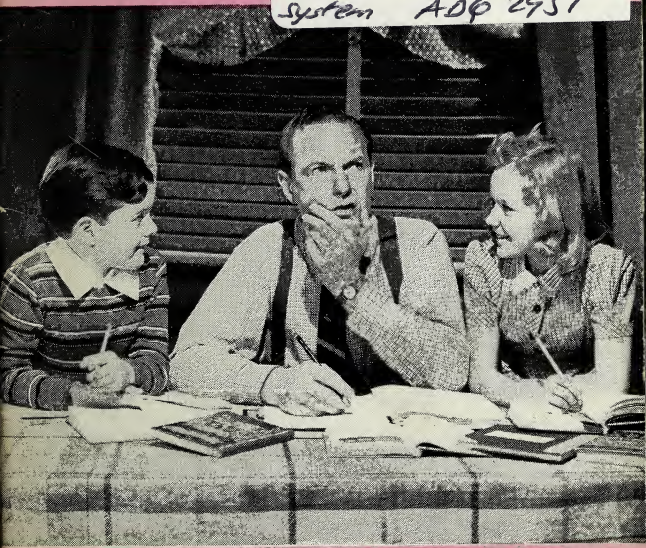


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# Our Undemocratic SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Ginder, Richard  
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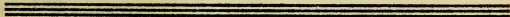
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OUR  
UNDEMOCRATIC  
SCHOOL SYSTEM



*by*

RICHARD GINDER



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# OUR UNDEMOCRATIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

*by*

RICHARD GINDER

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A TRAVELER, they say, passing through the Ozarks, stopped in at a little country store to buy some chewing-gum. The proprietor was in the back of the establishment playing a game of checkers with — of all things — an aire-dale! After playing a few more moves, he came up front and waited on his customer.

“That’s quite a smart dog you have there,” the astonished stranger remarked.

“Oh, I don’t know,” the storekeeper said with a laugh. “He just lost that last game.”

There was a whole spate of jokes like that circulating around the country a few

years back. Their whole point (if there was one) was the ridiculousness of assuming that animals have intelligence. Each yarn was calculated to bring the listener up short. Every story told of animals acting like human beings and every story had a character that took such a monstrosity for granted — whereas the listener knows very well that no airedale will ever be able to play checkers, no horse will ever be able to bat a ball, etc.

In fact, that's the precise point of difference between us and the animals. We can think and they can't. Although both we and they have brains, we have besides brains what is required for thought — a mind — that invisible power of an invisible soul.

That's why, as soon as our boys and girls begin to think for themselves, we pack them off to school and begin the process of their education.

## What Is Education?

But what, exactly, is education? Most of us spend a great deal of our lives chasing after it, and some few of us are convinced that we have finally waylaid it. There are those of us who throw out their chests and preen themselves on the fact that they are educated. But before we can agree, we have to know first what education means.

We listen to the Quiz Kids on the radio, to the Information Please program and Dr. I.Q. Those people seem to know all the answers. A question is popped. It baffles us. But there is always someone in the studio with the right answer. So that we're tempted to think "Gosh, isn't he smart! Isn't he well educated!"

That's a mistake. It's identifying education with the mere collection of facts and information. One of the programs — I forget which — tends to encourage this

idea by giving away sets of an encyclopedia, the inference being that you'll be really educated if you can only pack those fourteen volumes between your ears.

The truth of the matter is that some people are born with minds like glueballs, just as some people are born able to wriggle their ears, and others are born double-jointed. Such people have phenomenal memories. They can memorize a page by looking at it. They can watch a long freight-train pass by and recall all the serial numbers on the side of the cars.

Education is not the acquiring of information. That's only a part of it. Anyone with an encyclopedia and a World Almanac has more information at his finger tips than most of the college presidents in the country.

Most of us spend a lifetime painfully acquiring mastery over one or two foreign languages. And yet in the larger cities



there are men with a knowledge of several foreign languages slaving at a few dollars an hour as court-interpreters. They're not educated. All they can do is talk foreign languages.

Why, nowadays we even buy machines to do our mathematics for us. They add and subtract, multiply and divide, and even, we are told, work out complicated problems in algebra and calculus.

### **Power Is Blind**

Knowledge is power, they say. But power as such is blind. It can be a help or it can be a menace. It's like a stick of dynamite. Plenty of power there! But that dynamite can be buried in the basement of a hospital to blow it sky high, or it can be buried in a hillside and used to excavate the foundations of a new hospital. In the one case, it's being used destructively; in the other, its use is constructive.

To illustrate again: Two boys went to-

gether to trade school. Both were bright. Both took up engraving and learned the art to perfection. Both graduated with high honors.

One of them set out on his career, engraving pictures of horses, castles, battle-ships, and pretty girls. But the other took to engraving beautiful pictures of Abraham Lincoln and General Grant on slips of green paper about the size of a dollar bill.

The F.B.I. eventually caught up with this second fellow, and he is currently doing time in Alcatraz. The first one is married, has a family, and is a respected member of his community.

