# MONOGRAPHS ON EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES 20: EDUCATION THROUGH THE AGENCY OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS; PP.975-1022

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# MONOGRAPHS ON EDUCATION

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# UNITED STATES

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## 20

# EDUCATION THROUGH THE AGENCY OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

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# RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND EDUCATION

One of the facts that most forcibly strikes the student of all early efforts in education is the predominance in them of religious motives and influences. This predominance has been clearly manifest in the beginnings of the schools in the United States. Even where the state has been ostensibly the active agent in these, its work has been in most cases inspired by the church and the ministers, and they have furnished the chief instrumentalities by which it has been carried on. In some of the colonies where the church and the state were closely allied at the beginning of the earliest settlement, as was the case with the Congregationalists in New England and the Episcopalians in Virginia and in New York after the English occupation, a distinct line cannot be easily drawn between what the state did and what the church, but the religious element was the active one.

It has been usual to regard concerted movements in behalf of education as having begun with the higher education; and in the majority of cases they originated in the purpose to provide suitably qualified ministers for the congregations.

The oldest American college, Harvard, was founded with the avowed object of training young men for the ministry. Its first benefactor, from whom it was named, was a minister, and its earlier presidents were ministers.

The presence of the religious motive was evident in the earlier steps taken for the foundation of William and Mary college. Its faculty was organized with two professorships of divinity; its early chancellors were the bishops of London; its first nine presidents were clergymen; and three of its presidents were bishops.

The beginning of Yale college was in the gift of books for a library by nine ministers, whose next step was to procure a charter for an institution, the purpose of which was

declared to be to fit young men for public employment both in church and state. The religious character of the institution, now a great university, has never been essentially changed.

The College of New Jersey, now Princeton university, was founded under the auspices of a Presbyterian synod, and has been under Presbyterian control from its beginning in 1747.

King's college, now Columbia university, in the city of New York, was at the time of its foundation greatly aided by a grant of land from Trinity church, and while not exclusively under the control of the members of any one branch of the Christian church, was strongly religious in aim and purpose. The original charter of King's college provided that among the trustees should be the rector of Trinity church in the city of New York, the senior minister of the Reformed Protestant Dutch church, the minister of the Ancient Lutheran church, the minister of the French church, and the minister of the Presbyterian congregation.

Brown university was built up by the efforts of Baptists in Philadelphia and Rhode Island to found a school where members of their denomination might acquire a liberal education.

Dartmouth college originated in an effort by the Rev. Ezra Wheelock to establish an Indian missionary school.

Williams college, a creation of individual beneficence, has been conducted as a Congregational institution from its beginning, and was identified with the origin of the chief Congregational missionary society, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

Several religious denominations co-operated in the foundation of Union college.

The first public school in Pennsylvania was opened by the Friends in 1798.

The Seminary of the Moravians, at Bethlehem, Penn., founded in 1798, is regarded as the oldest school in America for the education of women, and their school at Nazareth Hall as the first normal school.

The religious motive is likewise apparent in the earlier measures for the institution of elementary schools in the colonies, in which religious instruction is often named as one of the objects.

While the line of distinction between the participation of the state and of the church in the earliest schools is not distinctly marked, the part of the state has gradually become better defined. Its right to provide for education has been recognized from the earliest periods, but the function has had its fullest development in recent times. As population increased in the American colonies and a diversity of religious sects arose, the intervention of the state in the maintenance and control of schools was found to be necessary if provision accessible to all was to be made. Since the first land grant for school purposes by the congress of 1785, according to a report made by the commissioner of education in 1887, state aid to education has been an acknowledged principle in the United States. In the presence of many religious denominations holding diverse views on what they regarded as fundamental principles, whose equal rights were guaranteed by the constitution, it was found impossible to provide systematic religious instruction without conflict with the conscientious convictions of some of them, and the effort was abandoned. For a time the plan was adopted in some of the states of distributing the school moneys among all the schools, public, private and denominational, in the district, according to the number of pupils they reported; but this has been generally abandoned under the more complete development of the public school system, and the rule now prevails that public moneys shall be applied only to schools supported exclusively by the state. Religious teaching is not, however, wholly excluded from the public schools, but in most of the states readings from the Bible and the inculcation of general religious and moral principles are allowed. This system is accepted by most of the Protestants as affording a practicable *modus vivendi*, with the expectation that the secular instruction given in the

public schools will be supplemented by religious instruction elsewhere. The Roman Catholics and some Protestants reject it in principle.

