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THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF ST. JEAN-BAPTISTE

DE LA SALLE, THE FOUNDER OF THE BROTHERS

OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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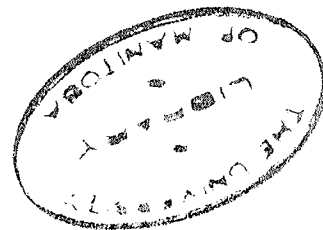
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ABSTRACT

"The Educational Philosophy of St. Jean-Baptiste De La Salle, the Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools."

Purpose of the Dissertation

The purpose of this dissertation is to organize, systematize and discuss De La Salle's philosophy of education pointing out the following: (1) the permeation of his philosophy by religion; (2) the importance of the teacher in his educational system; (3) the aspects of modernity in his philosophy.

Method of Procedure

Frequent recourse to both primary and secondary sources of information is made with emphasis on the former. Historical details are used to clarify ideas connected with his educational system. The interpretation of Lasallian thoughts is made in terms of modern pedagogy, but in the light of the social, religious and educational background of the seventeenth century.

Life and Work of De La Salle

To have a better understanding of De La Salle's thought it is necessary to know his life history and his achievements. John Baptist De La Salle was born in Rheims, France, on April 30, 1651 of distinguished parents whose chief interest was to imbue their children with piety. He received his Master of Arts degree from the College Des Bons Enfants and his Doctorate degree from the University of Rheims. After completing his ecclesiastical studies at the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, Paris he was ordained a Catholic priest in 1678.

Besides establishing the Order of the Brothers of the Christian Schools he is also credited by the historians for the following: the establishment of the first teachers colleges, the popularization of the vernacular language as a medium of instruction, the application of simultaneous method of instruction in elementary schools, the establishment of Latinless secondary and technical schools, the initiation of adult education and the founding of a reformatory for delinquents.

Findings of this Study

Every phase of the Lasallian educational philosophy is directly or indirectly connected with religion. The main objective of education is the salvation of the pupils' souls through the Christian character formation; the chief means of realizing this aim are prayer, sacraments, Holy Mass and religious instruction; the principal subject on the curriculum is religion whose spirit governs such subjects as reading, writing and arithmetic. The textbooks, prizes and the appearance of the classroom recall to the pupils' minds the ultimate end of the Lasallian education.

In the Lasallian school the teacher is considered all important. He is not merely an instructor who imparts knowledge to children, nor an administrator who keeps the children orderly; he is essentially a moulder or a fashioner of pupils' character. In fact the success and the efficiency of the Lasallian system depends on the teacher who imbues the children under his care with the Christian principles by means of his example, prayer and instruction.

Although De La Salle established his Institute in the seventeenth century many aspects of his educational philosophy conform favourably with modern theories and practices. Besides elevating teaching to a dignified profession, De La Salle provided a programme for the training

of candidates for this profession which included such modern features as practice teaching, in-service training, teacher selection and an academic and professional education.

His school management also demonstrates such aspects of modernity as pupil participation in classroom management, homogenous grouping, frequent and subject promotions, friendly pupil-teacher relationship, attractive classroom and positive means of discipline. There is far too much regimentation in the Lasallian educational system.

Perhaps nowhere else are the modern aspects of the Lasallian philosophy so conspicuous as in the curriculum and in the methodology. In the former we notice such current practices as co-operative curriculum making and a wide selection of subjects in the vocational and secondary schools; and in the latter, we note such modern characteristics of methodology as group instruction, care for the individual differences, pupil-activity, appeal to the understanding, motivated and meaningful learning, mastery of subject matter, remedial teaching, practical teaching and the use of the vernacular as a medium of instruction.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Thesis.

De La Salle was not a theorist. Unlike Rousseau, Milton and Comenius, he did not write books solely for expounding his educational theories; on the contrary, he was interested in doing things. In the words of Adamson, "De La Salle was essentially the man of action, the administrator, rather than the elaborator of theories." His educational thoughts are scattered throughout his writings and are not confined to any one book.

The purpose of this thesis is to organize, systematize and discuss De La Salle's philosophy of education pointing out the following: (1) the permeation of his philosophy by the spirit of religion; (2) the importance of the teacher in his educational system, and (3) the extent of agreement and disagreement between Lasallian theories and practices and those of other educators, particularly those who belong to the modern school of thought.

Procedure

Since this dissertation is documentary in nature, frequent recourse to De La Salle's pedagogical writings will be made. Historical details will be used to clarify ideas connected with his educational system. The interpretation of his motives and his thoughts will be

¹
J.W. Adamson, Pioneers of Modern Education 1600-1700,
(London: Cambridge University Press, 1921) p. 229.

²
Lasallian means belonging or pertaining to De La Salle.

made in the light of the social, religious and educational background of the seventeenth century.

In order to evaluate critically De La Salle's educational theories, the author will compare and contrast the Lasallian concept of education with that of other educational thinkers. Wherever possible the modernity of Lasallian philosophy will be shown.

De La Salle's pedagogical writings will be reviewed in order to show the phases of the philosophy that can be discovered in each of his books. References will be made to the spiritual books which amplify the educational ideas expressed in his pedagogical writings. A summary of the researches made on Lasallian philosophy will be given in order to demonstrate how this dissertation is different from any other work done so far on De La Salle's educational theories.

Man's thoughts cannot be justly appreciated nor evaluated without an adequate knowledge of his philosophy of life and the social, religious and educational background of his time. Consequently, the life of De La Salle will be outlined with stress on those factors that influenced his educational philosophy. His educational contributions and the influence of his philosophy on the French educational system will be summarized for the same purpose.

Lasallian objectives form an important chapter of this thesis. The treatment of the methods, curriculum and school management will reveal how De La Salle proposed to realize his objectives. The conclusion of each chapter will develop the argument designed to prove the claims made at the outset of this research.

Sources of Information

It is rather difficult to separate De La Salle's spiritual

writings from his pedagogical ones, for the former were written in order to help the Brothers, founded by De La Salle, to become effective Christian educators. For the purpose of this thesis, however, only literature directly connected with his philosophy will be reviewed. His pedagogical writings consist of: The Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, The Conduct of the Schools, Meditations and letters of De La Salle.

The Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools constitute the backbone of the Lasallian educational system. At the request of the Brothers, De La Salle committed to writing the customs of the community by editing in 1695 the "Practices of the Daily Regulations," which were observed until 1705, when they were modified to meet the needs of the Brothers. They were divided into two sections, namely: The Common Rules and Constitutions of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and Rules Regarding the Good Order and Good Conduct of the Institute. The former contains an elaboration of the purpose, spirit and the necessity of the Institute, along with an account of the right relationship between the pupils and the Brothers, and the Brothers and the Brother Director. The latter outlines the schedule for schooldays, Sundays, holidays, vacations and retreats. It also contains a clause prohibiting the Brothers to study or teach Latin in order to prevent them from aspiring to the priesthood. To meet the needs of the Church, the General Chapter of the Brothers of Christian Schools held in 1923 revised this regulation permitting the Brothers to both study and teach Latin.

The Conduct of the Schools is an administrative manual for schools and a book on methodology on religion, arithmetic, reading,

spelling and writing. The first printed copy of it appeared in 1720. Prior to this date, the Brothers brought written copies of this manual to school. It is divided into three sections. Part One contains eight chapters, which minutely prescribe directives for proper school management and outline the methods of teaching reading, writing, arithmetic, catechism and prayers.

The second part sets forth the nine necessary means for securing and maintaining order in the school. The third part deals with the means Brother Directors should employ to train the young Brothers who are sent to their community. Since this section was meant only for the Brother Directors, it was omitted in the subsequent editions of The Conduct of the Schools, which was composed particularly for the teaching Brothers. This manual of pedagogy has been revised in 1811, 1870 and in 1886 in order to keep it up to date with contemporary methods and curricula.

In his Meditations De La Salle discusses the end of the Institute, the dignity of the Christian educator, the means for character formation, the nature of the child, the duties and rewards of the Christian master. Based on the assimilation of Sulpician, Berullian and Ignatian spirituality these Meditations provide "food for thought" for the Brothers.

De La Salle's Meditations can be grouped into three sections: "Meditations During the Retreat," "Meditations for All Sundays During the Year," and "Meditations for the Principal Feasts of the Year." Each of these Meditations is divided into three parts, the last section of each part containing an exhortation to the practice of virtue.

His fifty-two autographed letters written to Brothers, priests and civil authorities demonstrate his remarkable common sense and his self-effacing charity. His letters to the Brothers contain both spiritual and pedagogical advice, although some of them are purely informative. Brother Athanase Emile, the late Superior General of the Brothers of Christian Schools, claims in his preface to Battersby's book that:

No one can read through De La Salle's Letters without admiring his spirit of understanding, his fatherly interest in each individual Brother, his unfailing patience with the weaker members of his society, his knowledge of the minute details of community life and his devoted care to supply each of his disciples with what he needed. 3

Review of Researches on Lasallian Philosophy

Numerous books have been written on De La Salle's spirituality, but only a few on his educational philosophy. Among those who outlined his pedagogical principles are Jules Herment⁴ and Frère Maximin.⁵ The former discusses the Lasallian school and the maintenance of its tradition, concluding with the following statement which throws some light on De La Salle as an educator: "There may be some who have spread as many pedagogical theories as he or more than he, but no one has equalled him as a doer or as an originator." The latter enumerates the characteristics of Lasallian management. In his historical and critical

³ W.J. Battersby, De La Salle: Letters and Documents, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1951), p. xv.

⁴ Jules Herment, Les Idées Pédagogiques de Saint Jean Baptiste de La Salle, (Paris: P. Lethiellieux, 1932.)

⁵ Frère Maximin, Les Ecoles Normales de Saint Jean Baptiste de La Salle, (Bruxelles-Namur: Procure des Frères, 1922.)

study of De La Salle's normal schools, Frère Maximin does not discuss the aims nor the methods of Lasallian educational system.

Two recent dissertations containing summaries of Lasallian philosophy have been approved by the state universities. Brother A.⁶ Lessard S.C. in his doctorate dissertation on "Saint De La Salle and the Training of a Christian Brother," devotes nine pages to the educational philosophy of De La Salle. Brother Hilary C. Gilmartin, F.S.C.,⁷ in his master's dissertation entitled, "The Perfection and Application of the Simultaneous Method of St. John Baptist De La Salle," outlines those characteristics of Lasallian philosophy that are in accord with the modern educational theories.

In brief reports given at the Educational Conference of the Brothers of the Christian Schools held in the United States, Brothers⁸ Philip and Arsenius⁹ pointed out the salient principles of Lasallian philosophy without discussing them.

Although much valuable information on De La Salle's educational theories has been made available recently through the efforts of the

⁶ Brother A.R. Lessard, S.C., "Saint De La Salle and the Training of a Christian Brother," (Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Department of Education, Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1953.)

⁷ Brother H.C. Gilmartin, F.S.C., "The Perfection and Application of the Simultaneous Method of St. John Baptist De La Salle," (Unpublished M.A. thesis, St. Louis University, 1949.)

⁸ Brother Philip, F.S.C., "St. John Baptist De La Salle's Philosophy of Education," Proceedings of the Educational Conference of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Vol. I, pp. 8-15.

⁹ Brother Arsenius, F.S.C. "Educational Philosophy of St. John Baptist De La Salle as applied to Present Social Conditions," Ibid., Vol.IV.

research writers, there still remains a vast unexplored area connected with his philosophy. This dissertation attempts to fill this void by discussing and evaluating his philosophy in terms of present educational theories.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

De La Salle's educational philosophy was determined largely by his philosophy of life, which in turn, was influenced by his home training and by the formal education he received at the Collège Des Bons Enfants, the Seminary of Saint Sulpice and the University of Rheims. The people with whom he associated also exerted on him an important influence, some of which was direct and some, indirect.

Early Education

John Baptist De La Salle was born in Rheims on April 30, 1651, of a distinguished family. His father, Louis, was a city magistrate and his mother, a descendant of the "elite" of French society. Both parents were fervent Catholics. They were also well-to-do economically so that they were able to hire a tutor for their children.

When nine years old, De La Salle entered the Collège Des Bons Enfants, where he spent nine years as a resident student. This institution of learning, whose aim in education was to train the pupils to piety, good morals, respect for the king and obedience to the magistrates, increased De La Salle's spirituality.

The curriculum at the college put emphasis on the study and on the practice of religion. The students and their teachers assisted at Holy Mass each day of the week. Every class period began and ended with prayer. Religion was studied with much application and devotion.

Latin and philosophy were the other two important subjects

on the curriculum. Lectures were delivered in Latin. Even the conversation during the recreation was carried on in Latin. For four years the student at Collège Des Bons Enfants studied the Latin grammatical rules and familiarized himself with the classical authors.

After completing this highly concentrated Latin phase of his education, De La Salle took rhetoric and philosophy. The former comprised the acquisition of the art of discussion, while the latter consisted of logic, ethics, physics and metaphysics, with great emphasis on the volume of knowledge rather than on its quality.

In 1669, when only eighteen years of age, De La Salle completed his classical education at the Collège Des Bons Enfants and received his master of arts degree, which placed him in the category of the learned. However, this degree proved to be only the first of his academic degrees, for in 1677 and 1680 he obtained a licentiate and doctorate in theology, respectively.

Later Education

From his earliest days, De La Salle showed a liking for the ecclesiastical state. At the age of eleven he was tonsured to signify his intention of becoming a priest. His relative, Peter Dozet, a Canon of Rheims, furthered his ambition by bequeathing to him the honor and the benefits of the office of a Canon of Rheims. In 1669 De La Salle followed courses in theology at the University of Rheims and at the Abbey of Saint Denis. Next year he went to Paris and entered the Seminary of Saint Sulpice.

John Baptist entered wholeheartedly into the studies that were necessary for the priesthood. According to M. Leschassier, a member of

the seminary staff, De La Salle proved to be a model seminarian. His temperament and his earlier education made it possible for him to imbibe the intense spirituality, which characterized this institution.

While at the seminary, De La Salle was initiated into the teaching profession. The seminarians taught in the charity schools attached to the parish churches. These schools were under the supervision of an "Assembly of Charity," and only pupils who were proven to be poor could attend them. Reading, writing and religion were the main subjects on the curriculum. At the end of two years, the pupils were placed in a trade where they worked as apprentices. Undoubtedly, this teaching experience provided De La Salle with some insight of what could be expected if the schools were conducted properly. It may be that he also witnessed the operation of the continuation school of M. Olier located near the seminary.

While at the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, De La Salle had the opportunity of reading Remonstrances, written by Charles Demia, and L'Ecole Paroissiale, written by a priest in 1654. Demia's description of the plight of poor children must have impressed De La Salle, who had particular affection for the unfortunate. In the words of Demia:

The children of the poor are completely neglected, although these constitute the largest and the most important part of the State. Youth badly brought up, commonly fall into laziness whence it comes that they run the streets, gather in the public places and occupy themselves in dissolute talk which makes them intractable, dissipated, quarrelsome and licentious and turns them into blasphemers, drunkards, knaves and thieves. 2

1

J. Guibert, Histoire de Saint Jean Baptiste De La Salle, (Paris: Pouissielque, 1900), p. 31.

2

As quoted in W.J. Battersby, De La Salle: A Pioneer of Modern Education, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), p. 24.

Perhaps, no other book influenced the pedagogical ideas of De La Salle as much as L'Ecole Paroissiale. When we compare this book with The Conduct of the Schools, written by De La Salle, we notice many similarities. In both books we find a list of qualities of a good teacher, a description of ideal school furniture, a list of awards and punishments to be used in school, an enumeration of the duties of the monitors, who participated in the government of the school, and an emphasis on the importance of teaching reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic.

