

# GENERAL INTENTION FOR MAY

## RELIGION IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

The title of this article limits our consideration of the school question to religion. We mean by proposing a subject of prayer for our associates and for the general reader that religion should have its rights respected in public education. In order to answer this question properly we must distinguish between the right doctrine and the wrong practice.

From the Christian and Catholic point of view the education of children belongs to the family. Parents have a right to educate their children directly by doing the teaching themselves or indirectly by teachers whom they themselves choose. Strictly speaking, the State has no right to teach, because it has no special competence in the sphere of knowledge. Its province being the ensuring of good order and the fostering of the people's welfare, it ought to keep a watchful eye on the suitable spread of the religious instruction. This duty implies the right to help and support private initiative, and when there is need, to make up for its deficiencies. But whatever be the teacher's intellectual ability and experience, he has a right to teach only what is according to truth and morality. Error and evil have, of themselves, no rights.

Moreover, the Catholic Church has received from her Divine Founder the mission to teach. This mission gives her complete independence for the diffusion of truth and of religious doctrine, and it also bestows on her an indirect right to impart secular knowledge, so far as it is necessary for the proper preparation to the teaching of religion. The Church holds that the end to be aimed at in the upbringing of a baptized child is not merely to form a man by the natural development of his bodily organs and of the faculties of the soul, but likewise and above all to form a Christian by inculcating strong religious convictions and by helping him to acquire solid habits of virtue. The formation of the Christian being the proper end, the training of the man, not only should the man be so trained in a Christian atmosphere that the absence of that atmosphere should never be tolerated, but care should also be taken that the Christian formation be not allowed to become a matter of secondary importance.

This ideal condition is happily realized in truly Catholic schools, encouraged and supported by the State. An approach to this condition obtains when Catholic schools are recognized by the State and receive government grants, but are not on a footing of perfect equality with Public schools. A remote approximation to this second condition is made when Catholic schools though grudgingly recognized by the State, are forced to use non-Catholic text-books and are hampered by vexatious restrictions. Unfortunately there are many countries where the Catholic point of view is not only ignored but constantly violated by false principles and unjust laws. There we find a State educational system, established not for the legitimate purpose of making up for the shortcomings of private initiative, but with the explicitly avowed object of claiming for the State the exclusive right to supplant families and individuals and to impose on all Catholics anti-Catholic doctrines and anti-Catholic teachers. This pretension, unjustifiable though it is in point of principle, suggests, in practice, a serious difficulty. In such countries religious and moral unity does not exist. If the State insists on assuming educational powers, it must necessarily take into account the variety of religious and philosophic principles that part asunder various groups of individuals and families. Doubtless, error has no rights, but the erring have, besides how can the modern State, which professes to acknowledge no absolute truth, distinguish the true from the false? It is logically driven to tolerate in its schools all such doctrines as are not a menace to the social order, and to respect all kinds of convictions. But by the very force of the same logic, for a still stronger reason driven to tolerate the world-wide unity of Catholic doctrine, it should respect the faith of Catholics and concede to the children of the Church full liberty to receive a Catholic education. We as Catholics should claim this as a minimum, as a right of our God-given rights, for our brethren thus persecuted in countries not favored, as our own is, by the blessing of educational freedom.

Compared to this tyrannical interference of the State, the condition of our brethren in some parts of Canada and in all the United States, where Catholics are allowed to build and conduct their schools at their own expense, unaided by the State, is vastly better, since it leaves them perfectly free to choose their own teachers and text-books and to permeate these schools with a Catholic atmosphere. True, the sacrifices which the refusal of State aid entails upon faithful Catholics are very great; but the advantage of being left to their own devices is so much greater that many far-seeing American Catholics deprecate any agitation for State aid lest it might, if granted, carry in its train serious fetters on their Catholic liberty. There is, however, in this condition of voluntary consent to double taxes, a constant temptation for negligent Catholics to take advantage of the Public schools which all over the Catholics who shun them, must support; and of course the entire system is, on the part of the State, an outrage on equity.

Whatever may be the pretensions of the State in matters of education, its encroachments on the liberty of individuals and the franchises of the Church, no one seriously challenges the right of parents to direct the education of their children. Even where this right is practically entirely eliminated and the exercise thereof deadened, politicians never fail to admit it and even to make capital out of it. In fact, nothing is more evident than the preponderance of the family over the State in educational rights. Because the child belongs to his father and mother whose life is prolonged and completed in his, his physical, intellectual and moral education depends on them. The outside teacher is but the delegate of the parents and all the authority he has is derived from them. The obvious consequence is that, if the parents are Christians and want their children to be Christian, the teacher must abide by their will. Should he refuse to do so, he would be recreant to duty and would betray the trust reposed in him. As this breach of trust involves eternal issues, it is a much graver delinquency than financial dishonesty.

