

McGucken, William
Catholic Education
ADT 9895

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

ITS PHILOSOPHY
ITS FUNDAMENTALS
ITS OBJECTIVES

by

William J. McGucken, S.J.

THE

America

PRESS

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION, by William J McGucken, S.J., is a reprint of Chapter VI, *Philosophies of Education*, Part I, of the forty-first Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. Special permission for the issuance of this treatise in pamphlet form by the America Press was granted by the Board of Directors of the Society. Copies of the complete Forty-first Yearbook, *Philosophies of Education* (\$2.25, paper binding; \$3.00, cloth binding), are available through the Department of Education, University of Chicago.

PERMISSU SUPERIORUM

NIHIL OBSTAT

IMPRIMATUR

JOHN M. A. FEARNES, S.T.D.

✠ FRANCIS CARDINAL SPELLMAN

Censor Librorum

Archbishop of New York

Price 25c.

THE AMERICA PRESS

70 EAST 45TH ST.

NEW YORK 17, N.Y.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

I. Introduction

To understand the philosophy of Catholic education, it is necessary to understand—not necessary, of course, to accept—the Catholic philosophy¹ of life, which has its roots deep in the past. When Christianity came on the world scene, the revelation of Christ brought a completion of the Old Law; but not that merely: it also came as a completion, a correction often, of the thought of Greco-Roman civilization. The philosophy of Aristotle and Plato, for example, had an extraordinary influence on early Christian thought and thinkers. To the making of Christian philosophy many minds contributed: Aristotle and Plato, Augustine and Aquinas, and the great galaxy of philosophers and theologians of all ages aided in clarifying and defining the Christian view of life.

The essentials of Christian philosophy are found in the New Testament and the early writings of the Fathers of the Church. Augustine of Hippo and the American Catholic of today differ not at all with regard to essentials. Thomas Aquinas and the other medieval schoolmen, dispute though they did over the accidentals of that philosophy, were yet as one in basic principles. Through all the centuries from Augustine to Aquinas to Suarez and Bellarmine to Newman and Chesterton and Pius XII, there is seen a uniform pattern of the Christian philosophy of life, startling by reason of its uniformity. From that philosophy of life is derived the philosophy of Catholic education.

To many moderns it is not an acceptable philosophy. But even if it be not accepted, the Catholic may ask that a sincere effort be

¹ "Catholic" or "Christian" philosophy is not used in M. Gilson's sense. (*The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, chap. 1. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.) It is used here for convenience to designate all the philosophical-theological bases of the Catholic outlook on life.

made to understand what it is all about. Idiom and language may be strange, yet the philosophic mind investigating, let us say, the strange ideologies of the Australian bushmen will find these no barrier to understanding. Indeed, it may well be worth the effort. Here in the United States, Catholics have 273 universities, colleges and institutions of collegiate rank with 128,844 students; 2,235 high schools and 350,190 pupils; 7,794 elementary schools with an enrolment of 2,114,037. It would seem to be desirable to know why Catholics have these schools, and what philosophy underlies the education there given.

II. Philosophic Bases of Catholic Position

Scholastic philosophy is theocentric. Catholic life and thought and education have God as their basis. Arnold Lunn, the English convert, once said petulantly, "The answer to the educational problem is a monosyllable—God." This cornerstone of scholasticism is apt to prove irritating to the modern secularist who either ignores God or relegates Him to lower case. Secularism and naturalism, so characteristic of many American philosophies of education, make it exceedingly difficult for the modern mind trained in these philosophies to understand the Catholic position on this important matter. It is important to note that God, whose existence is proved by human reason, is not the undying energy of the physicist, not the vague impersonal being of the deist, but He is a personal God, who has created man, upon whom man is dependent and to whom, therefore, man has certain duties and obligations. Without God, the Catholic maintains there is no ultimate purpose in life, no ultimate purpose in education. For God made man, according to the words of the penny catechism, "to know, love and serve Him in this life and be happy with Him forever in the next."

1. God

One of the five proofs¹ that Saint Thomas gives for the existence of God is based on the argument from contingency: that is, there are contingent beings in the world about us, beings that have not the reason for their existence within themselves; they depend for their existence on some other force. Eventually we must come to some being upon which they all depend. Ultimately we come to a noncontingent or necessary being, a being that is not dependent but independent. This necessary, self-existent being we call God.

Since God is the First Cause, He must be infinite and must contain in Himself in an infinite degree all the qualities and perfections

¹The *quinque viae* are found in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and in the *Summa Theologica*. For a further explanation of them cf. E. Gilson, *The Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, chaps. iv and v. (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1939.) Also R. P. Phillips, *Modern Thomistic Philosophy*, Vol. II, chap. ii. (Westminster: Newman, 1945.)

He has caused. Among these are intellect and will. God therefore is infinitely wise and infinitely powerful. In other words, He is a personal God. This fact of facts, the existence of a personal God, is of supreme importance for any program of education. For education deals with the formation of the whole man, body and soul, intellect and will. In the area of character education, for example, the Catholic would hold that any character-training program that left God out of consideration would be not merely inadequate but utterly false.

2. The Nature of Man

Verbs of teaching govern two accusatives, the person taught and the thing taught. Now, obviously, a great deal of our philosophy of education depends upon our view of the person taught; in other words, upon the nature of man. Obviously, those who hold that the child is composed of a material body and an immortal soul will differ *toto coelo* from those who hold that the educand is merely a machine or a physico-chemical combination, or a bundle of S-R bonds or a product of the cosmic evolutionary process. That is the reason why we have *philosophies* of education, not a philosophy of education.

Scholastic philosophy, basing its proofs on rational grounds,¹ holds that:

a) Man was created by God. Since God is infinitely wise and infinitely good, He must have created man for a purpose. That purpose is man's happiness, a happiness to be realized only perfectly in God.

b) Man is composed of body and soul, united in essential unity. Thus it is not the mind that thinks; it is the person, John Smith, that thinks. It is not the body that feels; it is again John Smith that feels.

c) The soul of man is immaterial, spiritual; that is, intrinsically independent of matter, although necessarily united to the body to form a composite.

d) Man has an intellect; that is, he is capable of understanding, of forming judgments, of drawing conclusions.

e) Man has free will, the ability to make a free choice. I ought,

¹ For these proofs cf. G. J. MacGillivray (editor), *Man*. (New York: Benziger Bros., 1932.) Or C. C. Martindale, *Man and His Destiny*. (London: Burns, Oates, Washbourne, 1928.)

therefore I can, although I need not. Free will does not imply that we act without a motive. Nor does it imply that all human acts are free. In an individual's day there may be very few fully free acts.

f) Because of his intellect and free will, man is essentially different from the highest form of brute life. Man is an animal, but a rational animal. No mere animal thinks or wills.

g) Since the soul of man is immaterial or spiritual, it can be destroyed by God alone. Only annihilation can blot it out of existence; and to annihilate belongs solely to God. On the other hand, there is in human nature everywhere and at all times a craving for perfect happiness, so universal that it can only have been put into human nature by the Author of that nature itself. Since this perfect happiness is unattainable in this life even by those who keep God's law, we can have no reasonable doubt of the immortality of man's soul. Otherwise, we have a natural human craving that never can be fulfilled.

h) There are certain human acts which are of their very nature good and deserving of praise, and therefore independent of all human law; other actions are of their very nature, that is, intrinsically, bad and deserving of blame. The scholastic holds that there is a norm to determine the good act from the bad act.

If there be no norm to determine what actions are good and what are bad, then indeed man is a weathercock, carried now in this direction, now in another, according as whim or the influence of his fellows or his environment is most prevalent. Even though he desire to be moral, unless he has a yardstick with which to measure the good and the bad, morality will be beyond his reach.

Scholastic philosophy teaches that there is such a yardstick, such a norm of morality, one eminently usable; namely, man's rational nature taken in its entirety. Consequently, the scholastic would hold that those actions that are in conformity with man's rational nature are good, those that are not in conformity with man's rational nature are bad. What does reason teach us about man's nature? First, that it is composite, made up of body and soul. Second, that man's nature is social by its very essence; that is, intended by its Creator to live in society. Third, it is contingent; that is, not independent, not responsible for its own being and existence, but dependent on its Creator, God. From this it follows that man has duties to himself, to his neighbor, to his God. He must so live his life that the higher part of him, the spiritual, be not made subordinate to the organic. Consequently, drunkenness is in itself evil because it is not in conformity with man's rational nature; rather it

places the soul and its powers in a subordinate position to the animal appetites. Secondly, he has duties to his fellowman. Certain of these duties are in conformity with his social nature, as a member of domestic society, the family; as a member of civil society; as a member of world society. Therefore, assisting one's neighbor, playing the good Samaritan, supporting one's children and obeying parents are things good in themselves because in conformity with man's social nature. On the other hand, dishonesty, lying, stealing and murder are intrinsically wrong because they run counter to man's social nature. Thirdly, man's contingent nature indicates clearly man's duties to God. Therefore, blasphemy, irreverence toward God are things bad in themselves. Worship and service of God are good because in accord with the contingent nature of man. Suicide is an evil thing in itself because man, as a contingent being, has no dominion over his own life.