The Influence of People on De La Salle

The circumstances and the people whom De La Salle met, rather than the books he read initiated him in the work of Christian education. He says this himself:

It was through meeting with N. Nyel and a proposal of Mme. de Croyère that I was led to idea of doing it. Not but that it had been proposed to me. Several friends of M. Roland had tried to persuade me into it, but they could not get it into my head and it did not occur to me to undertake it. 3

De La Salle's association with Canon Roland cannot be overlooked. Out of charity Roland undertook the work of establishing schools for the poor. Unfortunately, his many activities sapped his energy to such an extent that they shortened his life. To make certain that his work continued after his death, Roland asked De La Salle to secure letters patent for the Sisters of the Congregation of the Holy Child Jesus. The carrying out of this request in 1677, a year after the death of Roland, provided De La Salle with some experience in

3

A. Ravelet, Blessed J.B. De La Salle, (Paris: Procure Générale, 1888), p. 141.

business administration, which he used to good advantage, when he established the Institute of the Brothers of Christian Schools.

But the initiation of De La Salle into his future work was the responsibility of two French ladies, Madame Maillefer, and Madame Croyère, and a superintendent, Mr. Nyel, rather than the association of Roland with De La Salle. The ladies provided the necessary funds for the maintenance of schools opened by Mr. Nyel.

Inception of the Institute

Characteristically, Mr. Nyel opened a number of charity schools with the assistance of De La Salle and the parish priests. Being ill-prepared for the work in the classroom, the teachers soon became disgusted and threatened to abandon their teaching profession, leaving these schools on the brink of ruin. Eager to save the children from this pending disaster, De La Salle visited the schools, observed the instruction given and noticed the most pressing problem...the lack of academic and professional teacher training. Thereupon, he invited the crude mannered teachers into his own house, gave them lodging and taught them the elements of pedagogy. He also drew up a set of rules which were to regulate their conduct. Some of these teachers found the regulations too restrictive and deserted him, but, fortunately, an influx of new candidates appeared replacing those who had left.

By this time, De La Salle fully realized his mission, and did not spare himself to make it successful. To make himself like his fellow teachers, he resigned his canonry and distributed his fortune, despite the opposition from his relatives.

On May 9, 1684, he had the school masters assemble in the Novitiate at Rheims to discuss the problems confronting the newly

established Institute. Among the most pressing problems were: the kind of rules and vows that were to be adopted, the name that was to be given to the new Institute and the kind of soutane the Brothers were to wear. All these problems were solved through the means of discussion, in which De La Salle and the Brothers participated.

This Institute established by De La Salle in 1684 had to fit into the educational system of France in the seventeenth century. It had also to meet the needs of society in a manner different from the already established organizations.

Stratification in French Society

In the seventeenth century, France was divided into two great groups, the privileged and the non-privileged classes. The members of the former class inherited the right to possess property, to hold important offices in the government and to govern the country. They were exempt from taxes although they were the ones most capable of paying them.

On the other hand, the members of the non-privileged class spent the greater part of their lives earning a living and working for the nobles. They spent and had their children spend but a short time in school. In any case, public opinion did not favour the universal education of the poor, and even men like Voltaire and Rousseau considered an educated peasantry dangerous and undesirable. Unfortunately, too, the educational system of France offered only limited opportunities for poor children.

French Educational System in the Seventeenth Century

France had four different organizations interested in the education of children under nine years of age. These organizations were:

"little schools," schools conducted by the writing masters, parish charity schools and schools operated by religious congregations.

The "little schools" were found in every district of France and in large cities. Enrolment in these schools was small, hence the name "little." Those who attended them were obliged to pay tuition. The Grand Chantre or Ecolatre granted permits to those men or women who were able to devote their leisure time to the teaching of boys and girls. Naturally, many of the schoolteachers were poorly qualified for their profession. Claude Joly, Grand Chantre of Paris, was accused of employing in his parish schools a collection of "low pot-house keepers, second-hand shop proprietors, silk weavers, flunkies, wigmakers, and marionette-string pullers."⁴ Such as these teachers were, they did exert considerable influence, even preventing the erection of private schools.

The schools operated by the writing masters had calligraphy as their speciality. They were also engaged in the work of copying, embellishing and illuminating manuscripts, along with the teaching of such subjects as reading and arithmetic. Like the teachers of "small schools" the writing masters charged fees for their instruction. The admission to their guild was strictly regulated by a jury composed of their own experienced members. Jealous of their rights, these masters considered the slightest infringement a gross injustice. De La Salle had some misunderstanding with them when he insisted that

⁴ Quoted in W.J. Battersby, De La Salle: A Pioneer of Modern Education, op. cit., p.7.

the Brothers teach writing to the poor boys, who would otherwise be deprived of this skill.

So far the "little schools" and the schools of the writing masters were intended for fee-paying pupils. In the former, some provision was made for students who were too poor to pay. In practice, however, very few poor children attended these schools, because they were despised by both pupils and teachers. The poor children were quick to realize that they were not wanted. Little or no persuasion was required to make these pupils stay away from school, leaving them free to join gangs of ignorant, vicious and complacent hoodlums.

Religious Congregations operated the fourth type of schools. Only few Religious Orders of men were interested in the elementary education of poor boys. César de Bus inaugurated in the Venasian Counties of France the Congregation of the Christian Doctrine. About the same time, Saint Joseph Calasanctius established in Rome the Order of the Clerks Regulars of the Poor and of the Mother of God for Pious Schools. The members of this order confined their work to Italy and Spain. Unfortunately, the Congregations founded by César de Bus and Saint Joseph Calasanctius abandoned elementary schools and devoted their lives to teaching boys in secondary schools.

The girls of poor families were more fortunate than the boys, for they had a number of religious orders of Sisters interested in elementary education. The Ursuline Order founded by Saint Angela de Merici was introduced into France from Italy in 1592 by César de Bus. In 1597 Saint Peter Fourier founded the Congregation of Notre Dame whose members conducted numerous schools in France. Sisters of Charity were also engaged in the teaching of poor girls of elementary school age.

Educational Contributions

The establishment of the Institute of Christian Schools proved to be an essential stabilizing factor for all other works of De La Salle. By summarizing De La Salle's contributions to education we shall demonstrate his philosophy of education as it was applied to the conditions of his time.

According to Kane, "the two most obvious defects at the time of De La Salle in elementary schools were poor teachers and poor methods."⁵ De La Salle solved the first problem by establishing teachers colleges for lay teachers and a religious Institute, and the second, by introducing the simultaneous method of instruction. Adamson and Cubberley claim that Demia established the first teachers colleges or normal schools, whereas, Kane, Hall and Graves give De La Salle this credit. Battersby describes the difference between Demia's "séminaire" and De La Salle's "séminaire de maîtres de campagne." The former was primarily a seminary for students who were preparing for the priesthood. True, an elementary course in pedagogy was given here, but the students did not enter this institution for the purpose of becoming teachers. On the other hand, De La Salle's institutions⁶ were the "real prototype" of our modern teachers colleges.

The popularization of simultaneous method is De La Salle's second contribution to education. It must be noted, however, that he was not an inventor of this method nor did he first use it. Comenius

⁵
W.T. Kane, An Essay Toward a History of Education, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1935) p. 245.

⁶
W.J. Battersby, De La Salle: A Pioneer of Modern Education, op. cit., p. 115.

and Fourier explained its advantages, but failed to explain its application. Both suggest the use of monitors in teaching. Obviously, this method of instruction cannot be termed simultaneous or group teaching. On the other hand, De La Salle had the teacher teach all the pupils of the same class at the same time, using monitors for administrative purposes only.

Although De La Salle did not initiate the idea of vernacular instruction, he, nevertheless, fostered this movement by substituting French for Latin in his own schools as a medium of instruction. Prior to his time, Vitorino de Feltre, Ratke, Comenius and the Little Schools of Port Royal advocated and used the mother tongue in the elementary schools.⁷

The establishment of Latinless secondary schools, which met the needs of the children of the middle class, was another of De La Salle's educational contributions. The secondary schools of that time did not provide any courses in business practice or in commerce. De La Salle established his first Latinless secondary school for the fifty Irish boys who fled the country with James II of England and sought asylum in France. The curriculum in the school opened for these youngsters was broad enough to make them efficient members of their class.⁸

Witnessing the success of the Brothers in elementary school, the bourgeoisie of Rouen persuaded De La Salle to open a Latinless

⁷
E.A. Fitzpatrick, La Salle Patron of All Teachers, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1951) p. 301-306.

⁸
W.J. Battersby, "Saint De La Salle and the Education of Irish Youth," Irish Ecclesiastical Record, 1949, pp. 421-422.

boarding college at St. Yon, Rouen, where both the parents and the teachers participated in the organization of the curriculum. A wide range of subjects was taught: religion, general history, geography, literature, rhetoric, bookkeeping, accountancy, geometry, architecture, natural history, calculus, music, living languages, hydrography, mechanics, and cosmography.⁹ The founding of this secondary type of school had a far-reaching significance. Adamson states that "the institution which grew from the boarding school at St. Yon is of historical interest, as exhibiting the germ of the French Higher Primary School of today and the German Latinless Realschule."¹⁰

De La Salle is also credited with the popularization of technical instruction. In his report in 1897, Victory Duruy, French Minister of Public Education said:

It is to Abbé De La Salle that France owes if not the first idea, at least, the putting into practice and the popularizing of this kind of instruction. From this first attempt, there emerged a teaching, which if it had been generalized, would have advanced by one century of specialized education.¹¹

Adult education was also initiated by De La Salle. Urged by Father de La Chétardye, De La Salle opened in 1699 and in 1703 schools for the young people, workers, or apprentices who wanted to "perfect their intellectual culture and thus improve their social

⁹
J. Guibert, Histoire de Saint Jean-Baptiste De La Salle, op. cit., p. 404.

¹⁰
J.W. Adamson, Pioneers of Modern Education, 1600-1700, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1921), p. 227.

¹¹
Journal Officiel, March 2, 1897, as quoted in E.A. Fitzpatrick, La Salle Patron of All Teachers, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1951), p. 227.

¹²
position." According to Sadler, De La Salle was the first educator
who held organized adult classes, in which religion and practical
¹³
subjects were taught.

It appears that De La Salle was at least two centuries ahead
of his time as judged by the historical facts, when he founded a reform-
atory for delinquent youth. Barnard in the Encyclopedia of Social
Sciences claims that "La Salle organized in 1709 what was probably the
¹⁴
earliest reformatory." In this school of correction the delinquent
lived under constant surveillance of a Brother whose chief duty was to
guide the maladjusted individual. As soon as the inmates showed signs
of improvement in behaviour, they were given more freedom and allowed
to work in shops in order to learn a trade.

Influence of Lasallian Educational Philosophy

Historians pay tribute to De La Salle's influence in education.
Parker claims that "the schools of the Christian Brothers were without
doubt the most effective elementary schools in existence before the
¹⁵
French Revolution (1789)." Cubberley calls the Institute of the
Brothers of Christian Schools "the largest and most influential of the
¹⁶
teaching orders established for elementary education." Reisner

¹²

E.A. Fitzpatrick, La Salle Patron of All Teachers, Ibid., p.37.

¹³

M. Sadler, Continuation Schools in England and Elsewhere,
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907), p. 628.

¹⁴

H. Barnard, "John Baptist De La Salle," Encyclopedia of
Social Sciences, Vol. IX, pp.181-182.

¹⁵

S.C. Parker, History of Modern Elementary Education,
(Illinois:.....1912), p. 100.

¹⁶

E.P. Cubberley, The History of Education, (Chicago:
Houghton Mifflin Co., 1930), p. 347.

explains wherein the influence of the Christian Brothers lay. He maintains that besides its conspicuous educational work, the Institute provided a "model for many other teaching congregations of men and women which played an important part in the progress toward public elementary education in Catholic countries." ¹⁷ Among the Religious Orders which adopted the Rules of the Christian Brothers were the Irish Christian Brothers founded by Ignatius Rice and the Sisters of the Christian Schools of Mercy established by Saint Mary Magdalen Postel.

De La Salle exerted an important influence on the French educational system. M. O'Leary points out that, though the Brothers were practical men not theorists, their methods nevertheless "Penetrated ¹⁸ into the French school world." Among the characteristics found in the present French educational system which can be traced to the influence of the Christian Brothers are: rigid silence, minutely organized system of pupil classification, ceremonial attitude of children towards teachers, ¹⁹ and love of textbook.

Barnard, agreeing with O'Leary on the question of De La Salle's influence, says that "any description of popular education in Europe would be incomplete which should not give prominence to the Institute ²⁰ of the Christian Brothers."

17

E.H. Reisner, The Evolution of the Common School, (New York: MacMillan Co., 1930), p. 109.

18

M. O'Leary, Education With a Tradition, (New York: Appleton Co., 1887), p. 29.

19

Ibid., p. 29.

20

H. Barnard, National Education in Europe, (Hartford: Case Tiffany and Co., 1854), 2 ed., p. 100.

He also claims that this Institute had "one of the most remarkable body of teachers devoted exclusively and without pay to the education of the children of the poor that the world has ever seen."²¹

De La Salle's pedagogical doctrines are, as of 1935, the subject of a three-year course at the Catholic University of Milan. Initiated by professor Mario Casotti, this new course had proven to be popular. In Belgium the School Management, which is a revised version of The Conduct of Schools,²² enjoys great authority.

Conclusion

A great portion of De La Salle's educational theories is the result of his training, which was in the main, religious. The thorough religious formation he received at home, at the Collège Des Bons Enfants and at the Seminary of Saint Sulpice is reflected in the aims, methods and curricula of his educational system. The dignity of the teacher was impressed upon him at the Collège Des Bons Enfants where the school masters were held in great esteem.

The influence of the book, L'Ecole Paroissiale, on De La Salle's pedagogy cannot be over-estimated. The Conduct of the Schools is similar in content to L'Ecole Paroissiale, which De La Salle and the early Brothers used. However, the Founder of the Christian Brothers deviated from the principles found in the latter when he substituted French for Latin as the medium of instruction, and the simultaneous method for the mutual method. These two bold innovations demonstrate, beyond all doubt, De La Salle's ability to utilize the best in each

²¹

Ibid., p. 101.

²²

D. Moldan, "St. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle Etudié dans Deux de Ses Ouvrages," Bulletin des Ecoles Chrétiennes, (October, 1922), pp. 319-326.

system and at the same time, to make any necessary changes in the then current practices.

Actual experience in administrative and educational work played an important role in determining De La Salle's philosophy of education. While at Saint Sulpice he received first hand information on the art of teaching. He, with other seminarians, taught religion in the charity schools. Although limited, this experience in class work enabled him to observe the operation of charity schools. In addition, it gave him an opportunity to witness the plight of the poor children, whose education was neglected.

De La Salle acquired valuable experience in administration when he assisted the Sisters of the Congregation of the Holy Child Jesus to obtain recognition of their Order. By undertaking the care of his younger brothers and sisters, after the death of his parents, he learned the problems of child management.

Although De La Salle's association with Madame Maillefer and Mr. Nyel resulted in the establishment of an Institute devoted to the education of the poor, it did not determine the principles of his educational philosophy. De La Salle considered Mr. Nyel's enthusiasm disastrous since it led to the multiplication of schools, which were poorly managed because of the lack of qualified teachers.

CHAPTER III

LASALLIAN OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION

The term "objectives" is used by educators to designate the changes that are to take place in an individual as a result of his or her learning experiences. Other words such as "aims" "purposes" and "ends" are frequently employed as synonyms for objectives, although the former express meanings which differ in their connotation.

As ends to be achieved, objectives in education offer guidance to both the teacher and the students, for according to Dewey, they give "direction to every activity."¹ They not only tell what the quality of the results will be, but also indicate the quantity of the change that will take place as a result of the educational experiences. In addition, they determine the subject matter to be taught, the methods to be employed and the kind of school management to be used.