None but those amiable and short-sighted people who live in a fool's paradise can fail to foresee that organized and speciously veiled attacks on the freedom of Catholic education, and in particular on the religious feature of public education in the more favored regions of this Canada of ours, will be made sooner or later by the secret emissaries of that world embracing Masonic conspiracy which, having achieved its most notable conquests in France, is now dexterously laying its snares in our country. French Catholics are now, thank God, fully alive to the political skill that had been secretly undermining their educational system many years before they detected its crafty work, and we have every reason to hope that they were the first to break this deep-laid scheme of soul-tranny, so they will also be the first to shake off the hateful yoke and become once more freemen in Christ.

Meanwhile, by way of an object-lesson, it will be well to consider the practical working of State education in France. The history of Europe, America and Japan for the last hundred years shows how French revolutionary and anti-Christian ideas gradually make their way round the world. Nothing, therefore, can be more instructive than a study of the poisonous product in the central workshop.

After what we have already said in this article, we need hardly emphasize the obvious truth, that the educational scheme, operating in France since 1831, which imposes on all pupils in primary State schools a godless ethical training, is diametrically opposed to parental rights. To parents and to the State does it belong to decide in what religion or in what principles children shall be brought up. By monopolizing the teaching of morality, the French Government ousts parents from the rightful exercise of their authority and sets up in their place a paid official. Thus the noble function of the teacher is perverted. He who ought to be a cordial helpmate of the family is turned into an adversary of parental authority, a usurper of parental rights, a rank outsider tyrannically intruded by the State into the family to sow discord between parents and children. A more flagrant and odious usurpation could hardly be imagined.

Government supporters plead in defence that official education does not meddle with the religious and moral training of the child; it leaves that entirely in the family's hands. This is a transparent fallacy. Unconsciously but inevitably every teacher exerts an influence on the conduct and morals of his pupils. A Catholic teacher in a non-Catholic school may, to a great extent, counteract the godless tendencies of the Papal Curia, irrespective of persons. During the last few years the condition of affairs has been such that it must appear to every loyal son of Mother Church that he is living in the time of the Protestant Reformation. Most of the purpose of railing against the Church and her institutions, of casting ridicule upon her and seducing their readers away from Rome, is at the present time being served by the influence of the Evangelical Union, by an association of evangelizers, by strolling preachers with a full purse, by the press and multiplied leaflets. These factors conjointly have led to happen whenever the Church movement has been called into being. The Protestant theologians are in the main the spiritual instigators of this strife, the many Protestant professors of other branches of science and many Protestant laymen, be it said to their credit, are maintaining an attitude of unmistakable aloofness.

I say in the main the Protestant theologians are the spiritual instigators, for they began the fight, while not infrequently Catholics were drawn into the fray and were made the luckless scapegoats. Nevertheless the aforesaid Protestants are the audacity to lay the blame of the whole affair at the feet of the Catholics, and to charge them with having disturbed religious peace. It is always the same old story. Even Luther when he was blamed by those dreamers, Carlstadt, Zwingli and Oekolampadius for the disagreement in the Lutheran camp touching the doctrine of Communion, lamented: "It is with us as with the lamb which went to drink with the lion; he himself stood at the stream and turned the water. The lion replied: 'How is this possible, since you are above me and are drinking from the stream before me?' The lamb replied: 'I am not drinking the water, I am only turning it.'"

To evade this charge of trampling on parental rights some contemporary sophists have excoqueted what they call "the child's right." They say: "In order to protect the liberty of the child we avoid imposing on him any positive religion. Later on, he will freely choose the religion he then prefers." Before attempting to prove the reasonableness of this pretended impartiality it would be necessary to prove the truth of the implied proposition that religious beliefs manacle and shackle the soul. We maintain as a first principle that what manacles is truth, and that the direct bondage to slavery to error and sin. All the champions of the neutral school, if they pooled their collective intellects, would be hard put to disprove our first principle. But, supposing they did succeed in that arduous task, they would have to go further and prove that the State has the right to interfere in matters of conscience and to prescribe religious indifference until the pupil has attained his majority. Of this the proof is not forthcoming. Thus the theory of a child's right as opposed to parental rights falls to the ground. This, however, does not imply that children have no rights. Even the pagan Juvenal insists on the "great reverence due to the child." If university professors think that from their lofty pedestals they can safely sneer at

the doctrines of the Church, as not a few of that kind of gentry have done in Canada, the most elementary respect for youth should keep them from doing so in the lecture-room before young men and women, still more before Catholics. The fact that such things happen, not merely in primary schools taught by half-baked teachers from the back concessions, but especially in non-Catholic colleges and universities that are expected to cherish a saving sense of their fallibility, in a country where Christianity is honored and integral Catholicism is the creed of more than every third man you meet, shows how bitter must be the lot of Catholic children in the public schools of France, a country where there no longer exists a healthy public opinion accepting Christianity as an axiom, and where the Government is in the hands of unscrupulous men, sworn to root out Christianity.