Difficult as it may be to indicate all the duties of man to God, his neighbor and himself, this is nevertheless simplicity itself compared to the attempts made by some of the character educators who put before us a changing norm of morality. In the scholastic system there is a yardstick, fixed and unchanging, suitable for all ages and all countries. Granted that it may be hard in certain circumstances to determine what is lying, what is dishonesty, the fact remains that in the scholastic system lying and dishonesty are evil things. Further, there is a hierarchy of values. If there be a conflict between man's duties to God and to his neighbor, the inferior right must cede to the superior. First things come first. Charity is a good thing, but if giving away one's possessions means impoverishment of one's dependents, right order would show that this was not a good thing. Man's duties are first to his own household.

3. Educational Implications of the Foregoing

Quite independently of any dogmas of faith or any calling on truths known through revelation, the scholastic can formulate a definition of education:

Education is the organized development and equipment of all the powers of a human being, moral, intellectual and physical, by and for their individual and social uses, directed towards the union of these activities with their Creator as their final end.¹

¹T. Corcoran, S.J., *Private Notes*. Dublin, n.d.

Anyone who accepted Aristotle's or Aquinas' teaching about the nature of man would concur in that definition, be he Catholic or Calvinist, Jew or Gentile. Indeed, there was a time in the history of the world when this was the only definition of education. Until the nineteenth century, all education was religious and God-centered, if we except the brief interlude of the Encyclopedists and the French Revolution, which had little immediate influence on school practice. President Hutchins, in the *Higher Learning in America*, says that, in the modern world, theology, the principle of order in the medieval university, cannot be an integrating force in education and, as a consequence, the modern man is obliged to go to metaphysics to draw education out of its disorder and chaos. Yet Mr. Hutchins knows very well that metaphysics necessarily deals with the existence and nature of God. With the metaphysical principles of which President Hutchins speaks—which Professor Adler has clearly enunciated—the Catholic will readily concur. His only difficulty is that they do not go far enough. For the Catholic bases his theory of education not merely on metaphysical principles; he must also take into consideration the facts about man and his destiny made known to him through revelation. In fact, he would argue that the metaphysics of Aristotle and Aquinas need completion by the theology of Aquinas.

It is not merely because President Hutchins rejects theology that Catholics disagree with him, no matter how greatly they may admire the lucidity and sanity of his theory. But even his philosophy or metaphysics can be questioned—not because it is false—it is not—but because it has no *roots*. In the literal sense of the word, it is *une philosophie déracinée*. It is a de-Christianized philosophy or metaphysic. Mr. Gilson says:

I call *Christian every philosophy which, although keeping the two orders [i.e. the natural and supernatural] formally distinct, nevertheless considers the Christian revelation as an indispensable auxiliary to reason.*¹

Mr. Hutchins rejects revelation, not because he wants to, but because a naturalistic, secular world will have none of it. When he quotes Aquinas, he quotes an Aquinas that never existed. For Aquinas did not merely reëdit Aristotle, he added to Aristotle's metaphysics those corrections made known to him through Christian revelation. In a Christian philosophy, the supernatural must

¹ *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, p. 37. Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1936.

descend as a constitutive element—not, of course, into its texture, which would be a contradiction, but into the work of its construction.

In an article in the *Journal of Higher Education* discussing the new program at Saint John's College, Adam Alles claims that the restoration of medieval metaphysics is not enough; there must also be a restoration of medieval theology, which he sneeringly calls "mythology."

Our second thought reminds us that medieval metaphysics or theology [*natural theology*?] was accompanied by a mythology [*theology*] and that whoever wants to reclaim medieval theology [he means *metaphysics* or *natural theology*] must also reclaim medieval mythology [*theology!*]. On the theoretical [*metaphysical*] side, God was thought of as the creator and sustainer of the events of nature; on the mythological [*theological*] side, He was thought of as having taken on human form. . . . This is the great fact of the incarnation and God's supreme revelation to man. Around it centered medieval thought. Therefore, whoever desires to reclaim medieval metaphysics must also recapture medieval mythology. [Again, *theology*.] He cannot take medieval theology [*metaphysics* or *natural theology*] and leave its mythology [*theology*], because that theology [*natural theology*] makes sense only in the light of the mythology [*theology*] on which it is based The Catholic church has been fully conscious of this fact; that is the reason why she has kept her mythology [*theology*] intact Under no conditions, therefore, has the Catholic church ever compromised on that mythology [*theology*].¹

Despite Mr. Alles' contemptuous use of the term mythology in speaking of the sacred science of theology, despite his confusion in applying the term theology to what is evidently metaphysics or that branch of metaphysics known as natural theology, there is a certain half-truth in what he says, *mutatis mutandis*. Not that metaphysics is dependent on theology. On the contrary, as Mr. Adler said so finely and truly at the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, held in New York, September 10, 1940:

Metaphysics is valid knowledge of both sensible and suprasensible being. Metaphysics is able to demonstrate the existence of suprasensible being, for it can demonstrate the existence of God, by appealing to the evidence of the senses and the principles of reason, and without any reliance upon articles of religious faith.²

¹ Adam Alles, "Whither Education," *Journal of Higher Education*, XI (October, 1940), 371-378.

² Mortimer Adler, "God and the Professors," *Vital Speeches*, VII (December, 1949), 101.

Metaphysics is autonomous; it does not stand or fall on facts discovered by theology. Nevertheless, the truths of philosophy are made clearer, more certain, by revelation. Certain facts pertaining to man and God would never be known except for revelation. The scholastic holds that the candlelight of reason shows us the fact of God's existence so clearly that only the wilfully blind could fail to see it; nevertheless, to glimpse the richness and fullness of the concept of God, especially the wondrous sweep of the divine attributes, there was needed the effulgent beaconlight of revelation. So, too, with regard to man's nature. Reason here can tell us much; it can never tell us all about man; it can never tell us that man was raised to a supernatural life, that he fell from his high estate and was restored in wondrous manner by the Son of God.

To quote Mr. Adler again:

What is known by faith about God's nature and man's destiny is knowledge which exceeds the power of the human intellect to attain without God's revelation of Himself . . .

Religious faith, on which sacred theology rests, is itself a supernatural act of the human intellect and is thus a divine gift.

Because God is its cause, faith is more certain than knowledge resulting from the purely natural action of the human faculties.

Sacred theology is independent of philosophy, in that its principles are truths of faith, whereas philosophical principles are truths of reason, but this does not mean that theology can be speculatively developed without reason serving faith.

There can be no conflict between philosophical and theological truths, although theologians may correct the errors of philosophers who try to answer questions beyond the competence of natural reason, just as philosophers can correct the errors of theologians who violate the autonomy of reason.

Sacred theology is superior to philosophy, both theoretically and practically; theoretically, because it is more perfect knowledge of God and His creatures; practically, because moral philosophy is insufficient to direct man to God as his last end.¹

It is necessary then to examine the theological postulates—annoying though it may be to the modern mind that distrusts theology—upon which the Catholic theory of education rests.

¹ *Loc. cit.*

III. Theological Bases of the Catholic Theory of Education

1. Man Has a "Supernature"

Christianity is meaningless without revelation. The Catholic Church teaches that revelation is possible and that a revelation has taken place. Revelation is the act whereby God speaks to men through Himself or through His messenger, making a statement the truth of which He guarantees. It is not an interior emotional experience; it is a statement of truth made to man in a definite place at a definite time, by a personal God who is outside and distinct from the recipient.¹

Among these truths revealed to man by God is that of a supernature, or of a supernatural life of grace, as it is called. Confusing theological controversies have obscured the very meaning of the supernatural. Some writers on education confuse it with "other-worldly." Yet "other-worldly" and supernatural are not synonymous. "Other-worldliness," it is true, implies a supernatural viewpoint, but it is by no means identical with supernatural. Neither does it mean mystical nor magical nor "ghostly." The reason for this confusion is largely owing to the fact that the modern world has lost its interest in its Christian heritage, has whittled down the meaning of supernatural until it has ceased to have any clear meaning at all.

The teaching of the Catholic Church is that not only did God create Adam with his human nature, consisting of a human body and an immortal soul, but He also gave him that to which man has no right, a higher kind of life, a supernature, implying a supernatural life of grace and a destiny of supernatural union with Him. This life is not merely an improved human nature. It is something distinct from, superadded to, human nature. The natural life, man's body and soul with all their faculties, remains intact even when the supernatural is added. The natural, moreover, would not be destroyed even if the supernatural life itself should be lost.

