

**A STUDY OF THE MORAL AND
RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS IN
AMERICAN SECONDARY
EDUCATION UP TO 1800; A
DISSERTATION**

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A Study of the Moral and Religious Elements in American Secondary Education Up to 1800; A dissertation by Adrian Augustus Holtz

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ADRIAN AUGUSTUS HOLTZ

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A Study of the Moral and Religious
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A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND
LITERATURE IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
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(DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)

BY
ADRIAN AUGUSTUS HOLTZ

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PREFACE

Many assumptions have been made of the religious motives back of American educational activities, but no historical study has been made to determine the actual participation of religious bodies and of the presence of religious incentives as a dynamic of our educational advancement. The purpose of this thesis has been to find out to what extent religious motive was present in the founding of the American educational system. The field opened up so large that it was found advisable to limit the scope of the investigation to the elementary and secondary schools. The study of the universities would be a work for a separate investigation.

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PART I

THE EDUCATORS OF ENGLAND

In no period of history has there been a time when the educational system was equal to the idealism of the educators, but the fact that the educators were recognized as such and in many cases were the masters of one or more large schools gave opportunity for their ideas to find expression in the methods employed. In studying the writings of some of the leading educators of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries in England, and the principles of educational practice given by eminent schoolmasters we find that they built their educational structure on a religious basis. The branches were to be so taught as to be instrumental in instilling knowledge which directly or indirectly had a religious value. The religious element of instruction was the hub, and all the other branches were those which aided in strengthening the hub. In studying Latin, or Greek, for instance, the text used was often the Bible, or portions of it. Exercises in Latin were often the translation of the English catechism into Latin and then back into the English again. In taking up a lesson in Greek, the master at first had a portion of the Bible translated each morning before going on with one of the Greek authors. It was thought that by translating a section of the Bible or catechism into Latin or Greek or from the Latin and Greek back into the English, a keener insight into the religious implication of the words would be obtained.

Definite periods each day were set apart for religious practices such as praise and prayer. Definite periods were set apart for the direct religious instruction. This instruction was at first memory work such as memorizing the catechism, the Ten Commandments, the creed, the Lord's Prayer, and certain portions of Scripture. Expositions of the catechism were given by the schoolmaster. Histories of the biblical books and helps of a kindred nature were used. Having made several generalizations we will now give references to substantiate them.

Richard Mulcaster was the Head Schoolmaster of the Merchant Taylor's School from 1561-1586. This leading educator writes:

" . . . to see youth well brought up that waye, to learne to discern that which is well from ill, good from bad, religious from profane, honest from dishonest, . . . that they may honour God, serve their countryman, comfort their friends, . . . The ende of our being here is to serve God and our country, in obedience to persons, and performance of duties. . . ."¹

¹ Mulcaster, *Positions*, pp. 28, 29, 127.