For these persecuted children of France, that they may ultimately overcome their tyrants, and for our own Canadian children, that the fate of their little French brethren may never be theirs, let our prayers be offered up in this month of May consecrated to the Blessed Mother in whose home at Nazareth was born by her the most perfectly educated God-man, Jesus Christ.

LEWIS DRENNON, S. J.

## OPENING WORDS OF A MONUMENTAL WORK

FATHER REINHART, O. P., SCHOLARLY TRANSLATOR OF FATHER BENIGNUS' "LUTHER AND LUTHERANISM," CONTRIBUTES TO ROSARY MAGAZINE "FOREWORD" OF FORTHCOMING BOOK

The following article is the opening word of Father Benignus' masterpiece of his fruitful life, in the masterly and penetrating "Luther and Lutheranism." He appears as the incomparable glorious champion of Truth and of Holy Mother Church that he was; he appears armed from top to toe, but he wears his vizor up and bears his trusty sword unsheathed such a foe as Luther ever met before nor since.—The Translator.

The genesis of this work, of which the first volume is hereby published, has been given in the introduction, needs, therefore, no further consideration.

My preparation for the work fell into a time in which, on the part of Protestant theologians and pastors, a bitter warfare against the Catholic Church had been inaugurated. I almost believed myself to have been relegated to that period in which Luther stigmatizes the Pope as the worst of scoundrels, worse than Attila, Antiochus, or any other tyrant; worse even than Judas Iscariot, a time in which the same Luther brought every charge of crime and outrage against any and all members of the Papal Curia, irrespective of persons. During the last few years the condition of affairs has been such that it must appear to every loyal son of Mother Church that he is living in the time of the Protestant Reformation. Most of the purpose of railing against the Church and her institutions, of casting ridicule upon her and seducing their readers away from Rome, is at the present time being served by the influence of the Evangelical Union, by an association of evangelizers, by strolling preachers with a full purse, by the press and multiplied leaflets. These factors conjointly have led to happen whenever the Church movement has been called into being. The Protestant theologians are in the main the spiritual instigators of this strife, the many Protestant professors of other branches of science and many Protestant laymen, be it said to their credit, are maintaining an attitude of unmistakable aloofness.

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And so it happened that in these efforts to exterminate existing evils other errors sprang into being. We shall hear Luther repeatedly deliver himself of this opinion, that thing should not be destroyed because it is not free from abuses. Otherwise it would become necessary to kill all the women and throw out all the wine. Therefore, Westcott's contemporary of Luther, wrote in 1838: "The unfortunate ones fail to see that if the Pope should commit an act that is wrong, this does not impugn the sacraments, the faith or established usage." He also says: "The same holds of the many lives of certain cardinals, Bishops, vicars and monks. If these be guilty of irregularities, it does not justify any Protestant, nor even Luther himself, to utter a syllable against them. Much less to abuse, therefore, the whole Church."

By destroying the unity of the Church they give the lie in the throat to Christ, as well as to St. Paul, because themselves the "significators" of the Kingdom of God, turn out the decession of the saints. "Error and suspicion are rampant everywhere."

Luther himself was at one time of this opinion, for as far as we can trace him back as I have repeated in the introduction of this work, he manifests a spirit of hostility to the abuses in the Church, and to the self-righteousness, singularity and superstition in religious orders, and as well as the rivalry existing between some of these orders. But until 1519 it did not occur to him that he should, therefore, destroy the

an emancipation of enormous and measureless significance.

The manifestation of this temper, so hostile and unpleasant, induced me to widen the scope and purpose of my original plan, and to subject not only Luther but occasionally also the most influential Protestant theologians to a searching criticism. I have never been able to go about on tiptoe; I have never been taught this method of locomotion, and I shall not learn it now, for I am too old to learn any new tricks. Besides, it serves no purpose, but is really productive of harm. There need be no misconception on this point. Then too, since the days of my childhood it has been impressed upon me that candor and sincerity must be the guiding principles of my dealings with my fellow men. In the past thirty years I have in divers fields disputed many a palm, and I believe I may say that my opponents have never been able to do this. Where I stand, and that they get invariably the expression of my unqualified sincerity without the slightest dissimulation or pretense. I take this to be a thing as I call it a lie; if I discover rascality, deceit or dishonesty anywhere, I call it precisely by those names. If I am confronted by ignorance I support it not by anything else, and I do so in every point.

I fail to see why Luther should be accorded a different method of treatment. If any one tells me that this is reviling Luther, I will make the reply that in this entire work I have written nothing about Luther which is not undeniably authenticated, or which does not rest upon his own utterances, of conduct, and flow therefrom with an iron and inevitable logic. If thereby he appears in a bad light, so be it. He is not mine, but Luther's. He has reviled and disgraced himself. And if indeed the effort should be made—as indeed it has—to prove that Luther was the founder of a new religion, he is thereby subjected to a snuff which which could be none greater. The Christian religion was established fifteen hundred years before Luther. Jesus Christ, the Founder of this religion, promised to build his Church upon a rock, and in fifteen hundred years. 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