2. The "Fall of Man"

Now the supernatural life of grace was given to Adam conditionally; namely, on the condition of fidelity to a special command. This command was disobeyed and therefore God withdrew His

¹ George D. Smith, *Faith and Revealed Truth*. London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1929.

special gift of supernatural life, and left Adam on the merely natural level. Such is the teaching of the Church on the "Fall." The Fall means simply the rejection and loss of the supernatural life. Adam was the head of the line; if he had kept his inheritance of supernature, all his descendants would have come into the world with it. But he, the responsible representative of the race, rejected the gift of God; therefore all the sons and daughters of Adam are born without that special life of grace God intended them to have. This in brief is the Church's dogma of original sin. Human nature was not *depraved* because of Adam's sin, as Calvin held, but *deprived* of this supernatural life of grace.

Calvin believed in the Fall, but, unlike the Catholic, he regarded man as essentially depraved by reason of the Fall. Hence the doctrine of total depravity, which originated with Calvin, and its fatal consequences to education. Rousseau did not believe in the dogma of original sin; it is doubtful if he believed in any dogma; he regarded nature as essentially good. The Calvinistic doctrine of total depravity was too much for this romantic sensualist. Therefore, he threw out the whole thing: Fall, original sin, Redemption, Christianity. Two men, Calvin and Rousseau, are responsible for the world's failure to accept the Catholic *via media*: that nature, by reason of Adam's sin, is deprived and wounded, but not depraved; that deprivation is made up for us by a restoration through the Second Adam, for "by His wounds we are healed."

3. The Restoration of Man

It is the Church's teaching that it was not God's will that this deprivation should be final. In God's plan this restoration was to take place through a second Adam, one who was to stand like the first Adam as the representative of the human race, with whom we could be incorporated or united through bonds of solidarity. For this office of Second Adam, God chose His own Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who took upon Himself our human nature. Through His Incarnation, Life, Passion, Death, and Resurrection, He gloriously atoned for Adam's sin. God's plan was that all men should incorporate themselves with the Second Adam, and thus, united with the very source of supernatural life, since He is God, be in a state even better than if merely restored to the position lost to them through Adam's sin.

The liturgy of the Church shows this whole teaching in striking fashion in the ancient prayer that the priest says at Mass, as he

pours water into the wine which is to be consecrated, thus symbolizing the union of our human nature with the divine nature of Christ:

O God, who through creation has wonderfully ennobled human nature and still more wonderfully re-created it, grant that by the mystery of this water and wine we may be made partakers of His divinity who in our humanity did not disdain to share.

4. Difficulties of Moderns

Nothing is more irritating to the modern than this dogma of the supernatural, a dogma that cannot be proved by anthropology, history, psychology or any other human science. Yet nothing is more certain than this, that all traditional historic Christianity is inextricably bound up with it. It cannot be demonstrated by human reason; it requires God's revelation to bring to our knowledge this fact that man is supernaturalized. This traditional teaching of Christendom, which the Catholic Church teaches today as she did in the fourth century, gives point and focus to the life and practice of that Church, explains her attitude toward the things of eternity as opposed to the transient pageant of this world, brings out in bold relief her hierarchy of values. This may be far from clear to the modern; indeed, it may sound like the veriest nonsense. Yet it must be insisted that the Catholic position is utterly unintelligible unless this primary fact of the supernatural life be recognized. The Catholic takes the existence of the supernatural on the word of God and the teaching of the Church; it is part of the very air he breathes. Unacceptable the supernatural may well be to the "modern mind"; it may be regarded as the nadir of irrationality to admit even the possibility, still more the fact, of a divine revelation of the existence of the supernatural. Yet once the Catholic starting point of a supernatural life and man's supernatural destiny is recognized, then with unerring logic follows the Catholic position on the whole educational question.

5. Christianity Based on the Dogma of "Fall"

It must be evident to one who knows anything about history that revelation—prescinding for the moment whether it be true or false—and theological speculations concerning revelation have played a tremendous part in the theory and practice of education in the Western world. If there had been no revelation made to man by God, or if man had not imagined such a thing, then the whole

history of civilization and education would have been vastly different from the present record. Either there was in human history such an event as is succinctly spoken of in Christian theology as the "Fall of Man," or for thousands of years men mistakenly believed there was such a fact. Not only does Christianity base its doctrine and practice upon that fact, but our whole civilization and, consequently, education depend upon it.

No reputable historian could deny that the main factor in the building of our Western civilization has been Christianity. Now, unless this fact of the "Fall of Man"—or, if you will, the dogma of original sin—be admitted, Christianity simply collapses like a pricked balloon. It not only becomes an antiquated superstition; it becomes, in a very literal sense of the word, nonsense. For, without the Fall, there would be no need of the Incarnation and Redemption, the two cardinal points of Christian belief.

6. Educational Theory Dependent on View of "Fall"

Two moderns of widely different antecedents, with antipodal philosophies, Friedrich Foerster, the devout Lutheran educator, and Bertrand Russell, the modern skeptic, both have come quite independently to the same conclusion; namely, that in the last analysis all theories of education are dependent on the views taken of the dogma of original sin. For every theory of education hinges on the precise nature of the educand. What is the nature of the material with which we are dealing in our educational work? What is there inherent in the nature of the child that enables us to indulge in wild Utopian dreams about the effect of education on the human spirit? Or are these dreams as fantastic as the palaces of Xanadu? Is there some essential obstacle in human nature that prevents us from even thinking high thoughts about the possibilities of education?

7. Catholic Attitude toward the "Natural"

With the Catholic emphasis on the supernatural, the question may well be raised: What is the Catholic attitude toward nature? Does the supernatural exclude the natural? Saint Thomas gives the answer. God is the beginning and end of creation; God's goodness and beauty are the absolutes to which all natural beauty and goodness are relative,¹ the symmetry Aquinas advocates is the sym-

¹ See G. Vann, *On Being Human*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1934.

metry demanded by a supernatural end. The supernatural completes the natural; *gratia perficit naturam*, grace perfects nature. For the Catholic is neither Manichee nor Puritan.

Nature was not corrupt, even despite the cataclysmic effects of the Fall; it was merely wounded. Hence, in education as in life, there was no repression of legitimate human desires merely for the sake of repression. Marriage was a good thing, as was merriment and song and laughter. The humanism of the Catholic is the humanism of Christ, a Christ that suffered the little children gladly, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven, a Christ that consorted with publicans and wine-bibbers and attended as an honored guest the marriage-feast at Cana. All flesh was sanctified, in the Catholic sense, since the day that the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.

8. Catholic Theory of Education Unchangeable

There has been acrimonious debate within the Catholic Church at various periods of history as to what the child should be taught, but the attitude of the Church in this matter of the child's nature has never changed. Every child born into this world is regarded as a child of Adam. Therefore, he comes into the world with Adam's inheritance, a lowlier estate because deprived of supernatural life than would have been his had it not been for the fall of Adam. Through the life, passion, death and resurrection of Christ, the Son of God, every one of the descendants of Adam can be restored to his rightful heritage as a child of God. The whole business of the Church is for this purpose, to give this new life to all the sons of men, to keep it alive and growing, bringing forth fruits. So, too, the educational work of the Church is precisely for that purpose. Her whole educational aim is to restore the sons of Adam to their high position as children of God, citizens of the kingdom of God.

The encyclical of Pius XI merely reëmphasizes these ancient truths:

Education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must do here below in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created . . .

It must never be forgotten that the subject of Christian education is man whole and entire, soul united to body in unity of nature, with all his faculties, natural and supernatural, such as right reason and revelation show him to be; man, therefore, fallen from his original estate, but

redeemed by Christ and restored to the supernatural condition of adopted sons of God . . .

Hence, the true Christian, product of Christian education, is the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ; in other words, to use the current term, the true and finished man of character.¹

9. The Supernatural, the Basis of the Catholic System

The key of the Catholic system is the supernatural. Not only Catholic theology, but Catholic practice, the Catholic attitude toward life, and most of all, Catholic education are insoluble mysteries if we exclude an understanding of the supernatural. The Church holds that she is divinely commissioned by Christ to carry on His work, to do what He did. "I am come that you may have life, that you may have it more abundantly." The Church continues that work, bringing this supernatural life to men who have not yet received it, surrounding it with safeguards that it may not be lost, restoring it once more to those who perversely cast it aside. The same is true of her educational system. Her primary purpose in establishing schools, kindergartens or universities is not merely to teach fractions or logarithms, biology or seismology, grammar or astronomy—these subjects are subordinate to her main purpose to inculcate the "eminent knowledge and love of Jesus Christ our Lord," a knowledge so intimate, a love so strong that it will lead necessarily to a closer following of Christ. Other-worldly? Yes, if you will; for, strange as it may seem, the Church considers religion as more important than fractions. If it came to a point where a choice must be made between endangering faith by learning fractions or keeping the faith and not knowing fractions, there is only one answer.

Not, of course, that there is an essential conflict between fractions and the supernatural life, but man can create a fictitious conflict. Let us suppose, for example, that the Nazis had conquered America, had established a monopoly of schools, forcing all in its schools to accept the pagan ideology of Rosenberg with its cult of the state. To such a school no Catholic child could go, even though it meant that the child would grow up illiterate.

