

# Roman Catholicism By Lorraine Boettner

## Section Four Chapter XVI The Parochial School



St. Florian Catholic school in the Hegewisch neighborhood of Chicago, the school I went to from kindergarten to 8th grade.

This is the continuation of Dr. Boettner's book, *Roman Catholicism* and the next chapter after [Chapter XV Marriage](#).

### **1. The Roman Church Claims the Right to Supervise All Education**

**Webster's New International Dictionary** defines "parochial" as "(1) of or pertaining to a parish...; (2) confined or limited to a parish; as of parochial interest; hence limited in range or scope; narrow; local; as a parochial mind or point of view. ..."

When we apply this term to a school we mean one created and governed by a church organization. Such a school may be created because the parent body does not consider the existing school system adequate (in most cases because it omits or gives unsatisfactory religious instruction) or because no other school is available. In the United States the motive for parochial schools is clearly the former.

One of the totalitarian claims made by the Roman Catholic Church, as professedly the only true church and the only organization on earth that has a right to speak for God, is the right to control all education, outside as well as inside its membership. Its ideal is that education should be the exclusive monopoly of the priesthood. Repeatedly it has denounced public education, that is, education organized and controlled by a public authority such as a local, state, or national government. Pope Pius IX, in his *Syllabus of Errors*, in 1864, condemned the public school system in these words:

"The direction of public schools in which the youth of Christian states are brought up... neither can nor ought to be assumed by the civil authority alone, or in such a manner that no right shall be recognized on the part of any other authority to interfere in the dispositions of the schools, in the regulation of the studies, in the appointment of degrees, and in the selection and approval of masters. ... It is false that the best conditions of civil society demand that popular schools be open to the children of all classes, or that the generality of public institutions should be free from

all ecclesiastical authority. Catholics cannot approve a system of education for youth apart from the Catholic faith, and disjointed from the authority of the church" (Propositions 45, 47, 48).

In another statement Pope Pius IX declared: "Education outside of the Catholic Church is heresy." But we may well ask, just what has education in the Roman Church done for the masses of Italy, France, Spain, and Latin America? And again we ask: If the direction of the public schools, which are paid for with tax money, should not be in the hands of the community which pays for it, where should it be? Certainly it should not be in the hands of a foreign pontiff of a different faith, nor should it be turned over to a totalitarian church which is under foreign control.

Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical, *On the Education of Youth* (1929), declared:

"In the first place, education belongs pre-eminently to the Church for two supernatural reasons. ... As for the scope of the Church's educative mission, it extends over all people without any limitations, according to Christ's command: 'Teach ye all nations.' Nor is there a power which can oppose or prevent it."

Pope John XXIII, on December 30, 1959, reiterated the papal claim in substantially the same words.

Rev. J. A. Burns, president of Holy Cross College, Washington, D. C., in his book, *The Growth and Development of the Catholic School System in the United States*, says:

"We deny, of course, as Catholics, the right of the civil government to educate, for education is a function of the spiritual society. ... It [the state] may found and endow schools and pay the teachers, but it cannot dictate or interfere with the education or discipline of the schools" (p. 223).

In these statements we have the claim of the Roman Church that it is the only rightful educator in the world. It denies the right of the state even to establish secular schools for its own order. According to this teaching the sole right and duty of the state in this field is to collect taxes for the establishment and maintenance of Roman Catholic schools.

It does not hesitate to claim openly, even in the Protestant and democratic United States, that education is exclusively a function of the Roman Catholic Church—as indeed it also claims that preaching and the administration of the sacraments are functions of the Roman Church only. This claim implies that education should be denied to all those outside the Roman Church. And indeed that is the policy that the Roman Church puts into effect in areas where she is in control—another means by which Rome seeks to maintain her control over the people.

What the Roman Church really wants is a concordat between the Vatican and each nation, such as that under which Italy, Spain, Portugal, and various other nations have been or are governed, through which a large part or

perhaps all of the educational process is turned over to the Roman Church while being paid for by the state. Her aim is to dominate public and private schools to the exclusion of all other churches and religions. The teaching of the Roman Catholic religion in the public schools becomes compulsory, even for Protestant children, as in present day Spain, if the Roman Church has her way. The first step in that process in a country such as ours is to undermine the public schools by making her parochial schools tax supported, while at the same time placing as many Roman Catholics as possible in the public schools as teachers. But such a condition destroys the very foundation of democratic and representative government. Concerning this problem MacGregor says:

"A country such as America cannot expect to come to any reasonable terms with the Roman Catholic hierarchy on the subject of education. The Church is avowedly opposed not only to public schools but also to independent schools and universities that are not under the control of the Roman Catholic Church, to which alone, it is affirmed, belongs the right to teach anything.

"In practice, however, in a country such as the United States, the Church is unable, for obvious reasons, to enforce this principle. So the hierarchy has to content itself with the more practical aim of securing Roman Catholic parochial schools at the public expense."

After saying that the Roman Church thus seeks "to make its own educational system a charge on the American public," he adds:

"Financially it would hardly be better news to the hierarchy if Congress were to pass a bill appropriating money from the Treasury for the payment of mass stipends to all Roman Catholic clergy throughout the country. ...

"It is by means of censorship and boycott, and above all, educational indoctrination at public expense, that it is hoped to transform America into a country that is predominantly Roman Catholic in spirit; that is to say, one in which it would be very imprudent to speak openly against anything uttered by a Roman Catholic bishop, and exceedingly dangerous to speak even privately in favor of anything uttered by anyone who was explicitly under the ban of the Church" (*The Vatican Revolution*, pp. 148-150).

It is important to remember that historically the American system of free, universal public education was exclusively a product of Protestantism. Practically all of the people in colonial America were Protestant. The Puritans of New England contributed most toward developing the ideal that all classes should have equal educational opportunities. Having come to America to secure religious freedom for themselves, it was only natural that they should turn to education as one means of promoting their faith.

Our first college, Harvard, was established in 1636, just 16 years after the landing at Plymouth Rock, and it was intended primarily as a school to train those preparing for the ministry. The first elementary schools were in the homes and churches, usually with the local pastor as the instructor. So keenly was the need felt for grammar schools that in 1647 a legislative act provided that every town having as many as fifty householders should appoint

a teacher and provide for his wages, and that every community having as many as one hundred householders should provide a grammar school.

The next colleges of earliest origin, William and Mary (Episcopal) in 1693, Yale (Puritan) in 1701, Princeton (Presbyterian) in 1746, as also Dartmouth, Brown, Rutgers, and the University of Pennsylvania, were established through church influences during the colonial period, before the Constitution was written and before those generally recognized as the champions of our American way of life were born. Those schools were not the product of government but of the church.

## **2 Parochial Schools Compulsory for Roman Catholics**

The First Plenary Council of Baltimore, in 1853, called upon all bishops to establish parish schools in every church in their dioceses. The Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, in 1866, repeated that call and took steps to make it effective.

Canon Law 1374 denies freedom of choice to Roman Catholic parents in regard to schools, and says that they must send their children to parochial schools under pain of mortal sin unless excused from doing so by the bishop. Canon Law 1381 decrees concerning the school setup:

1. "In all schools the religious training of the young is subject to the authority and inspection of the Catholic Church" [i.e., the priest or bishop].
2. "It is the right and duty of the Bishops to take care that nothing is taught or done against the Faith or sound morals in any school in their territory."
3. "The Bishops have also the right to approve the teachers of religion and the textbooks and further to require that texts be dropped or teachers removed, when the good of religion or morality demands this action."

