"TRUTH AND FREEDOM"

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"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," said Jesus. The truth about God and the universe truly frees men from falsehood, superstition and fear. But how shall one find and recognize the truth about a thousand burning questions? The answer is by being free to investigate all sides of every issue, free to read, to think and to discuss any question, pro and con. Freedom is thus bound up with truth. Truth makes men free but they must also be free to seek her out.

That is why the Bill of Rights or the first ten amendments to the Constitution of the United States is one of the most important documents in all human history. It guarantees us freedom of the press, of speech, of assembly and of worship. Any attack on those basic freedoms is an attack on the American Way of Life. Totalitarianism is any form constitutes such an attack whether it comes from a state or a church. Political Fascism and Communism therefore assault the very foundations of our Anglo-Saxon heritage because they deny men the right to investigate or to express any ideas contrary to those laid down in the party line.

The same thing must also be said of the Roman Catholic Church though we say it reluctantly and with sorrow because we have so many good friends among the people of that faith. For their sake as well as ours , however, the time has come for plain speaking.

The Roman Catholic Church does not believe in freedom. In the Spanish catechism, used in all Catholic religious instruction in Spain, one may find the following in question and answer form:

Q. What are the freedoms which liberalism defends?

A. Freedom of conscience, freedom of worship, and freedom of the press.

Q. What does freedom of the press mean?

A. The right to print and publish without previous censorship all kinds of opinions, however absurd and corrupting they may be.

Q. Must the government suppress this freedom by means of censorship?

A. Obviously, yes.

Q. Why?

A. Because it must prevent the deception, calumny and corruption of its subjects, which harm the general good.

Q. Are there other pernicious freedoms?

A. Yes. Freedom of education, freedom of propaganda, and freedom of assembly.

Q. Why are these freedoms pernicious?

A. Because they serve to teach error, propagate vice, and plot against the church.

Q. Does one sin gravely who subscribes to a liberal newspaper?

A. Yes . . . because he contributes his money to evil, places his faith in jeopardy, and gives others a bad example.

It is quite evident that the Roman Catholic Church does not trust its people to study both sides of a question. They forbid them to do so. Recently, the Roman Catholic superintendent of the Newark public schools banned "The Nation" from the high school library. The cause of this unAmerican action was a series of three factual articles by Dr. Paul Blanshard on "The Roman Catholic Church in Medicine, Sex and Education." He quoted from their own text books so that no one could possibly say the articles do not clearly present the Roman Catholic point of view.

Let us take a look at these articles. If the mother of a large family should find herself pregnant again and her Catholic doctor knew that removal of an hour-old fetus would save her life, his Church would forbid him to operate because, "An innocent fetus an hour old may not be directly killed to save the lives of all the mothers in the world." Dr. Blanshard quotes this monstrous dictum from Dr. Austin O'Malley's "The Ethics of Medical Homicide and Mutilation," published with the imprimatur of the late Cardinal Farley. And this would still be true for the Catholic even if the pregnancy were a tubal pregnancy in which the unborn child would also have to die!

Unborn infants who are liable to die at birth must be baptized with a syringe because, "unbaptized infants who die are deprived forever of the sight of God (that is barred from heaven): hence it is important that every effort be made to baptize infants in danger of death." The quotation is from "The Nurse: Handmaid of the Divine Physician" by Sister Mary Berenice Beck, with the imprimatur of the Archbishop of St. Louis. When I read a portion of this article recently to a Catholic medical student here in the University of Iowa and asked him if he would practice medicine according to these directives he said he would!

The question of birth control is one of the most important in a world where overpopulation is rapidly becoming a menace. In overpopulated India, for example, there is an increase of population every month of 500,000 or a new city added the size of Minneapolis. Unless the Indian people are taught to control and space their families, God only knows what mass suffering and death lie ahead of them. Every year the world's population increases 17,000,000. There are two and a quarter billion people in the world now. It takes 2½ acres of cultivated land to feed each person but there is only 1.77 acres available now because of overpopulation. Can it be God's will that we continue to add other millions who must of necessity be forced to starve to death? We think not!

Here in America the Protestant Church has taken a firm stand in favor of planned parenthood and the use of medically approved contraceptives while the Catholic Church stands in violent opposition to the same. This is creating a moral problem for Catholic women who cannot afford to agree with their church even when that church calls them sinners. When the Ladies' Home Journal asked its readers in 1938 if they believed in the right to disseminate birth control information to married couples, 51 per cent of the Catholic women polled said yes. When Fortune posed a similar question in 1943, 69 per cent of the Catholic women said yes.

Such was the content of Dr. Blanshard's factual articles. Supt. Herron of Newark, in banning "The Nation" made no attempt to refute the articles. He merely called this liberal paper a "vile rag" and made it inaccessible to all students, Catholic and Protestant alike.

If Jesus was right in saying that the truth shall make men free, how are we to find the truth unless we are free to read scholarly and factual articles which present all sides of a question? What chance does a Catholic child have of learning the truth when he is forbidden to read certain books and magazines? The answer is obvious. He has no chance whatsoever.

That is why the Catholic Church does not believe in the public school system. Here is a quotation from a pamphlet under the imprimatur of the late Cardinal Hays—"May an American Oppose the Public School?" by Father Paul L. Blakely, S. J.—"Our first duty to the public school is not to pay taxes for its maintenance. We pay that tax under protest not because we admit an obligation in justice. Justice cannot oblige the support of a system which we are forbidden in conscience to use or a system which we conscientiously hold to be bad in its ultimate consequences. . . The first duty of every Catholic is to keep his children out of it. . . ."