¹ Pius XI, *Encyclical on Christian Education*.

10. Catholic Hierarchy of Values

Since so much time has been spent elaborating the Catholic concept of man's nature, a concept derived from psychological dualism that man's nature is a unit, though composite, made up of body and soul, possessing intellect and free will; derived, too, from ethical theory with regard to man's origin, nature and destiny, man's duties to God, his neighbor and himself, the unchanging norm of morality based on man's composite, social and contingent nature; a concept of man's nature illuminated by revelation to include the supernatural, with all that is connoted in theological science by that term, it clearly follows that there is a certain hierarchy of values in Catholic education. Supernatural values are obviously of more importance than the natural; spiritual values of greater import than the bodily; and eternal of more significance than temporal.

IV. Objectives of Catholic Education

The ultimate objective of Catholic education can be stated very simply. In the words of Pius XI:

The proper and immediate end of Christian education is to co-operate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian, that is, to form Christ Himself in those regenerated by Baptism . . .

For precisely this reason, Christian education takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic and social, not with a view of reducing it in any way, but in order to elevate, regulate and perfect it, in accordance with the example and teaching of Christ.

Hence the true Christian, product of Christian education, is the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ; in other words, to use the current term, the true and finished man of character. For it is not every kind of consistency and firmness of conduct based on subjective principles that makes true character, but only constancy in following the eternal principles of justice.

. . . The true Christian does not renounce the activities of this life; he does not stunt his natural faculties; but he develops and perfects them by coordinating them with the supernatural. He thus ennobles what is merely natural in life and secures for it new strength in the material and temporal order, no less than in the spiritual and eternal.¹

With this ultimate aim of Catholic education, there never has been, there can be no change. Given the Church's teaching about man's nature and supernature, and man's supernatural destiny, it is impossible to see how there could be any change. Into this ultimate aim every type of Catholic educational institution must fit, from kindergarten to graduate school; otherwise it has no right to be called a Catholic school. For no matter how poor the intellectual training it imparts, no matter how badly equipped academically the teachers may be, that school is a Catholic school which holds fast to its philosophy of supernaturalism. This is not to say that the school, *qua* school, must have as its specific concern the moral virtues as opposed to the intellectual virtues; that controversy will be referred to later.

Education is not confined to the school. There are other agencies concerned in the training of the child: the home and the Church, to mention but two. Thus religious education, moral education,

¹ Pius XI, *Encyclical on Christian Education*.

training in citizenship, courtesy, character education, even intellectual training, are not exclusively the prerequisites of the school; they could not be. But the Catholic Church insists that each Catholic agency, the Catholic home, the Catholic school, place first things first; but that does not necessarily mean that the Church intends that character training, religious training and the rest should be the exclusive function of the school. It may well be doubted, however, whether character training, religious formation, can be imparted without a solid intellectual foundation. Some element of knowledge, varying in amount with the stage of development of the child, must enter into the formation of habit which is the basis of good character education and even of religious education. Obviously, habits cannot be properly established in a human being without his having some intellectual grasp of the motives upon which habits are based, of the standards by which their value is judged. Objectives of conduct are not attained by irrational, mechanical drill.

I. Objectives of the American Catholic Elementary School

Dr. George Johnson of the Catholic University has stated what he regards as the aim of the Catholic elementary school.

The aim of the Catholic elementary school is to provide the child with those experiences which are calculated to develop in him such knowledge, appreciation and habits as will yield a character equal to the contingencies of fundamental Christian living in American democratic society.¹

American Catholics believe that America's tradition of democracy, her splendid struggle to achieve that democracy, are of right taught every Catholic child in the elementary school together with his rich, colorful Catholic heritage. In addition, of course, there must be training in the skills necessary to enable him to take his place as a useful citizen in America. To prepare the child to lead an intelligent Catholic life in contemporary American society, it is necessary to impart training in processes that are needed for American Catholic citizenship. Further, it is necessary to hand on the tradition of Catholicism and American democracy in such a fashion that knowledge will develop into an appreciation of that Catholic and American background. In a word, the elementary school aims to impart those knowledges and skills, habits and appreciative atti-

¹ *National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin*, XXII (Nov., 1925), 458 ff.

tudes that will fit the child to be an intelligent, practical Catholic, a good citizen, a good member of society, including the various groups to which he belongs, family, working group, neighborhood and the like.

2. Indoctrination

The Catholic educator does not hesitate to teach the rules of grammar, the multiplication tables, spelling and the like. The child is given no choice in these matters. So, too, with regard to patriotism, love of country—a very noble Christian virtue—truths about God and God's law, he does not wait for the child to discover these important truths for himself; he helps him to discover them. As E. I. Watkin says,

[This is] the justification of a religious education—no imposition of ideas upon the unreceptive and recalcitrant, but simply the showing what is actually there and what otherwise they might not see. For not only are individuals intellectually or spiritually color-blind or sufferers from astigmatism; entire groups, races or epochs display particular faults of vision, which require correction by reference to a complete body of truth handed down through the ages and taught universally.¹

3. Objectives of the American Catholic Secondary School

The high school in America is a completion of education for some and a preparation of further education for others. The theory of universal secondary education, about which there probably is among Catholics, as among other groups, wide divergence of opinion, has brought about a multiplication of secondary schools and an amazing increase in the secondary school population which unquestionably have produced a lowering of intellectual standards through adaptation of the curriculum to the needs of the students. Yet, taking it as it is, the Catholic secondary school in America must find its objectives within the frame of reference that is common to all Catholic institutions—the supernatural. Therefore, its aims are a further and richer development of those knowledges and skills, habits and appreciations that will fit the pupil to be

- a) an intelligent human being according to his capabilities;
- b) an intelligent, practical Catholic, with all that these terms connote;
- c) an intelligent, good American citizen;

¹E. I. Watkin, *The Bow in the Clouds*, p. 7. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1954.

d) an intelligent, helpful member of society and of those particular groups of which he is or will be a member—the family, professions, vocations, etc.

Therefore, the Catholic high school must cultivate in its pupils an intelligent appreciation of Catholicism and of the traditions of American democracy so as to bring about these ends.

It may be noted that “intelligent” is emphasized throughout in the above statement. This does not mean that the Catholic school is indifferent to character, or supernatural virtue, but it must be insisted, as the writer has said elsewhere, that:

A school is set up by a community to perform certain functions that it, and it alone, can perform. In addition, it aids other agencies, notably the family and the Church, in other functions that are common to it and to them. Now those who conduct a secondary school must have a hierarchy of values. For example, good moral character is more important than proficiency in grammar; good citizenship of greater value than ability to appreciate a play of Shakespeare. For the Catholic secondary school, development of the Christian virtues is obviously of greater worth than learning or anything else. Therefore it follows that the secondary school cannot be indifferent to these higher values. Since the pupils in the Catholic secondary school are not disembodied intellects, still less merely higher types in the animal kingdom, but children of God, redeemed by Christ our Lord, a Catholic school would fail wholly if it did not consciously strive to impart training in Catholic character.

But it must be remembered that these higher values, Christian citizenship, Christian character, supernatural virtues, are not the exclusive concern of the school. The school alone cannot secure them unaided. Surely it is conceivable that virtues can be developed by young people who never went to high school. Mere literacy of itself or the possession of a high-school diploma is no guarantee of either virtue or citizenship. But if the school does not attend to intellectual training at all, is not concerned with the fact that its students are not mastering grammar or reading or whatever may constitute the high-school curriculum, then it is not merely a poor school; it forfeits the right to be called a school at all, even though it may be successful in developing the virtues of a Christian character.

The Catholic secondary school has the specific function of training for intellectual virtues. Yet as a Catholic institution it must always recognize that since it is concerned with the whole pupil, intellectual training is not enough, nor is it even the most important thing in the life of the child. It is even possible that under certain circumstances it must forsake or abandon temporarily its specific purpose, and turn to the more important business of training for the moral virtues.

Examples may help to clarify this point. The specific purpose of a shoe factory is to make shoes; yet a Christian shoe manufacturer will necessarily admit that development of Christian virtue is more important. If shoemaking interfered with Christian virtues, shoemaking would have to cease. But in that event, he would cease calling his establishment a shoe factory. A library is a place to serve readers with books; yet in time of war the librarian and his staff might have to use the building for housing the wounded. If this were to be a permanent arrangement, quite obviously it could no longer be called a library. So, too, with our high schools. If a great moral or physical disaster were imminent, we might conceivably have to give up the work of intellectual training of our students and devote our efforts for the time to the exclusive development of the moral virtues. But, I maintain, there is no necessary incompatibility between virtue and learning. A good secondary school will use its intellectual training as a means to the well-rounded development of the characters of its pupils. One can say that if a secondary school fails to insist on intellectual training, it fails also in character training.