Thus the curriculum, staff, and operation of the parochial school are under the complete domination of the bishop. Parents have no choice, no rights at all, as regards teachers, texts, or methods of instruction, as over against the bishop, if he chooses to exercise his authority. Nor has any school board or committee any choice in the management of the school except as that choice may be delegated to it by the bishop.

The fact is that the parochial school has been promoted primarily by the priests and bishops as a means of keeping the children of their church separate from Protestant children and from public school influences during their formative years, the better to indoctrinate and control them. If left to themselves most Roman Catholic parents would send their children to the public schools, and many do so in spite of the pressure from the priests. After more than one hundred years of effort by the hierarchy to impose the parochial school system on their people, less than half of their children attend those schools.

In the United States there are some 10,760 parochial grade schools with an enrollment of approximately 4,700,000, and some 2,432 high schools with approximately 900,000 students.<sup>1</sup> The National Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has indicated that the total grade and high school enrollment in all schools is approximately 35,000,000. That means that the parochial schools enroll approximately one out of seven, or about 15 percent. And that of course includes some who are not Roman Catholics. Also there are about 330,000 students enrolled in 278 Roman Catholic colleges and universities. The parochial school enrollment has risen from about 5 percent in 1900 to the present figure, with the primary increase having come since the close of the Second World War in 1945. All of these students, of course, are taught Roman Catholic polity (political, economic, and social) as well as Roman Catholic doctrine. Approximately 90 percent of all parochial and private elementary and high schools in this country are under the control of the Roman Catholic Church. Less than half of those high schools are accredited.

Let it be clearly understood that we do not object to church related schools as such, as they are conducted, for instance, in the Lutheran and some other churches, but only to that form of parochialism that is found in the Roman Catholic Church.

<sup>1</sup> In contrast with developments abroad, Roman Catholic parochial schools in the United States in recent years have declined. According to a report of the National Catholic Educational Association, enrollment in the elementary and secondary schools dropped from 5.6 million in the 1964-65 school year to 4.6 million in 1969-70.

### **3 Parochial School Indoctrination**

In view of the fact that some 5,600,000 Roman Catholic children at the grade and high school level are being trained in the parochial schools, what is the hierarchy teaching these future Americans? It is well known that such schools do not confine their indoctrination to religion. History books are rewritten to present a "Catholic version." Roman Catholic schools do not share a mutual pride and appreciation with the public schools in setting forth the problems and difficulties and progress of the early Colonists, such as the Pilgrims, Puritans, Quakers, etc., practically all of whom were Protestants. Protestant national heroes, such as Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Roger Williams, William Penn, and others are minimized, and comparatively unimportant Roman Catholics are glorified and their deeds presented as accomplishments of Roman Catholicism. The struggles that our forefathers went through and the sacrifices they made to establish freedom of religion, freedom of speech and of the press, the right to vote, etc., are minimized or omitted. What we consider a victory and a great step forward, they consider a defeat and a step backward. We point with pride to the constitutional provision for the separation of church and state; they brand that a mistake and say that this and other nations should have remained under the authority of the pope. A few years ago the government of Mexico by constitutional provision closed all papal sectarian schools in that country, to the end that every boy and girl should be given a true statement of the history of Mexico as taught in the

public schools. Certainly every boy and girl who is to become a good American citizen should be taught a fair and truthful account of American history.

In the parochial schools Roman Catholic indoctrination is included in every subject. History, literature, geography, civics, and science are given a Roman Catholic slant. The whole education of the child is filled with propaganda. That, of course, is the very purpose of such schools, the very reason for going to all of the work and expense of maintaining a dual school system. Their purpose is not so much to educate, but to indoctrinate and train, not to teach Scripture truths and Americanism, but to make loyal Roman Catholics. The children are regimented, and are told what to wear, what to do, and what to think.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the teaching in the parochial schools is done by the nuns. They teach the children to revere and worship the Virgin Mary and to trust in images and rosaries whether they know anything about faith in Christ or not. All nuns are under solemn vows to promote their religion in every course they teach. They work year in and year out without receiving anything more than their board and keep, and without the personal freedom that every American has the right to enjoy. They are kept in abject poverty, while money flows freely to the priests, bishops, and especially to the Vatican in Rome.

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph... was quoted in a concurring opinion by justices Douglas, Black, and Marshall as the Supreme Court of the United States, in two cases, June 28, 1971, held by decisions of 8 to 0 and 8 to 1 that State aid to parochial and private schools was unconstitutional.

As regards the content of the curriculum at the high school and college level, in the textbook, *Christian Principles and National Problems*, by Ostheimer and Delaney, under the imprimatur of Cardinal Spellman, we read:

"The doctrine of the Church... is that the State must profess and teach not any religion, but the one true form of worship founded by Christ and continuing today in the Catholic Church alone" (p. 98).

"The non-Catholic and the non-baptized should be permitted to carry on their own form of worship as long as there would be no danger of scandal or perversion of the faithful. In a country where the majority are Catholics, the practice of Protestantism or paganism by an inconspicuous minority would be neither a source of scandal nor perversion to the adherents of the true faith" (p. 99).

Here we have the threat that freedom of worship will be denied to Protestants if the Roman Church gains the ascendancy. Only as long as the Protestant minority remains small and "inconspicuous" will it be allowed to exist peacefully, and even then it must not seek to carry on evangelistic work among Roman Catholics and others. But just how small and how inconspicuous it would have to be to receive this tolerance is not stated. Presumably that would rest with the individual Roman Catholic leaders. Judging by the active persecution that still is carried on against an inconspicuous minority of Protestants in Spain, it would have to be near the vanishing point. That the rising generation of Roman Catholics should be taught that when their church

reaches an anticipated majority in the United States they are to start oppressing and persecuting other churches is monstrous and diabolical. And yet this is set forth under the imprimatur, and therefore with the approval of, the most prominent American Roman Catholic, Cardinal Spellman.

A similar view is taught in another widely used text, *Living Our Faith*, by Flynn, Loretto, and Simeon, also with Spellman's imprimatur. It says:

"The question of union or separation of Church and State has perplexed men since the Protestant revolt. The ideal situation exists when there is perfect union and accord between Church and State, with each supreme in its own field. ... In a Catholic country, when a dispute arises and settlement is unattainable the rights of the Church should prevail, since it possesses the higher authority" (p. 247).

This book also tells the students that "non-Catholic methods of worshipping must be branded counterfeit"—and the inference is that the state should assist the church in making the brand effective.

A widely used college and seminary text, with the official *nihil obstat* (nothing objectionable) of Arthur J. Scanlan, S.T.D. (Censor Liborum ), and the official Imprimatur of Archbishop (now Cardinal) Francis J. Spellman, says:

"Suppose that the constitutional obstacles to proscription of non-Catholics have been legitimately removed and they themselves have become numerically insignificant: What then would be the proper course of action for a Catholic State? Apparently, the latter State could logically tolerate only such religious activities as were confined to the members of the dissenting group. It could not permit them to carry on general propaganda nor accord their organization certain privileges that had formerly been extended to all religious corporations, for example, exemption from taxation" (p. 320; from *Catholic Principles of Politics*, by John A. Ryan and Francis J. Boland. Copyright 1940 by the National Catholic Welfare Conference. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company).

The general thrust of that book is that the Roman Catholic Church must establish itself as the state church in the United States, that it must be made to prevail and eventually to eliminate all other churches.

Thus the rising generation of Roman Catholics is being indoctrinated with the belief that church-state separation is unwise and un-American in principle, that the Roman Church is the only true church, and that it is the right and privilege of that church to suppress others by force as it has opportunity. And we are even asked to subsidize such teaching with tax money! This same teaching is also being given more or less directly to three million other students in various public schools through this nation that are staffed in part with nuns and brothers.