Philosophic Bases of Lasallian Objectives

To comprehend De La Salle's objectives of education, it is necessary to know his philosophy of life, which was basically Catholic. Being a devoted follower of the Catholic Church, De La Salle firmly adhered to her teaching. From his early childhood to his manhood, De La Salle was taught by example and precept the principal truths of the Catholic faith, which animated his thoughts and decisions.

One of the most basic truths of the Catholic Religion is the

¹
J. Dewey, Democracy and Education, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1921), p. 119.

supernatural purpose of man's existence. According to Catholic philosophy, man is created by God to know, love and serve Him here on earth so as to be happy with Him in heaven. When man attains this happiness, he is said to have saved his soul. It cannot be doubted that De La Salle had this fundamental truth engraved in his mind as he passed from childhood to youth and then to manhood.

Since the soul is destined to live for all eternity, it is the more important part of man. The body is the servant of the soul; it senses objects, changes and dies. The soul, on the other hand, is the ultimate internal principle by which man lives, moves, and understands. Although the soul is sometimes identified with the mind, the latter is more comprehensive since it vitalizes and integrates² the entire personality.

Catholic philosophy claims that man's main concern should be the salvation of his soul, which can be achieved by living in such a manner that a person will be at the time of death in the state of sanctifying grace - a state which makes one pleasing to God and³ deserving of heaven. Although the idea of salvation can be understood quite readily, the practice of living a good life is difficult because man's intellect has been darkened and his will weakened by original sin, the sin of the first parents. Only through the help of sacraments, prayer and personal effort can man expect to live a life worthy of the eternal happiness of heaven.

² W.A. Kelly, Educational Psychology, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1935), p.12.

³ W. Kane, Some Principles of Education, (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1938), p. 74.

Educational Implications of the Foregoing

It is but natural for the Catholics to make the ultimate objective of education one with the ultimate objective of all human effort, the attaining of the eternal happiness of heaven. The immediate objective in education is the acquisition and the development of such qualities of soul and body as will enable each human being to order his actions in conformity to his eternal destiny. In Catholic education, religion takes the first place among the subjects of the curriculum, and prayer and sacraments become necessary means of education.

Catholic philosophy also teaches that a child is not all good as Rousseau claimed, nor is it completely degraded as Calvin taught; it possesses tendencies to evil which must be checked so that grace may work in the child.

Prime Objective of Lasallian Education

De La Salle emphasizes the ultimate objective of his Institute. "Your only concern," he says, "should be to discover what is most conducive to the salvation of the souls confided to your care, for this is the end and object of your state and employment."⁴ The strictest account must be rendered by the Brothers on the day of judgment on the duty of saving souls.⁵ Moreover, the salvation of

⁴ De La Salle, Meditations, trans. W.J. Battersby, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1953) Meditation for St. Mathias, No. 13, p. 233.

⁵ Ibid., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 13, p. 35.

the teacher's soul depends on his effort to save the souls of his pupils, and his greatest reward in heaven will be the happiness of being surrounded by pupils who have attained heaven - their final⁶ destiny.

The Catholic Church agrees with the Lasallian ultimate aims of education. In the Encyclical on Christian Education, Pope Pius XI summarizes the Catholic ultimate objective of education when he says that "Christian education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must do here below in order to attain the sublime and for which he was created."⁷ The "sublime end" he refers to is the eternal happiness of heaven.

The immediate objective of Lasallian education is the formation of good character, enabling the pupils to lead good lives and thus save their souls. De La Salle states that the end of the Institute of the Brothers of Christian Schools is the "Christian education of children." "For this purpose the Brothers keep schools, that having the children under their care from morning until evening,⁸ they may teach them to lead good lives."

De La Salle's concept of "Christian education" is explained in his Meditations. To him character formation is the same as the cultivation of the virtues of Jesus Christ.⁹ This idea is in harmony

⁶
Ibid., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 16, p. 43.

⁷
Pope Pius XI, "Christian Education of Youth," Five Great Encyclicals, (New York: The Paulist Press, 1944), p. 39.

⁸
De La Salle, The Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, (Lembecq-Lez-Hall.....1925) p. 1.

⁹
De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for Saint Nicholas, No. 97, p. 426.

with that held by the Catholic Church. "The proper and immediate end of Christian education," writes Pope Pius XI, "is to co-operate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian, that is to form Christ Himself in those regenerated by baptism."¹⁰

The true Christian according to Pope Pius XI "is the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teachings of Christ."¹¹ Thus, the present Catholic conception of a true Christian is the same as that held by De La Salle.

Many of the modern philosophies of education do not agree with the Lasallian idea of character formation. An experimentalist or a naturalist believes that a child can form a good character if it acts according to its natural desires providing that this gratification does not conflict with the life of the other members of society.¹² According to De La Salle, child's natural desires are inordinate and cannot be reliable guides for character formation. Religion alone can provide the basic principles by which a child should act.

An idealist considers individual perfection as the acme of character formation. Unlike De La Salle, an idealist believes

10

Pope Pius XI, "Christian Education of Youth," Five Great Encyclicals, op. cit., p. 64.

11

Ibid., p. 65.

12

W.H. Kilpatrick, "Philosophy of Education from the Experimentalist Outlook," Philosophies of Education, Forty-first Yearbook of National Society of the Study of Education. Part I, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 52.

that a person should develop skills, social graces and knowledge for the effect they have on one's personality, making this development an end in itself.¹³ De La Salle, on the other hand, claims that the formation of a Christ-like character is but a means to an end.

Although the school, according to De La Salle, should have Christian education of youth as its main objective, it is not the only agency of education. Parents have both the duty and the right to "bring up their children in a Christian manner and to give them knowledge of their religion."¹⁴ But since the parents are either not qualified to instruct their children or are too occupied with the means of securing their livelihood, they are not able to fulfill this obligation, therefore, the Christian teacher must undertake the task of instructing their children in the principles of religion.

In accord with the Lasallian philosophy of education, the Catholic Church teaches that the family, the church and the school¹⁵ are the chief agencies of education. The experimentalist and the idealist agree with the Catholic and Lasallian philosophy with regard¹⁶ to these agencies of education, except that the latter teaches¹⁷ that the school should train new members for the Church.

¹³

H.H. Horne, "An Idealistic Philosophy of Education," Philosophies of Education, Ibid., p. 182.

¹⁴

De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 1, p. 3.

¹⁵

Pope Pius XI, "Christian Education of Youth," Five Great Encyclicals, op. cit., p. 39.

¹⁶

J.S. Brubacher, Modern Philosophies of Education, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1939), p. 203.

¹⁷

De La Salle, Meditations, Meditation for the Retreat, No. 7, p. 19.

Secondary Objectives of Lasallian Education

Besides the religious aims, the Lasallian system of education also possesses vocational and cultural aims. Fully aware of the short time a child of poor parents could spend in school, De La Salle organized the curriculum so that the pupils may have, at least, an opportunity to gain rudimentary knowledge. "Thus," he comments, "they [children] are prepared to earn their living as soon as their parents¹⁸ wish to make them do so." It is for the purpose of fitting the children for their lifework that he established Latinless secondary schools,¹⁹ Sunday schools, vocational schools and a reformatory.

But the pupils from these schools are not to be merely mechanics or tradesmen; they are, above all, to be good Christians and loyal citizens of their country. Vocational training is then a liberating force rather than a restricting one, helping the individual to serve God, his fellow man and himself more effectively. Although some critics, such as Professor Forester, cannot see how liberal and vocational education can be given at the same time, others, including Fitzpatrick, claim that education, no matter what adjective limits it,²⁰ is a training for some vocation.

Realizing that the pupils will live in a society which demanded certain decorum, De La Salle insisted that a course in politeness be given. To facilitate matters, De La Salle wrote a

¹⁸

Ibid., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 2, p. 5.

¹⁹

Jean-Baptiste Blain, La Vie du Vénérable Serviteur de Dieu Jean-Baptiste De La Salle, (Paris: Procure Générale, 1887), p. 363.

²⁰

E.A. Fitzpatrick, How to Educate Human Beings, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1950), p. 85.

book entitled, Christian Politeness, which outlines the virtues and the manners the pupils are to cultivate:

The pupil must cultivate a deep reverence for parents; a sincere affection for relatives and friends; gentleness and courtesy to equals; affability to inferiors; cheerfulness of mind; a desire to please and oblige; a gentle, amiable engaging manner of acquitting himself of every domestic duty. 21

Conclusion

Lasallian objectives of education are based on the Catholic philosophy of life. The character formation of children is the primary and immediate aim, whereas the salvation of the pupils' souls is the ultimate aim to which the immediate goal is closely related.

Lasallian secondary objectives are subordinate to the immediate aim and can be summed up as the preparation of the pupils for their life in society. The cultivation of acceptable manners, the acquisition of writing, reading, mathematical and vocational skills comprise this preparation.

The Christian teacher can perform his duty only if he keeps the ultimate end of education in mind. During the time of Retreat, the Brothers are asked to recall this end if they have forgotten it or have replaced this ideal by human goals. The thought that the pupils are destined for a life of eternal bliss encourages the teacher, in his difficult and often thankless task.

21

De La Salle, Duties of a Christian Towards God, (West Chester: The New York Catholic Protectory, 1874), p. 353.

CHAPTER IV

LASALLIAN MEANS FOR CHARACTER FORMATION.

The salvation of souls through Christian education was De La Salle's absorbing interest. The curriculum he proposes and the methodology he wants the Brothers to employ are designed to achieve this aim. His plan for the Christian education is outlined in the Common Rules, where he states that for the purpose of Christian character formation "the Brothers keep schools, that having the children under their care from morning until evening they may teach them to lead good lives, by instructing them in the mysteries of Our Holy Religion and by inspiring them with Christian maxims, and thus¹ give them a suitable education." We notice in this quotation the triple aspect of Lasallian plan for character formation: the initiation of the Christian spirit, the religious instruction and the practical application of the instruction.

By means of good example, prayers, reflection and religious atmosphere the teacher inspires the children with the spirit of Christianity. Religious instruction, which includes the teaching of catechism, prayers and responses to the Holy Mass, is to be given by teachers who know their religion thoroughly and who practice it conscientiously. But mere knowledge does not of itself produce sound moral character. Good moral habits must be formed through the

¹
De La Salle, The Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, (Lembeck-Lez-Hall:.....1925), p. 21.

repetition of desired acts. De La Salle provides opportunities for the formation of such habits, constituting the practical application of the religious instruction. Although for the purpose of this discussion Lasallian method for character formation is divided into three distinct parts, in reality, each of these divisions penetrates and complements the others unifying the component parts.

Initiation

Of the three aspects of character formation, the initiation of the mind with a Christian spirit, which consists essentially of a filial love of God and a zealous love of neighbour, is the most important. The Founder of the Christian Brothers uses various terms to designate this aspect. He tells the Brothers to study Saint James' Epistle so that they may be able "to instil" the Christian spirit in their pupils.² Commenting on the zeal of Saint Paul he wishes that the Brothers inspire the children with "sentiments and disposition similar to those with which Saint Paul sought to inspire the Ephesians."³ Other terms used by De La Salle to designate this process of initiation are: "touching the hearts of the children,"⁴ "imparting a religious and a Christian spirit,"⁵ "bringing them up in a Christian spirit,"⁶ and "communicating the wisdom of God."⁷ This process of initiation

² De La Salle, Meditations, translated by W.J. Battersby, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1953) Feast of St. James and St. Philips, No.25, p. 260.

³ Ibid., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 6, p. 16.

⁴ Ibid., Meditation for the Feast of St.Hilarion No. 85, p.397.

⁵ Ibid., Meditation for the Feast of St. Marcellinus, No. 89, p. 405.

⁶ Ibid., Meditation for the Feast of St. Nicholas, No. 97, p. 425.

⁷ Ibid., Meditation for December 30th, No. 107, p. 448.

depends upon the personality of the teacher, his reflections and the religious atmosphere of the classroom.

The Teacher in the Work of Initiation

A Christian teacher holds an unique position in the Lasallian education system. He is not merely an instructor who teaches the secular subjects and religion. He is above all an instrument of God. To make himself effective he must cultivate the virtues of a good teacher, namely; seriousness, silence, humility, prudence, wisdom, patience, restraint, gentleness, zeal, watchfulness, piety and generosity⁸---virtues which are found in a schoolmaster who is united to God. The good that the teacher can do is in direct proportion to his union or friendship with God.⁹ "Since you are expected to bring about the sanctification of your pupils," says De La Salle, "you ought¹⁰ yourself to possess holiness in an uncommon degree."

This communication of the spirit of Christianity through the intense spiritual life of the teacher is the fundamental basis of initiation. It is a supernatural means of forming true Christians, for it takes into account the teacher as a mere instrument, and God as the vivifying agent. But in order to become an efficient instrument of God, the teacher must perfect himself through mental prayer, and the observance of his vows and the Rules. Only then can he communicate the Christian spirit to his pupils by his words and actions.

8

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, trans, F. de la Fontainerie, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, Book Co., 1935), p. 230.

9

De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 3, p. 9.

10

Ibid., Meditation for the Ascension of Jesus Christ, No. 39, p. 128.

Good example has a definite place in Lasallian pedagogy, for according to De La Salle instruction without good example is useless. "Your zeal," he says, "could have little or no success if it were limited to words; to make it effective your example must sustain your instruction."¹¹ He goes on to explain the reason for the influence of the teacher's good example. "Young children whose minds are not capable of reflection follow the example of their masters because the former are more inclined to do what they see them do, rather than what they hear them say."¹²

But good example is not only an aid in instruction; it is instruction.¹³ Since children ought to find in the teachers all the virtues they should practice, the teacher must be a walking model of Christian virtues.

Prayer is another means the school master employs in his task of inspiring the students with a Christian spirit. De La Salle urges his Brothers to pray for all their pupils, and especially for those who are inclined to evil.¹⁵

Reflection:

One of the most effective means to be used in the formation of true Christians is reflection, which consists of a short exhortation

¹¹

Ibid., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 10, p. 28.

¹²

Ibid., No. 10, p. 28.

¹³

Ibid., Meditation for the Feast of St. Cassian, No. 61, p. 337.

¹⁴

Ibid., Meditation for the Feast of St. Hilarion, No. 85, p. 395.

¹⁵

Ibid. Meditation for the Feast of Marcellinus, No. 89, p. 406.

given by the teacher. The pupils meditate on the reflection and take appropriate resolutions. In the afternoon they examine themselves on the extent of their fidelity to these resolutions. De La Salle suggests a variety of topics, which the Brothers may use for their reflections:

In your exhortations, you must represent to your pupils their defects, suggest to them the means of correcting themselves, point out the virtues suitable to their age and the ease of acquiring them; inspire them with great horror for sin and aversion for bad companions and recommend them to associate only with good and modest young people. 16

Religious Atmosphere of the Classroom

De La Salle is not satisfied with a school in which religious instruction is given only during the one period designated by the timetable. On the contrary, he wants the religious spirit to permeate every subject on the curriculum and every object connected with education, including the appearance of the classroom, the textbooks, awards and punishments.

As the pupil enters the classroom he senses the "climate" which is to envelope him during the day. Upon entering the classroom the pupil bows to the crucifix and salutes the teacher, kneels down, says a prayer, bows and salutes the crucifix again, and then takes
17
his seat. He does the same thing when leaving the classroom.

The interior of the classroom constantly reminds the pupils of the prime objectives of education. A crucifix with two holy pictures on either side of it, hangs above the teacher's desk.

16

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 160.

17

Ibid., p. 51.

Near the front door is a holy water font. Facing the pupils are¹⁸
statues of Jesus Christ and of the saints placed on pedestals.