The purpose then of the Catholic high school, as I understand it, is to develop Catholic boys and girls along intellectual lines, to turn out intelligent Catholic citizens with an appreciative knowledge of their heritage as American citizens and an appreciative knowledge of their Catholic heritage. Only in the Catholic school can this appreciative knowledge be fully secured. If it be true—and we know that it is true—that our concept of democracy is based on the dignity of man, then it is only in the Catholic school that the proper dignity of man can be learned, because only there will youth learn that man has dignity because he is created by God to His image and likeness, only there will he learn of the high estate to which he has been called—a son of God, redeemed by Christ our Lord.¹

4. Objectives of Catholic Higher Education

Higher education in America includes everything from the college of liberal arts to the graduate school, from a school of medicine to a college of agriculture. The confusion and bewilderment of aim so characteristic of American higher education, the utilitarian, anti-intellectual elements that prevail there, which make Mr. Hutchins despair of hoping for anything but triviality, mediocrity and chaos from the present American educational system, are unfortunately all too true of most Catholic institutions. Nevertheless, despite this lack of solidity and standards, the Catholic college and university have retained their supernatural viewpoint.

¹ William J. McGucken, "Intelligence and Character," *The National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin*, XXXVI (May, 1940), 10-12.

Naturally enough, Catholic institutions have imitated the externals of college and university here in America; perhaps necessarily so. Nor do they cease by that fact *qua* Catholic institution to be any the less Catholic, just so long as they hold fast to their philosophy of supernaturalism, so long as they realize they are training not merely for time, but for eternity, although possibly inefficient *qua* institutions of higher education.

The traditional purpose of the university is

- a) the conservation of knowledge and ideas and values;
- b) the interpretation and transmission of knowledge and ideas and values;
- c) the quest of truth through scholarly research;
- d) the preparation for professions not by mere *ad hoc* training in techniques but by intelligent and thorough training in the principles underlying the professions.

5. Idea of the University in Its Origins

This was the idea of the university from its origin. True, historically the character of the university was determined by the idea of knowledge which its age valued, by the type of man it intended to produce, and by the economic, social, political and religious conditions of the nation and age in which it found itself. The oneness of learning, which in an earlier day united all the universities irrespective of their accidental differences, no longer exists. In the Middle Ages, theology or philosophy, rooted in Christianity, was that principle of unity. The Reformation shattered the common faith that united Christendom and the universities of Christendom, without, however, removing theology from its place at the summit of the tower of learning. But in the eighteenth century, theology was dismissed as a poor slattern by the men of the Enlightenment. The principle of unity where such a principle existed now became philosophy, not indeed the ancient Christian philosophy of the schoolmen, but a philosophy that was contemptuous of all revealed truth, hostile to all supernatural values. In the nineteenth century, philosophy gave way to naturalism; the experimental method became the ruling spirit in the secular university. The scientific method is the sole possession that is common to all modern universities.

Science, however, and the scientific method—excellent though they are in their proper sphere—cannot alone help the university to fulfill that function which is proper to it, i.e., to be an interpreter and guardian of values. It is because of this that confusion has

overtaken the modern university. It has failed properly to guard and hand on the heritage entrusted to it. Pragmatism has ruled the university and in the mad scramble to turn out statisticians, business men, social workers, laboratory technicians—all excellent professions, as who shall deny?—the university has forgotten that it must train its sons in human values first before it attempts to impart techniques.

6. A Non-Catholic View

Howard Mumford Jones, a non-Catholic writer, says in this connection:

What is the source of this confusion? Let us contrast the Catholic and the non-Catholic traditions in liberal education. Roughly speaking, the problem of values does not arise in the Catholic educational tradition, or if it does arise, it does not arise in the same way. The Catholic university may be objective in matters of pure science, but in the humanities it is not unpartisan and it does not try to be. The core of the Catholic system is theology; theology in turn conditions Catholic ethics and Catholic philosophy; and the Catholic point of view in the interpretation of history and literature is unmistakable. Indeed, it is precisely because the church does not desire to intrust the question of values to irreligious hands that Catholic institutions of higher learning exist. There is a definite point of view which, if it avoids dogma, implies doctrine; and consequently Catholic education in the humanities has a certainty with which one may quarrel, but which in contrast to the confusion of mind among non-Catholic professional educational leaders is admirable.¹

No doubt many who heard Professor Jones' lecture at the University of Chicago misinterpreted his words to mean that the Catholic university is hampered by Pope and dogma. Many were perhaps naive enough to believe that Catholic universities receive bulls from Rome at the beginning of September mapping out their course of instruction for the coming year. Unfortunately, no such delightful practice exists.

7. The Function of the Catholic University

The precise function of the Catholic university was defined in imperishable prose in Cardinal Newman's sermon on "Intellect, the

¹ William S. Gray (editor), *General Education: Its Nature, Scope, and Essential Elements*, pp. 43-44. Proceedings of the Institute for Administrative Officers of Higher Institutions, Vol. VI. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934.

Instrument of Religious Training." All of it deserves careful reading in the light of the present confusion.

Here then, I conceive, is the object of the Holy See and the Catholic Church in setting up universities; it is to reunite things which were in the beginning joined together by God, and have been put asunder by man. Some persons will say that I am thinking of confining, distorting and stunting the growth of intellect by ecclesiastical supervision. I have no such thought. Nor have I any thought of a compromise, as if religion must give up something, and science something. I wish the intellect to range with the utmost freedom, and religion to enjoy an equal freedom; but what I am stipulating is that they should be found in one and the same place and exemplified in the same persons. I want to destroy that diversity of centres, which puts everything into confusion by creating contrariety of influences. I wish the same spots and the same individuals to be at once oracles of philosophy and shrines of devotion. It will not satisfy me, what has satisfied so many, to have two independent systems, intellectual and religious, going at once side by side, by a sort of division of labor, and only accidentally brought together. It will not satisfy me, if religion is here, and science there, and young men converse with science all day, and lodge with religion in the evening. It is not touching the evil, to which these remarks have been directed, if the young man eat and drink and sleep in one place, and think in another. I want the same roof to contain both the intellectual and moral discipline. Devotion is not a sort of finish given to the sciences; nor is science a sort of feather in the cap, if I may so express myself, an ornament and set-off to devotion. I want the intellectual layman to be religious and the devout ecclesiastic to be intellectual.

This is no matter of terms, nor of subtle distinctions. Sanctity has its influence; intellect has its influence; the influence of sanctity is the greater in the long run; the influence of intellect is the greater at the moment. Therefore, in the case of the young, whose education lasts a few years, where the intellect is, there is the influence. Their literary, their scientific teachers really have the forming of them. Let both influences act freely. As a general rule, no system of mere religious guardianship which neglects the reason, will in matter of fact succeed against the school. Youths need a masculine religion, if it is to captivate their restless imaginations, and their wild intellects, as well as to touch their susceptible hearts.¹

The Catholic university can, indeed should, be singularly free from prejudice, although it may be freely granted that it was not always so. Catholic and secular educators alike may be swayed by passion, emotion, prejudice, propaganda. The Catholic university

¹ *Sermons on Various Occasions*. Sermon I.

welcomes research and scientific investigation; the only thing it has to fear is prejudice. A secular professor trained in naturalism may enter upon his research with certain definite prejudices. For example, here is a professor of psychology who is sure there is no spiritual soul, although he has no evidence for that conviction. His research is conditioned by blind, irrational prejudice. The Catholic professor, trained in metaphysics, enters his laboratory with no such bias. For the materialist, the soul, immortality, spirituality, God are anachronisms. For the Catholic scientist they are ever-present realities. They in no way hamper the research of the Catholic scientist or historian or philosopher. On the contrary, the Catholic scholar welcomes every scientific discovery, wherever found. The experimental naturalist too often fears the truth, seems dominated by theophobia. If a Catholic is dogmatic—and some Catholics are dogmatic—so too is the materialist with his absurd dogma denying the existence of all dogma, refusing even to consider the possibility of the spiritual.

The Catholic university, as all universities, is devoted to the pursuit of truth, has an obligation to further and deepen the intellectual life of its students, to raise the cultural standards in the community and region wherein it is situated. For the Catholic university above all, the thing of ultimate importance is not here but hereafter. This world has genuine value only in so far as it leads to the next.

The university must hold fast to its primary function—the imparting of wisdom and the discovery of truth. Conservation and conservative are terms closely allied. The university should be conservative in the etymological sense; it is the guardian of the culture of the intellectual world. While in no wise unfriendly to new discoveries, it should be unwilling to pick up its academic robes and run pell-mell after every pedagogical pied piper that pipes in the market-place. It is not progress for the university, even in a democracy, to lower its drawbridge for the howling mobs clamoring for admittance under the leadership of the apostles of service.