When these millions of students are being trained in that kind of mental climate, how can we doubt that if and when the opportunity comes they will attempt to put those ideas into practice? The bigoted and shocking teaching

that goes on in schools using such textbooks as the above mentioned is a betrayal of American freedom and democracy. It is treasonable, and it certainly should not be allowed by any group or in any schools in this nation. If such teaching were being given in a set of schools established by the Communists there would be an immediate outcry against it. But when given in Roman Catholic schools it attracts little attention, and indeed some are even willing to assist in promoting it with tax money.

Roman Catholics often pretend to Protestants that their schools for all practical purposes are the same as the public schools except that at certain periods religion is taught. But as we have shown by quotations from their own texts, the facts are quite the contrary. We particularly warn Protestant parents against sending their children to such schools. The training given can have no other effect than to undermine the faith of Protestant children. And for parents who send their children to such schools the time surely will come when they will regret their decision with bitter tears. Many Protestant parents who pay little attention to school affairs have suddenly been amazed to find their children praying to the Virgin, crossing themselves, and attending Roman Catechism classes. And when that stage is reached it may be too late to reclaim them.

The secret of the success achieved by the dictators such as Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin, in leading a majority of their countrymen to accept ideologies that were detrimental even to their own interests, was to concentrate on the training, or the so-called education, of youth. Each sought to control the schools and youth organizations, and both Hitler and Mussolini, although Roman Catholics themselves, had sharp disagreements with the Roman Church concerning that problem. Each of the dictators realized that if he could control the youth of the land, the nation soon would be under his control. The Roman Church had operated on that principle for centuries, and the dictators simply took that method over as a part of their own system.

Some Roman Catholic leaders say that a school in a community is more important than a church. And indeed that is the principle on which the hierarchy is now working in Japan, Korea, Formosa, in Lutheran Sweden and Finland, and in various other places where their people are few in numbers. In various places it is now putting the building of schools ahead of the building of churches. And that policy apparently pays off since it trains a group of followers who in time form the nucleus of a church. In established communities Roman churches usually do not bother to separate church and school finances but treat them as one operation. The parochial schools, with their intense indoctrination of the young are, in a word, the "secret weapon" by which the Roman Church hopes to control the nation's future citizens and so to win the victory over Protestantism.

#### **4 Narrow Viewpoint of the Parochial Schools**

One feature of the Roman schools that calls for comment is the very narrow outlook presented. This applies particularly to schools at the high school and college level. While Protestantism encourages free investigation, Romanism restricts the investigative process and is concerned primarily with its own advancement. It suppresses truth as does any totalitarian power. In



the ages before the Reformation free inquiry was prohibited and men were even put to death for possessing the Bible translated into their own tongue. The Index of Forbidden Books<sup>3</sup>, still in effect as rigidly as ever, proscribes all the controversial books, magazines, and other publications of Protestants and others who oppose Romanism, and so makes it impossible for Roman Catholics to know both sides of a question.

<sup>3</sup> Technically the Index was dropped in 1965, but general supervision over books allowed continues through the newly established magazine supervision Nuntius (Herald). The imprimatur remains in force, and gives another effective means of control. Since the Second Vatican Council, restrictions against other versions have been relaxed to some extent.

Graduates from parochial high schools who enroll in state colleges or universities are surprised to find, for instance, that their history books do not agree with the ones they have been studying. They read instead about the decadence and moral corruption of the papacy during the Middle Ages, the cruel tyranny of the Inquisition, and, on the other hand, the accomplishments of Protestant leaders and nations, and many other embarrassing facts. The Roman Church wants obedience, and to that end it withholds from its people that broader knowledge and outlook on the world that makes for a well-informed and well-rounded personality. Many Roman Catholic laymen, as well as some priests, resent the narrow, un-American atmosphere of the parochial schools. But few have the courage to express their views openly or to do anything about it. Those who expect to stay in the Roman Church simply accept the situation and keep their mouths shut.

Throughout the entire Roman Catholic system of "education," from the parochial schools to the colleges and seminaries, the teachers, who for the most part are nuns and priests, have studied practically nothing except what has borne the official Imprimatur ("Let it be published") of the church. The Index of Forbidden Books limits and controls their libraries. The most important qualification for teachers and professors is not knowledge and teaching ability, but indoctrination and loyalty to the church. Roman Catholic students, therefore, in a real sense are forbidden to think. They let the priests think for them. But the fallacy of that system is that the priests too are forbidden to think. They too are limited by the Imprimatur and the Index. Freedom of thought and research have very little place in such schools. And the students in such schools are, for the most part, not educated but merely trained.

Various instances can be cited showing how this narrow attitude toward learning has worked out in the past. Copernicus, a Polish-born astronomer who died in 1543, wrote a book, *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies*, in which he set forth the view that the sun was the center of the solar system and that the planets including the earth revolved around it. But the Roman theologians were bitterly opposed to that view. The idea that the earth was not fixed at the very center of all things was more than they could stand, and they were not open to demonstration. To make the earth a mere satellite, indeed only one among several satellites, seemed to diminish the importance of the pope, who allegedly was the ruler of the earth. Copernicus was excommunicated, and his book was put on the Index where it remained for

centuries. But his scientific discoveries later proved to be true.

Thomas Aquinas, most prominent of all Roman theologians, taught that the earth was fixed in its position, and his writings tied up that false doctrine with the doctrines of the Church of Rome. In 1633 Galileo, another brilliant astronomer who supported the views of Copernicus and who discovered the telescope, was brought to trial by the Jesuits before the Inquisition. His work was examined by a committee and was condemned as dangerous to the church. He was forced to recant. But it is said that as he rose after the recantation he reiterated his views concerning the earth, saying, "Nevertheless it does move." The Inquisition sentenced him to the dungeon for three years. Later this was changed to house arrest, under which he spent the remainder of his life. The church put an end to his scientific investigations, but the learned man was right. The Roman Church persecuted Harvey who discovered the circulation of the blood, and it anathematized Pascal, the famous French mathematician and scientist, because he dared to question some of its doctrines.

## **5 Public Schools Sometimes Taken Over by the Roman Church**

In some communities in the United States where Roman Catholics are in a majority they have taken control of the public schools. This usually is accomplished by gaining a majority on the school board. In view of the fact that so few people vote in school elections, it frequently is easy for pressure groups to elect their candidates. The schools are then staffed with nuns, or in some cases with priests or brothers, the study of Roman Catholic doctrine is introduced and is practically made compulsory, and all the while the school remains on the public payroll. Pupils who object are subjected to social and economic reprisals, and sometimes are told that if they cannot adjust to the school they should go elsewhere.

Such schools are known as "captive schools." A report in *The Christian Century*, July 15, 1959, said there were at least 281 such schools in 21 states. The report also said that at least 2,055 nuns were teaching in these schools. Conditions of this kind exist in Ohio, Maine, Connecticut, Illinois, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Michigan, Texas, and Arkansas, with the worst conditions in Indiana, Kansas, and Kentucky. In some of these states nuns teach in their church garb, and the classrooms display religious pictures, crucifixes, and other symbols of the Roman Catholic Church which by no stretch of the imagination can be called legitimate teaching devices. Salary checks of the nuns, who have taken vows of poverty and who therefore cannot own property, and who have no family obligations, are commonly made payable to the religious orders to which they belong, even without being subject to withholding tax deductions. But the salaries of Protestants teaching in the same or similar schools and with family obligations are subject to all of the tax deductions. This same situation has also been found to exist in regard to chaplains in the armed forces. This practice means that in reality the nuns' salaries and those of the chaplains are paid to the Roman Catholic Church, which in turn merely furnishes them with living expenses. For all practical purposes such schools are parochial schools supported by public taxation. This illustrates again the relentless drive of the hierarchy to get tax money

for its private institutions. This practice of turning the nuns' and chaplains' salaries over to the order to which they belong, even without tax deductions, is permitted through a special ruling by H. F. O'Connell, Chief of Technical Reference Branch, U. S. Treasury Department, which seems to have been made for the special benefit of the Roman Catholic Church. His ruling reads:

"Members of a religious order who have taken vows of poverty, are not required to report as income, for federal tax purposes, their earnings which, in accordance with their vows, they turn over to their orders.

