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ARTICLE III.

OUR TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR CITIZENSHIP.

BY THE REVEREND RICHARD CAMERON WYLIE, D.D.

THE number of children of school age in the United States is more than twenty-two millions. The number enrolled in our public schools is nearly sixteen millions. In a few years these boys and girls will be the men and women of our country, bearing the responsibilities of citizenship. It is important that they receive the training necessary to fit them for these responsibilities. Our public-school system is the chief agency employed by the state for this purpose. We should be deeply concerned about the efficiency of this system. Patriotism requires that every thing possible be done to increase, and that nothing be done to impair, its efficiency.

That the school curriculum, in so far as secular studies are concerned, is well adapted to the end in view, is not seriously questioned. That the teachers are generally well equipped for their work is readily conceded. That mental training of a high order is given in most of these schools is shown by the results. If there is weakness anywhere, it is in the training of the moral nature.

There is in progress a triangular discussion as to the place the Bible and its system of morals and religion should have in the school-room. The three positions occupied by the parties to the controversy are the Secular, the Roman Catholic, and the Historic American.

Dr. W. T. Harris, Commissioner of Education, advocates the secular view in the following words:—

"The principle of religious instruction is authority; that of secular instruction is demonstration and verification. It is obvious that these two principles should not be brought into the same school, but separated as widely as possible. The analytical understanding is necessarily hostile and skeptical in its attitude toward religious truth. . . . When we come to teaching a live religion in the schools, we see that it must take a denominational form, and, moreover, it must take on the form of authority and address itself to the religious sense and not to the mere intellect. . . . We must conclude, therefore, that the prerogative of religious instruction is in the church, and that it must remain in the church, and that in the nature of things it cannot be farmed out to the secular school without degenerating into mere deism without a living Providence, or else changing the school into a parochial school and destroying the efficiency of secular instruction."

Mr. Herbert W. Horwill, in the *Atlantic Monthly* for September, 1903, advocates the same theory as follows:—

"Owing to the religious implications in the Bible, it is impossible to teach it even as literature or history without becoming involved in questions of acute controversy. . . . The moment the matter of the Bible is seriously considered, strife is inevitable. Nay, in these days it is more difficult than ever before to treat even the manner of the sacred writers without provoking acrimonious religious discussion. If you once begin to treat the Bible in the public schools as a religious and ethical textbook, instead of merely a literary model, you violate the principle of neutrality of the state in matters of religion. . . . The conclusion of the whole matter is that the teaching of religion is the work of the churches, and not of the state."

These quotations clearly define the meaning of the term "secular" as used in this controversy. It means, not merely the freedom of the schools from sectarian control, not merely the exclusion of sectarian tenets, but the exclusion of the Bible, together with its moral and religious teachings, whether given orally or otherwise.

Cardinal Gibbons states the Roman Catholic position in these words:—

"The system of public education in this country is imperfect and vicious, and undermines the religion of our youth. We want our children to receive an education that will not only make them learned but pious men and women. . . . We want them to be not only polished mem-

bers of society, but also conscientious Christians. We desire for them a training that will form their hearts as well as their minds. We wish them to be not only men of the world, but, above all, men of God. . . . The religious and secular education of our children cannot be divorced from each other without inflicting a fatal wound upon the soul. The usual consequence of such separation is to paralyze the moral faculty and to foment a spirit of indifference in matters of faith. . . . The remedy for these defects would be supplied if the denominational system which now obtains in Canada were applied in our public schools."

The Historic American position is embodied in the following quotations from a variety of sources :—

"Our public schools as such have as their primary function the promotion of good citizenship. If they fail to perform their primary function, they fall of the purpose for which they are maintained."—W. W. STERSON, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Maine.

"The American public school is the organized attempt of democracy to educate and train a people for the responsible and peculiar duties of citizenship in a republic."—HOMER H. SEERLY, Iowa State Normal School.