8. Values in a University

The university must have a standard of values. The rejection of values has been the great tragedy of the modern university, as it has been of the modern world. If there be no standards, if there be no abiding values, then indeed we must accept the gospel of despair. Material things have values—bread and circuses, pennies and footballs, jobs and games, but surely they are not the primary

concern of the university. The university deals with things of the mind; education is an intellectual and spiritual process which has to do with the opening of the windows of the human mind, the enrichment and ennobling of the human soul. Therefore, the university must place humane values, spiritual values, above material values; training of men in thinking is of more importance than training in techniques.

For the Catholic university there is another grade in the hierarchy of values. Above the material, above the spiritual, there exist supernatural values, values known through revelation. The Catholic university from its coign of vantage in the ancient Church has a view not merely of the world but of the superworld as well, not only of the facts in the natural order but of those in the supernatural order also, those facts that give meaning and coherence to the whole of life. And while it is true that it is the province primarily of the faculty of theology to impart knowledge of the supernatural, to investigate and promote research on revealed truth, nevertheless in a Catholic university there should always be on the part of all the faculties an awareness of these supernatural facts and values.

A university that is a static institution is bound to decay. It must give evidence that a life-giving principle is at work. This will be shown in the men that it sends forth to the world, intellectual leaders of the generation, to whom the university has handed on the burning torch of knowledge and wisdom. The university itself must promote the quest for truth, advancing the frontiers of knowledge by its research, its experimentation. The university is not a fortress, not a mere treasure-house of knowledge; it is in a very real sense an army in battle array, capturing now this outpost, now that, from the enemy, ignorance, while breaking new paths into unexplored fields. A university that simply hands on its knowledge and does not set its students aflame with enthusiasm to spread that knowledge has signally failed in its mission.

Since the Napoleonic era the principle of integration has scarcely existed in the university. It is this lack of integration that President Hutchins and Norman Foerster particularly deplore. Each discipline in the modern university is virtually autonomous. Philosophy, where it raises its trembling head, is sent back to its lair by the lord of the intellectual world, science. But how can this integration be accomplished in the modern university? Will the Hutchins solution of metaphysics be satisfactory?

9. Catholic Principles of Integration

For the Catholic university, there is a principle of integration—not an eclectic metaphysics, but the metaphysics of Aristotle and Aquinas. In Newman's phrase, we are all Aristotelians, we cannot help being so, "for the great Master does but analyze the thoughts, feelings, views and opinions of the human mind. He has told us the meaning of our own words and ideas, before we were born. In many subject matters, to think correctly is to think like Aristotle; and we are his disciples whether we will or not." Nevertheless, for the Catholic university this principle of integration is not merely metaphysics, but metaphysics supplemented by theology. In this the Catholic university of today is at one with the ancient University of Paris, the mother and fountainhead of all universities.

The Catholic university exists not for the sake of apologetics, not for the purpose of merely training its students for the "other life." In the words of Dietrich von Hildebrand,

[Catholic Universities are necessary] for the sake of the truly adequate objective knowledge, not by any means merely for the protection of the religious knowledge of the students. They are needed as the institutions where Catholic thinkers and men of science, supported by a truly Catholic environment, informed in their attitude by the spirit of Christ and of His Church, shall be enabled by a really unbiased, truly liberated and enlightened intelligence to penetrate adequately to reality and to achieve by organized teamwork that *universitas* which is nowadays so urgently needed. They must further be institutions in which young people may be educated to that attitude which represents an inevitable prerequisite for the learner also. A Catholic university would have no meaning if it were nothing but a collection of Catholic men of thought and science, while following the model of the modern university in its general atmosphere. It requires the conscious production of an atmosphere filled by Christ, an environment imbued with prayer; as an organism it must in its structure and in the common life of its teachers among each other and with their students be thoroughly Catholic. The students must breathe a Catholic air and Catholic spirit which will make them into anti-pedantic, humble, faithful, metaphysically courageous men of winged intelligence and learning, and therewith capable of truly adequate and objective knowledge . . .¹

¹ Walter M. Kotschnig and Elined Prys. *The University in a Changing World*, p. 219 ff. London: Oxford University Press, 1932.

V. Nature of Knowledge

Whether man can know anything, how he comes to know, and how true is this knowledge are fundamental to the whole educational question. Saint Thomas begins his treatise *De Magistro* with the question: "Whether man can teach another and be called a teacher or God alone?" Sceptics, anti-intellectuals, rationalists, Kantians have answered all these questions in various ways. The answer given here is that of moderate intellectualism, the theory of Aristotle and Saint Thomas.

The Aristotelian-Thomist concept of knowledge is very simple. Knowledge implies three things, a knower, a thing known, and the act of knowing. The knower is assumed to have the capacity to attain to truth with certitude because his senses and his intellect under certain conditions are infallible means of truth. This supposes, therefore, that truth exists; that man can attain it under certain conditions. It does not maintain that all our judgments are veracious, all our ideas are true, all our sense perceptions are correct; only that some of them can be. Further, it assumes that man can know when he has attained the truth.

1. How We Get Our Ideas

How man comes to know is handled by the scholastics in this fashion:

a) With our senses we see, let us say, trees of various shapes and colors and sizes.

b) Imagination and sense-memory keep the concrete images of the various trees, as they exist in nature, with their determinate sizes, colors and shapes.

c) Then the active intellect, by reason of its power of abstraction, prescind from the various differences in the images of the trees retained in the memory, and attends to the essential features common to all trees.

d) This essence, *abstracted* from its individuating notes, immaterialized, so to speak, in the process, is presented to the cognitive intellect.

e) This cognitive intellect, after this action of the active intellect, expresses the essence of the tree by means of a concept or immaterial representation of what is common to all trees.

This is the origin of universal concepts or ideas according to the scholastics. The abstract idea that we formulate of beauty, for ex-

ample, is derived as follows: We see beautiful things in nature; the active intellect abstracts, the cognitive intellect cognizes and forms the abstract idea of beauty. So too with patriotism, derived from patriotic deeds or from patriotic men. When we say "Man is mortal," man is a universal idea, derived from our sense-experience of Tom, Dick and Harry; of white men, black men, yellow men, red men; of brilliant men and stupid men; of kings and beggars; of Nordics and Alpines and Mediterranean types; of men who are our friends and men who are our enemies. By the power of abstraction in the human mind, we strip off the "Tomness," the whiteness, the brilliance, the kingliness, the "Nordicness," the "friendness" and reach the universal abstract idea of man. Nor will it do to attempt to reduce all ideas to sensations or to fusion of sense-images. We can distinguish our ideas from sensation, although it is undoubtedly true that our ideas are accompanied by sense-images, more or less vague. Gruender, in his chapter, on "Thought," says:

By an idea we become aware of the nature of any object whatever, while by a sensation we become aware only of a sensible object as it appears to our senses here and now. When, therefore, we become aware of an object which has no sensible qualities, we know by that very fact that we have an idea and not a sensation.¹

The relation between the hypotenuse and the other two sides of a right-angled triangle is an idea and not a sensation, because it is "neither hot nor cold, neither black nor yellow, etc.; it simply has no sensible qualities."

Without universal ideas, science itself would be impossible; we cannot formulate a scientific law or scientific hypothesis without the aid of abstract, universal ideas. When the mathematician says, "In a right-angled triangle the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides," he is not talking about this right-angled triangle on the blackboard, not even of an imaginary right-angled triangle, but he is talking about the "universal" right-angled triangle, which exists nowhere outside of his mind, but which has its foundation in reality. Of any right-angled triangle the statement in the proposition is true.

¹Hubert Gruender, *Experimental Psychology*, p. 308. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Bruce Publishing Co., 1932.

2. Being—the Object of the Mind

The object of the mind is to know what is—that is, to know being. The mind must see the universe of being—God, man, the cosmos—as a totality, with all its constituent elements in right relation to one another. Individual things must be studied, of course, but only as they fit into the total view; only then is every piece of knowledge enrichment.

This totality of view is the indispensable element. This view of education is what marks off the Catholic from most other groups. Catholics still believe that every sphere of human life is related essentially to every other. For the Catholic, the world is ordered on the principle of theocentric realism. As Sheed says:

For the theist, the matter hardly needs stating. God is not simply the Supreme Being, enthroned at the apex of all that is in such wise that the universe may be conceived as so many strata of being from the lowest to the highest and God over all: if that were so, one might conceive of a true study of the lower strata which should take no account of God. But the truth is that God is at the very centre of all things whatsoever. They come into existence only because He sustains them. To omit God, therefore, from your study of things is to omit the one being that explains them: you begin your study of things by making them inexplicable! Further, all things are made not only by God but for God; in that lies their purpose and the relation of each thing to all others . . .