"Members of a religious order who have taken vows of poverty are bound absolutely to obey the commands of their superiors and have no discretion as to where they will perform their duties and in what capacity; and they are further bound to turn over their entire compensation (or the amount less living expenses), to the order. By reason of the stringency of these requirements and the lack of discretion on the part of the members, such members are considered agents of the order they represent. ... This is the general rule applicable where one person performs services and receives compensation as agent for another" (ruling issued December 19, 1956).

We point out first of all, however, that the restrictions under which the nuns and priests work are merely Roman Catholic Church regulations for which the government has no responsibility whatever. The nuns and priests accept those restrictions willingly and are responsible for them. In the second place, how can nuns and priests who are so completely under the control of their church organizations that they have no discretion as to where or in what capacity they perform their duties be considered free agents fit to teach in our public schools? In the third place, while the government can legitimately contract with private companies for such things as construction projects, carrying the mail, etc., under our constitutional provision for the separation of church and state it has no right to hire the religious orders of a church to provide teachers for the public schools or chaplains for the armed forces. And in the fourth place, in view of the official doctrines of their church, how can these nuns and priests be expected to teach the true principles of American freedom and democracy? How can they be expected not to teach their religion?

C. Stanley Lowell reported the following situation as existing in 1956:

"In Indiana more than two million dollars in tax funds went to 'public schools' that were in effect parochial schools of the Roman Church. There are 152 garbed nuns teaching in the public schools of Kansas with their salaries going to their church" (*Christianity Today*, January 7, 1959).

In some states long and expensive legislation has been instituted to clear up abuses of this kind. Much more is needed. Schools such as those just mentioned—public in name but parochial in purpose and operation—patently violate the religious rights of Protestant and other children who do not belong to the Roman Church. Such schools are an affront to our Constitutional principle of separation of church and state.

Glenn L. Archer, executive director of Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State, cites the following as a typical example of church-state abuse:

"In Bremond, Texas, the 'public school' is conducted in a parish-owned building with six nuns and two priests as teachers. A suit filed there recently charged that public funds were being illegally used in support of this sectarian institution. The Bremond school is only one of 22 such 'public schools' in Texas that are being supported by tax funds" (*The Convert*, November, 1959).

In numerous instances school boards friendly to Roman Catholicism or under Roman Catholic domination have sold school buildings and grounds to the Roman Catholic Church for a mere fraction of their true values, sometimes for only \$1.00, a mere token sale. At Rome, New York, an old school was "abandoned" by the city, sold for \$25,000, and reopened as the Transfiguration parish school. Catholic sources admitted that the true value of the property as "estimated by experts" was not \$25,000 but \$300,000. In St. Louis, Missouri, publicly acquired property was resold to St. Louis University, a Jesuit institution of the Roman Catholic Church, at an alleged loss to the public in excess of \$6,000,000.

Even when nuns in a public school are instructed by the school board not to teach their religion, it is vain to expect that they will not do so either directly or indirectly. They are under vows to teach their religion to all who come before them. Indeed that is the very purpose of their confession, and they will refrain from it only to the extent to which they are restrained. Protestants justly protest teaching which seeks to make Roman Catholics out of their children in the public school classrooms.

As just indicated, in several states nuns are even allowed to wear their religious garb while teaching in the public schools. In 1960 a ruling was handed down in Ohio permitting this practice. And the Roman Church pushes this practice just as far as it can without arousing too much opposition. Such symbolism inevitably has its effect on the impressionable young minds, identifying the teachers with the Roman Catholic Church and turning the pupils in that direction. Even if religion is not mentioned, even if the name "Roman Catholic" is never spoken, the church garb in itself carries the message: "This is Roman Catholicism; this is what the Roman Catholic Church teaches." The pupils grow up looking up, perhaps unconsciously, to the nuns and priests as their mentors and guides. As a rule children tend to admire what they see in their teachers, and under normal conditions it is proper that they should do so. But it is most highly improper for the Roman Church to take advantage of this situation and to propagandize in schools that are paid for at public expense and which contain children from Protestant and other homes.

We oppose the employment of nuns in the public schools under any conditions, for the simple reason that they are not free agents. Their allegiance to their church is stronger than their allegiance to any school board. At the very least they should be required to exchange their church garb and insignia for dress that is without distinctive suggestion and which does not in itself

propagandize in behalf of their religion. But even this is less than a halfway measure toward correcting the problem.

## **6 Roman Catholic Opposition to Public Schools**

The Roman Church not only promotes her own school system, but is strongly opposed to the American system of free public education. She would like nothing better than to see it destroyed. This is true first of all because the Roman Church claims for herself and as a matter of right the privilege of supervising all education, so that the youth of the land can be effectively directed toward that church. Typical of this attitude are the words of Paul L. Blakely, S.J., in an article, *May an American Oppose the Public School*, which bears the imprimatur of the late cardinal Hayes:

"Our first duty to the public school is not to pay taxes for its maintenance. We pay that tax under protest, not because we admit an obligation in justice. ... The first duty of every Catholic father to the public school is to keep his children out of it. ... For the man who sends his children to the public school when he could obtain for them the blessing of a Catholic education is not a practicing Catholic, even though he goes to mass every morning. ... 'Every Catholic child in a Catholic school,' is the command of the church."

In the late 19th century the Roman Church began a vigorous campaign to drive Bible reading and all discussion of religion out of the public schools. The real objection, of course, was not to the teaching of religion as such, but to the fact that the Roman Catholic religion was not taught. And now that the Bible and religion have been driven out of the public schools the Roman Church denounces them as "godless," "pagan," "socialistic," "immoral," "un-American."

C. Stanley Lowell writes:

"Roman Catholics undertook to drive religion out of the schools not because they were atheistic or secularistic people, but because they were not powerful enough to determine the kind of religion to be taught. They preferred no religious teaching at all if they could not have Roman Catholic dogma. The provincial council of the Roman Catholic Church in Baltimore, 1840, imposed on priests the responsibility of seeing to it that Catholic children attending public schools did not participate in any religious exercises there. They were also to use their influence to prevent any such practice in the public school. The 'secular public school' was in substantial part an achievement of the Roman Catholic Church" (*Christianity Today*, January 7, 1957).

In some places, however, where Roman Catholics are able to dominate the public school moral and spiritual teaching with their own dogma, as in New York City, or where they have been able to secure public funds for their own schools, they have done an about-face and now call for a return of religion in education.

Another practice, we may even say a standard procedure, of the parochial schools is that of "dumping" delinquent, problem children on the public

schools. Acknowledgment of such practice, even from a Roman Catholic source is found in an article in the Paulist magazine *Information*, November, 1959, by Louise Edna Goeden, a public school administrator in an un-named American city. She says:

"As a teacher and administrator in a large public high school I am constantly dealing with pupils the parochial school expels or refuses to enroll or re-enroll. From experience, I know without looking that a large percentage of these entrants will be from parochial schools. From experience I also know that many will become our problem cases— because of poor scholarship or conduct or both.

"I call in the parents, and the story is always the same. The students were 'asked' to leave the parochial school because they had poor grades or didn't follow directions or were behavior problems. Or they were 'advised' not to enroll in any Catholic school.