The textbooks, too are of a religious nature. Pupils study
their spelling from a book containing the Acts of "Entering into the
Presence of God," "Invocation of the Holy Ghost," "Adoration" and

¹⁹
"Thanksgiving." To be able to follow the Mass and the Liturgical

Services they memorize the Latin prayers of "Pater Noster," "Ave

²⁰
Maria," "Credo" and "Confiteor." The Conduct of the Schools insists

that the teacher explain the meanings of the words of the prayers

before the pupils are asked to commit them to memory. In writing,

the boys imitate the models which "consist of sentences from Holy

²¹
Scripture or a Christian maxim." The teacher is cautioned not to

give the pupils any other writing models but these because the words

taken from Holy Scripture have the power to make a greater impression

²²
on the child.

Frequent prayers, which help to create and to maintain the
religious atmosphere of the classroom, characterize Lasallian schools.

Prayers are recited in the morning, in the evening, before and after
meals, on feast days and at every hour and half-hour, at which times

18

Ibid., p. 51.

19

Ibid., p. 59.

20

Ibid., p. 60.

21

Ibid., p. 87.

22

Ibid., p. 87.

the prayer reader asks the pupils to recall the presence of God²³ and to dedicate the next lesson to Him. To demonstrate their love for the Mother of God, pupils take turns, two at a time, and recite the rosary.

For rewards, holy pictures, statues, crucifixes, rosaries and books of a religious nature are given to pupils, with the best prize awarded to the most pious.²⁴ Even the punishments are governed by a religious spirit, for the teacher is urged to remember that the motive for correcting pupils is to please God. After the administration of the punishment, the student turns towards the crucifix to thank God for the correction and to ask Him for help so that he may not fall into the same fault again.²⁵

Instruction

Instruction is the second aspect of the Lasallian system of Christian education. The principal matter for religious instruction consists of catechism, holy maxims and prayers. Catechism occupies an important position in the Lasallian curriculum. Brothers are asked to examine themselves frequently on their "discharge of the duty of teaching pupils their religion and the truths of the Gospel."²⁶ They are to prefer the teaching of catechism to the teaching of²⁷ reading, writing and arithmetic, for to teach catechism is "no less²⁸ a good than the conversion of infidels." By every possible means,

²³ Ibid., pp. 111-117.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 160.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 187.

²⁶ De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the Eighth Sunday After Pentecost, No. 61, p. 166.

²⁷ Ibid., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 14, p. 37.

²⁸ Ibid., Meditation for the Feast of St. Gregory, No. 15, p. 237.

De La Salle attempts to make "teachers and pupils realize that religion is the biggest thing in life, the most interesting thing in life, the most important thing in life."²⁹

The Lasallian emphasis on religion should be viewed in the light of the seventeenth century, when both Catholics and Protestants aimed to prepare their children for the life hereafter. De La Salle was following the custom of his time when he made his schools God-centered institutions.

The length of the religion lesson and the method of teaching are specified in The Conduct of the Schools. Catechism is taught for half an hour each day except on the eve of holydays when it is lengthened to one hour and on Sundays and holydays, to one hour and a half.³⁰ Pupils memorize the answers to the catechism questions during their breakfast and lunch periods,³¹ which are supervised by monitors.³² It seems that the regular religion period is too short for the study and the teaching of catechism. A detailed discussion of the question technique is found in Chapter VII.

Application of Religious Instruction

The motivation received in the initiation and the knowledge acquired by instruction lead to the practical applications...

²⁹ Brother Leo, The Story of St. John Baptist De La Salle, (New York: La Salle Bureau, 1947), p. 84.

³⁰ De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., pp. 127-129.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 55-62.

³² Ibid., p. 62.

the climax of Christian character formation. "Make them [children] practice Our Lord's Commandment, 'Love your enemies'" says De La Salle.³³ In the Meditation for the Retreat he tells the Brothers not only to teach the truths of the Gospel to their children, but also³⁴ "to teach the pupils how to put these truths into practice."

Apparently De La Salle believed that children should learn how to be true Christians by living a Christian life. Childhood seems to be the opportune time to practice virtue since, generally speaking, most of the pupils at this stage of development have not acquired bad habits which militate against Christian character formation.³⁵ But the acquisition of moral habits is not to be hazardous; on the contrary, all the activities are minutely prescribed³⁶ by The Conduct of the Schools.

Living the Liturgy

De La Salle, being a thorough Christian, wants the pupils to enter into the spirit of each of the Church's feast days, seasons and practices; in other words, he wants them to live the Church liturgy. The pupils interrupt their studies in order to assist at the parish Mass which usually begins at ten thirty. The solemn entrance and dismissal of the pupils emphasize the importance of this church service, where the pupils are not mere spectators but active participants. Therefore, The Conduct of the Schools suggests that

³³
De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 10, p. 26.

³⁴
Ibid., No. 6, p. 16.

³⁵
Ibid., No. 2, p. 7.

³⁶
De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op., cit., p. 122.

the pupils follow the Mass using the prayer book, or by reciting³⁷
the rosary, if they do not know how to read.

The school year follows the Liturgical or Church Year. There is no school on the holydays of the Church, although the pupils are obliged to attend the catechism lesson which is given in the classroom. This attendance is vitally important, for no pupil may be kept in the school if he refuses to come for this period. Every Church feast-day and every Church season has its practices which the children observe. For instance, on Christmas Eve the pupils recite the Litany of the Holy Child Jesus; on the eve of the Feast of Saint Joseph, they recite the Litany of Saint Joseph, and on the Feast of³⁸
Saint Mark, they recite the Litany of All Saints.

Politeness Practised

Pupils in the Lasallian school are obliged to study the textbook on politeness. But this is not all; they are urged to practice what they have learned. For instance, before giving an answer in class the pupil stands up out of respect for his teacher. On their way to church they walk sedately, so as to edify those who³⁹
watch them. During mealtime they eat with propriety and decorum. Perhaps, some of this behaviour is rather artificial and constraining, but every improvement in the conduct of the pupils was a progress in the right direction, for the children who frequented Lasallian schools were ill-mannered.

³⁷
Ibid., p. 122.

³⁸
Ibid., p. 114.

³⁹
Ibid., p. 119.

Christian Charity Practised

The pupils are not only to practice politeness but also Christian charity, by giving their extra sandwiches to poor children, who had no lunch to bring with them, and by visiting the sick pupils. In both cases the acts of charity are to be performed for the love of God.⁴⁰

Comments and Conclusion

In the previous chapter, the author stated that the immediate aim of the Lasallian educational system is the formation of Christian character. Most philosophies of education agree that character formation should be one of the aims of education, but they disagree on the definition of good character and on the methods to be employed in forming good character. It may be repeated here that the Catholic and the Lasallian philosophies of education consider a pupil to possess a Christian character when he thinks, judges and acts consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the teachings of Christ.

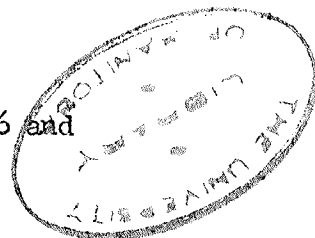
The creation of a proper atmosphere is De La Salle's greatest concern in character formation. Advocates of the indirect method of inculcating moral values favour the existence of such an atmosphere.⁴¹ However, De La Salle considers religious instruction ineffective without a religious climate, which is fostered by holy pictures in the classroom, by classroom prayers, by the regular frequentation of the sacraments and by Catholic textbooks. By

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Ibid., p. 200.

⁴¹

Review of Educational Research, Vol. 5, pp. 31-36 and Vol. 7, pp. 467-473.



these means, the mind and affections are captivated making the practice of virtue pleasant. This conception of the Christian school is in full accord with the teaching of the "Encyclical on Christian Education:"

To be this [a Christian school] it is necessary that all the teaching and the whole organization of the school, and its teachers, syllabus and textbooks in every branch be regulated by the Christian spirit, under the direction and maternal supervision of the Church. 42

In the Lasallian school religious values are not instilled by such subjects as history and literature, a method advocated by Livingstone,⁴³ but by the teaching of religion as a subject and by the religious atmosphere of the classroom. "Our first attention in regards to our pupils," writes De La Salle, "should be to teach them the doctrine of the holy apostles and to make them practice the Gospel maxims."⁴⁴ The teaching of religion is to be preferred to any other subject, although the secular subjects are not to be neglected. Keeping within the spirit of their Founder, the Christian Brothers continue to emphasize religion in elementary, secondary and college curricula.

Both the Lasallian and the Catholic philosophies of education regard religion as a necessity for moral character formation. Redden⁴⁵ and Ryan consider morality and religion intrinsically united. Regis

⁴² Pope Pius XI, "Encyclical on Christian Education," Five Great Encyclicals, op. cit., p. 60.

⁴³ S.R. Livingstone, On Education, (Toronto: The MacMillan Co., 1944), pp. 57-87.

⁴⁴ De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for March, No. 15, p. 237.

⁴⁵ J. Redden and F. Ryan, A Catholic Philosophy of Education, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1942), p. 278.

Canevin emphasizing the importance of religion in directing personal conduct says that "to exclude religion from education is to exclude morality. To ignore religion is to ignore the power that sustains⁴⁶ and the authority that sanctions all laws of human conduct."

Professor A. Col, agrees with the Catholic educators when he maintains that "religion is an essential factor of the human personality and that therefore a place should be found for religious education within⁴⁷ general education."

Although in most Canadian provinces, Bible Reading is recommended in public schools, no formal teaching of religion is demanded except in Quebec where it is a compulsory subject in all public elementary and high schools. One of the main difficulties which the present day public schools have to cope with and which De La Salle did not have to contend with since all the pupils frequenting his schools were Catholic, is the teaching of religion to students who may belong to various religious denominations.

Since the salvation of souls is a supernatural work, it requires supernatural means, which are prayer and the sacraments. De La Salle exhorts the Brothers "to omit nothing in order to inspire children with a love for and a frequent use of these⁴⁸ means of sanctification." According to the Lasallian and Catholic

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Regis Canevin, "Religion First in Catholic Schools," Catholic Educational Review, 4: Sept. 7, 1912, pp. 99-100.

⁴⁷

G.A. Col, "Religious Education as a Part of General Education," Proceedings of the First Annual Convention, (Chicago: Executive Office of the Association, 1903), p. 153.

⁴⁸

De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 8, p. 21.

philosophy of education, prayers, the sacraments and Holy Mass are efficacious means of making desirable changes in the lives of children. The teacher, however, ought to assist the child to make proper use of these means, for their effectiveness depends on the disposition of the individual who receives them.

49

Besides the supernatural means for character formation, De La Salle recommends the natural means of ideals and models. He tells the Brothers to present to the pupils such models of holiness as Jesus Christ and the saints. Children, who naturally admire greatness, can be led to imitate the virtues found in Christ or in the lives of the saints. Redden and Ryan exalt the importance of religious ideals and models in the work of character formation:

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One of the noblest and most fruitful sources of ideals lies in the study and practice of religion. It is only in religion that one finds the most edifying motives; the basic virtues of moral life; ultimate sanctions of worthy living; countless examples of true character; and the perfect model, Jesus Christ. 51

The teacher, too, according to De La Salle, must be a model of all the virtues the pupils are to acquire. "Remember that you are the model," he says, "and the first thing you owe them [the children]"

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J. Redden and F. Ryan, A Catholic Philosophy of Education, op. cit., p. 346.

50

De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for April 25, p. 252.

51

J. Redden and F. Ryan, A Catholic Philosophy of Education, op. cit., p. 271.

is edification and good example." Rugh agrees that good example is important in character formation: "If a teacher by examples and precepts presents values and induces joyous obedience and loyalty, the teaching is religious both potentially and actually." ⁵³ Saucier recommends that teachers practice the social virtues of temperance, honesty, industry, kindness, helpfulness and tolerance so that they ⁵⁴ may be models for their pupils. De La Salle would consider these virtues worthy of imitation if they were motivated by the spirit of religion.

Some may object to the Lasallian method of forming true Christians on the ground that De La Salle indoctrinated the pupils with the truths of the Catholic religion. However, the Catholic Church used and continues to use this method of inculcating moral values claiming that the state uses it to foster nationalism and patriotism which are trivial when compared with the great purpose of life...man's eternal salvation.

But the mere inculcation of the Christian mentality and the teaching of the rules of conduct will remain futile unless provision is made for the acquisition of good habits, which ⁵⁵ constitute a Christian character. In the Lasallian school the

52

De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for December 20, No. 107, p. 449.

53

C.E. Rugh, Essential Place of Religion in Education, (Ann Arbor: National Education Association, 1916), p. 20.

54

W.A. Saucier, Introduction to Modern Views of Education, (New York: Ginn and Co., 1937), p. 425.

55

E.R. Hull, The Formation of Character, (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1933), p. 18.

pupil has numerous occasions of forming virtues. The exterior control or supervision aims to cultivate interior discipline or self-control, which is the essence of all character formation.

The present Catholic educational philosophy conforms favourably with the Lasallian philosophy with regards to character formation except that the former does not favour coercion in religious matters, frowning on such Lasallian practices as punishment by rod for negligence in assisting at the Holy Mass or for wanton carelessness in prayer. It must be kept in mind that corporal punishment was advocated by Protestants as well as Catholics in the seventeenth century as a deterrent for evil and as a means of facilitating the practice of virtue.

CHAPTER V

THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER

When De La Salle was forced by circumstances to investigate the causes of dissatisfaction among the teachers appointed by Adrien Nyel, he readily realized that the lack of academic and professional training was the main reason for the discontent. Thereupon, he took the crude school masters into his own house where he directed and encouraged them. From this period in 1679 until his death in 1719, De La Salle's all absorbing interest was the formation of school¹ masters; the rest, he thought, would look after itself.

To make his enterprize of training teachers a success, he spared neither pain, money nor time. He organized the novitiate for the spiritual and pedagogical training of the Brothers. In order to facilitate the education of the aspirants to the Institute, he opened a juniorate, a preparatory novitiate, where boys too young to enter the novitiate were "trained to the practice of mental prayer and² other exercises of piety." These boys were also taught such subjects as catechism, reading and writing.

Besides establishing a novitiate and a juniorate for the training of boys who wished to enter his Institute, he also opened

¹ W.J. Battersby, De La Salle: A Pioneer of Modern Education, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), p. 121.

² J. Blain, La Vie du Vénérable Serviteur de Dieu Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, (Paris: Procure General, 1887), pp. 231-232.

for lay teachers, normal schools, to which he sent his best
qualified Brothers.³ McCormick and Cassidy claim that these normal
schools were not only types of our own American teachers colleges,
but "were the models after which the primary normal schools of
France were formed in 1861."⁴ The lay teachers from the Lasallian
normal schools acted as auxiliaries to the Brothers, teaching in
country schools where only one teacher was required.

According to Graves, De La Salle made it possible for the
elementary schools in France to have, for the first time in history,
competent and trained teachers.⁵ Before this time elementary
school teachers "consisted of wig-makers, masons, cooks and
others"⁶ who were characterized by ignorance and immorality.
Parker quotes a French bishop living in 1686, who claimed that the
teachers in his diocese were "gamesters, drunkards, profligates;
ignorant and brutal."⁷

The Dignity of the Christian Teacher

De La Salle could in the words of Spalding say that "it is

³
E.A. Fitzpatrick, La Salle Patron of All Teachers,
(Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1951), p. 28.

⁴
C. McCormick and Cassidy, History of Education, (Washington:
The Catholic Education Press, 1946), p. 494.

⁵
F.P. Graves, A History of Education, (New York: MacMillan
Co., 1931), p. 231.

⁶
Ibid., p. 232.