While elementary instruction has thus been generally surrendered to the state, the denominations have been less willing to give up their control over secondary and higher education, and the planting of academies and colleges has been carried on industriously, in endeavors to meet and even anticipate the wants of growing populations and of the new settlements in the west. The attachment of the churches to their schools has in many cases grown stronger and more pronounced, and the motives that underlie their support of them have been more emphatically expressed as the secular institutions have become more numerous and their influence has extended. Objections are often made to consigning the youth of Christian parents at the age when their characters and principles are becoming fixed, to a course of instruction from which religion is left out. The denominations do not decline to recognize the impossibility under the American system of including the teaching of religious doctrine in a state supported school, and even refuse, on principle, to accept government aid for work done in their Indian schools. But they perceive in these state and secular institutions and in the influence they are destined to wield, additional reasons for building up their own schools and for adhering to their own systems.

The primary motive, the one that appears earliest in order in the history of the denominational schools, is to secure an educated ministry and qualified teachers for the church. It has also been found necessary to provide preparatory schools and academies in order to secure candidates qualified to undertake the studies of the colleges and theological seminaries. Further, the conviction is not uncommon among religious persons that the children of the church ought to be educated under denominational influence, where the principles of the denomination are regarded and taught. It is believed to be essential to the growth, consolidation, influence and per-

petuity of a denomination to maintain institutions pervaded with the denominational spirit. In a wider view, religious training is deemed to be essential, equally with intellectual culture, to the most perfect development of character, and is therefore regarded as a factor that should be made an organic part, and not an accidental adjunct, of education.

### THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Roman Catholic church has always insisted firmly and uncompromisingly upon the necessity of an inseparable association of religious instruction with all general education; holding it to be a necessary means of securing fidelity to religious principles in youth and of promoting their proper development in them. As the Roman Catholic idea of education is defined by one of the representative writers of the church,[1] "Catholics hold that as ever and always the child's soul and his duties to God are the highest and greatest, so there is no place, time and method from which the teaching of morals and religion may be eliminated;" that the knowledge of the relations of the creature to his Creator should receive at least as much attention as is given to any other branch; and that, as with secular branches, the child cannot acquire the necessary knowledge of these subjects without the daily presentation of them; and that morality cannot be taught separately from its basis, religion.

In the effort to reach a realization of their ideals in the training of their own children and youth, the Roman Catholics of the United States, besides paying the taxes levied by the states for the support of the public schools, have performed the task, at the cost of great labor and expense of building up a complete system of schools, embracing all the courses from elementary to post-graduate, and covering the whole country, in all of which instruction is given under the direct superintendence of the church.

The organization and extension of the Catholic schools

[1] Rev. P. R. McDevitt, superintendent of parish schools in Philadelphia (Catholic World, September, 1901).

have been a matter of gradual development, the progress of which has been marked during the past half century.

The beginnings of the Catholic institutions of the higher learning were made towards the end of the eighteenth century, when colleges were founded with the original intention of their serving as feeders for the theological seminary.[1] Georgetown college, D. C., was founded by Bishop Carroll in 1789; the Theological seminary in Baltimore, in 1791; St. Mary's college, Baltimore, was chartered in 1805; and Mount St. Mary's college, Emmetsburg, Md., in 1830. St. Louis university, Missouri, an institution established by the Jesuits, the history of which is continuous since 1829, was the first institution of collegiate grade chartered west of the Mississippi river, and the medical school connected with it was also the first in that region.

The establishing and management of the Roman Catholic colleges and universities have been to a large extent the work of the religious orders, a considerable number of which have been active and assiduous in it. Institutions established and maintained by the diocesan clergy and laymen have also acted a notable part in the educational development of the church, and are to-day considerable factors in it.

Pursuing a vocation to which they have consecrated their whole lives, the teaching brethren and sisters of the religious orders have developed a high standard of scholarship in the branches included in their courses of study, which correspond, as a rule, with the traditional classical course, and constitute what has been regarded as the best preparation for the priesthood and for the liberal professions. Much interest has been manifested of late in the extension and perfection of the instruction given in the departments of scientific research, applied science and technology.

Especial importance is attached to the religious education of children, and the parish school is regarded as an essential adjunct to the parish church. The organization of a system

[1] Mgr. Conaty, Address before the third annual Association of Catholic Teachers, 1901.