Both those boys had the same knowledge, to be sure, but their education was different.

### **Knowledge Must Be Used Well**

It comes to this then: that knowledge in itself is not enough. We must also be

taught how to use our knowledge. It's not enough for a man to have eyes; he must also have legs — motive power — to get him where he wants to go. The mind is the eye of the soul: our will-power is its driving force — and both faculties must have their proper training.

Hence it is that education, if it is to deserve its name, must be shot through with religion. We must have something, a principle, to pull together all the random facts, all the arts and sciences, to give them vitality and make them into a unit. Religion is the only force that can do that.

Many of us are in the habit of regarding religion somewhat as the icing on top of a cake. We think the cake may be baked in the schools and the frosting can be laid on at home: five days of schooling without any religious training, and then an hour or so at church over the weekend — when we go.

Others think of religion as something like the raisins in a cake. They have their children excused from class once a week for an hour of religious instruction. In other words, religion is dropped right into the batter.

But religion is more than a frosting. It's more than raisins in the batter: religion is the baking powder without which there can be no cake at all, but only a soggy, heavy, unpalatable mess. Religion must permeate education, soak into its every cell and pore, entering into every part of it.

Because of these false notions on the unimportance of religion in education, we Americans are making a terrible blunder in our school-system.

### **Our Undemocratic School System**

Forgetting that every one of our Founding Fathers was the graduate of a church-school, forgetting their insistence on the

fact that the Almighty God is the ultimate foundation of our liberties, mistaking their separation of church and state for separation of religion and the state (which they never intended), we have chased God out of our schools and in so doing have erected what must be one of the most undemocratic school systems in the world.

In exiling the Almighty God, incidentally, we are giving our children a false and distorted picture of the world.

Let's assume that anti-Communist feeling in this country should reach such a pitch that even the mention of Russia should be banned from our schools. Russia would be cut out of the maps in our geographies, there would be no hint of the country in our history books; the teachers would be forbidden to discuss the subject. Our children would grow up in complete ignorance of that country. If its name were to be raised in later conversa-

tions, how could we blame them if they were to insist in furious anger that there is no such country, that belief in the existence of Russia is nothing more than superstition, etc.?

Would such people be truly educated? Wouldn't their knowledge of world affairs be a distorted, lop-sided sort of business?

But that's just what we're doing with the subject of God. Officially, as far as our schools are concerned, He doesn't exist.

And that's what has made our school system undemocratic. Here's how: The system has been rigged to suit a tiny minority in the American community — the atheists. They are the only ones being catered to by our public school system. And it's not fair! The great majority — at least 95% — of Americans are good God-fearing people. We're about 25% Protestant, 25% Catholic and 45% unaffiliated. But those 45% are nevertheless Christian

in sympathy. They know what it means to be under oath in court; they celebrate Christmas and Easter; they keep the Bible in their homes, however little it may be read; and they believe in the good old-fashioned morality of their parents, however little they may practice it.

Now if one of these people — one of the 95% — be he Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic, Presbyterian, or just unattached — if one of these wants to send his children to a school where they could get a complete picture of things, including God and the Ten Commandments, he has to find a private school or build one that will instruct according to his own church teachings. The one thing he can't do is to send them to the public schools, for they cater to the atheists. That's why I call the public-school system undemocratic.

### **Salvation through Education?**

Our country has just passed through a phase in which it was thought that salva-

tion came through education. "All our problems will be over," it was thought, "if only we can stamp out illiteracy. When everyone can read and write, crime will vanish" — a pious but futile hope. The age of compulsory education has never been higher in this country, and yet neither has our rate of juvenile delinquency. As for the fallacy that salvation is through education, we have just seen Germany and Japan, two of the most advanced nations in the world, guilty of crimes that other less "advanced" nations could never dream of. The learned man is not necessarily the good man.

It's a lesson we Catholics learned many years ago. In this country we put our trust in the public-school system until we saw it lapsing into its present Godless condition. Then in 1884, the Church in America decreed that every parish must have its own school insofar as that is possible, to



teach our children not only reading, writing and arithmetic, but religion as well.

As this booklet goes to press, we Catholics have 8,248 elementary schools, 2,432 high schools, and 221 colleges and universities, employing 101,944 full-time instructors. Total attendance is 4,158,695.

Naturally this is a vast expense to us — an expense that is not at all relieved by the thought that at the same time we Catholics must pay heavily in support of a school system which we do not patronize, for the most part, and whose policies are drawn up with an eye to the prejudices of a tiny minority in the community rather than the convictions of the great majority.

As a general rule, non-Catholic children are admitted to Catholic schools provided that there is sufficient room. Anyone not of the Catholic Faith who nevertheless wants to provide his child with a religious education, even though it be along Cath-

olic lines, need only consult the nearest Catholic pastor and talk the matter over with him.

We Catholics are proud of the fact that we are keeping faith with the Founding Fathers, that we are doing our best to keep this a religious country — for in our Christian youth and in their training rests the hope of humanity today.



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