⁷
S.C. Parker, The History of Modern Elementary Education,
(Illinois:.....1912), pp. 96-97.

indeed difficult to exaggerate the worth of a true teacher, one who, loving children with a love akin to that which glowed in the Divine Heart of Christ, is wise and strong, watchful and patient." The Christian teacher is to the school what a mind is to a man, and a soul to a body. He is an intermediary who has relations with God so as to awaken and sustain the spiritual life in children. He is indeed a developer and a shaper of the life and destiny of a child.

Teaching to De La Salle is not just another job by which the teacher earns a living; it is a mission in which every teacher is a missionary and every classroom a mission field. The Christian teacher aims to mould the character of each of his students to the likeness of Christ.

De La Salle continuously reminds the Brothers of their dignity. He claims that the work of the Christian teacher is analogous to the work of the apostles, to the intrepid missionaries, and to the guardian angels. Indeed the Christian teacher is an ambassador and a minister of Christ. In addition, he is a helper of the clergy and is an essential worker of the Church. "Look upon your work," writes De La Salle, "as one of the most important and excellent in the Church, since it is most capable of sustaining it

⁸
J.L. Spalding, Thoughts and Theories of Life and Education,
(Chicago: A.C. McClary and Co., 1904), p. 222.

⁹
De La Salle, Meditations, trans. W.J. Battersby, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1953), Meditation for the Feast of St. Francis Xavier, No. 96, p. 424.

¹⁰
Ibid., Meditation for the Feast of St. Gregory, No. 15, p. 237.

¹¹
Ibid., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 5, p. 12.

¹²
Ibid., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 3, p. 7.

and of giving it a solid foundation."

De La Salle's conception of a Christian teacher is inspired by a spirit of religion. Despite his great reverence for the dignity of the priesthood, he expressly forbids the members of his Institute to become, or to aspire to become, priests, for he believes that a Christian teacher is a quasi-priest himself, giving his undivided attention to the Christian education of youth.

The Lasallian conception of the dignity of a Christian teacher conforms to that held by the present Catholic philosophy.¹⁴ The followers of other philosophies of education also recognize the dignity of the teacher, but this dignity stems from the function of the teacher as a moulder of future citizens of democracy rather than from the supernatural destiny of the children.

Duties of a Christian Teacher

The Christian teacher has both spiritual and professional duties. His spiritual duties consist in the observance of his Rules and vows and in the practice of all Christian virtues. Although these duties pertain to the teacher as a Religious, they are connected closely with his professional obligations, for the good a Christian teacher can do depends largely on the intensity of his own spiritual life.¹⁵

De La Salle summarizes the professional duties of a Christian teacher when he says: "The Brothers of the Society shall

13

Ibid., Meditation for the Feast of St. Cassian, No. 61, p. 336.

14

Pope Pius XI, "Encyclical on Christian Education," Five Great Encyclicals, (New York: The Paulist Press, 1944), p. 63.

15

De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost, No. 60, p. 158.

strive by prayer, instruction, and by their vigilance and good
16
conduct in school," to form the pupils' character in a Christian
manner so as to procure their salvation. Thus, the four main duties
of a Christian teacher are: to pray, to instruct, to supervise and
to give good example.

One of the principal duties of a Christian teacher is to
pray for the success of his work in school. De La Salle urges the
Brothers to lay before God the wants of the pupils and the difficulties
17
they may have in educating them. He particularly encourages the
18
Brothers to pray for those who are least inclined to piety, a duty
which the Catholic philosophy of education considers important.

The second and important duty of a Christian teacher is
to instruct the children not only in religion, but also in the
sciences necessary for successful life in society. Since all educa-
tion in the last analysis is self-education, the teacher must make
adequate provision for self-activity.

Although De La Salle emphasizes the teaching of subjects,
especially religion, nevertheless the child rather than the subjects
remains the chief object of instruction. Subjects are taught as a
means to an end, which is the character formation of the child.

16

De La Salle, The Common Rules of the Brothers of the
Christian Schools, (Lembecq-Lez-Hal:.....1925), p. 4.

17

De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the
Feast of St. Charles Borromeo, No. 90, p. 408.

18

Ibid., Meditation for the Third Sunday after Pentecost,
No. 56, p. 158.

The third duty of a Christian teacher is to supervise the pupils at school, in church, and on their way to and from school,¹⁹ so that they may not act contrary to the law of God. "Watch so carefully over their conduct," says De La Salle, "that you may prevent them from committing the least sin during all the time they are under your supervision."²⁰ This vigilance or supervision also prevents disorder in and out of the classroom. More will be said about supervision in the Chapter on the "Lasallian School Management."

The last duty of a teacher is to give good example to the pupils under his care. By his words and action, the Christian teacher inspires the pupil with the love of virtue, beauty and truth. De La Salle tells the Brothers: "Your morals should be the model of theirs [the children], because they find in you the virtues which they are obliged to practice."²¹

Educators have always believed in the power of the teacher's example. According to Saucier, any individual who does not want to be a model of good conduct to his pupils should be barred from the teaching profession.²² Spalding is of the opinion that example has

¹⁹ De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditations for the Retreat, No. 14, p. 38.

²⁰ Ibid., Meditation for March 21, No. 17, p. 244.

²¹ Ibid., Meditation for the Feast of St. Luke, No. 83, p. 390.

²² W.A. Saucier, Introduction to Modern Views of Education, (New York: Ginn and Co., 1937), p. 425.

greater educational value than any possible verbal instruction.²³
He also maintains that a wise, strong, patient, punctual and loving
teacher can do more good than a brilliant orator.²⁴ His ideas are in
complete agreement with those of De La Salle.

Selection of Candidates for the Teaching Profession

Since the success of his Institute depended on the members
who composed it, De La Salle took utmost care in selecting proper
candidates. The requirements he took into consideration were: age,
right motives, intelligence, good conduct and good health.²⁵

During the first fourteen years of the Lasallian Institute,
most of the candidates who applied for admission were at least twenty
years old.²⁶ Understanding the importance of training during the
plastic period of adolescence, he opened "un petit seminaire," a
preparatory novitiate, for boys who were only fourteen or fifteen
years of age.²⁷ When they reached the age of sixteen or seventeen
they were admitted to the novitiate, where their religious and
pedagogical training continued. Keeping within the Lasallian trad-
ition, the Christian Brothers continue to use the juniorate and

²³ J.L. Spalding, Thoughts and Theories of Life and Education,
op. cit., p. 217.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 217.

²⁵ Brother A.R. Lessard, S.C., "Saint De La Salle and the
Training of a Christian Brother," (Unpublished Ph.D dissertation,
Department of Education, Louisiana State University and Agricultural
and Mechanical College, 1953), pp. 6-14.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁷ W.J. Battersby, (editor) De La Salle: Letters and
Documents, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952). pp. 240-241.

novitiate in training candidates to their Institute.

The right motivation is another requirement demanded by De La Salle from his prospective teachers. "Nothing but zeal for the salvation of the souls of those whom you instruct," he writes, "should have induced you to give yourself unreservedly to the work
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of Christian education." Neither honours, money, nor security are sufficient reasons for becoming a Christian educator. If the candidate enters the Institute for reasons other than religious, he is exhorted to rectify his heirarchy of values by placing the salvation of his own and his pupils' souls at the top of the list.

The third requirement for a candidate who wishes to enter the Institute is intelligence. Since I.Q. tests were not in existence in the time of De La Salle, we do not know exactly what degree of intelligence a candidate was required to possess. However, we read in De La Salle's Memoire that only those with brains were admitted into the "petit seminaire," a preparatory institution for
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the novitiate. According to this document, a boy who was not able to learn catechism, nor to read and write was barred from the teaching profession, although he could serve in the Institute as a
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cook or a linen keeper.

W.G. Reeder considers high native ability or intelligence

28

De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 9, p. 25.

29

W.J. Battersby, (editor) De La Salle: Letters and Documents, op. cit., p. 240.

30

Ibid., p. 241.

as an essential requisite for a successful teacher.³¹ Many teacher-training institutions administer intelligence tests to prospective teachers in order to discover the type of work each teacher is capable of doing and to advise him accordingly. Cursory investigations have indicated that teachers with below-average intelligence cannot³² succeed in their profession. On the other hand, some teachers with a high intelligence quotient have also failed in the teaching profession because of some peculiar personality trait or because of unwillingness to give attention to routine work.

The fourth requirement for the admittance to the Lasallian³³ Institute is "good conduct." Although the new prospects are not required to be models of virtue, they are required to possess an inclination towards piety, which is cultivated in the juniorate and the novitiate. Naturally, no one with a bad reputation is admitted into the Institute. This emphasis on good character conforms with the practice of the present normal schools who demand a character³⁴ reference from the candidate's principal or teacher.

Finally, the candidates must possess good health if they wish to become members of the Institute. The Rule of Government, composed by the Brothers, states that no candidate should be

³¹ W.G. Reeder, A First Course in Education, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1950), p. 482.

³² Ibid., p. 482.

³³ W.J. Battersby, (editor) De La Salle: Letters and Documents, op. cit., p. 241.

³⁴ W.G. Reeder, A First Course in Education, op. cit., p. 485.

admitted who is sickly or deformed, or whose parents suffer from
any hereditary disease.³⁵ De La Salle himself devotes an entire
chapter in the Common Rules to the prevention of sickness and the
care of the sick, showing concern for the health of the Brothers.³⁶

Realizing the importance of mental and physical health,
many teacher-training colleges require a medical examination from
prospective teachers, and the tendency is to make these examinations
more rigid.³⁷ Like De La Salle, present day educators consider good
physical and emotional health essential to the teacher whose prof-
ession demands hard work despite a widespread belief to the contrary.
No one with defective hearing, or with weak nerves should be
permitted to become a teacher, for students and society would suffer
as a consequence.

Method of Selection

Selecting the best candidates for the teaching profession
has been and still is one of the acute problems of departments of
education. Some of the undesirables are "weeded" out during their
year at teachers college, but the mediocre are permitted to graduate.
De La Salle's method of selecting new members to the Institute, on
the other hand, includes constant evaluation of the candidates, not

³⁵ Christian Brothers, The Rule of Government, (Lembecq-
Lez-Hal:.....1923), p. 14.

³⁶ De La Salle, The Common Rules of the Brothers of the
Christian Schools, op. cit., Chapter XXIV, p. 54.

³⁷ W.J. Reeder, A First Course in Education, op. cit., p. 483.

only during the juniorate and novitiate, but also during the first two or three years of teaching, at the end of which the candidates are either accepted or rejected.

In the Annales we read that the young men sent by parish priests to be trained by De La Salle, in his normal schools, were accepted only after carefully checking of their qualifications.³⁸ Even after accepting a candidate, De La Salle did not hesitate to dismiss him, if he showed a lack of aptitude.

Religious Formation

De La Salle realized that only intensely religious teachers can form the character of the pupils in conformity with the teachings of Christ. Because he believed in the dictum which says, "Morals are caught, not taught," and because he believed that the Christian teacher must be a model for the pupils, he omitted nothing which could foster or increase the spirituality of his teachers. Mental and vocal prayer, frequent reception of the sacraments, weekly conferences, weekly interviews and daily self-examinations were the general means at the disposal of the Brothers.

Speaking of prayer, De La Salle says: "Be convinced that in order to fill yourself with God, as it is necessary in the state to which Providence called you, you must frequently converse with Him."³⁹ But to prepare for mental prayer, which is more important than vocal prayer, the candidate reads the New Testament or

³⁸
Frère Lucard, Annales de L'Institut des Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes, (Paris: Librairie Pouissielque, 1883), Tome 1, p. 111.

³⁹
De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the Eve of Pentecost, No. 43, p. 135.

The Imitation of Christ. Supplementing this reading, the Master of Novices or the Director of the Community gives conferences with the definite purpose of exhorting the Brothers to virtue or instructing them in the art of school management.

De La Salle wants the Brothers to acquire all the Christian⁴⁰ virtues necessary for a successful teacher. The virtues he emphasizes in his Meditations are: charity, zeal, piety, mortification, faith, obedience, humility, hope, chastity, poverty, modesty, regularity, silence, meekness, prudence, reserve and patience.⁴¹ These virtues are arranged according to the frequency of their occurrence in the Meditations. It is surprising to note the similarity between De La Salle's list of virtues and that of experienced school officials and employees, who claim that the ten most important elements entering into the teaching personality are: sympathy, personal appearance, address, sincerity, optimism, enthusiasm, scholarship, physical vitality, fairness and reserve.⁴² For comparison we can pair the traits mentioned by De La Salle with those of Bagley: sympathy-charity or kindness; personal appearance and address-modesty; optimism and enthusiasm-hope and zeal; fairness — prudence; reserve-seriousness.

⁴⁰

Ibid., Meditation for the Eve of Ascension, No. 39, p. 126.

⁴¹

Brother A.R. Lessard, S.C., "Saint De La Salle and the Training of a Christian Brother," op. cit., p. 27.

⁴²

H.C. Bagley, School Discipline (as quoted in) W.A. Reeder, A First Course in Education, op. cit., p. 489.

It is to be expected that some of the virtues mentioned by De La Salle have no counterpart in Bagley's list, since the former regards the traits from the supernatural point of view and stresses those that are necessary for a good Christian life.

Although the Brothers are not expected to acquire all the virtues mentioned in the Meditations during their years of formation, they are to strive to cultivate as many as possible. The acquisition of each of the virtues is systematic, including a foresight of the obstacles to be encountered during the practice of it and a periodic examination on the extent of success in its cultivation.

Acquisition of the Spirit of the Institute

By the word "spirit" De La Salle means the characteristic mentality that all the Brothers of the Institute should possess. He emphasizes the importance of the spirit of the Institute, which is, first, a spirit of faith, and wants the Brothers to pay special⁴³ attention to its acquisition. Those who have lost it or do not possess it are to consider themselves and to be considered, as dead⁴⁴ members from whom nothing good can be expected.

This spirit of faith governs the thoughts, desires, ideals, words and actions of the Brothers, making them regard people, events, work, joy and suffering in a manner advocated by Christ. In order to increase this spirit, the Brothers are encouraged to pray, to read spiritual books, particularly the New Testament, and to perform all their actions with the view of pleasing God, and not through

⁴³
De La Salle, The Common Rules of the Brothers of Christian Schools, op. cit., p. 9.

⁴⁴
Ibid., p. 3.

impulse, custom or any human motive.

The spirit of faith provides the Brothers with a basic philosophy of life and of education, ever guiding them with regards to the aims and the methods of Christian education. "If like St. Barnabas," writes De La Salle, "you are full of faith and the spirit of God, as you should be in your employment, you will make true Christians of those whom you instruct."⁴⁵

Sanford is of the opinion that all good and successful teachers have a definite philosophy of life, which convinces the teacher of the importance of his work and makes him willing to suffer in order to promote the good he is undertaking.⁴⁶ If this is the criterion of good teachers, then De La Salle has given the Brothers an effective method for becoming successful teachers.

The second spirit of the Institute is the spirit of zeal, which causes the Brothers to be enthusiastic about their work of Christian education. This spirit is not distinctly separate from the first spirit, since only those who have the spirit of faith can be zealous in their vocation. De La Salle wants his Brothers to be so zealous that they willingly dedicate their entire lives to the cause of the Christian education regardless of the sacrifices. "Your zeal should be such, in fact," he says, "that you should be ready to give your life, if necessary, to show how dear to you are the children confided to your care."⁴⁷

⁴⁵
De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the Feast of St. Barnabas, No. 40, p. 298.

⁴⁶
C.M. Sanford, Developing Teacher Personality, (New York: Row, Peterson and Co., 1937), p. 22.

⁴⁷
De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 6, p. 16.