"As a teacher and a Catholic, I take exception to the parochial schools dumping the dullards, the sluggards and the delinquents on the public school doorstep. When my non-Catholic colleagues say about problem students, 'These are the very ones the Catholic schools should keep; they need religious training,' I agree."

## **7 The Two Systems Compared**

Far from being "godless," or "immoral," or "un-American," as the Roman Catholics charge, the public school, in which all students meet as equals regardless of race, color, or creed, is uniquely designed to be a bulwark against narrow sectarianism, bigotry, intolerance, and race prejudice. The record is clear that an undue proportion of the gangsters, racketeers, thieves, and juvenile delinquents who roam our big city streets come, not from the public schools, but from the parochial schools. The Roman hierarchy must be aware of the preponderance of malefactors among their own people, and evidently they are attempting to hide their guilt behind the "godless school" smoke screen. It is time that the American people wake up to the fact that the real godless schools are the parochial schools that are turning out more than their proportionate share of the moral misfits.

C. Stanley Lowell, writing on this subject, has well said:

"Our public school system has been the keystone of democracy. It is the one place where Protestant, Catholic and Jew meet on common ground and get to know and understand each other. Very early the Romanists began to establish their own sectarian schools, although millions of Roman Catholic youth continued to attend public schools. In an endeavor to correct this situation, Romanist leaders have launched a campaign to undermine and discredit the public school. Father Francis P. Le Buffe has declared: 'Thanks to our godless American public school... we have a generation today which does not know God.' The Rev. Robert I. Gannon, president of Fordham University, has charged the public school is responsible for juvenile delinquency and suggests that there would be none if Roman Catholic moral teaching were given to all. Unfortunately, it just happened that at the time Dr. Gannon was

making this speech in New York City, three fifths of all the juvenile delinquents being arrested in that area were Roman Catholics (Roman Catholics make up only one fifth of the population of New York City). It just happens, too, that Roman Catholics supply more than twice their proportionate share of the prison population of this country" (pamphlet, *A Summons to Protestants*).

And to the same general effect Dr. Walter M. Montano says:

"Let me disabuse those Protestants who send their children to Catholic schools in the fond belief that they 'receive a better education.' Actually, the education in Catholic schools is poor to a degree that would shock our educational authorities if they were ever permitted to find out about it. The deficiencies of our public schools, over which we are concerned, do not compare for a moment with the abysmal ignorance which passes as Catholic education.

"Many American Catholic children are being taught by ignorant European peasants in this country solely through the connivance of Catholic politicians. Too often their teachers are nuns who know nothing of American democracy or American institutions, who cannot speak grammatically even in their own tongue. Add to this the suppression and distortion of facts which constitute history, literature, and such little of the arts and humanities as are 'taught' in the Catholic schools, and you have the quality of Roman Catholic education.

"For instance, the word 'Inquisition' is hardly known to Catholic students. If mentioned at all, the Inquisition is represented as a political project in which Holy Mother Church's office is merely to turn over troublesome political undesirables to the proper authorities. The same explanation is given of the burning of Joan of Arc, with the church's responsibility played down to nullity and that of the political participants played up.

"This policy is also followed in dealing with current Colombian persecutions. Never is it revealed that the political authorities in all those cases held or hold their posts only by sufferance of the Roman Church and only as long as their decisions reflect her will.

"While whitewashing Rome, Catholic education loses no opportunity to vilify Protestants and Protestantism in a way calculated to engender resentment and hatred, even in the trusting heart of a child.

"Turning from the social to the natural sciences, we find them faring as poorly. It is no accident that the United States fails to boast a single major Catholic scientist. The fact is that the Roman Church is afraid of science and would suppress it if she could as in the days of Galileo's recantation. Her justified dread is based on the fact that science has so often proved her wrong. The need of private tutoring before they are able to meet matriculation requirements at standard colleges and universities is a common experience for Catholic students" (*Christian Heritage*, May, 1959).

One of the set purposes of the parochial school is to erect a wall between Roman Catholics and the other people of the community, not only the students

but the parents as well, and so to isolate them to some extent from the liberalizing tendencies in American life. Children in a parochial school are taught that only the Roman church has the "truth," that all others are in "error," and that it is "a sin against faith and a rebuff to God" even to attend another church (see *Living Our Faith*, p. 114). They are also taught that any marriage ceremony involving a Roman Catholic is "null and void" unless performed by a priest, and that the marriage of a Roman Catholic before a minister or an official of the state is only "an attempt at marriage" (p. 290). Such teaching is bigotry of the worst kind. Add to this the fact that 90 percent of the teaching in the parochial school is done by brainwashed nuns and priests who throughout their lives are kept in a rigid mental strait jacket in which they are forbidden to read books or magazines not approved by the hierarchy, or to attend or listen by radio to religious services other than those of their own church, or even to carry on an ordinary conversation with people from other churches concerning religious matters, and that these teachers are not under a school board but under the absolute authority of one man, the bishop of the diocese, and the narrowness of the parochial school becomes so evident that it cannot be denied.

Since the Roman Catholic Church is so opposed to the public schools, the question arises: Should Roman Catholics—laymen, nuns, or priests—be allowed to teach in the public schools? Our answer is that they should not as long as they maintain their allegiance to the hierarchy. Protestants are not allowed to teach in the schools in Spain. In the other Roman Catholic countries it is very difficult, if not impossible, for Protestants to secure teaching positions. But the fact is that many Romanists are allowed to teach in this country. And not only that but in some places they are given a preference. In 1933 a law was passed in New York State making it an offense, punishable by a fine or imprisonment, even to inquire concerning the religious affiliation of applicants for teachers' positions! Thus the citizens of that state were deprived of one of the safeguards of civil and religious liberty, that is, the right of free speech and inquiry and the way opened for teachers who are opposed to the public school system to be forced upon a community contrary to the wishes of the majority of the people of that community. Concerning this general subject Dr. Zacchello says:

"The Roman Church—popes, bishops, priests, and laymen—do not hesitate in opposing and denouncing our public schools. Then why should the followers of Romanism be allowed to teach in public schools? Would you employ in your business a man who would tell your customers that your merchandise is rotten and that they should buy from his relatives' store? And would you want to finance that rival store?

"No business man in his right mind would do this. Yet our government is not only employing teachers who are deliberately and publicly against our educational system, but is considering the financing of private Roman Catholic schools.

"If the public schools of this country are not good enough for the children of Roman Catholic parents, then the true American parents should consider their children too good to be taught by Roman Catholic teachers. I am referring, of course, to Roman Catholics who take orders from the Vatican



(*Ins and Outs of Romanisrn*, p. 170).

In most states there is no requirement that private or parochial schools:

Meet the standards of the public schools;

Meet any minimum requirements;

Report their attendance;

Make annual reports to the department of public instruction;

Be inspected by state officials;

Be licensed or registered under state regulations;

Require the teachers to have the same qualifications as those in the public schools; or, Require the teachers or their teaching qualifications to be registered with the department of public instruction.

## **8 State and Federal Aid for Parochial Schools**

As the Roman Church has grown in this country the parochial schools also have grown. Often they have been staffed with poorly equipped nuns who served without pay, and often they have been conducted in inferior buildings with inferior equipment. In recent years, however, the Roman Church has made a considerable effort to improve its schools, particularly in the larger cities. In fact the aggressive actions of the hierarchy indicate that their ultimate goal is to take over the public school system here as they have done in the predominantly Roman Catholic countries. But before they can do that they must undermine it. This they attempt to do, first by securing fringe benefits. Usually they begin by asking for bus transportation. In some places this is now provided, sometimes through state or local law, oftentimes without benefit of law if there is no public protest. But free bus transportation does not satisfy them. Instead it only serves as a springboard for further demands. So consistently has this plan been followed that it has been appropriately termed "the school bus wedge." The next step is to ask for free lunches, free text books, free equipment, etc. The plan then calls for state or federal aid in erecting school buildings and in paying teachers' salaries, but never with state supervision, so that eventually the state pays for the schools and the Roman Church operates them.

