



RELIGION IN SCHOOLS.

The Pope Writes to the Hierarchy of Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

Three Vital Rules: Religious Teaching, Religious Atmosphere, Religious Teachers.

Anent the Holy Father's last encyclical to the Archbishops and Bishops of the German-speaking countries, dated August 1st 1897 and intended to commemorate the tercentenary of Blessed Peter Canisius, the Montreal Star says:

The final decision of His Holiness the Pope regarding Manitoba schools is being anxiously awaited, as a result of the report made by Mgr. Merry del Val and of the audience granted the Prime Minister by Leo. XIII. The following extract from an encyclical just issued, addressed to the episcopacy of Austria, Germany and Switzerland regarding schools and the education of the young, will be read with interest as giving an insight into the views of the Sovereign Pontiff on such matters.

The fact that our great non-Catholic contemporary deems this pronouncement extremely significant at the present juncture more than justifies us in printing a rather longer extract than the one given in the Star. We take this passage from the translation prepared especially for the scholarly N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

Beginning with the remark that the age of Canisius resembled our own, the Holy Father says that the holy Jesuit was "after Boniface, the second Apostle of Germany." He and others were supported by the Popes who always fostered education, because knowledge is a great help to religion. This was realized vividly by Peter Canisius, so that "to know one's Canisius" and "to preserve Christian truth" have been synonymous in Catholic German for three centuries.

After showing how religion borrows lustre from learning, the Holy Father proceeds:—

No Barren Knowledge for Catholics.

Since the light which emanates from the arts and sciences reflects so brilliantly on religion, those who have devoted themselves to these studies should employ not only their entire intellectual strength, but all their activity, to the end that the knowledge which they themselves possess may not remain solitary and sterile. Let the learned, therefore, learn how to render their studies fruitful to the profit of the Christian commonwealth, and consecrate their private leisure to the general welfare, so that their knowledge may not remain imperfect, as it were, but enter upon the field of practical work.

Pope Leo Speaks Emphatically on Religious Education.

Now this practical work is in especial evidence in the education of youth, which is a matter of so much importance that it demands the largest share of their energies and care. For this reason, of all others, we strenuously exhort you, venerable brethren, imploring you to watch carefully over the maintenance of the schools in the integrity of the faith, or even, if need be, to restore the faith in them, and to lavish your care as well on the schools founded by past generations as on those more recently established, and not only on children's schools, but on those called secondary or academic. As to the other Catholics of your country, they should, even at the cost of the greatest efforts, see that in the instruction of youth the rights of parents, as well the rights of the Church, be restored and upheld.

The principal rules to be observed in this matter are as follows:

Catholics Must Have Their Own Schools.

In the first place Catholics are not, especially for children, to adopt mixed schools, but should have their own schools, and should select for them excellent and well approved teachers. Very perilous is the education in which religion is either vitiated or non-existent, and we see that in schools known as mixed either of these alternatives is frequently realized. Men

must not allow themselves to be easily persuaded that instruction and piety can be kept separate with impunity. If it is true that no part of life, public or private, can be exempt from the duty of religion, neither is there any age when this duty can be less ignored than that early period when wisdom is lacking when the mind is fresh, and when the heart is exposed to so many fascinating causes of corruption. To so organize education as to remove from it all points of contact with religion is to corrupt in the soul the very seeds of beauty and virtue, and to bring up, not defenders for the fatherland, but a pest and a scourge for the human race. Suppress God, and what consideration can be alleged to keep young people to their duty or to call them back to it when they have turned aside from the straight path of virtue and are moving downward toward the abysses of vice?

Religion Must Ferment Education.

In the second place, not only should religion be taught to children at certain hours, but all the rest of the instruction should, as it were, exhale a perfume of Christian piety. Where this is not the case, where this sacred aroma does not penetrate and enliven the minds of teachers and pupils, instruction, of whatever kind it may be, will produce but little fruit, but will, on the contrary, be often attended by very grave inconveniences. For almost every science brings with it its own perils which the young cannot escape if their minds and hearts be not held in check by divine restraints. The greatest care must be taken, therefore, that the practice of such essentials as justice and piety be not relegated to a secondary place; that youth, impressed only by what comes under its eyes, should not be allowed to let its powers of virtue grow feeble; that, while teachers are laboriously unfolding before their eyes the elements of some tiresome science, the young should not be permitted to have no care for that true wisdom whose "beginning is the fear of the Lord," and to whose precepts they should conform every moment of their lives. Let, then, the transmission of the various branches of human knowledge remain conjoined with the culture of the soul. Let every degree of instruction, in whatever line it may be, be penetrated and animated by religion, and let religion so rule by its majesty and sweetness as to leave, as it were, in the souls of the young a stimulus to well-doing.

And the Teachers Must Be Good Catholics.