"The school is society shaping itself. Whatever should be in society must be put in the schools."—FRANCIS W. PARKER, President Cook County Normal School, Chicago, Illinois.

"A school or a school system that does not get beyond the training of the intellect would have small claims on the public for support. Our public-school system is to develop, normally and naturally, every part of the child's being—its intellect, sensibility, and will: its moral and spiritual nature."—G. R. GLINN, State School Commissioner, Georgia.

"Nobody knows how to teach morality effectually without religion. Exclude religion from education and you will leave no foundation upon which to build a moral character."—PRESIDENT ELIOT, Harvard University.

"Surely no reasonable person could object to the employment of such parts of the Bible, or other books, as teach justice, integrity, patriotism, humanity, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, and all the virtues upon which depend the permanence of a government by the people."—T. B. STOCKWELL, Commissioner of Public Schools, Rhode Island.

"Resolved, that the attempt to separate the cultivation of moral and intellectual powers which prevails to a certain extent in the school system of to-day is unphilosophical, injurious to children, and dangerous to the state. Resolved, that, in the judgment of this Association, the Bible should be recognized as the text-book of ethics, and that the Word of God, which made free schools, should hold an honored place in them."
—NATIONAL TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION.

These quotations fairly present the positions of the three parties to the controversy. To determine which is correct, all the essential facts should be considered.

Historical facts first claim attention. We are not now for the first time considering what sort of a school-system it would be wise for us to establish. We have a system which is almost as old as the country itself. From the beginning the Bible has had a place in the school-room. The founders of this system never supposed that any question could be raised about the wisdom of this use of the Bible. The dispute about its wisdom is of recent origin. No well-informed secularist will claim that the proposition to exclude the Bible is a proposition to return to the original type of American public schools. Neither will Cardinal Gibbons claim that his proposition has such an end in view. Both are plain propositions to introduce something new in this country. Hitherto the aim on the part of the aggressors in this controversy has been, not to introduce the Bible into the schools, but to cast it out. One of the first legal controversies about the matter was in the State of Maine in 1854. The Bible was used in the schools as a reading-book, and an effort was made to have it excluded. The case was carried to the Supreme Court, and, in giving its opinion, that Court held that such use of the Bible was not a violation of the Constitution and laws of the State, and interfered with no one's rights. There have been similar cases before the supreme courts of other States, and before the school-boards in a number of cities. In every instance the aggressors found the Bible in the schools, and began a crusade to secure its expulsion. Our system of education, therefore, has from the first recognized the right of the Bible to a place in the school-room. The denial of the right and the crusade against it are of modern origin.

In connection with these historical facts, certain legal facts should be considered. In nine States and the District of Columbia the school laws provide for the reading of the Bible in the school-room. In twelve others, decisions of supreme courts and of state superintendents of public schools sustain the custom. In seventeen others and one Territory (Oklahoma), the practice is generally sustained by public sentiment without the aid of law, except as moral training is required. In some of the States in which there have been legal controversies, decisions have been rendered against the custom. In Wisconsin the Supreme Court declared the Bible to be a sectarian book, and therefore excluded by the terms of the Constitution and the law. Similar opinions have been given by the Attorneys-General of California, Minnesota, and Washington, and by the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Montana. In most of these States, however, there are schools in which the Bible is used. In Louisiana and Nevada there is neither law nor judicial opinion relating to the matter, and but few schools in these States follow the custom. Also in the Territories of Arizona and New Mexico it would be difficult to find a school in which the Bible is read or a prayer offered. In a number of the cities in which there have been conflicts over the matter before the school-boards, the Bible and all religious exercises have been excluded. With the exceptions here noted, the reading of the Bible holds its place in the schools generally throughout the United States.