Regarding the school bus problem the magazine *Church and State* recently said:

"One in three children in school today must be transported to and from the institution. The bill for public school transportation is \$417 million annually. On the basis of the claimed attendance at parochial schools, and the national transportation average cost of \$37 per pupil for those who need transportation, the subsidy to the [Roman] Church for transportation to its schools would run in excess of \$61 million."

In various communities efforts to vote bonds for the erection of badly needed public school buildings have been defeated by an organized Roman Catholic

vote, with the purpose of forcing equal appropriations for parochial schools. The hierarchy has made it clear to the U.S. Congress that it will oppose any federal aid to education bill unless aid to parochial schools is included. It is interesting to notice that in Puerto Rico, in the summer of 1960, the failure of the Roman Church to get legislation giving it the right to conduct classes in religion in the public school as well as certain other benefits was the occasion for the launching of a new Roman Catholic political party as a direct means to achieve those goals. But the new party fared rather badly in the 1960 election.

The campaign to shift the cost of Roman Catholic schools to the American taxpayer has been vigorously pushed, but up until now it has met with only minor success. Most Protestant denominations are strongly opposed to the use of public funds to aid parochial schools, and it has been particularly galling to the Roman hierarchy that it has not been able to put its hands into the public treasury in the United States as it is so accustomed to do in many other countries. To provide federal aid for parochial schools would mean that a nation which is four-fifths non-Catholic would build private religious schools for about one seventh of the children who attend those schools. But the never-ending campaign for tax money goes on.

The Supreme Court of the United States has quite consistently upheld the principle of separation of church and state as set forth in the first amendment to the Constitution. Free bus transportation has been permitted, but only by a divided opinion, the judges voting five to four to permit it. In this connection we think that logic is on the side of Judge Ralph M. Holman, in a Circuit Court, in Oregon, who in a suit regarding the furnishing of textbooks to parochial schools, ruled against such aid and indicated that in his opinion the five Supreme Court justices who voted in favor of the constitutionality of parochial school bus appropriations were wrong, and that the four who constituted the minority were right. In that decision he said:

"Anything that assists a religious sect to conduct a separate school where all instruction is permeated with religious overtones is an aid to religion. The proof in this case is conclusive that the sole purpose in maintaining the private school is to promote religion.

"It makes no difference whether books, teachers, equipment, transportation, or buildings are furnished, nor does it make any difference to whom they are furnished. In truth, all are an integral part of the whole which makes up the school and the educational process. You cannot logically distinguish one from the other. They constitute the elements of an educational process permeated with religious purpose" (*Church and State*, April, 1960).

It should be clear to all that a Roman Catholic parochial school is an integral part of that church, as definitely so as is the service of worship. A parochial school is usually developed in connection with a church. In many cases the church and school monies are not even separated. Such a school is in no sense a public school, even though some children from other groups may be admitted to it. The buildings are not owned and controlled by a community of American people, not even by a community of American Roman Catholic people. The title of ownership in a public school is vested in the local

community, in the elected officers of the school board or the city council. But the title of ownership in a parochial school is vested in the bishop as an individual, who is appointed by, who is under the direct control of, and who reports to the pope in Rome.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> This paragraph was quoted by justices Douglas, Black, and Marshall in a dissenting opinion as the Supreme Court of the United States, on June 28, 1971, by the narrow margin of 5 to 4, held constitutional the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, which permits within certain limits the granting of federal funds to church-related colleges and universities.

Another contrast is that in the public school the selection of a faculty and the administration of the school usually rests with a school board which is subject to election and recall by the voters, but in the parochial school the selection of a faculty and the administration of the school is in the hands of the bishop alone, and usually is administered through the local priest. If a faculty member in the public school believes that he has been treated unjustly in being disciplined or dismissed, he can seek redress through the civil court and he is guaranteed a hearing. But if a faculty member in a parochial school is disciplined or dismissed he has no recourse whatsoever. The word of the bishop or priest is final, even without explanation if he so chooses. The taxpayers have a voice in the way their money is used in the public school, but the people who support a parochial school have no voice at all in such affairs.

The argument is often made that Roman Catholic parents are the victims of double taxation since they pay the regular levy for public schools and also the cost of the parochial schools. But it is hardly accurate to call this double taxation. They pay the regular levy as does everyone else, and they have the privilege of sending their children to the public school. There is no discrimination against them. But if instead they choose to use the parochial school where the principal course is Roman Catholic polity and doctrine, that is their privilege, and they should be willing to pay for it. That is entirely a matter between them and their church. If they have any protest it should be made to their priest or bishop who orders them to build and maintain such a school. The other side of the picture, of course, is that if those of us who pay taxes to support the public schools are also required to support the Roman Catholic schools, that would constitute a double burden on us.

Furthermore, many people who have no children at all, or whose children are not ready for school or are past school age, are also required to pay the regular levy. And usually they do so gladly as a service to the community. If the Roman Catholic objection were valid, then only those families who have children in the public school should be required to pay the school tax, and they should pay in proportion to the number of children they have in school.

To use a simple illustration: Suppose the state builds a road. It is paid for with state funds. It is open to the public, and anyone may use it. But if another group does not like the public road and wants to build their own private road parallel to the public road, they may do so. But they have no right to expect the rest of us to pay for it. It is their road. Let them pay

for it or use the public road.

In the United States we have "freedom of religion." In many other nations the people do not enjoy this high privilege. But freedom of religion has always had a price tag attached to it: *Pay the bill*.

Let us have public funds for public causes and private funds for private causes, whether it be for roads, schools, libraries, swimming pools, or anything else. And let Roman Catholics remember that in their country of Spain they do not allow Protestants to have private schools even though the latter would gladly pay all the costs.

The *Detroit News* has commented concerning the school problem:

"All the states decree... that all children shall be educated at public expense because an educated citizenry is essential to our form of government. ... No one is being taxed for the education of his own children; all are being taxed for the education of everyone's children, to everyone's ultimate benefit. They decree as well that what the community pays for on such a vast scale it must control. ... Like it or not, that is what our state constitutions provide. No child is a 'second class citizen,' for no child is barred from these schools."

Cardinal Spellman recently demanded that federal aid for education be extended to parochial as well as public schools, and argued that the government would be guilty of "coercion" and "discrimination" if it denied federal funds to Catholic schools. This was promptly and effectively answered by Glenn L. Archer, who said:

"Actually the government would be guilty of coercion and discrimination if it compelled the 140 million non-Catholic people of the United States to pay for schools which are maintained primarily to promote the doctrines of one church. ... The Catholic people of the United States have been offered free access to the schools of all the people without religious discrimination. If they choose under the pressure of their bishops to decline this invitation, they should not ask the taxpayers to pay the bill for their own separation" (The Evening Star, Washington, D. C., January 19, 1961).

If the Romanists achieve a breakthrough at the parochial school level, it can be confidently expected that that will be followed by demands for bigger and better Hill-Burton Hospital Construction Acts, G. I. Bills with generous tuition grants to sectarian schools, National Defense Education Acts, and, in the not too distant future, sectarian political parties and candidates at state and local levels.

