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The Wind And The Whirlwind

By Thomas F. Coakley, D. D.

"As you sow, so shall you reap," was never truer than the present status of the problem of educating our Catholic boys. Every Boys' School in the country is crowded to the doors, and many of them have turned away scores. There does not seem to have been any question of the price of tuition; the difficulty has been to find a school that would take Catholic boys at any reasonable cost. The cry "every Catholic child in a Catholic school" is not easy to utter in the presence of frantic parents who have searched with lamps to find a suitable place for their boys under Catholic educational auspices. The result is deplorable; it means that many of our Catholic boys are not going to get a Catholic education; indeed, for many of them it means that they are not going to get any kind of an education, Catholic or not, because we have been hammering away so hard at our Catholic parents upon the necessity of giving their children a Catholic education, that they have almost reached the conclusion that no education at all is better for their boys, rather than to put their faith in non-Catholic surroundings. But Spartan faith such as this cannot be expected to hold out forever against the present lack of faith for bringing up our boys under the Catholic tutelage. The results are fraught with much peril for the future of the church. We are not training leaders for the coming generation, and the time has almost slipped by for training any of the present generation. And if ever there was a time in the long history of the world when we needed educated Catholic men to lead us, men with backbone where backbone ought to be, it is in the present generation, and in that which will immediately succeed to it. "Votes for women" now a reality, does not automatically mean Catholic leaders, because men will not, at least in our time, be led by women.

The main trouble seems to be the lack of teachers. The shortage of the Catholic Sisters is notorious, for the labors of the hard worked, and over-worked religious communities of women increase faster than their numbers. Even if they were available in abundance, Catholic nuns are not fitted to teach boys beyond the grades; such boys need a strong masculine influence about them. Education is over-sized now. Hence for our boys the only teachers to whom we can have recourse are the teaching Brotherhoods, of whom there are a number of very excellent ones in the United States. But the simple matter of fact is that we have passively, perhaps grossly, neglected them up to this time. Nor is this the fault of the secular clergy alone; the religious orders of men have neglected their own Brotherhoods quite as much as the secular clergy have. The teaching Brotherhoods have been well-nigh lost sight of in the sense that the average pastor and the average priest has never or but rarely, sent to the teaching Brotherhoods and can- didates to fill the rapidly dwindling ranks of this highly important branch of the Church. Somehow or other the average priest has come to take the Brothers as a matter of course; they seem to be outside his range of vision; he did not know, and did not much care, whence their ranks were replenished. It was the problem of someone else, and he allowed it to drift in this fashion, until today we have reaped the fruit of this neglect in past generations, and we are simply overwhelmed with the Catholic boy problem, and yet the teaching Brotherhoods are the only ones who can solve it in any satisfactory fashion.

Without vocations to the Brotherhoods, they must soon die out; the only way of filling their numbers is by fresh recruits; and these recruits, as is the case with postulants for the Communities of Nuns, must come from the parishes. Vocations to the teaching Brotherhoods must be stimulated and encouraged and fostered by parents, by parish priests, and by Confessors. It is idle to talk of the Catholic Boys' High School problem until we find Catholic Brothers sufficiently trained to cope with it. In most dioceses, priests cannot be well spared from parish work for the purpose of teaching in a Boys' High School, unless there is a readjustment of parish duties, a contingency to which the average pastor takes serious objection, unless his vision sweeps beyond his parish boundaries. An Assistant Priest is often a pack horse; he cannot bear the burden of the day and his heats in the parish and teach us well, although a large percentage of assistant priests would welcome an opportunity to take charge of a class in a Boys' High School for the good that would accrue to the boys, and to the priests' own intellectual life. So we are back again to the Brotherhoods. If pastors and priests generally would send a sufficient number of

virtuous and capable young men to the teaching Brotherhoods, and foster and cherish vocations to them with the same praiseworthy zeal they manifest in sending splendid candidates to the various religious communities of women, it will not be long until the Catholic Boys' High School problem will be on a fair way to solve itself.

THE GOAL OF AMERICANIZATION TRAINING

In view of the commonly recognized need for adequately trained Americanization workers, various universities have established an Americanization Training Course, the object of which will be to afford fundamental, scientific and practical training for men and women who wish to engage in any phase of the important and developing work of Americanization.

Perhaps the value of this specialized Americanization training may be best summed up if we state gains to be aimed at for the individual most concerned, namely, the immigrant:

First. The most important thing immigrant should get from the trained Americanization worker is the certainty that the worker stands for the best forces in America reaching out in a democratic way to help him in his difficult problems of new world adjustment. Too often the immigrant is the prey of the evil forces in America. The trained Americanization worker should stand to him for all the good America has to offer.

Second. The immigrant should feel the certainty that the worker understands him and his racial group; that he knows their peculiar strengths and weaknesses; that he knows the political, industrial and social conditions under which they lived in their own country, why they came to America; that he realizes their problems here, their causes of discontent, and what they need in order to fit themselves happily and successfully into the complex life of America.

Third. The immigrant from any one of the sixty odd racial groups represented in America should get from the trained worker the special educational, political, or other guidance which he needs to adjust himself to American life; the needs will vary with the group.

Fourth. The immigrant should acquire the language of America so far as he is able. But it must be remembered that many immigrants are too old or too much occupied with earning a living to learn the language of America well enough to have it become the language in which they think, and that for some time wise use must be made of Americanization work of the foreign tongue and the foreign press.

Fifth. The immigrant should get the realization of the real meaning of the ideals of her founders—of her traditions, of her standards, of her hopes. He should get some ideas of social and economic adjustments which are truly democratic and of the best ways for him to help in these adjustments.

Sixth. The immigrant should get from the worker encouragement to put into America all the talents, crafts, and deals for good which he brings with him, to develop them in harmony with the best ideals of America, and so make his contribution to enduring American culture. He should be led to prize the things which are his own which make or good in America. On the other hand, he should get clearly a realization that is practices and characteristics which are weakness in America should be done away with as quickly and as completely as possible.

Seventh. The immigrant should get such a sympathetic understanding of the other foreign peoples in America that old world prejudices will tend to die, and confidence will be established among all groups here so that they may have fair and square dealing with one another.

Eighth. The immigrant should get from the Americanization worker the definite feeling that the worker stands in a real sense as an advocate of the immigrant against race discriminations and unjust treatment. It is true that as Americans our practices too often lag behind our democratic ideals, but just and intelligent interpretation of America to the immigrant, and of the immigrant to the quick sense of fair play of the American, will do much to bring about a sense of justice and real democracy toward the foreigner which is the foundation of all true Americanization.

Ninth. Finally, the immigrant should get as a result of the entire effort of the trained Americanization worker such a fundamental and sympathetic understanding of America that he will necessarily develop a love and loyalty for our country, a desire to remain here and to bear all the citizenship burdens of the Nation in its continuous reconstruction towards a better realization of its democratic ideals.

Albert E. Jenks, (Director University of Minnesota Training Course)

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