Another legal fact of striking significance is that Congress, in adopting the Ordinance of 1787 for the government of the Territory of the Northwest, declared that "religion, morality, and knowledge being essential to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." This means that schools shall

be established to provide these essentials. The same proposition is contained in a number of state constitutions. The most of the States require the teaching of morality in the public schools. Teachers are therefore legally bound to teach morals as well as grammar or any other prescribed branch of study. Our school laws also clearly show that the public schools are designed, not primarily to qualify young people for a business or a professional life, that they may do well for themselves, nor yet to train them for church-membership or to secure the salvation of their souls, but to qualify them for citizenship. The course of study best suited to this end should be adopted. No church has a right to complain if its creed is not made a part of the course of study.

There are facts concerning the course of study necessary to secure the end in view which demand careful consideration. It is clear, to every one who has watched the progress of this controversy, that it is not a controversy merely about the Bible in the schools. The consistent secularist is not satisfied till all religious references are excluded. Dr. E. E. White says, that he "once knew a principal who attempted to exclude religion from his school by marking for omission all selections or parts of selections in the reader that contained religious ideas and sentiments. The book was not merely despoiled of its literary treasures, but violence was done to the religious nature of the pupils. But he stayed his hand when he came to the music-book; for the exclusion of all religion from it necessitated the striking-out of not only the best classical music, but also our best national songs." But there are secularists who will not stay their hands even here. In the recent contest before the courts of Nebraska, the song entitled "America" was objected to because of the following stanza :—

“Our fathers' God! to thee,
Author of liberty,
To thee we sing.
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might,
Great God, our King.”

It is easy to formulate a plan of instruction devoid of all religion, but it is not so easy to put it into operation. Let us inquire whether it is possible to carry out the secular program, and whether, when carried out, anything is left deserving the name of a course of instruction, for which the people should be taxed. While this program formally demands the exclusion of all religious reading-lessons, it must allow the English language to remain. But the language of any people must partake of the religious character of that people, whether Mohammedan, Jewish, Pagan, or Christian. Ours is the language of a Christian people. It contains thousands of words in common use with distinctively Christian significations. Can any one learn the language as it is and not come to know these words? But the language must be learned as it is, not as the secularist might wish it to be. To exclude religion would require that our language be made over again so as to exclude from it all words with Christian significations. To do this the people who speak it must first be transformed so as to exclude religious ideas from their minds. The advocates of the secular program have undertaken a task of no inconsiderable dimensions.

History must have a place in every school that aims to prepare young people for citizenship. Can religion be eliminated from the history of our country? What shall we do with the Pilgrim Fathers, the Puritans, the Huguenots, and others who came to this country in search of religious as well

as civil liberty? Can we now secularize the Mayflower and Plymouth Rock? Can we now eliminate all religion from the charters granted those early colonists and from their compacts of government? Religion is interwoven with the warp and woof of our whole history. But there have been times when it has had a degree of marked prominence. This has been so in every time of calamity. Is it possible now to secularize this history and teach it correctly? Secularists may wish it were different, but how is it possible now to make the past other than what it was? History as taught in the schools must be true to the facts. The only way to exclude religion from the history of a people is to exclude it from their lives. Whether or not this will be done in the future, it is certain that Christ and Christianity have been the most potent of all factors in the history of the past nineteen hundred years. To exclude them from the narrative of human existence during these nineteen centuries, says Dr. A. P. Peabody of Harvard University, "is an immeasurably more gross, foolish, and stupid mutilation of history than it would be to omit the names and doings of Washington, Franklin, and Adams from American history."