On the other hand, since it has always been the intention of the Church that all kinds of studies should principally subserve the religious formation of youth, it is necessary not only that this branch of instruction should have its place and that this place should be the principal one, but, further, that nobody should exercise such important functions without having been judged fitted therefor by the judgment of the Church and confirmed in their office by religious authority.

The Good Fruit of Catholic Education.

But it is not only in the instruction of childhood that religion claims its rights. Time was when the management of every university, and especially that of Paris, was so intent on subordinating all kinds of instruction to theological science that no one was judged worthy of the highest scientific titles unless he had obtained a degree in theology. Leo X., the restorer of the Augustan era, and after him the other Pontiffs, our predecessors, were determined that the Italian Athenaeum and the other educational establishments, known as universities, at a time when impious wars were being let loose on the Church, should become, as it were, stout citadels where youth should be educated under the conduct and inspiration of Christian wisdom. This system of study, which accorded the first place to God and sacred things, has produced no meagre fruit. It insured, at least, that the young thus brought up remained more faithful to their duties.

The Holy Father Condemns Dissension.

These happy results will be renewed among you if you devote all your efforts to seeing that in the schools known as secondary, in gymnasiums, lyceums and

academies, the rights of religion be respected. May your efforts never encounter that obstacle which renders vain the best intentions and useless all exertions—dissension in policy and want of harmony in action. What can the divided forces of the well-meaning effect against the assault of their united enemies? Of what avail is the merit of individuals if there be no common line of conduct? Wherefore, we earnestly exhort you to put aside all untimely controversy and all contention of parties by which division in men's minds is so easily effected, so that all the faithful may have but one voice in defense of the Church, so that all may concentrate their strength to direct it toward one sole end and all bring to the work the same good will, "careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. iv., 3.)

Is It Wrong to Attend The Dancing School?

By Eben Bumstead.

We know a superintendent of a Sunday School who has his boy take lessons in dancing. It is well known that multitudes in the churches think the same course to be a wise one. But how many of these Christian parents have any knowledge of the dance as it exists to-day? If they knew but one-tenth of the evil that takes place in and results from the dance halls and even private parlor dances, we feel sure that they would at once take their children from so great a danger.

What can be the object of this Sunday School Superintendent, but that his boy may learn to do as the world does, to mingle more gracefully in its society, to spend his evenings in that which they think is the queen of worldly amusements. If this be his object how can it be reconciled with the admonitions, "Be not conformed to this world"; Romans 12: 2; "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"; 1 John 2: 15; "A friend of the world is the enemy of God"; James 4: 4.

The Bible clearly indicates that there is to be a dividing line between the world and the disciple of Christ. On which side is the dance?

Are the low cut dresses, bare arms and tightly clinging gowns befitting the modesty of one professing to be clothed in Christ's robe of righteousness? Can the giddy music, the overheated room, the early morning hour and the embrace of the opposite sex tend to purity of thought? Is the position assumed in the waltz tolerated in any other place? In a word, is it not all tending to temptation, if not actual sin, and how can a Christian pray "Lead us not into temptation" and then allow his children to go into the most captivating temptation ever invented?

Great as is this evil there seems to be almost no voice to speak out and warn against its bold effrontery. The Dancing School is not only tolerated but it is supported by a large portion of the Church, while in many cases Christian people open their parlors for private dances. I know of an Academy for young ladies, members of whose Board of Directors are among the foremost Congregational ministers of Massachusetts, that allows the girls to have weekly dances among themselves. Though they come from Christian homes, and may have been taught by watchful parents, to look upon dancing as a sin of worldliness, yet in this seminary, which is one of our very best, they have every encouragement and means to learn to dance. This season there was only one student who had the courage to refuse. Another student declined to dance for some time, knowing that her mother, then in heaven, had been opposed to it, but finally she yielded

to the solicitations of the other girls.

In answer to the question so commonly asked, "What harm can there be in parlor and boarding school dancing?" we will give the words of Mr. T. A. Faulkner, ex-dancing master, ex-champion dancer and ex-president of Dancing Masters' Association of the Pacific Coast: "In these places," he says, "are taught the rudiments of an education which may make them graduates of the saloon or the brothel."

"I do not say that it ALWAYS does, but I do say that it OFTEN does."

"I only wish that certain parents who think they are restricting their children to 'parlor dancing at home only,' could have been with me the night of May 30th, 1892, and have seen as I did, their girls, some of them but twelve or fourteen years of age dancing in a public saloon, where so much beer had been spilled on the floor that the women had to hold their dresses up to keep them from getting soiled and wet as they danced."

"This is usually the result of teaching the child to dance and then to restrict it to home dancing. If they once become fascinated with it they must and will, by some means fair or foul, have more of it than their homes afford."