Modern educators emphasize the importance of enthusiasm in the classroom, and claim that one of the traits of a successful teacher is the possession of this enthusiasm, which makes him sell the subjects to the pupils.⁴⁸ W.W. Chartres and D. Waples, in their survey among pupils, found that enthusiasm is regarded as one of the most important characteristics of teachers whom pupils liked.⁴⁹

It should be noted that the Lasallian teacher is never a finished product as far as the spiritual formation is concerned. He continually strives toward his own personal perfection by developing the virtues necessary in his profession, by the same methods that were used in his novitiate training.

According to De La Salle's biographer, Blain, the candidates who attended the normal schools established by De La Salle followed regulations and a manner of life prescribed for the Brothers in the novitiate.⁵⁰ However, these lay teachers were not bound by any obligations to the Institute after their graduation.

Professional Training

Although De La Salle considers the religious formation of the new candidates to the Institute very important, he does not neglect their professional training, which commences in the novitiate and continues, in a less concentrated manner, during the entire life. The course of studies in the novitiate established and administered

⁴⁸
C.M. Sanford, Developing Teacher Personality, op. cit., p. 54.

⁴⁹
W.W. Chartres and D. Waples, The Commonwealth Teacher-Training Study, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1929), p. 18.

⁵⁰
J. Blain, La Vie du Vénérable Serviteur de Dieu Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, op. cit., p. 358.

by De La Salle included the study of catechism, the reading of printed matter and manuscripts, penmanship, grammar, orthography of the French language, arithmetic, including weights and measures⁵¹ then in use, and plain chant. This curriculum seems to be rather limited, but even one hundred years later, the government of France opened normal schools in which the curriculum was almost identical⁵² except for history and geography. The textbooks used in the first Lasallian novitiate were the same as those used in Lasallian schools.

De La Salle insists on thorough academic training and tells the Brothers that they will have to render an account before God⁵³ on the matter of studying those subjects which they have to teach. In his Meditation on Saint Cajetan he exhorts them to study religion and to read good books, for the lack of knowledge on the part of the teacher is a "criminal ignorance" which causes a similar ignorance⁵⁴ in the pupils.

A thorough knowledge of the subject is essential for every teacher, for a teacher cannot give to others what he does not possess himself. Some of the states of the United States refuse to employ teachers unless they have specialized in subjects which they intend to teach. Neatby bemoans the fact that the Canadian and American teachers colleges are more concerned with the problem "How to teach"⁵⁵ than with "What to teach."

⁵¹
Brother Azarias, Essays Educational, (Chicago: D.H. McBride and Co., 1896), p. 253.

⁵²
Ibid., p. 253.

⁵³
De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation on Saint Cajetan, No. 59, p. 331.

⁵⁴
Ibid., p. 331.

⁵⁵
H. Neatby, So Little For the Mind, (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Co., 1953), p. 84.

Whereas the present teachers colleges give courses in methodology, psychology, philosophy and school management, the Lasallian novitiate or normal school offered the prospective teachers a limited course in methods and management, and a philosophy of education given in the form of Meditations.

Practice Teaching

Realizing that theory without practice remains inert, De La Salle provided the young teacher with an opportunity to teach before an experienced teacher who offered him constructive criticism. It was customary during De La Salle's time to have the novices practice their teaching in the nearby parish schools, where the master teacher or the "Formateur" observed the teaching of the young candidate, pointing out his faults particularly the following: talkativeness, too great activity, indifference, embarrassment, harshness, spite, partiality, negligence, despondency, familiarity, giddiness and lack of attention to the individual differences in character and disposition in children.

The results of a questionnaire, which was distributed to a thousand Canadian teachers, show that teachers consider practice-teaching the most valuable part of teacher-training - a conclusion which is in harmony with the Lasallian educational philosophy. The present trend in teacher training is not only to have practice-teaching on the course in teachers colleges, but to

⁵⁶
De La Salle, Conduite des Ecoles Chrétiennes, (Paris: Procure Générale, 1720), p. 306.

⁵⁷
H. Neatby, So Little for the Mind, op. cit., p. 82.

increase the length of this period, as evidenced by the program at the College of Education at the Columbia University, where the candidates serve an interne period of one year under the supervision of the principal and in co-operation with the instructor from the College. 58

In-service Training

When the young Brother finished his novitiate he was sent to teach school. As was mentioned before, his religious and professional training continued. All the means for spiritual advancement found in the novitiate were at the disposal of the Brothers when they went to their communities. The Lasallian in-service training, which was carried on when the Brother began teaching school, included the following: teachers' meetings, school supervision, reports to the superior, classroom visitation, personal conference with the teacher and summer schools.

Every year during the summer the Brothers met for their annual, eight days, retreat. Although the period of retreat is concerned mainly with the spiritual welfare of the Brothers, it also includes pedagogical discussions, many of which are informal. The sixteen Meditations for the Retreat deal with the religious and professional duties of the Brothers, and the topics for community discussion are of an educational nature, as can be seen from the following list:

The object of the Institute, the good that may be done therein, how the Brothers may realize the aim of the Congregation, how to teach the children well, the virtues

of a good teacher, the faults the good teacher should avoid. 59

The Brother Director, who is assisted by Brother Inspector of Schools in large cities, plays an important role in the in-service formation of the Brothers. Being responsible for the spiritual and pedagogical training, Brother Director guides his inferiors by means of counselling and visits to the classroom. The object of the classroom visitation is to observe the teaching of the Brothers, or to check on such routine matters as the entrance and dismissal of pupils. By watching carefully over all the teachers, particularly over those of lesser ability, Brother Director can help them instruct the children and assist them in the maintenance of good order. 60

If the Director wishes to advise the Brother of his observations, he calls him privately for a personal interview. To facilitate matters, De La Salle obliges the Brothers to see their Directors once a week at an appointed time. During this interview the inferior is free to tell his superior about his difficulties or successes in his spiritual life or in his teaching. 61

While visiting the classes, Brother Director evaluates the work of his Brothers, and sends a written report to the Superior General at the end of the months of November, January, May and September on the conduct of his Brothers as religious teachers and on the condition of the school. During alternating months 62

59
De La Salle, Collection of Short Treatises, (New York: The De La Salle Institute, 1890), p. 40.

60
De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 199.

61
De La Salle, The Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, op. cit., p. 10.

62
Frère Athanase Emile et Collaborateurs, Les Lettres de J. B. De La Salle, (Paris: Procure Générale, 1952), p. 172.

the Director reports on the religious advancement of his Brothers. These reports are to be given in a spirit of charity and include such items as the health of the Brother, his methods of teaching, his personality traits and his success or failure in maintaining order.⁶³ Besides acting as incentives to improvement in teaching, these reports form the basis of promotion.

The Brothers are urged to continue studying after they leave the novitiate, for a Christian Brother remains a student all his life. Most of the studying is done during the summer holidays, although each day the Brother is obliged to study religion.⁶⁴ It may be argued that the spiritual exercises, the daily preparation of lessons and the study of religion curtail leisure time which is necessary for efficient work in the classroom, but it seems that De La Salle's conception of leisure time is that time which a person spends in useful occupation different from teaching.

De La Salle's in-service education of the teachers conforms favourably with the modern theory and practice. Reeder lists the following in-service agencies used in the United States: summer schools, extension courses, supervision, rating by school officials, self-rating, school visitation, institutes and conferences, reading, daily preparation of lessons, travel, exchange teaching and teacher participation in school administration.⁶⁵ The only in-service agencies

⁶³
Ibid., pp. 172-173.

⁶⁴
De La Salle, The Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, op. cit., p. 90.

⁶⁵
W.G. Reeder, A First Course in Education, op. cit., p. 524.

mentioned by Reeder but not by De La Salle are travel and exchange teaching.

Conclusion

In viewing the Lasallian teacher-training method the reader must remember that De La Salle lived in the eighteenth century - a period in history when the teaching profession was cluttered with the misfits of society. It was believed that teaching was a "part time job" requiring neither training nor aptitude.

De La Salle not only raised the dignity of the teaching profession, but he also initiated a teacher-training programme, which includes such modern practices as practice-teaching and in-service training, and such current theories as the need for a careful selection of candidates, the importance of a pleasing personality and the necessity for a thorough academic and professional training.

Unlike the present theory of teacher-training, the Lasallian philosophy considers the religious formation of prime importance, and the possession of Christian virtues a requisite to the success of the work of a Christian educator. There is a growing demand in our modern state and provincial teachers colleges for a systematic and formal character training, for it is felt that failure in the teaching profession results from defects of character of the teaching personnel, rather than from deficient intellectual achievement.

The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools continues to stress the dignity and the proper character formation of the teacher. The twenty thousand members of this Institute, who

teach in sixty-three countries, have the same spiritual formation as proposed by De La Salle, but their academic and professional education has been somewhat modified to meet the needs of the time. The length of training has been increased to four year, including the year in the novitiate, by the members of the General Chapter of 1946, who felt that the young Brothers require longer religious, intellectual and professional training.⁶⁶

In the United States and in Canada, the Christian Brothers attend state or provincial universities and teachers colleges in order to receive the necessary academic and professional qualifications. In Quebec province and in some states of the United States, the Brothers operate their own colleges of education, which are approved by the state authorities. At present twenty-six such training colleges are run by the Christian Brothers in different countries of the world.⁶⁷

In order to keep up to date with regard to pedagogical theories and practices, the Christian Brothers hold educational conferences and publish periodicals devoted to the religious and professional training of the Brothers. In the Toronto District of the Christian Brothers, the last three days of the Annual Retreat are devoted to panel discussions and seminars on such topics as methods and school management. The American Districts of the Christian Brothers spend an entire week on matters related to the teaching profession. The first American National Educational

⁶⁶
"Resultats Du Chapitre General," Institut des Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes, (Rome: Maison Saint-Joseph, 1946), No. 318, p. 86.

⁶⁷
W.J. Battersby, De La Salle a Pioneer of Modern Education, op. cit., p. 124.

Conference of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was held in 1939.

Since the Christian Brother is principally a Catechist, provision has been made for an adequate in-service training by the introduction of the Institute Religion courses. The examinations are set by the superiors at Rome and are written each year on the thirtieth day of December. Courses leading to the Catechist Diploma include dogma, moral, worship, Church History, Old and New Testament and methodology in the teaching of religion. When a Brother completes these courses he may specialize by taking three courses in one or in all of the following fields: Scripture, Apologetics, Church History and Asceticism.

De La Salle's conception of the dignity and the duties of a Christian teacher is in full agreement with that held by the Catholic Church. A quotation from the "Encyclical on Christian Education" summarizes the principles of the two schools of thought:

Perfect schools are the result not so much of good methods as of good teachers, teachers who are thoroughly prepared and grounded in the matter they have to teach; who possess the intellectual and moral qualifications required by their important office: who cherish a pure and a holy love for the youths confided to them, because they love Jesus Christ and His Church, of which these are the children of predilection; and who have therefore sincerely at heart the true good of family and country. 68

CHAPTER VI

LASALLIAN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

School management is the art of organizing and governing¹ the school. It is based on the knowledge of the nature of the pupil, the end to be achieved in education and the means used to achieve this end. Although the organization and the government of a school are closely related, the former refers to such items as the arrangement of school equipment, the seating of the pupils, the classification and the promotion of students, the keeping of attendance and scholastic records and the giving of instruction; while the latter refers to the classroom control.

No phase of Lasallian philosophy is as adversely criticized by historians as its school management, particularly its school discipline. More will be said about the punishments used in class when school discipline is discussed. At the outset of this chapter, it is important to note that De La Salle considers exterior control a means to an end, which is interior control or self-discipline. This idea of discipline is consistent with the modern theories of education, except for the motive that governs it. The present day educators deem self-discipline essential to the democratic way of life, whereas De La Salle regarded it as means of forming good

² Christians. The responsibility for the proper administration of the

¹
The Minister of Education, School Management, (Toronto: William Briggs, 1917), p. 1.

²
J.H. Panton, Modern Teaching, Practice and Technique, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1945), p. 269.

Lasallian school lies on the shoulders of the Brother Director, who is assisted by the Brother Inspector and the teaching Brothers.

The Brother Director's Role in School Administration

As the name suggests, the Brother Director "directs" the spiritual, professional, and academic progress of each of the Brothers of his community and, indirectly, that of the pupils. Besides being the superior of the community, the Brother Director is also the principal of the school, the bursar of the community and the supervisor of all the working personnel connected with the school. His duties can be classified under the following headings: spiritual guide, executive head, chief disciplinarian and educational leader.

Much has been said about the Brother Director as the spiritual guide in the previous chapter. We have noted that in this capacity, he is primarily concerned with the spiritual life of his inferiors. He sees that the Brothers observe the Rules of the Institute, which regulate all their actions from the time they rise in the morning till they retire at night. Since the observance of the Rules is the essential means of sanctification, the Brother Director has the authority and the duty to impose a penalty on his inferiors who violate them.³

De La Salle wants the Brothers to regard their superior as one invested with God's authority and therefore, to speak to him in a low voice, to have entire confidence in him and to receive his commands as if they were coming from God himself.⁴ As a kind

³
De La Salle, Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, (Lembecq-Lez-Hal.....), p. 36.

⁴
De La Salle, The Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, op. cit., p. 26.

father of a religious family, the Brother Director enlightens his inferiors, consoles them in time of trouble and exhorts them to virtuous living.

As an executive head, he meets the parents of the pupils,⁵ supervises the work of the cook, porter and the gardener,⁶ runs his community on a sound financial basis,⁷ looks after the health of the Brothers,⁸ provides the classroom with the necessary equipment and⁹ sees that this equipment is properly arranged.

In his capacity of chief disciplinarian, Brother Director supervises or appoints monitors to supervise the pupils when they enter and leave the school and the church.¹⁰ He also administers¹¹ extra-ordinary punishments and distributes extra-ordinary awards.¹² Such punishments as expulsion from school or severe chastisement¹³ by means of the rod belongs to the jurisdiction of the Brother

⁵
Ibid., p. 21.

⁶
De La Salle, "Recommendations of De La Salle to the Brothers in Office," as quoted in Rule of Government, (Rome: The Mother House, 1947), p. xviii.

⁷
Ibid., p. xv.

⁸
Ibid., p. xx.

⁹
De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, trans. F. de la Fontainerie, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Co., 1935), p. 224.

¹⁰
Ibid., p. 51.

¹¹
Ibid., p. 170.

¹²
Ibid., p. 168.

¹³
Ibid., p. 168.

Director, who investigates and, when necessary, punishes or asks the
14
teacher to punish the guilty.

But the Brother Director does not confine his duties as a
disciplinarian to the administration of punishment and the distribution
of awards; he prevents disorder by his frequent visits to the class-
room and by his supervision. De La Salle, in one of his letters,
reminds one Brother Director of this duty: "I am sure that you could
15
prevent the disorder which the boys of Brother.....cause in the schools."

Finally, he is the educational head of the school. In this
16
role he outlines the work to be covered during the week, he promotes
17
the pupils from one grade to another, he suggests the books to be
18
used, and evaluates the teaching efficiency of each Brother, advising
19
him of his shortcomings in a private interview.

De La Salle's conception of the principal's duties agrees
favourably with those listed in the Twenty-Seventh Yearbook of the
Department of Elementary School Principals. These duties are based
on the sampling of published rulebooks of local schoolboards in
fifty cities of over 30,000 population:

14

Ibid., p. 203.

15

W.J. Battersby (editor) De La Salle: Letters and Documents, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), p. 230.

16

De La Salle, Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 57.

17

Ibid., p. 67.

18

Ibid., p. 78.

19

Ibid., p. 52.