Certain principles of political science are involved in this controversy. It is asserted, that, "if you once begin to treat the Bible in the public schools as a religious and ethical textbook instead of a merely literary model, you violate the principle of neutrality of the state in matters of religion." This raises the question as to the real nature of this principle of neutrality, and the extent of its application. Clearness here is essential. "Religion" is often regarded as either synonymous with "church" or as the exclusive possession of the church. Separation of church and state, which is one of the chief glories of our government, is erroneously regarded as

the separation likewise of religion and the state. From the separation of church and state it follows that the state shows no partiality to any sect or creed, levies no tax to build churches or to support ministers of the gospel, and prohibits sectarian instruction in the public schools. With respect to all such matters as these the principle of neutrality is clearly applicable. But there are principles of political science which are positively religious. How can the question of the origin of the nation be answered without entering the religious sphere? It is superficial to say that, like railroad and banking companies, it originates by the will of man. The nation is an organism with life and growth, and is the sphere in which man as a social and political being has his existence. God made man a political being, and his political nature finds expression in the state, with its established government.

It is equally futile to attempt to solve the problem as to the source of the authority of civil government outside the realm of religion. That authority is too great to be the result of the surrendered rights of individuals. It is a political heresy to say that civil government has only that authority which has been given it by the consent of the governed. When did the criminal consent to give up his liberty or his life for his crimes? Nearly all writers of any repute hold that the authority with which civil government is clothed is from God.

A third question is here suggested, which cannot be answered outside the religious sphere. This is the question as to the end for which civil government exists. That end may be studied in a practical way by considering what the state does. It defines the rights, duties, and relations of all the people within its territorial sway. "It defines crime. It makes its prohibitions, and commands the measure of the lawful and the right. It employs force to an unlimited degree. It pun-

ishes by the infliction of pain to any amount it may deem necessary. It banishes, it imprisons, it puts to death." It wages war in defense of its own and its citizens' rights. It employs its armies in defense of the rights of weak and wronged nations. In short, governments exist among men for the maintenance of rights. Our Declaration of Independence states that "All men . . . are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights." Is not this statement true? Is it not a religious as well as a political truth? Should it not be taught to our children? Evidently "religion" and "church" are not synonymous terms, and religion is not the exclusive possession of the church. There is a wide religious realm which is not ecclesiastical, but political.

But there are also moral and religious principles which have a political character. One of these is the binding obligation of the moral law in every sphere of human life, not excepting the political. The nation is composed of human beings in their entirety, not of human beings minus their souls. The duties of citizenship are moral. Citizens should be trained for these duties by instruction in the moral law. Who is to give this training? It is usually replied, that this is the duty of the church. It is conceded that the church is partly responsible, but it is denied that the whole responsibility rests with it. On what ground can it be maintained that the state is wholly dependent upon the church for the moral character of its citizens? Not more than half the young people of the land are found in Sabbath-schools. Is the church responsible for the moral training of the other half? If so, should there not be a compulsory Sabbath-school law enacted by the state, and should not the state pay the church for the service rendered? The contention that the Bible and its moral system should have a place in the school-room is not a conten-

tion that the state should do the work of the church, but that the state should do its own work in the training of citizens, and not depend upon the church for this service.

It should be here noted that the obligations of the moral law extend over the nation itself. It exists within the moral sphere. In the exercise of its tremendous authority and power it is bound by the "Higher Law." Otherwise we have no right to raise the question of the right or wrong of a nation's dealings with other nations or with its own citizens. Where there is no law there is no transgression. Surely the moral law has a political character.

The religious principle that God rules in the affairs of men has a political bearing. It involves the truth that he governs nations. This principle is generally recognized in our state constitutions. Moreover, the state makes constant, practical use of the doctrine concerning God in the employment of the oath. If the oath is not religious, nothing is. If it is not religious, it is nothing. It is a direct appeal to God, whereby both the person taking it and the state, through its representative who administers it, recognize the being, authority, power, justice, and omniscience of God.

A fundamental error of secularists consists in ignoring all the facts and principles of national religion and adopting a definition of religion which makes it relate only to individual salvation, and life and worship in the church. From this definition the inference is drawn that any recognition of religious principles by a civil government is of the nature of union of church and state. But the facts here given show that there are politico-religious principles. Their banishment from political life results in political corruption.