"The safe side is the best side. Keep them from taking the first step to ruin, and they can never take the last."

It is a sad commentary on the dancing school that dancing masters find it necessary to close their schools for a season, lest the young ladies who have been ruined bring the school into disgrace, as is shown by Mr. Faulkner in the following incident: "I met on the train while leaving town one day, a young woman, who, a few months before, had been a member of my select dancing academy. She had been ruined there and was one of the discarded ones when the school was closed for a few weeks, as all dancing schools have to be every little while, to get rid of those girls who have met with a fate similar to hers."

"I entered into conversation with her and found she could no longer endure being shunned and slighted by all her old companions, and was running away from home. I knew that her parents would be heartbroken, and that she, without the protection of a home, would soon sink into utter abandonment, and I tried every persuasion to induce her to return to the home she was leaving. I—who was still teaching the very thing which had been her ruin, now that self-respect and all that life was worth living for, was lost to her forever—I tried to save her from future degradation."

"After I had argued for some time with her she turned fiercely upon me, her once beautiful eyes now filled with a desperation born of despair and said, with a look and tone of reproach which I shall never forget: 'Mr. Faulkner, when you will close your dancing schools and stop this business, which is sending so many girls by swift stages on a straight road to hell, THEN, SIR, and not till then, will I think of reform.'"

The dancing master was stirred by her words. He renounced the business and is to-day a devoted follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. The case of this young woman is not one of a few, but of many. It is the story of three-fourths of the harlots in our cities. Mission workers who have taken statistics among fallen women tell us that seventy-five per cent. ascribe the first cause of their downfall to dancing. Professor La Floris says: "I can safely say that three-fourths of these women (2500 abandoned women in San Francisco) were led to their downfall through the influence of dancing."

A chief of police of New York city has said that "three-fourths of the women and girls who are living lives of immorality, have been led from the path of virtue through the dance."

My only object in writing on the unpopular side of a popular subject is that Christian parents may be aroused to the danger their children are in, if they dance; and that those parents who are debating the question of sending their children to dancing schools, may have a few reasons why it is not a wise thing to do.

A friend told me that his wife took into their home a young girl with an illegitimate child, who one day said to his wife: "Mrs. _____ do not ever allow your daughters to attend a dancing school. WHEN MY FATHER SENT ME TO THE DANCING SCHOOL HE STARTED ME ON THE WAY TO HELL."

IMPORTANT UTTERANCE OF IRELAND'S BISHOPS.

Irish World.

The Catholic bishops of Ireland have issued a very important statement on a question which has been raised by recent mischievous developments in Irish politics. Certain of the factionists, not content with breaking the Irish National party into fragments, have endeavored to do much worse by attempting to establish the doctrine that "political acts are outside the sphere of morals, and that, consequently, they are not subject to the rules of morality or to any control on moral grounds."

This is one of the factionist errors, as the Bishops word it in their pronouncement, and, as so presented, it carries with it, in our judgment, its own condemnation. No man who is a believer in the fundamental principles of the religion of Christian or Jew could for a moment accept the monstrous and preposterous idea that our relations and duties toward God are to be altogether shut out from and ignored within the wide field of politics. Of course, the Irish bishops have no difficulty in showing the absurdity, as well as the irreligion, of such a theory. They point to the obvious fact that there are many questions which, though called political, have a moral and religious aspect, bringing them clearly within the domain of subjects in which the clergy must be closely interested, not merely by right, but by duty. Such, for example, the bishops remark, was the question of the disestablishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland, and are at present the questions of education and legislation for the maintenance of the poor.

Apparently there are persons in Ireland who would exclude the clergy from a voice in the public discussion of such matters—persons who say, as the bishops declare in their statement, "that the clergy have no right to intervene in such questions, where oftentimes the highest interests of religion are at stake; that they ought not to point out to their flocks the line of conscientious duty and call upon them to follow it; that they cannot, and ought not, to advise them in such political matters to choose as their leaders men of high character and sound principles."

This doctrine sought to be inculcated as true patriotic doctrine on the minds of the Irish people by certain men claiming to be good Irishmen, the Catholic bishops condemn as a "great and pernicious error, involving a manifest denial of the teaching authority, of the Church," an authority they add, which was given by Christ "to teach politicians as well as private persons all the truth of the Christian revelation—dogmatic truth and moral truth—and to condemn everything which, judged by that code, is untrue, immoral or unjust."

Of course, the great mass of Catholic Irishmen will recognize in these utterances of their bishops a principle they well understand as inseparable from the faith to which they belong and which, needless to say, they will not abandon, in one jot or tittle, at the bidding of men whom they know to have already gone hopelessly wrong in things far less important than religion. To banish God and the Ten Commandments from politics is an undertaking for which there never was and never will be the ghost of a prospect of success in Catholic Ireland.