately pass on that obligation to one who does not share their religious faith. A non-Catholic schoolmaster cannot legitimately or effectively stand in *loco parentis* to a Catholic boy. The young man, on the other hand, who goes up to the university or who is preparing for a professional career in some other way, is no longer directly dependent on the responsibility of his parents. He must begin to accept responsibility for, and fully to possess and guard, his own conscience and soul. There is no parity, there is no real analogy between the two cases."

In addition to this reason mentioned by the Cardinal, there is another reason why the Church does not insist peremptorily and absolutely on Catholic university students attending Catholic universities. In many countries or regions no Catholic University exists. This is the case of the Church in the first universities both in Europe and in America were founded by Catholics. To this day, three-quarters of the leading universities of Europe are Catholic foundations. But the confiscations and expulsions and secularizations which followed in the wake of the Protestant Revolution and the French Revolution took from the Church and influence of the Church every one of her ancient universities. Not merely was the Catholic Church, the Mother of Universities, robbed of all her seats of secular learning, but with a refinement of tyranny that is truly Jacobin, great nations like France and Germany that owed their whole Christian civilization to the Catholic Church, assumed a State monopoly of university education. The refusal to allow the establishment of a single free Catholic University. At most, such a Catholic University is recognized only as an Institute. France went further and in the name of liberty expelled the Catholic religious teachers from the country. Other nations have followed this bad example set them. Soviet Russia has carried this theory of the State's omnipotence of education to its logical conclusion. It is a crime punishable by death to teach religion to anyone under eighteen. We realize better the liberty we enjoy in the British Commonwealth of Free Nations when we consider the history of Continental Europe or of Latin America. Bigotry we have who would destroy our schools, and they have upset more than one Catholic State system, but in the English-speaking world as a whole their power has been on the wane since 1829. If we have not an English-speaking Catholic University in Canada, this is not due to State interference past or present, but solely to the fact that our militant English-speaking Catholics are scattered over half a continent, and in no section are sufficiently massed and wealthy to found at

present a real university. The united hierarchy of Canada considered this question at the Plenary Council of Quebec in 1909, and came to the conclusion that it was scarcely possible at present to supply English-speaking Catholics with Faculties of Law and Medicine in Catholic Universities of their own. 10

It is therefore owing to past confiscations and expulsions, to unjust State interference with her inviolable right to teach, and to the immense cost of establishing and maintaining a real university, that the Catholic Church finds herself unable today to supply her children with a sufficient number of Catholic universities. What an advantage it would be not merely to the Church, but to humanity, if every Catholic nation and region had its own! How much more readiness and progress then would be the world, if during the past four centuries malicious or misguided men had not deprived the Church of her universities and fettered the activities of her religious teachers! Throughout the world the enemies of the Church are impeding the progress of humanity by hampering Catholic schools. Meanwhile, the Church, disarmed by opposition that was foretold by her Divine Founder, assisted by His power and guided by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, is ready to utilize imperfect educational means, when necessary, in this imperfect world in which she finds herself. Where any real civil liberty exists, she provides Catholic influences and aids, to remedy, as far as the Catholic students who attend these institutions are concerned, the shortcomings and errors of secular universities. Experience has shown that the best remedy is to found where possible in the very, secular university frequented by Catholic students a Catholic Faculty or College. Outstanding examples of this policy abroad are the Dominican Faculty of Theology in the State University at Freiburg in Switzerland, the Jesuit Faculty of Theology in the State University of Innsbruck in Austria and the Catholic Faculties of Theology in Bonn, Munich, Wurzburg, Muenster, Freiburg in Baden, Breslau. Nearer home, in Toronto, St. Michael's College, under the Basilian Congregation, is a constitutional portion of our provincial university. Before I mention a case even nearer to Toronto, let me say a word concerning the attitude of the Church towards the State programme of studies.