But the place of God in our view of the totality of things—and so of education—is not simply a matter of recognizing Him as first cause and last end and sustained in being more intimate to each being than it is to itself; there is also His revelation of the purpose for which He made man—not simply that He made man for Himself but just what this involves in terms of man's being and action. This question of purpose is a point overlooked in most educational discussion, yet it is quite primary. How can you fit a man's mind for living if you do not know what the purpose of man's life is? You can have no reasonable understanding of any activity—living as a totality or any of its departments—if you do not know its purpose. You do not even know what is good or bad for a man till you know the purpose of his existence, for this is the only test of goodness or badness—if a thing helps a man in the achievement of the purpose for which he exists, then it is good for him; if not, it is bad. And the one quite certain way to find out the purpose of anything is to ask its maker. Otherwise you can only guess. The Catholic knows that man has a Maker and that the Maker has said what He made man for. Therefore—not of himself but by the revelation of God—the Catholic knows the purpose of human life and if he be an educator he has the answer to this primary question. He may be a thoroughly bad educator

—perhaps through being like many of us a born fool—but he has the first requirement.¹

3. “What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?”

This question the Catholic answers in straightforward fashion: religious knowledge, knowledge of God and man’s relations to God as made known through reason and revelation—this is the knowledge that is of most worth. Not that Catholic schools of any type are concerned merely with knowledge of Christian doctrine. The point is academic; it is conceivable that in a more primitive civilization some Catholic schools might confine themselves almost, if not exclusively, to religious knowledge. The thing to be insisted on is that religion permeates all Catholic education from arithmetic to zoology, just as, ideally, it impregnates all of Catholic life and living. Naturally, there is no such thing as Catholic chemistry; yet in a chemistry class taught in a Catholic school to Catholics by a Catholic there will be an awareness of and a reverence for God and supernatural values. The Catholic scientist will never make the mistake of becoming so absorbed in test-tubes that there is room for no higher loyalty.

4. The Catholic Theory of a Liberal Education

Catholic education has, generally speaking—it is impossible to speak with more precision—been sympathetic to the humanist theory of a liberal education. Terence expressed the humanist ideal perhaps as well as anyone, *Nihil humani a me alienum puto*. All that is human must enter into the education that is humanistic and liberal. All that is human, all that belongs to man—the true, the beautiful, the good—all these constitute the elements of humanism in education. Not one alone, but a synthesis of all three. Not merely Greek thought and Roman thought, but Christian thought and Christian art, and modern thought and modern art and modern science as well—in so far as they are true, beautiful, good—these are the elements, often jarring because of false emphasis of one over the other, that must be harmonized to secure a liberal education.

In the history of the world there have been surprisingly few great minds. The minds, the thoughts of these great minds, are

¹F. J. Sheed, “A Note on Reading and Education,” *Ground Plan for Catholic Reading*, pp. 7-8, New York: Sheed & Ward (n.d.).

preserved in matchless poetry and prose for our delight and edification. The traditional liberal education puts man in contact with these great minds. Most Catholics believe that humanities and those disciplines that prepare for the understanding and appreciation of the humanities must always be basic to any adequate theory of a liberal education. Not any sort of study of the humanities, surely not the gerund-grinding drudgery of the pedant, not the scientific dissection of the masterpieces of literature, but a study of literature that will show vistas of new worlds and old, that will unlock magic casements opening on sunlit seas, that will lift youth out of his narrow parochialism, remove him from the current barbarism and neopaganism of the day and make him a world citizen, at home with great minds ancient and modern. History has its contribution to make to a liberal education, a history that sees the relationship between our own age and that of a civilization that has disappeared from the face of the earth. Science and mathematics will play their part; they are the language of the contemporary world and are needed to impart experience in scientific method.

Philosophy is needed, a genuine and strenuous exercise in the art and science of thinking, a dynamic and fearless investigation of ideas and facts and things that will color all of life for the man who undergoes this discipline, and will enable him to meet problems of a modern changing world unafraid, not because he has the solutions ready-solved in a mental answer-book, but for the reason that his mind and soul have been steeled for conflict, have been anchored so sturdily that even a world tottering to ruins would not find him unprepared.

Religion must play a part in the integral humanistic training of man. Philosophy and science give only partial answers to the world riddle. Religion is needed to secure a complete view of life. If religion be banned from a liberal education, you have not merely an incomplete education, you have a maimed and distorted education.

Classical culture, Christian culture, the medieval synthesis of Thomas Aquinas, and modern science and modern thought—these are the strands that the Catholic believes must be combined somehow into unity to provide a liberal education for the youth of our day, to place him in contact with truth, and beauty, and goodness. How can integration be secured for these divergent and sometimes clashing forces? The metaphysics that President Hutchins speaks of is a partial solution; it is not a complete solution. The Catholic

believes humbly and sincerely that the answer to this problem of integration is one word, a monosyllable, Christ. Christianity is Christ. Christianity is not the history of one nation or race or people; it is universal history, the history of the human race, the most human thing in the world. The humanism of Christ, who is also God, as the Catholic confidently believes, this is Christian humanism, integral humanism that will make a marvelous synthesis of old and new. In this framework the classical theory of a liberal education remains not a relic, however glorious, of a golden past, not something static, but a dynamic force, transformed and vivified by all that is of permanent value in past and present, providing the world with a liberal education in the truest and finest sense of the word.

VI. Nature of Society

The idea of society connotes a plurality of persons united in some form of permanence with a common aim or object. Thus there are three features common to every society: plurality of persons, common aim, and authority to ensure permanence and common aim. Since man is a social being, society is natural to man, yet it must never be forgotten that he has an individual personality and dignity of his own. Therefore, education is hard put to it at times to keep a nice balance between individual and social aims.

1. State and Family

On the purely natural level there are two societies of educational import—the state and the family.

The family [was] instituted directly by God for its peculiar purpose, the generation and formation of offspring; for this reason it has priority of nature and therefore of rights over civil society.¹

It is on this point that Aquinas, and other scholastic philosophers, part company with Aristotle. Aristotle² and pagan civilization generally regarded the individual as subordinate to the state. The important thing was to be a good citizen. Aristotle had said in his *Politics*, "A citizen does not belong to himself but to the state; he should be educated for it and by it."³ Christianity changed this emphasis on the state by indicating man's supernatural end. This explains the importance of the individual man in scholastic thought, the reason why the state exists for man and not man for the state.

This would be true even in the merely natural order. For the state exists for the common good. Although the common good, the good of society, is in general more important than the good of an individual, this does not hold when the private good is of a higher order.⁴ So, too, with the rights of the family. The state may think it for the common good to require all children to attend

¹ Pius XI, *Encyclical on Christian Education*.

² *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, ii, 8. See also Charles A. Hart, *Philosophy of Society*, especially Clare Riedl, "The Social Theory of Saint Thomas Aquinas," pp. 11 ff. Philadelphia; Dolphin Press, 1934.

³ *Ibid.*, c. viii.

⁴ Cf. *Summa Theologica* II-II, q. 39, a. 2 ad 2um.

state schools. This conflicts with the higher right of the family over the education of its children.

Part of the Supreme Court decision regarding the Oregon Act of 1922 indicates clearly that American opinion is in perfect accord with Catholic principles.

We think it entirely plain that the Act of 1922 unreasonably interferes with the liberty of parents and guardians to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control . . . Rights guaranteed by the Constitution may not be abridged by legislation which has no reasonable relation to some purpose within the competency of the state. The fundamental theory upon which all governments in this union repose excludes any general power of the state to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the state; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right coupled with the high duty to recognize and prepare for additional obligations.¹

2. The Church

In the supernatural order, there is a third society concerned with education, the Church. Since education, in the Catholic view, has a necessary connection with man's supernatural destiny, the Catholic Church rightly claims that the education of her children belongs to her preëminently. Hers it is to decide what may help or harm Christian education. It is worth noting, in view of the widespread misunderstanding of the Church's position on her educational rights, that the Church has no jurisdiction over those that are not baptized, nor does she exercise any authority in matters of education over those not of her fold.

Again if the Church's position be true, her social objective in education is higher, nobler than any other. Humanity alone is not its aim, still less a humanity without God; a realization of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, good as far as it goes, is too vague for her; citizenship and patriotism are noble objectives and are worthy of cultivation in every school system, yet citizenship and patriotism are not enough. The objective of the Church is to realize the consequences of a child's incorporation with Christ through baptism, a realization that Christ and the Church of which he is a member are *one* thing—the Mystical Body of Christ—Christ the Head, and we the members. In the light of

¹ Charles N. Lischka, *Private Schools and State Laws*, p. 292. Washington: National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1926.

this doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ the social end of Christian education stands in bold relief. Information is not its aim, but formation of the whole man; better still, transformation of Christians into other Christs. And Catholic schools, no matter of what type, no matter of what nature their material of instruction, all of them are engaged in this one aim, so startling because of its unity "of building up the body of Christ . . . till all attain to the full measure of the stature of Christ."