Mandatory Ministerial Duties

- To be present in the building between specified hours
- To keep certain records and accounts
- To give receipts for delivered supplies
- To check the school census
- To inventory equipment, books and supplies
- To check the payroll list
- To report injuries of pupils and of employees
- To fly the American flag

Discretionary Ministerial Duties

- To conduct fire drills
- To supervise janitors
- To report needed building and equipment repairs
- To supervise buildings at recess and noon hours
- To notify parents of unsatisfactory work of pupils
- To regulate, permit or refuse entrance to visitors
- To regulate, permit or prohibit advertising exhibits
in the building
- To requisition and dispense supplies and equipment

Discretionary Powers

- To classify pupils
- To keep personnel records of teachers
- To keep personnel records of pupils
- To assign teachers
- To conduct teachers' meetings
- To allocate funds made available for building,
according to budget
- To obtain substitutes for teachers who are absent
- To evaluate the teacher's efficiency
- To supervise instruction
- To co-operate with juvenile court and law enforcement
agencies
- To regulate or abolish activities of teachers and pupils
in building
- To handle complaints of parents
- To discipline pupils. 20

Naturally, no one expects the duties of the principal as enumerated by De La Salle to be exactly the same as that given by the National Education Association, for De La Salle's duties are for principals who belong to a Religious Order and who lived in the

seventeenth century. However, in essentials both lists are identical.

The Teacher's Role in School Administration

As an administrator the Lasallian teacher is subordinate to and dependent on the Brother Director. Therefore, wherever the duties of the teacher and the Brother Director are identical, the former assists the latter. For instance, the teaching Brother helps to²¹ supervise the entering and dismissal of pupils; he nominates monitors,²² who must be approved by the Brother Director, and he administers the ordinary punishments of the ferule, gives penances and reprimands,²³ and distributes such prizes as holy pictures.

It appears from the foregoing discussion, that the Lasallian teacher has little or no freedom, his initiative and creativeness are constantly restricted by the minute regulations found in the Conduct of the Schools and in the Common Rules, and by the dependence on the wishes of his superiors. Although De La Salle wants the inferior to ask his superior for permission before doing anything, no matter how insignificant, it is not to make the former a mere cog in the latter's administrative wheel, but "in order to be sure of doing²⁴ the will of God in all things." The Christian Brother is reminded of the reward that awaits him in heaven for the performance of his duty done in obedience to and with the intention of pleasing God.

²¹

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 51.

²²

Ibid., p. 66.

²³

Ibid., p. 211.

²⁴

De La Salle, The Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, op. cit., p. 49.

Pupils' Participation in Administration

Pupils participate in the administration of the Lasallian school, where ten different types of officers are appointed to aid the teacher in performing duties which he can not and ought not do himself.²⁵ The Conduct of the Schools lists the following officers to be employed in the government of the school: the reciters of prayers, the aspergill bearer, the keeper of rosaries and his assistants, the bell ringer, the inspectors, the supervisors, the distributors and collectors of papers, the sweepers, the doorkeepers and the keeper²⁶ of the key. The qualifications for each office are stated in detail, most important of which are: good behaviour, piety, common sense, punctuality, sense of responsibility, neatness and diligence.

Although the names of the kinds of officers indicate their duties, some have unusual functions to perform and therefore require elucidation. The aspergill makes holy water accessible to the pupils as they enter and leave the church.²⁷ The keeper of the rosaries and his assistant bring the rosaries to church, distribute them, collect²⁸ them after Mass and keep a careful account of them. The bell ringer rings the bell at the beginning and at the end of the school day; on the hour and half hour, at which time the pupils interrupt their²⁹ work and mentally follow the prayer recited by the prayer reader.

²⁵ De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 211.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 222.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 213.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 214.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 215.

The inspector reports to the teacher everything that happens during
the latter's absence, but does not threaten anyone.³⁰ Acting like
the officials of the Persian King Darius, the supervisors watch the
conduct of the inspectors and inform the teacher of any willful neg-
ligence in the performance of the latters' duties.³¹

Modern educators advocate pupil participation in the govern-
ment of the school because such participation enables the pupils to
acquire a sense of responsibility which is essential for democratic
living, and because the enlistment of the pupils in the government
of the school helps to eliminate some disciplinary problems.³² On
the other hand, De La Salle considers the use of officers as a means
of facilitating the management of classes which numbered from sixty
to one hundred pupils per teacher.³³ However, some of these offices
are given as rewards to boys who perform their work exceptionally
well,³⁴ or as a means of developing a pupil's sense of responsibility.³⁵

Classification and Promotion of Pupils

De La Salle realized the necessity of a careful classification
of pupils in his educational system. Simultaneous or group instruction,

30

Ibid., p. 216.

31

Ibid., p. 218.

32

G.A. Yoakam, R.S. Simpson, Modern Methods and Techniques
of Teaching, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1949), p. 142.

33

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 38.

34

Ibid., p. 68.

35

Ibid., p. 178.

by its very nature, tends to neglect the individual differences of students. To offset this weakness, De La Salle inaugurated a complex system of classification and of promotion. The Lasallian school has nine main grades of instruction, each of which is subdivided into smaller units, making twenty-two divisions in all.³⁶

De La Salle's grading is not based on the time element, but on the achievement of the pupil. The student remains in his group until he masters the matter assigned to it, then he is promoted to the next grade, unless it is deemed advisable to keep him back that he may exert good influence on the others, or that he may gain greater profit from his studies.³⁷ If the pupil is not promoted for the foregoing reason, he is compensated by some reward or by the assignment of some office.³⁸

All promotion is carried out by subjects. The teacher examines the pupils at the end of each month and gives the Brother Director a list of boys who he thinks should be promoted.³⁹ If the teacher is not certain whether the pupil should be promoted he indicates his doubt by an appropriate "pin prick" placed beside his name. Then, the Brother Director tests these candidates himself⁴⁰ in order to determine their mastery of the subject matter. The teacher keeps a register which contains the names of the pupils in

³⁶
Ibid., pp. 62-65.

³⁷
Ibid., p. 68.

³⁸
Ibid., p. 68.

³⁹
Ibid., p. 67.

⁴⁰
Ibid., p. 67.

each grade, but does not indicate their achievement by means of percent, since only those who completely mastered the previous work are promoted.

Various methods of promotion are advocated by our modern educators. Some school administrators approve of one hundred percent promotion basing their belief on recent evidence which indicates that "failing children" who are promoted to the next grade, achieve more than the children of comparative ability who are required to repeat their grade.⁴¹ The supporters of "no-failure" policy maintain that the only time non-promotion is justified is when the children's social and physical immaturity makes success in the next grade practically impossible.

On the other hand, some administrators consider wholesale promotions undesirable since they lower the standards of education.⁴² De La Salle, too, belongs to this group. According to the former, no student will exert himself during the school year if he knows that he will be promoted to the next grade regardless of his effort or achievement.

A solution to the problem of promotion has been offered in the Winnetka and Dalton Plans, which favour frequent promotions.⁴³ In the former plan, the student must perfectly master his unit before

⁴¹
L.J. Breuckner, "The Cumulative Effects of the Policy of Non-failing," Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 25, (March 1939), pp. 182-190.

⁴²
G.A. Yoakam, R.G. Simpson, Modern Methods and Techniques of Teaching, op. cit., p. 316.

⁴³
W.G. Reeder, A First Course in Education, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1950), pp. 295-296.

he is allowed to proceed to the next unit of work. Thus Winnetka's unit advancement resembles De La Salle's subject promotion, except that in the latter system the pupils did little or no planning of the subject matter. The Dalton Plan also favours promotion upon completion of units, with the proviso that the pupil must finish all his tasks in all the subjects before he is permitted to advance to the next grade.⁴⁴

Promotion by subjects has been accepted in many American schools, as a regular policy in most of the upper grades of the elementary school and in all grades of the secondary schools.⁴⁵ This method was advocated by De La Salle in the seventeenth century and is consistent with the findings of psychologists, who claim that pupils in the same grade vary considerably in their ability to master a subject in a given time.

Historical Attitude towards the Lasallian Discipline

No section of The Conduct of the Schools is subjected to so much criticism as the one on establishing and maintaining order in the classroom. Compayré considers the Lasallian system of discipline curious since according to him, it forbids any resort to admonitions and severe reprimands and advocates "constraint and violence."⁴⁶ Moreover, the signals and regulations reduce the teachers and pupils to mere automatons. Graves and Monroe support Compayré by terming the Lasallian discipline as restrictive and

⁴⁴

Ibid., p. 296.

⁴⁵

Ibid., p. 299.

⁴⁶

G. Compayré, The History of Pedagogy, trans. W.H. Payne, (London: Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1918), pp. 271-272.

⁴⁷
repressive.

On the other hand, some historians laud the Lasallian system for its humanized discipline. Adamson claims that De La Salle advocates the use of the ferule and the rod, only after ⁴⁸ admonition and moral suasion fails. Cubberley, McCormick, Cassidy and Marique agree that the discipline enjoined on and exercised by the Brothers was mild in comparison with the customary practices of the time. ⁴⁹ These historians look on the minute regulations as a means of preventing any rash decisions or severe punishments on the part of the teacher.

Only a thorough and complete study of the section on school management as found in The Conduct of the Schools can furnish adequate information for the proper evaluation of the opinions given by the historians. In addition, Lasallian school discipline must be taken in the context with De La Salle's aims of education and the social background of his time.

We have noted in Chapter III that the prime objective of Lasallian education is the salvation of the souls of the pupils through Christian education, which is essentially character formation or interior discipline. But since the child's intellect is darkened and its will weakened through original sin, it requires guidance and correction before it can achieve self-control or ⁵⁰ interior discipline. Here discipline is considered in the broad

⁴⁸
J.W. Adamson, Pioneers of Modern Education, (1600-1700)
(London: Cambridge University Press, 1921), p. 231.

⁴⁹
E.A. Fitzpatrick, La Salle, Patron of All Teachers, pp. 34-35.

⁵⁰
De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 162.

sense of the word, meaning the training of all the capacities and powers of a child, particularly the volitional powers.

Perhaps no other class of boys in the seventeenth century needed as much guidance and correction as the poor French children whose parents were generally occupied all day in earning their living and who were, in many cases, morally corrupt.⁵¹ A good description of the families of these parents is given by Blain, the biographer of De La Salle:

Brought up in homes where there was nothing but bad example before their eyes and nothing but bad language ever in their ears; left in complete ignorance and abandoned to their natural inclinations, they the children looked to their mother and father to shield them against the wise corrections of the teacher. 52

We can but surmise the difficult task that confronted the teachers who had sixty to one hundred such pupils in their classes.

Positive Means of Discipline

De La Salle advocates both negative and positive means of classroom control with an emphasis on the latter which includes the following: enforcement of silence, friendly teacher-pupil relationship, good teaching methods, supervision, incentives and proper structure and condition of the school.

According to De La Salle silence is one of the principal

51

De La Salle, The Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, op. cit., p. 2.

52

J. Blain, La Vie du Bienheureux Serviteur de Dieu Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, as quoted in W.J. Battersby, De La Salle, A Pioneer of Modern Education, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1948), p. 96.

means of establishing and maintaining order in the school.⁵³ By silence De La Salle means the proper use of speech and not the absence of purposeful activity nor morose muteness of teachers and pupils. In The Conduct of the Schools he indicates the times when the teacher and the pupil ought to speak, but even then he insists that it be in a few words and in a moderate tone of voice.⁵⁴

Signs and signals are used to facilitate the enforcement of silence. In all, thirty signs are used in the Lasallian school. Some of these signs are simple whereas others are complicated. For instance, to have the pupils prepare to begin a lesson the teacher taps with his hand on the closed book which will be used during that period.⁵⁵ For many of his orders and for most of the mechanized routine activities, the teacher uses a signal - a small instrument made of wood.

Perhaps, De La Salle over-emphasizes regimentation. For example, he insists that pupils observe silence not only in class, but also while marching to and from church.⁵⁶ During reading they hold their bodies erect and fold their arms,⁵⁷ and during mealtime they study their catechism. True, a certain amount of repression is necessary for good order in the classroom, but a too rigid enforce-

53

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 147.

54

Ibid., p. 148.

55

Ibid., p. 150.

56

Ibid., p. 51.

57

Ibid., p. 65.

ment of regulations may be harmful to young, growing children.

De La Salle insists on silence because it is a necessary condition for class work and because it fosters a religious atmosphere which is essential to character formation. The author of the School Management agreeing with the first purpose of Lasallian silence, claims that quietness can be secured if the teacher is quiet himself in his voice and in his movement, and if he speaks only when necessary.⁵⁸ Dewey, on the other hand, regards silence as "that hum of disorder"⁵⁹ which results from pupil activity. Evidently, he disagrees with the Lasallian emphasis on rigid physical posture and with the repression of talkativeness.

Most teachers today favour a discipline which is neither too rigid and demanding, nor too lax. As much silence is insisted upon as is necessary for good teaching. Perhaps, teachers talk too much for their own good and the good of the pupils. Certainly, unnecessary and thoughtless talking fosters inattentiveness, for the pupils get tired of purposeless verbosity.

Friendly Pupil-teacher Relationship

A friendly pupil-teacher relationship is emphasized by hygienists and guidance teachers as a means of preventing behaviour problems and disorderly conduct of pupils. This relationship, which is based on mutual respect and affection, satisfies the three basic emotional needs of a child, namely; love, understanding and success.⁶⁰

58

The Minister of Education, School Management, op. cit., p. 265.

59

J. Dewey, The School and Society, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1900), pp. 30-31.

60

A. Jensen, Psychology of Child Behaviour, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1938), p. 388.

De La Salle regards the love for all the pupils, no matter what economic status, an important teacher trait. Although the poor children are shown more consideration than the rich, the teacher is cautioned not to form any particular friendships even with the former.⁶¹ This love for the children must be religious rather than human in its nature. "Look upon your pupils," writes De La Salle, "as the children of God, and love them only that they may love Him God and be filled with His spirit."⁶²

But love is grounded on tolerance and understanding. Therefore, De La Salle wants the Brothers to be firm as fathers, but mild as mothers.⁶³ Harshness or impatience causes antipathy for the teacher and an aversion for his instruction, paralyzing the influence of the teacher. The teacher must repress every movement of anger and impatience in himself, for this self-control is the most efficacious way of leading the pupils to live a good Christian life.

The teacher must not only love his pupils sincerely but also know them well, if he wishes to prevent disorderly conduct. This knowledge includes both the virtues and the defects of the pupils, particularly their past sicknesses, their abilities, their physical defects and their achievements.⁶⁴

61

De La Salle, The Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, op. cit., p. 16.

62

De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for St. Joachim, No. 63, p. 342.

63

Ibid., Meditation for April 21, No. 21, p. 253.

64

Brother Anselme, "La Modernité de Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle en Pedagogie," Bulletin des Ecoles Chrétiennes, XXXVI (January, 1938), p. 65.

Consistent with the opinions of mental hygienists, De La Salle claims that a pupil, regardless of his ability, should be given an opportunity to succeed in some undertaking. Speaking of mentally retarded children, he tells the Brothers that they should not be discouraged by the work of these pupils, but on the contrary, "manage to advance them, encourage them from time to time, and be satisfied with the little progress that they make."⁶⁵

Good Teaching

De La Salle considers good school discipline as a by-product of good teaching. On Sundays when the catechism lesson lasts for one hour and a half, he wants the teachers to tell some interesting stories connected with religion in order to sustain the attention of the pupils.⁶⁶ Whereas, short, clear, and accurate questions are used to stimulate the minds of the pupils, variation in questions helps to break the monotony which results from frequent interrogation.⁶⁷

Modern research shows that good discipline is a result of good teaching.⁶⁸ Generally, a teacher who skillfully directs the learning activities and maintains good working conditions will seldom experience serious difficulties in classroom control. Since the manner of teaching is captivating and since the matter is interesting, the pupils do not even think of disturbing the teacher or his class. If the teacher has a pleasing and a winning personality, the effect

⁶⁵

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 182.

⁶⁶

Ibid., p. 132.

⁶⁷

Ibid., P. 133.