Under our American system of separation of church and state, all Protestant churches have financed their own projects by voluntary gifts from their adherents. The Roman Catholic Church should be willing to do the same. It is manifestly unfair for it to claim federal and state subsidies for its private projects. If such appropriations were granted, then Protestants, in proportion to their numbers, should receive similar appropriations, to be used in their church programs as they see fit. But Protestants do not want

such help, and in most cases do not take it even if it is available. They are opposed on principle to government support for any denomination.

On repeated occasions in recent years programs providing for federal aid to education have been blocked by Roman Catholic spokesmen because parochial schools were not included. Whether federal aid to education is in itself a wise or an unwise policy we do not here attempt to say, although we think that as a general rule educational problems can be handled more economically and more efficiently by local communities or at most with state aid. But in any event the fact of the matter is that throughout the nation more than half of all Roman Catholic children attend public schools. Roman Catholics are represented on school boards, often out of proportion to their numbers in the community. And the percentage of Roman Catholic teachers in public schools often is in excess of their proportion in the community. So they are benefiting quite materially from our public school system.

The argument that the parochial school saves the community money is also largely false. In the first place, the community does not ask the Roman Church to aid in this matter. Secondly, the Roman Church develops such schools, not as an aid to the community, not to teach American principles of citizenship, but strictly to serve its own purpose. And thirdly, many people would rather pay the tax to provide an adequate and unprejudiced education for all of the young people than to experience the divisions and rivalries that almost invariably result from such schools. Usually they feel that the Roman Church is doing the community a disservice in restricting the children to the kind of training that they receive in the parochial schools.

Something is to be learned by observing the school situation in Britain, which is quite different from that in the United States. The British government has agreed to provide up to 75 percent of the funds needed for the building and maintenance of Anglican and Roman Catholic schools, and up to 95 percent of certain other school expenses. But even so the hierarchy is not satisfied. It is demanding complete financial equality with the public schools. In France, under President De Gaulle, a Roman Catholic, the Roman hierarchy, early in 1960, precipitated a governmental crisis by demanding full school aid without governmental supervision, and with De Gaulle's assistance received most of what it asked for. The ideal toward which the Roman Church strives is found in Spain where, under a concordat with the Vatican, the schools are financed by the government while the Roman Church supervises the curriculum, selects the teachers, and directs the administration of the schools. Protestant schools are prohibited. Why should anyone believe that the Roman Catholic Church in the United States would be satisfied with anything less?

An interesting light is thrown on this problem of state and federal aid to parochial schools in a recent issue of *Church and State* magazine. Under the title, *Do They Need The Money?*, we read:

"The spectacle of the hierarchy of the mighty Roman Catholic Church pleading poverty is one to give us pause. This church is, by its own admission, the largest and wealthiest of all Christian bodies. It is literally richer than Croesus.

"The Roman Church has assets so vast that it has never dared to make a public report of them. This is the organization which now comes pleading that it must have Federal grants or credit if it is to carry on. ...

"The credit rating of the Buffalo diocese provides financial information about the Roman Church that is rarely disclosed. The Church's assets in this one diocese alone are placed at \$236,000,000. Its average gross income is \$241½ million. Taking the Buffalo membership of 860,000 in ratio with the claimed total American membership of 40 million, a total wealth close to 11 billion is indicated.

"When one adds to this the income producing potential of the 40 million contributors of Roman Catholic faith, we are confronted with a financial power that can be discussed in the same breath with the United States government itself. This is the organization which claims to stand in desperate need of government aid. ... Why does the hierarchy insist on Federal aid to its denominational schools? We think we know the reason. And that reason is not financial" (May, 1961).

A more recent and exhaustive study of the finances of American churches is *The Churches: Their Riches, Revenues, and Immunities*, by Martin A. Larson and C. Stanley Lowell (301 pages; 1969. Robert B. Luce, Inc., Washington, D.C.). The wealthiest church by far is the Roman Catholic, with assets, largely hidden, approximately as follows: Stocks, Bonds, Investment Real Estate, \$13 billion; Business Property, \$12 billion; Personal Property, \$900 million; Religiously used real estate, \$54 billion; total, about \$80 billion. Much of that is held by the various orders, which number 521. Annual Estimated Income is: Contributions, \$5 billion; Business, \$1 billion 200 million; Dividends, Interest, \$650 million; Wills, Community Chest Funds, Bingo, etc., \$1 billion 500 million; total, over \$8 billion—largely immune from income tax. To that must be added a bewildering series of government projects funded in part through the churches and which in effect are subsidies, such as the Hill-Burton Hospital Act, Higher Education Facilities Act, Vocational Education Act, Economic Opportunities Act, Research Programs, Distribution of Foreign Aid, and many others—total, over \$4 billion.

What vast holdings and reserves those are, particularly when the spiritual and material needs of so many even of their own Roman Catholic people in many parts of the world are so great! Their expenses for parochial schools have scarcely touched that reservoir of wealth. Some Protestant churches also have wealth beyond their needs. But most evangelical churches maintain a fairly close balance between income and expenses, and many are seriously handicapped by lack of funds.

## *9 Education in Romanist Dominated Countries*

It is not by accident that the people in countries that have been dominated by Roman Catholicism for centuries have an abnormally high percentage of illiteracy. Some 50 percent of the Portuguese cannot read or write. Spain, which is the most Roman Catholic nation in Europe, is also the most backward and has the lowest standard of living of any nation in Europe. In Italy illiteracy is high, and Roman Catholic domination of education has been so

oppressive that it has been almost impossible to establish even a primary school apart from the Roman Church. In Mexico, Central and South America, where the Roman Church has been dominant and practically without religious competition for four hundred years, the illiteracy rate until very recently was from 30 to 60 percent and in some places as high as 70 percent. Brazil, for instance, with 58 million people has more than 30 million who are illiterate. Only 42 percent of the people of Colombia, according to a government survey, can read and write, and most of those have not had schooling beyond the fourth grade. In Canada the Roman Catholic province of Quebec has lagged far behind the other provinces in education. Even primary education was not compulsory in Quebec until 1943. A program is now under way to remedy the lamentable conditions that were exposed by Life magazine in the issue of October 19, 1942. Throughout these countries we see the practice, so typical of all Roman Catholic countries, of gathering large sums of money for the building of magnificent cathedrals to overawe the people and for the enrichment of the priesthood, while leaving the people in indescribable ignorance and poverty.

Through the centuries the Roman Catholic Church has found that illiterate and superstitious people are much more obedient to her rule, and until she was forced by Protestant competition to make a change, her deliberate policy seems to have been designed to keep them in that condition. But thanks to the mission work that has been carried on in Latin America and to the generally enlightening influences that have come from the Protestant nations, the illiteracy rate in that area is now decreasing. Nevertheless the record of the Roman Church in Latin America remains one of miserable and undeniable failure so far as the general enlightenment of the people is concerned, and Rome must take full responsibility for that condition. Many of her leading men in the governing classes and many of her priests have been distinguished for learning and logical skill, for "knowledge is power." But she has not entrusted that knowledge to the masses of her followers. Instead, she has reserved it for her office holders that they might use it to her advantage. It is important to keep in mind that the Roman Catholic Church the world over is one solid, monolithic organization, all closely knit and under the absolute power of the pope in Rome, and that the same pope who appoints all of the cardinals and bishops in the United States also appoints all of the cardinals and bishops in Latin America, and that the church, working through the hierarchy in Rome, has perfect freedom to send men and money and to promote or to refrain from promoting schools in any area under its control.