It is for this very reason that the Catholic Church in America is now mobilizing its power to force the Congress of the United States as well as state legislatures to grant them the privilege of using public tax money for the support of parochial schools. The historic wall separating church and state has already been breached and there is more to come.

This great danger has therefore called into being a national organization established to maintain constitutional separation of church and state. It is called "Protestants and Other Americans United" and a recent manifesto to the American people was signed by John A. Mackay, President of Princeton Theological Seminary; Edwin McNeil Proteat, President, Rochester-Colgate Divinity School; G. Bromley Oxnam, Bishop of the Methodist Church; Louie D. Newton, President, Southern Baptist Convention; and Charles Clayton Morrison, former editor of The Christian Century.

So important is this manifesto to the free institutions of America that I quote from it at some length:

The officers and the widely representative National Board of Advisors of this organization desire to speak frankly and clearly to the American people concerning the purpose for which this undertaking has been launched. *Its single and only purpose is to assure the maintenance of the American principle of separation of church and state upon which the federal constitution guarantees religious liberty to all the people and all churches of this Republic.*

Protestants and Other Americans United has been called into existence because this principle has been and is being violated, and threatened with further violation, in certain areas and by certain acts of both government and church. The plain meaning of the first amendment to the Constitution which forbids Congress to make any law "respecting an establishment of religion" has been by specious propaganda tending to confuse the public mind as to the clear-cut line of separation which this amendment draws between church and state. We shall endeavor (1) to revive in the public mind a clear understanding of the constitutional basis upon which religious liberty has been guaranteed, (2) to redress the specific violations which have recently come into force, and (3) to resist further encroachments upon this constitutional principle.

Protestants and Other Americans United does not concern itself with the religious teaching, the forms of worship or the ecclesiastical organization of the many churches in our country. It is no part of our purpose to propagandize the Protestant faith or any other, nor to criticize or oppose the teaching or internal practices of the Roman Catholic Church or any other. We have no objection or sympathy with any movement that is tinged with religious fanaticism. Our motivation arises solely from our patriotic and religious concern for the maintenance of the separation of church and state under the American form of government.

Nevertheless, the existing situation cannot be dealt with save by frankly taking account of the specific sources from which violations of the first amendment originate. Our undertaking is not primarily directed toward these sources, but toward those agencies of government—local, state and federal—which weakly yield to their demands. Congress and all state legislatures, and all executive and judiciary agencies of government must be warned that they are playing with fire when thy play into the hands of any church which seeks, at any point however marginal, to breach the wall that sharply separates church and state in this country. The principle of their separation is so firmly established in a long tradition as well as in the Constitution that any tampering with it will tend to light the fires of intolerance and fanaticism which our system of government is designed to prevent.

Our operations, therefore, are not inspired by any religious differences, but by a

common conviction concerning the religious liberty of all faiths. The internal differences which distinguish one church from another have no place on the political level. Their consideration belongs in the open forum which the Constitution has provided for freedom of conscience and the free exchange of opinion. Here all the churches have liberty to worship as they desire, to propagate their own faith and to maintain such organizations for this purpose as they deem expedient. In the open forum of religious liberty they may meet one another in cooperation or in controversy.

Already, the legislatures of certain states, yielding to the political pressure of this church, have enacted legislation empowering local school boards to grant these special privileges. The federal Supreme Court in two decisions has confirmed state legislation which sanctions the use of public school funds to provide free text books for parochial schools (1930), and to transport pupils to such schools (1947). The four dissenting justices in the bus transportation case solemnly warned the nation that these two breaches in the wall separating church and state are only the beginning. "That a third and a fourth breach, and still others, will be attempted, we may be sure," say the dissenting justices.

Protestants and Other Americans United is determined to assert its full strength to the end that there shall be no more breaches in this wall, that the breaches already made shall be repaired, and that the complete separation of church and state in an undivided state-supported educational system shall be maintained.

On a bolder and more ambitious scale, this same church now demands aid for its schools from the federal government. A proposed federal grant of several hundred million dollars annually in aid of public education, especially in those states whose economic resources are insufficient to provide adequate education for their children, has been up before Congress for many years. Action on this proposal has been held up by the pressure of this church which demands that its parochial schools shall share with the public schools in any such federal appropriation in an amount proportional to the number of pupils in each school system.

Thus far, Congress has withstood this demand. But two bills have been introduced in that body, one of which completely yields to the church's maximum demand, while the other provides that the funds may be distributed by each state in accordance with its own statutes. The latter, the so-called Taft bill, (S.472), is a disguised evasion of the issue. It plays directly into the policy of the church which has already secured legislation in 18 states permitting financial aid to parochial schools in one form or another, and in effect invites the states to violate the mandate of the first amendment. The effect of its passage by Congress would encourage and facilitate the church's campaign in these states to widen the initial legislation already enacted in its favor, and to secure similar and even more advanced legislation in all states."

The recent Supreme Court decision outlawing the teaching of religion in the public schools has greatly strengthened the cause of those Protestants and Catholics who have been worried over the increasing violations of the basic principle of the separation of church and state. For let it be clearly understood that there are many clear-thinking Catholics who are opposed to their church's designs in this regard.

Even though such Catholic beliefs as were discussed earlier in this article are not acceptable to Protestants, we nevertheless maintain that the Catholic Church shall have the freedom to teach them to their people—but not the right to use public tax money for that purpose. We believe friendly but frank speaking along the lines indulged in this article will prove to be the best safegaurd for future friendly relations between all religious groups in America and that the basic cause of truth and freedom can thus be best served.