3. Democracy and Education: the Catholic View

It is well to recall Jacques Maritain's three meanings of democracy in his *The Things That Are Not Caesar's*. As his third meaning is the one most commonly used when American educators speak of democracy and education, that meaning had better be examined first. The third meaning of democracy, Maritain styles democratism:

Democracy as conceived by Rousseau, the religious myth of democracy, an entirely different thing from the legitimate democratic regime. . . . Democracy in this sense becomes confused with the dogma of the Sovereign People, which combined with the dogma of the General Will and Law as the expression of Number, constitutes in the extreme the error of political pantheism (the multitude—God).¹

It is precisely this type of Rousseauistic democracy or democratism that is being urged on schools by an influential minority. For them democracy is a religion; democracy is the only absolute. And this new religion is creating a new school and a new education. Democratism is the standard by which to judge every phase of the school, methods and techniques, administration and curriculum. If other educators insist that discipline and authority and traditional subjects still have a place in the training of American youth, the label of Fascist is attached to them. With this type of democracy, it is hardly necessary to state, Catholic education will have no traffic.

Democracy, however, has other meanings, as Maritain points out. Democracy may mean a social tendency to procure social justice for the working classes. It is only necessary to point to the Encyclical letters from Leo XIII to Pius XII to be certain that this sort of democracy is sound Catholic doctrine.

Political democracy as conceived by Aristotle and Saint Thomas

¹ Jacques Maritain, *The Things That Are Not Caesar's*, p. 227. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931.

is that form of government exemplified in the old Swiss democracy, consecrated by Lincoln's phrase "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." This is considered by the Church and scholastics as a legally possible form of government. Not, however, the only possible form. The Church can adapt itself to any form of government except the totalitarian state, where the rights of the individual, the family and the Church are all flouted.

Political democracy such as Americans enjoy is of primary concern to American Catholics. In 1938 the American Catholic Bishops issued a joint pastoral calling for a Catholic crusade for Christian democracy.

It is necessary that our people, from childhood to mature age, be ever better instructed in the true nature of Christian democracy. A precise definition must be given to them both of democracy in the light of Catholic truth and tradition and of the rights and duties of citizens in a representative republic such as our own. They must be held to the conviction that love of country is a virtue and that disloyalty is a sin.¹

Experience, common sense, the sad results seen in other lands in the present critical hour for Christian civilization where political democracy has disappeared, as well as the Christian virtue of patriotism, urge Catholics in the Bishops' words "to the defense of our democratic form of government, framed in a constitution that safeguards the inalienable rights of man." This is in accord "with the American hierarchy's traditional position of unswerving allegiance to our free American institutions."

¹ *Pastoral Letter of the American Bishops, 1938.*

VII. Conclusion

This then represents, the writer hopes, an adequate presentation of the theory of Catholic education, of the philosophical and theological bases upon which the Catholic theory of education rests. Despite the difficulty, perhaps the irritation, inherent in bringing in ideas such as supernatural, Incarnation, Mystical Body, the Fall of Man, it was felt essential that all these ideas be clear if one would understand the Catholic position on education.

1. Essentials in the Philosophy of Catholic Education

It is quite clear that Catholics regard certain things as essential to the Catholic theory of education, certain things as accidental. To put it in other words, a Catholic as a Catholic is not free to accept or reject the essential postulates of Catholic education; on the other hand, as an individual he may disagree—violently, if need be—over the accidentals of Catholic education.

a. Nature of Man. The whole theory of Catholic education depends on the Catholic doctrine regarding man, his nature and supernatural destiny. From the Catholic concept of the nature of man follows the primary objective of Catholic education, its theory of values. Everything else is subordinate to this ultimate aim of Catholic education. Every demand that the Church makes, every disciplinary regulation is based on her supernatural viewpoint. The whole history and theory of Catholic education is unintelligible unless the Church's teaching on the supernatural be grasped.

b. Nature of Truth. Truth exists and the human mind can attain truth. Reason is capable of reaching with complete certainty the most sublime truths of the natural order, but with difficulty and only when duly trained. Therefore, the school or teachers have a right and a duty to aid the pupil to attain these truths. There are also truths of the supernatural order which the mind can never know unaided. For this, revelation is needed. The Catholic school again has the right and duty to present these truths to the child since he could never learn them unaided.

c. Agencies of Education. The school, the family and the Church all have the right and the duty to educate in the Catholic system. Since man has a supernatural destiny, any educational system that fails to impart religious instruction is not acceptable to the Catholic. For the Catholic believes that religion is an essential part of

education, since it is indispensable for right living here and for eternal life hereafter.

2. Accidentals in the Philosophy of Catholic Education

a. Curriculum. The Catholic as a Catholic is not concerned with curriculum. As a humanist he may demand training in the liberal arts; as an essentialist he may insist on a curriculum made up of traditional subjects, a curriculum that is not a "rope of sand"; as a "utilitarian" he may insist on training in practical subjects. The one thing the Catholic will insist on is that, whatever type the curriculum may be, the first place must be assigned to religion.

b. Method. Still less is the Catholic as a Catholic concerned with method. He may advocate the outmoded method of drill; he may believe that the project method or the problem method has a place in his schools; he may insist on interest as the keystone of all educational progress; he may employ the methods of "progressive" education, while necessarily rejecting their underlying philosophy of naturalism; and there is no one to say him nay. Every acceptable method of learning must be based on the theory that all education is self-education. Consequently method, as distinct from techniques or mere tricks of the educational profession, must have as its aim the teaching of the child to think for himself, to express adequately his own thoughts, and to appreciate in a humane way the true, the beautiful and the good.

c. Freedom vs. Discipline. The Catholic school, even those conducted along "progressive" lines, believes in discipline, but that discipline must eventually be self-discipline. Undoubtedly, Catholic schools differ among themselves in external discipline from the progressive type to the ultraconservative type that is perilously close to regimentation. Yet every Catholic school would admit that discipline is necessary. Discipline means right order. And every Catholic teacher knows that his charges are not angels, but very human beings, with all the limitations of human nature. Not a *depraved* nature certainly, but *deprived* and with the "wounds of nature" that need watchful guidance in order to lead him on to his last end. Regimentation may accomplish this externally, but self-discipline is the real answer, a self-discipline based on sound principles. Interest is the secret. A child will be good if he wants to be good. A child will learn fractions if he wants to learn fractions. It is the teacher's business to make him want it. That is the essence of good method, however it may be applied.

3. A Final Word

The main difficulty for the reader of all the foregoing will be his inability to see what may be called the architectonic structure of Catholicism and Catholic education. The reason is that Catholics and non-Catholics have come to talk two different languages. The background of their thought is not the same. This is true not merely in the religious sphere but in the whole of life. Hence, the difficulty of understanding the Catholic theory of education.

There are two things particularly which set off the Catholic from the non-Catholic world. There is in the Catholic a singular unity of thought that springs from his totality of outlook that is particularly irritating to the non-Catholic. The Catholic never forgets at any time or place the totality of being—God, man and cosmos. The other provocative feature of Catholic thought may be styled other-worldliness. This is not to imply that Catholics are necessarily holier than other people; still less that they are the only people who believe in the world to come. The modern non-Catholic feels sure of what he has; he is not sure—not *so* sure, at all events—of what is to come. Therefore, quite logically he emphasizes living in this world. Probably, he reasons, there is another world, but let us make this one that we are sure about a better place to live in. For the Catholic, on the other hand, the idea of the world to come looms large; it makes its presence felt in a greater number of spheres. To him the thing of ultimate importance is not here but hereafter. Not, of course, that the Catholic does not recognize values in this world; he enjoys, as any other, natural truth and beauty and goodness; the glory of this world, of mountain and sea and plain; the glow that comes from family life and human friendship finds an echo in his heart; they are good and true and beautiful but they lead him on to the Creator of all these manifold delights made for him. "The heavens announce the glory of God."

With his philosophy of supernaturalism, the Catholic rests his case for education and for everything else in the world. Reactionary he may be, even dangerous to modern life, but at least in the light of his first principles he believes that he is consistent.



PAMPHLETS

KEEP GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE

Don't try to battle adult life—
with only a childhood knowledge of your faith.
Keep growing in knowledge.

Extra care goes into the preparation of
AMERICA PAMPHLETS so that you can read
about important subjects easily.

There is a wide choice of special subjects
at The America Press—

The convert series by Father Scott,
Church and State, education, democracy,
UN, peace, science, alcoholism, vocations . . .
and the leading papal encyclicals.

Complete list available at The America Press

THE AMERICA PRESS, 70 East 45th Street, New York 17, N.

831715

W HERE TO FIND IT?

TRY THE AMERICA PRESS

Pamphlets—that are clear, understandable, readable, yet the result of accurate research and deep thought. Prepared for those who have so little time and so much need to know.

America—a weekly magazine that bridges the gap between the ever challenging directives of the modern Popes and the baffling problems of our own times.

The Catholic Mind—the best of all the best contemporary ideas, written or spoken—from papal encyclicals to articles in the journals of the world.

The Catholic Book Club—new books, chosen by experts because they are *good books*—sent to you at a saving.

Books—either from the list of special books published by America Press or purchased for our readers.

Write for lists and prices

THE AMERICA PRESS, 70 East 45th Street, New York 17, N. Y.