Grave mistakes are often made with respect to the Bible itself. It is popularly regarded as a church-book exclusively,

and its contents spoken of as designed solely to inform us how to get safely out of this world into the next. But the truth is, that it is designed chiefly to tell us how to live in this world. Not less than two-thirds of it relate to national life and the duties of citizens. It is the greatest of all text-books on civil government. Its writers are aptly described by Milton,—

“As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government,
In their majestic unaffected style,
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught and easiest learned,
What makes a nation happy and keeps it so;
What ruins kingdoms and lays cities flat.”

In some places the mention of the name of Christ has been forbidden in the school-room, because it is held to be sectarian. But the truth is, that, according to the Bible, Jesus Christ is the nation's King, Lawgiver, and Judge. Nations are established or overthrown according as they regulate or fail to regulate their lives by his will.

To suppose that, because we have solved the problem of union of church and state, by decreeing their separation, we have at the same time solved the problem of the relation of religion and the state by decreeing their separation also, is to confound things that differ, to treat the principles of national religion unfairly, and to do damage to the state.

It is evident that there are a number of things the state may do of a religious nature without violating the principle of neutrality in the religious sphere. This principle is not violated by the recognition of God as the Supreme Ruler. This is done by nearly every State in the Union. It is not violated by the use of the oath. This is done to secure the fidelity of officers, witnesses, jurors, soldiers, and others. It is not violated by the enactment of laws based upon the moral laws

of the Bible. Seven precepts of the decalogue form the basis of such legislation. Neither is it violated if all the moral and religious principles here involved are taught in the public schools. As the entire man, including the physical, the mental, and the moral nature, is the citizen; so the entire child, including this threefold nature, is the pupil in school. It is impossible to divide the man into sections, and assign one section to the church and another to the state. It is also impossible to divide the child into sections and educate a section at a time. The whole child goes to school, and must be provided for in the course of study, because the whole man is to bear the responsibilities of citizenship. The complete secularizing of the schools, and of the state whereby they are founded, would require that man himself be first secularized. But the Creator has made us moral beings, and of our moral natures we cannot be divested.

Roman Catholics are partly right in maintaining that the religious and the secular education of our children cannot be separated without peril to the soul. But the peril to the nation is as great as it is to the individual. Roman Catholics are wrong, however, in denying to the state all right to educate, and in claiming this prerogative exclusively for the church. They join hands with the secularists to exclude the Bible from our schools, not because they hold anything in common with them as to the theory of education, but because they seek occasion against these schools. They are opposed to them with the Bible in, because in their view the church alone has the right to teach religion. They are opposed to them with the Bible out, because there is no true education without religion. With the one club or the other they will attack our school system, and of the two the second is the heavier and the more deadly weapon. Their object is to secure a

division of the school fund, so as to obtain state aid for parochial schools. While true to the Historic American position, our school system can be defended against all assaults. It cannot be defended against the charge of godlessness if it becomes godless indeed.

The whole history of our public schools shows, that, while in the course of study the Bible and its moral system have had a place, sectarianism has been excluded. Judge Lyon, of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin, in rendering his decision with reference to the use of the Bible in the schools of that State, erroneously pronounced the book as a whole sectarian, but did not dare pronounce the whole book sectarian. He said:—

“To teach the existence of a supreme being, of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, and that it is the highest duty of all men to adore, obey, and love him, is not sectarian, because all religious sects so believe and teach. . . . Furthermore, there is much in the Bible which cannot justly be characterized as sectarian. There can be no valid objection to the use of such matter in the secular instruction of the pupils. Much of it has great historical and literary value which may be thus utilized without violating the constitutional prohibition [of sectarian instruction]. It may also be used to inculcate good morals—that is, our duties to each other—which may and ought to be inculcated by the district schools. No more complete code of morals exists than is contained in the New Testament, which reaffirms and emphasizes the moral obligations laid down in the Ten Commandments.”