In Protestant countries the Roman Church has been driven, partly by shame and partly by a spirit of rivalry, to follow quite a different policy from that in Latin America. In the United States, which already possessed the most efficient system of universal education to be found anywhere in the world and where we might suppose that a parochial system was least needed, the Roman Church has been prompted to engage in extensive educational work. Much the same policy has been followed in Britain. In these countries her people cannot be kept in darkness, and she is forced to minister to them or lose them. In these countries her people are demanding high schools and colleges, and she is giving them what she does not give her people in Spain or Italy or Latin America.

In the United States she has established hundreds of hospitals, colleges, and various special institutions such as Dismas House in St. Louis, and Boys Town in Nebraska (built to a considerable extent with money solicited indiscriminately from Protestants). But we do not find comparable institutions in the typical Roman Catholic countries. Hence we must to a considerable extent label these "showcase religion," designed to meet Protestant competition.

To discover what a system *really* is, what its true fruits are, we must look at countries where it is fully established and where it has been in operation for long periods of time. And when we apply that test to the Roman system we find the invariable products— ignorance, superstition, poverty, and immorality.

## 10 The Christian School

Many Christian people are disturbed because the Bible cannot be read and Christianity cannot be taught in the public schools, and because in many instances the texts used present an anti-Christian viewpoint. This condition in the schools represents a radical departure from that which prevailed in the early days of our country and which in fact was common until comparatively recent times. The state, however, is a secular institution, and in a free society such as ours in which church and state are separate, the state cannot promote any particular religion in its tax supported and politically controlled schools. Hence it follows that whenever the government undertakes to provide education, whether at the local, state, or national level, it tends to secularize the schools. The result is that today most of the schools tend to ignore the subject of religion with many of them assuming a completely secular attitude, as if God did not exist, while others are actually irreligious, teaching an evolutionary philosophy in a man-centered world.

One of the privileges enjoyed by the people of the United States is that of establishing and operating private or parochial schools if they so wish. This right has been affirmed by the United States Supreme Court. While we strongly disapprove of the parochial school as conducted by the Roman Catholic Church, there is another type of school designed to provide a Christian atmosphere and course of instruction of which we approve most heartily. This is generally known as the "Christian School." It is supported and controlled not by a church or by a group of churches, but by an organization of Christian parents in the local community. It is usually interdenominational in nature, designed to serve the children of all of the evangelical churches in the community and such others as are given permission to attend. Since no church has any official connection with the project no compulsion is put upon any families in those churches to send their children to the Christian school if they prefer the public school.

The first schools in America were private, usually in the homes or in the churches. Often they were organized and taught by the local minister as a service to the community. The Bible was the most important book studied, sometimes almost the only book. As it came to be realized how valuable such training was, the local communities, and later the states, took over the



work, broadened the course of study, and in time such education was made universal and compulsory.

We believe that Christian training is the most important thing in a child's life. Responsibility for such training rests first of all upon the parents in the home. Early in the Old Testament the command was given that there should be oral teaching of the Scriptures in the home by the parents: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). The command is that the home shall be literally saturated with the Word of God.

But because many parents are so poorly equipped to give that training, perhaps never having had it themselves, it is a very great blessing if it can be given in the schools. The ideal situation would be a Christian state in which true Bible teaching could be given as a part of the regular school course. But that condition does not now prevail, and it cannot be realized in the foreseeable future.

While we insist that there must be separation of church and state, that does not mean that we acknowledge any area of life in which Christianity should not play a dominant role. It only means that it is better that neither the government nor the schools should be dominated by any religion than that they should be dominated by a false religion, better that they not aid any religion than that they aid a false religion. Due to the fact that in the United States most communities are composed of Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jews, and other minority groups, in order not to offend any the public schools are forbidden by law to give any type of religious training.

But it is not enough merely to educate children in the arts and sciences. They must also be trained in things relating to the spirit if they are to fulfill their true mission in life. To leave religion out of the curriculum is to omit the most important subject, and tends to give students the impression that religion is of little value or importance.

In order to meet this need various plans have been suggested. One is that in the public schools a certain number of Scripture verses be read each day without comment, followed perhaps by the Lord's prayer or some other suitable prayer. But such teaching can only be most elementary. And a further difficulty arises as to which version of the Bible should be used, and to whom or in whose name the prayer should be offered. Another plan that has met with fairly wide support is that of "released time," in which perhaps once each week the children are excused for a part of the school period in order to attend Christian training classes usually held in their own churches. The Supreme Court, in a case brought before it in 1952, gave the legal "go ahead" to released time religious classes, provided they are not held on school property. In accordance with that ruling approximately 4,000,000 children of all faiths are released from the public schools each week to attend such classes.

This latter plan, however, still leaves much to be desired, particularly if

other courses in the school are taught from a non-Christian or anti-Christian viewpoint. Much the best plan, we believe, is that of the Protestant Christian school. For that purpose an organization of Christian parents builds or leases its own buildings, hires its own teachers, teaches in general the same courses and seeks to meet the same academic standards as does the public school. Such schools may include only the grades, or the high school, or both. All courses are taught from the Christian viewpoint. And in addition they also have courses in Bible study, in which the Bible is presented as the inspired and authoritative Word of God.

But the question naturally arises: Can the "private" school survive? The answer is: Yes, it can, if the people of a community are genuinely interested in its success. In numerous communities such schools are proving remarkably successful. The Christian Reformed Church, with headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan, has done much to promote this type of school. We need only point out that for long ages it was generally thought that the churches in the various countries could not survive if they were cut off from state funds. But in those nations in which they have been "dis-established" they have gained new vitality and perspective and have prospered much more than where they still are dependent on state aid. In like manner Christian schools can be productive of true scholarship and can develop with more freedom and originality if Christian people take their work seriously. R. J. Rushdoony, who has made a special study of this problem, points out that, "The school society, as a voluntary organization, operates on a radically more economical basis than the public school in building, operational, administrative, and maintenance costs. On this basis it can still produce superior results" (*Intellectual Schizophrenia*, p. 24; The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Philadelphia, 1961. )

The hundreds of Protestant colleges with their splendid buildings and large endowment funds show what Protestant people can do when they set their minds to it. Such schools have rendered a most valuable service over the years.

There are valid reasons for establishing Christian schools at the elementary and high school levels. First of all there is the teaching of Christian truth and the building of Christian character. That, of course, can be done much more effectively in schools in which the Bible is honored rather than in those in which it is ignored or even attacked and ridiculed. In the second place a dedicated Christian faculty leaves an indelible impression on the lives and characters of the students who attend such schools. And in the third place fellowship with other students whose background and purpose in life is Christian does much to inspire students to better ways of living.

Ministers and laymen usually find a place in such schools as principals, teachers, and members of the school boards. Many teachers prefer the atmosphere of the Christian school to that of the public school. And the evangelical churches of a community usually give moral and sometimes financial support, although as churches they have no control over the schools. But if we demand federal or state aid merely to compensate for our own lack of conviction, such schools probably will not manifest much Christian zeal. Let no man be compelled to pay for another man's religion. That only arouses resentment, and it cannot accomplish any lasting good.

Certainly the world will never take seriously our professed concern for Christian education if our Christian schools have to be maintained at public expense.

It should be emphasized that the Christian school is not designed to operate as a rival of the public school but rather to cooperate with it in a friendly way for the benefit of the entire community. It was never the wish of the Protestant churches that Bible reading and Christian training should be excluded from the public school. But the fact must be faced that that condition now exists, and that remedial measures are needed. We insist that the public school with its secular viewpoint must not claim the right to teach every child under all conditions, nor the exclusive right to teach any child—that education is primarily the responsibility of the parents, and that the parents may provide that education privately if they wish.

(For assistance in starting and operating Christian schools contact: National Union of Christian Schools, 865 28th St., S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508.)

(Continued in [Roman Catholicism By Lorraine Boettner Chapter XVII By What Moral Standard?](#))

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