ATTITUDE OF CHURCH TOWARDS STATE PROGRAMME OF STUDIES

While the Catholic Church jealously guards the faith of her children, as it is more valuable to them than to gain the whole world, she is in no way antagonistic to the State. In the words of Pope Leo XIII., both Church and State are each in its own sphere sovereign. 10b In mixed matters preference must be given to the eternal over the temporal. The State has its own clearly defined rights and duties in education, even as have parents. Except in the moral and religious education of her children, the Church claims no exclusive rights. As Cardinal Cavignani writes, in his handbook of ecclesiastical public law: "No one has ever denied parents the right of educating their children and the State the right of establishing schools." 11 There are three essential societies founded by God to work harmoniously in conducting man to the goal of his creation: the domestic, the civil and the religious. With what care the Church has acknowledged the just rights of the State and protected the natural rights of parents may be seen from Cardinal Cavignani's lucid exposition of the reciprocal rights and duties of Church, State and family in his text-book just mentioned. The Roman Catholic Separate Schools of the Province of Ontario are an historic example of how the Church has co-operated with the State in the establishment of a system of schools which is at once Catholic and governmental. No one, in Church or State, would claim that this system is incapable of further growth and progress, and no patriotic citizen should in any way impede or imperil the natural development of the Separate School System. It is, however, not merely in Catholic State Schools of this nature that the Church is ready, in secular subjects, to accept a reasonable government curriculum and examination. Even in her own privately owned schools and, what is even more remarkable, even in those clerical seminaries over which she has exclusive control, the Church, when possible, encourages the adoption of the State system of secular studies and advises her educators to prepare their pupils for the State examinations. A striking instance of this was the Decree of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars for the reorganization of the studies of the students for the priesthood in Italy, a decree approved by Pope Pius X., May 5, 1907. 12 This decree states that the preparatory seminaries, that is, the secondary schools for candidates for the priesthood, will follow, with whatever modifications may be necessary, the programme of

studies in force in the State Ginnasio, that is, Gymnasium or High School, and in the Liceo, that is, Lyceum, or Upper High School. The former of these has a five year course and the latter a three year course. No one will be admitted to the Ginnasio who has not completed his elementary education and passed the necessary examination. No one will be admitted into the Liceo who did not pass the final examination in the Ginnasio, and no one will be admitted into the Seminary of Theology, for which a five year course is proposed, and a four demanded, who did not complete his course in the Liceo. In the Liceo the students are to be prepared for the State Licentiate. This State programme of studies is to be followed, the decree states, not because it is perfect, but principally for the following reasons:

First of all, because the programme of State studies represents the type of culture which is considered necessary for our present day society and the clerics or others who do not possess these qualifications are less esteemed by the public. Secondly, because it is impossible for all the students to know now with certainty that they wish to choose the ecclesiastical state, and therefore it is better so to organize their studies that they may obtain legally recognized State degrees and consequently be freer in the choice of their state of life. Should they be called to the priesthood, the decree adds, such degrees instead of handicapping them will be of great benefit to them. Moreover, the studies of the Liceo and here it may be said that they correspond roughly to the first three years of the Faculty of Arts in a Canadian University, as they have been preceded by a five year high school or Gymnasium course) these studies of the Liceo, we read in the decree, do not add to the studies which should form the programme of a Clerical Seminary of Philosophy, except this, that they give a deeper knowledge of literature and history, studies very necessary also to ecclesiastical students, that they may be "instructed for every good work." On the other hand, as the three year course of philosophy, prescribed by the government programme, in the Liceo is insufficient, it will be supplemented either by a fourth year of philosophy in the Seminary of Theology or by additional classes in the Liceo. In this way Pope Pius X. provides that all the advantages of the State educational system and of modern culture are absorbed into a thoroughly Catholic education for the clerics of Italy.

That these principles are true in Ontario as well as in Italy is evident, and surely no one will be found who will attempt to be more Catholic than the Pope and deny their application. That our Catholic colleges, convents and high schools in Ontario should fulfil the duty that we owe the Catholic public and prepare pupils for the Ontario Matriculation and Departmental Examinations is no longer questionable. In those few places where it is not done Catholic students are placed in the painful predicament of either obtaining these useful or necessary qualifications in a non-Catholic school or of foregoing them altogether. As regards university education, as has been already remarked, since the million English-speaking Catholics of Canada are nowhere grouped in a solid mass but are everywhere scattered, as a minority, over a country nigh four thousand miles wide, it is not possible at present to establish a chain of Catholic universities which will eventually place God in this land. Meanwhile it rests with each individual bishop to solve, with the concurrence of the Holy See, the higher educational problem of his diocese in such a manner as local conditions may require to enable his diocesan at this present moment to obtain the advantages of university education and of thoroughly Catholic intellectual culture.

It was with all these principles before his eyes, that Michael Francis Fallon, Bishop of London, after having explored all the educational possibilities of the province, and in particular the feasibility of founding a Catholic University, decided on the policy of establishing a Men's Catholic Arts College and a Women's Catholic Arts College in London in the University of Western Ontario. In carrying out this policy, the Bishop of London and the Catholic Colleges concerned, as I am authoritatively informed, could not have received more cordial co-operation than that which they obtained from the Board of Governors and Senate of the University of Western Ontario. A Catholic Women's Arts College was founded in London at once. 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