The assertion that all religious teaching must take the denominational form, and the further assertion that the moment the Bible is seriously considered strife is inevitable, are not sustained by experience and observation. The Bible is read in tens of thousands of our schools. Not once in a thousand cases does either of these results follow. An ounce of fact is worth a ton of theory. There are secular studies which are quite as prolific of strife as is the study of the Bible and religion.

But what is involved in the generally accepted proposition

found in so many of our state constitutions and schools laws, that morality shall be taught in our public schools? (1) That we have a system of morals recognized as binding; (2) that this system of morals shall be taught with necessary sanctions. By what sanctions can men be taught to act morally? Whatever theories men may adopt as to the origin of the feeling and the consciousness that some things are right and others are wrong, it remains a fact that the feeling and the consciousness exist. We are a Christian people, and our moral standard is the Christian standard. Its sanctions are the truths that there is a personal God who is our Creator and Ruler, upon whom we are dependent, to whom we are accountable; that we are under obligation to love and serve him in all the walks of life; and that there is a future life in which we will be rewarded according to our works.

Before accepting the dictum of Commissioner Harris, already quoted, we should carefully consider to what it would lead. His dictum is: "The principle of religious instruction is authority; that of secular instruction is demonstration and verification. It is obvious that these two principles should not be brought into the same schools, but separated as widely as possible." If this separation takes place, all moral as well as all religious instruction must be banished from the school-room, because morality cannot be taught apart from authoritative sanctions.

But if everything received on authority is to be excluded from our public schools, where will the work of exclusion end? In the earlier stages of education nearly everything is learned on authority. And when the higher stages are reached, and the learners begin to investigate the grounds upon which we trust the testimony of our senses and the correctness of our conclusions, they are brought face to face with the truth that

“reason itself must rest at last upon authority; for the original data of reason do not rest on reason, but are necessarily accepted by reason on the authority of what is beyond itself.”

Mr. Harris makes a fatal admission when he says that “the analytical understanding is necessarily hostile and skeptical in its attitude towards religious truth.” If this is true, and if, because it is true, religion and morality are to be banished from the school-room, the contention of Cardinal Gibbons, that the divorce of religious and secular education inflicts a fatal wound upon the soul, is established. While the state should not teach any church creed, it should not so teach as to destroy faith in all creeds. If it does, the public schools become schools of infidelity, which is the worst of all forms of sectarianism. In avoiding Scylla, let us keep clear of Charybdis.

In his Farewell Address, Washington used the following language:—

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. . . . And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles.”

It follows from this investigation of facts relating to our school system, that all moral and religious instruction cannot be excluded from the school-room. It would be as reasonable to think you can admit the atmosphere into your room and yet shut out oxygen. Not more surely is oxygen one of the constituent elements of the atmosphere than is religion a constituent element in real education.

While it is admitted that there may be some difficulty in de-

termining just how much religion shall have a place in our educational system, the difficulty of excluding all religion is incomparably greater. But the former difficulty is not so great as many represent it to be. Certain lines to be followed have been clearly marked out. No sectarian creed is to have a place in the school curriculum. No church is to be entrusted with the task of preparing the course of religious instruction to be given. That course is not to consist simply of the religious principles on which all are agreed. This would bring the instruction in religion down to the level of the man who believes the least; and, as there are some who believe nothing, that method would banish all religion.

A family finds no special difficulty in determining what religion to teach in the home. There are certain principles which are essential to household religion with which all intelligent men and women may easily become familiar. Churches have no special difficulty in settling the question for themselves what religious truths they will hold and teach. There are certain great principles concerning the church's own relation to God, to Christ and to the Bible, and concerning what church-members should believe and do. These form the substance of church creeds. Even so there are certain great principles of national religion which set forth the relation of the nation to God, to Jesus Christ, and to the Bible. These, together with those moral and religious principles which relate to the lives of citizens in the state, should have a place in every school which aims to prepare young people for citizenship.