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## ARE YE YET WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING ?

"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

The control exercised by the state and other accrediting agencies in the preparation of teachers in secular fields prevents undesirables to function in the field of education where boys and girls are given the opportunity to prepare themselves for successful careers in their natural environment, but no such precaution surrounds or protects that science which lifts man to God Himself.

If the State were to exercise the same vigilance regarding the acquisition of supernatural science taught in our Catholic Schools would theologians be justified in saying that much of our instruction is mild heresy. The term "Sisters' theology" includes more than mild ridicule. Without fear of contradiction I should answer no, basing my conclusion upon the fact that present and past existing conditions would not be tolerated.

It is hard to understand how we reconcile our principles to these conditions and yet allow them to prevail.

Opportunities for study in all other fields are afforded our teachers. Every secular subject takes precedence over religion. Caesar has no reason to suspect the loyalty of his subjects - our allegiance must be very gratifying.

If the Divine Teacher hadn't inserted that little conjunction "and" to link another obligation of gravity so paramount that not only time but eternity is affected thereby, we teachers could feel confident that we had more than satisfied our obligation. Do not our majors and minors cover all the fields of knowledge except religion. We have robbed God to pay Caesar, and in so doing, we have perverted the very purpose of our existence.

The Vicar of Christ, at whose command we operate, has outlined the motive of our existence, "To co-operate with Divine Grace in forming Christ in the souls of those regenerated by Baptism."

Consider the care with which specialists in any department prepare for their various avocations. Scientific instruments are tested and retested to determine as far as humanly possible their absolute accuracy, and on the detection of the least flaw they are discarded since lack of precision would be ruinous to a scientific experiment.

We are instrumental causes in the Hands of God and we allow ignorance to become a barrier to our operations.

In our position as religious we may lawfully pass on the major part of the burden of responsibility to Superiors.

The "prudence" of Superiors never permits them to send Sister X into the kitchen to prepare a sumptuous banquet on the assumption that her casual familiarity with the culinary department fits her for the "science" of cooking, nor a fortiori would they be guilty of the "crime" of commanding her to give a course in home economics because she has never absented herself from her three meals a day. Why labor the obvious?

An indisputable inconsistency supported by factual evidence betrays itself in the practice of superiors when a supernatural science is at stake. Sisters are teaching high school courses in dogma, college courses in apologetics and Scripture. They are doing this more on a wrong assumption than on rectitude of preparation. Superiors and subjects alike sometimes act on the assumption that the wearing of a religious habit should ipso facto confer on the wearer the knowledge requisite for a teacher of religion.

Let us examine this flagrant fallacy, first per se and secondly in its effects.

The general ignorance of Catholics about the essence of Catholicity is a positive proof of the necessity of mature knowledge and more explicit belief in teachers of religion. When we examine the content of our knowledge regarding the operations of Divine Providence in our own lives we are confounded at the inadequacy of our preparedness to impart religious knowledge to others. How do we rate in Church History - As likely as not we have not even had a good one semester course in this subject. Our knowledge of Scripture is gleaned, as often as not, from the missal.

The effect is not greater than the cause so that the effect will focus a yet greater light on the foregoing.

The theological I.Q. of Catholics in the United States testifies to the quality of religious instruction in our schools. On the supernatural level they are earnest, often devout, but mostly ignorant. Their influence as an organized group is outweighed by smaller and less highly organized units. Where there should be leadership there is blind acquiescence, and where there should be strength there is more often abject weakness. All this is a result of not a lack of will, but of knowledge.

Do we need more testimony to support our argument, if so, it is forthcoming. The attitude of students is an indictment of their religion classes. Boys and girls are restive and uninterested if not completely bored in a fifty minute class devoted to the attributes of God. The same students will hover hours on end over animals and moles which have become subjects of absorbing

interest under the expertly trained teacher. There is no question as to the comparative excellence of the subject matter. The students are identical. The poorly trained teacher alone makes the difference.

The unprejudiced will find plenty of food for thought in what has been written so that it remains only to point out, to those who are convinced that grave mistakes have been made in the past, that the School of Theology has been launched as the best possible corrective measure. Students here enrolled will find a curriculum ideal in content to provide adequate education for teachers of religion. In all charity, we warn those who still persist in the obstinacy of "unbelief" that the Great Teacher, Himself, hurled a frightening anathema which could well apply to them, "Cursed be he that doth the work of God negligently."

Too long have we worshiped at the wrong shrine. The natural sciences have usurped Theology, the Queen of science, and cowards that we are we have become the slaves of our own treachery. The "McCollums" of the twentieth century like the Jews of old would never suspect superiors and members of religious orders to be supporting their cause, but if we are not "with Christ", we are "against Him".

Let us then, at this late hour appraise our position and if we haven't been putting first things first, let us hasten to remedy the situation.

The fallacy that our schools cannot function if the teachers haven't reached the acme of perfection in the natural science have been exposed by Jesus Christ Himself - "Seek first the kingdom of Heaven and all these shall be added unto you."