⁶⁸

P.R. Grim and J.U. Michaelis, The Student Teacher in the Secondary School, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1953), p. 261.

of teaching is enhanced, and the possibility of disorderly conduct, diminished.

Supervision

Lasallian philosophy emphasizes supervision as a means of preventing disorder in its incipency. This vigilance is based on the premise that weakness rather than malice is the cause of a pupil's misbehaviour, and therefore the pupil requires constant care and attention. Lasallian supervision, exercised by the teacher and the principal, includes attention to such pupil activities as the recitation of prayers, reading during class, the distribution of books and the conduct of the pupils at the beginning and closing of school. ⁶⁹

By his presence, the teacher prevents words or acts which are contrary to the Ten Commandments of God. "Watch so carefully over the conduct of the pupils," writes De La Salle, "that you may prevent them from committing the least sin during the time they are under your supervision." ⁷⁰ Although such attention must be constant, it must not degenerate to an unsympathetic suspicion which sees only the bad traits of the student. Wiles is in complete agreement with De La Salle in regard to this important characteristic of supervision. ⁷¹

Incentives

De La Salle advocates the use of incentives to increase the application of the pupils, thus eliminating inattentiveness and minor

⁶⁹ De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 14, p. 38.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Meditation for March 21, No. 17, p. 244.

⁷¹ K. Wiles, Supervision for Better Schools, (New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1952), pp. 71-91.

types of disorder. The incentives consist of class appointments and of such rewards as books, holy pictures, crucifixes, and rosaries, which remind the pupils of the religious purpose of education. Although better prizes are given for assiduity than for ability, the most beautiful ones go to those who have made the greatest progress in piety.⁷² By rewarding the pupil's effort rather than his aptitude, De La Salle sanctioned a practice which current pedagogical books consider vitally important.⁷³

Generally, the appointment of pupils to various class offices is based on such qualities as good conduct, neatness, punctuality and assiduity. An exception to this rule occurs when the bold and haughty pupils are selected to act as inspectors in order to make them like school.

Most writers on school management consider incentives as a means of encouraging earnest effort. However, some educators frown on such incentives as prizes and awards because they induce the children to work for secondary ends rather than out of love for the subject.⁷⁴ The Ontario School Management points out that the advantages of material prizes and awards as a means of increasing application to work are overshadowed by the evil effects which result from their use.⁷⁵

⁷²

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 160.

⁷³

The Minister of Education, School Management, op. cit., p. 219.

⁷⁴

C.B. Gilbert, The School and its Life, (New York: Silver Burdett and Co., 1906), p. 78.

⁷⁵

The Minister of Education, School Management, op. cit., pp. 213-214.

Self-satisfaction that comes from work well done and praise for effort exerted or success achieved are suggested as substitutes for the material awards.

Caring for Physical Conditions

Regulating the light, heat and ventilation is an important factor in school management, for overheated or stuffy classrooms generally make the pupils restless and inattentive. Grim and Michaelis⁷⁶ claim that heating, lighting and ventilation are directly related to classroom efficiency and that any inadequacy in this respect must be compensated for by the teacher's ingenuity.

That De La Salle understood the necessity of proper school furniture, cleanliness and ventilation as a means of facilitating study is evident from his recommendations found in The Conduct of the Schools. The benches are of different sizes so as to accommodate⁷⁷ the pupils of various heights. A bookcase located in each classroom provides a place for storing papers and books used by the teacher⁷⁸ and the pupils. The religious pictures, representing Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph and the Holy Guardian Angel,⁷⁹ make the classroom attractive. To keep the classroom clean, the⁸⁰ monitors sweep it every day.

⁷⁶ P.R. Grim and J.U. Michaelis, The Student Teacher in the Secondary School, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

⁷⁷ De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 223.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 230.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 230.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 219.

Characteristics of Lasallian Corrections

De La Salle realized that despite good teaching, interesting subject matter, proper pupil-teacher relationship and incentives, misdemeanours are bound to occur, since the child's nature is inclined to evil. Therefore, he puts at the disposal of the Brothers repressive measures, whose characteristics are determined by the fallen but rational nature of the child. In his book, The Conduct of the Schools, De La Salle states that punishment should be rare, beneficial to the child, adapted to the individual, moderate, proportionate to the fault, objective and Christian.

Good order is found in classrooms where punishments are rare. Silence, restraint and watchfulness rather than harshness and blows establish and maintain good order. On the other hand, impatience on the part of the teacher is responsible for many of the punishments. Obviously, De La Salle is two and a half centuries ahead of his time in his emphasis on positive means of maintaining good order and on his condemnation of frequent use of punishments.

De La Salle wants punishment or correction to be beneficial to the recipient. "No punishment," he says, "should be administered unless it be considered useful and advantageous." An exception to this rule occurs, when a pupil is chastised to serve an example to

⁸¹
Ibid., pp. 170-171.

⁸²
Ibid., p. 168.

⁸³
G.A. Yoakam, R.G. Simpson, Modern Methods and Techniques of Teaching, op. cit., p. 153.

⁸⁴
De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 172.

others even though the culprit may not derive much personal benefit
therefrom.⁸⁵ Neither the frivolous individuals nor children who grumble
or weep after they are punished with a ferule, ought to be subjected
to corporal punishment, since they receive little or no benefit from it.⁸⁶

In order that the punishment be profitable, the culprit must
be induced to admit his guilt and be sorry for his transgression. No
pupil is corrected if he is not well disposed towards the corrections.
Furthermore, the teacher is forbidden to inflict punishment on an
individual in retaliation for the insults offered to him. "The effect
of wise correction, therefore," says De La Salle, "is to make those
who receive it disposed to amend their faults."⁸⁷

Correction is adapted to the individual differences of the
pupils. For instance, the gentle, the timid, the sickly children
and the newcomers are not to be punished severely, or not at all if
possible. In like manner, the mentally retarded are encouraged
rather than chastised if they do not follow the lesson, or if they
cannot retain what they are taught.⁸⁸ The following sentence summarizes
De La Salle's emphasis on the importance of knowing the pupils well
before punishing them: "It is necessary first to know their minds,
their natures and their inclinations."⁸⁹ By the "minds" he means the

86

Ibid., p. 180.

87

De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the
Retreat, No. 12, p. 33.

88

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 182.

89

Ibid., p. 183.

intelligence of the pupils, and by the "natures" and "inclinations" he means their disposition, aptitudes, likes, dislikes and habits.

Moderation rather than severity guides the teacher in the⁹⁰ administration of punishment and in the imposition of penances.

For instance, no more than three blows with a rod are permitted at⁹¹ one time. As a preventive measure against any excessive punishment,

De La Salle wants all extra-ordinary penances to be administered by the Brother Director, who because of his position, can take an⁹² impartial attitude towards the culprit.

But to be moderate in his punishment the teacher is urged to be calm, particularly before chastising the guilty. If he is at all perturbed or excited, he is cautioned to defer the punishment⁹³ to such time when tranquility is completely restored. The reasons for this deferment is given by De La Salle in these words:

When punishment is inflicted with passion, however, and with no view of God, it serves only to irritate the pupil against the master and excite him to sentiments of revenge and animosity which may last a long time. ⁹⁴

All punishment must be in proportion to the fault committed,⁹⁵ both in nature and in degree. For instance, if a pupil frequently comes late to school, he is required to compensate for this loss of

⁹⁰

Ibid., p. 171.

⁹¹

Ibid., p. 168.

⁹²

Ibid., p. 189.

⁹³

Ibid., p. 171.

⁹⁴

De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 12, p. 33.

⁹⁵

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 171.

time by coming to school early during one or two weeks.⁹⁶ Likewise, a pupil who maintains an unbecoming posture during mealtime is forced to stand up, and a class officer who neglects to do his duty is⁹⁷ deposed from his office. Thus, the penances are not only in proportion to the fault, but are also closely related to the acts of misbehaviour.

The giving and receiving of punishments are governed by religious rather than by human motives. De La Salle wants all punishments to be administered purely for the glory of God and for the fulfilment of His Holy Will.⁹⁸ Reprimands must be given without any passion⁹⁹ since God does not give His blessing to an action done in anger. This rule also applies to the administration of punishment. Before correcting a pupil the teacher purifies his motives so that he may¹⁰⁰ perform his action in a Christian spirit. After receiving the punishment, the pupil kneels in the middle of the classroom, thanks the teacher for it and then turns towards the crucifix to thank God¹⁰¹ and to promise Him not to commit the fault again.

Authors on school management agree with De La Salle's¹⁰² philosophy of school discipline. Johnson points out that no

96

Ibid., p. 191.

97

Ibid., p. 193.

98

Ibid., p. 170.

99

Ibid., p. 167.

100

Ibid., p. 186.

101

Ibid., p. 187.

102

F.W. Johnson, The Administration and Supervision of the High School, (New York: Gin and Co., 1925), p. 14.

punishment should be given in the state of anger, for pupils lose respect for a principal or a teacher who lacks self-control and who inflicts unjust chastisement. A.G. Hughes and E.H. Hughes maintain, as did De La Salle, that no punishment should be administered unless it is beneficial to the recipient. Even when it is useful to the culprit, the teacher should take the individual differences into consideration and choose a form of punishment that fits the individual case. Finally, all punishments should be moderate, not severe, for the effect does not depend on the severity of the punishment but on the certainty of its administration.

Kinds of Lasallian Punishments

Because the use of reprimands and threats cause the teacher to break the silence of the class, they are to be used sparingly. De La Salle agrees with Johnson who maintains that no threats should be made unless they can be executed; that sarcasm or ridicule should never be used as instruments of correction because they create resentment, and that reprimands when used, should be given in a firm and calm voice.

Although De La Salle wants the Brothers to employ penances, when necessary, instead of corporal punishment, he states that the

103

A.G. Hughes and E.H. Hughes, Learning and Teaching, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943), p. 189.

104

Ibid., p. 190.

105

J.H. Panton, Modern Teaching Practice and Technique, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1945), p. 267.

106

F.W. Johnson, The Administration and Supervision of the High School, op. cit., pp. 141-142.

latter be remedial, proportioned to the faults committed and related
107
to the fault. Common penances recommended by The Conduct of the Schools
are: copying two or three pages from a reader, learning by heart a
part from the Diocesan Catechism, coming to school early and demotion
108
from class offices. Since such penances as copying of sentences or
memorization of passages create a distaste for school work they are
frowned upon by many authors of school management.

Expulsion is used as a last resort by the Brother Director
who may send away the dissolute, the incorrigible and the frequent
109
absentees from Mass or Catechism. Agreeing with De La Salle, Johnson
says that, "suspension and, to a large degree, expulsion should be
reserved for cases of extreme character, and should be administered
110
only rarely and when all other methods have failed."

Many historians condemn De La Salle for advocating frequent
use of corporal punishment. Strangely enough, The Common Rules
written by De La Salle in 1705, not only forbid ill treatment of the
pupil, but scarcely mention corporal punishment. In the Chapter
entitled "The Manner in Which the Brothers are to Behave in School"
we read the following:

The Brothers shall carefully avoid then and at all times,
calling their pupils abusive or unbecoming names, and
shall never address them otherwise than by their real names.

107

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 199.

108

Ibid., pp. 189-193.

109

Ibid., p. 168.

110

F.W. Johnson, The Administration and Supervision of
the High School, op. cit., p. 147.

They shall be particularly careful never to touch
nor strike them nor to repulse or treat them rudely. 111

It seems strange that the 1720 edition of The Conduct of
the Schools dwells at great length on the administration of corporal
punishments, whereas The Common Rules neglects this topic. Brother
Martial André writing in the Revue Belge de Pedagogie advances the
theory that De La Salle expressly forbade the use of corporal punish-
ment in the 1706 edition of The Conduct of the Schools. 112
Since the
Brothers represented to their Founder the impossibility of governing
the rude boys without some recourse to the whip or the rod, De La
Salle reluctantly sanctioned these instruments of correction. However,
he surrounded the usage of the ferule and the rod with so many pre-
cautions that frequent recourse to them was made impossible. Thus,
before a teacher may punish a pupil he must be perfectly calm, and
during the administration he must observe the ten prescribed rules.

De La Salle's letters also demonstrate his attitude towards
punishment. In a letter to Brother Robert, he writes: "Take care
never to strike the pupils; it is a considerable fault." 113
Writing
to Brother Denis he says: "It is very disgraceful to call your
pupils names....See that the other Brother does not strike the pupil

111

....."Corporal Punishment and St. John Baptist
De La Salle," The Catholic School Journal, Volume 50, No. 8,
November 1950, p. 287.

112

Ibid., p. 287.

113

W.J. Battersby, (editor) De La Salle: Letters and
Documents, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

with his hand. That is of consequence." He exhorts the Brothers
not to diminish the number of pupils by rough treatment: "Take care
not to diminish the number of your pupils by your rebuffs, but teach
them well so that they do not go away."

Corporal punishment is frowned upon as a means of correction
by our modern educators. A. Hughes and E. Hughes claim that "on the
rare occasion when corporal punishment is deemed necessary and it
should be reserved for serious offences, it should be administered
in an approved way." These two authors hope that all corporal
punishment can be banished from all schools, since it only brutalizes
the pupils and, in some cases, has little or no effect because the
pupils seek it for the sake of relieving guilty feelings.

Bagley considers corporal punishment a tentative measure
designed to teach the child the initial lessons of decency and order.
If it is used in a wrong way it may antagonize the child, by putting
him in an attitude of habitual opposition to authority, and making
him detest the teacher who inflicts the chastisement.

But complete banishment of corporal punishment from schools
remains an ideal rather than a reality. In all the states except
the State of New Jersey, corporal punishment is legally sanctioned.

114

Ibid., pp. 159-160.

115

Ibid., p. 169.

116

A.G. Hughes and E.H. Hughes, Learning and Teaching,
op. cit., p. 189.

117

W.C. Bagley, Classroom Management, (New York: The
MacMillan Co., 1911), p. 119.

118

H.A. Falk, "Corporal Punishment," Teachers College,
(New York: Bureau of Publication, 1941), p. 162.

Out of one hundred and thirty five principal cities in the United States it is permitted in one hundred and sixteen.¹¹⁹ Although many school systems permit or tolerate corporal punishment in the elementary school, they do not favour its use in the high school.

De La Salle is not only modern in his insistence on the abolition of corporal punishment, but he is a pioneer in this phase of school administration. During his time the primary schools in France and Germany insisted on the use of the ferule and the rod. Luther himself, quoting scripture to support his claim, maintained¹²⁰ that the use of the rod is indispensable for classroom control. Comenius, a contemporary of De La Salle, asserted that the devil and the evil inclinations of children can only be checked by means of discipline, that is, by the use of blame, or corporal¹²¹ punishment.

Even the American schools during the early seventeenth century were characterized by severe discipline. Boys in college were whipped, not mentioning the continual administration of the switch or rod in the grammar schools.¹²²

Conclusion

As in the case of Lasallian aims, means for character

¹¹⁹

Ibid., p. 163.

¹²⁰

E. Frederick, Early Protestant Educators, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1931), p. 28.

¹²¹

J.A. Comenius, The Great Didactic, (edited by M.W. Keatings, (London: George Allen and Unwin Co., 1913), p. 28.

¹²²

E.F. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States, (Chicago: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1934), p. 57.

formation and teacher-training so also in the matter of school management, religious motives predominate. The pupil remains silent in class and obeys the class regulations because it is God's Will, and the teacher rewards the pupil or corrects him because it is his duty imposed upon him by God. The best reward is given to a boy who is the most pious, and the severest punishment is reserved for faults directly connected with the Ten Commandments of God.

But good order is not separate from good teaching; on the contrary, it is the by-product of interesting and meaningful instruction. De La Salle reminds the Brothers that they may themselves be responsible for disorder in the school by their harshness, talkativeness or poor methods. He emphasizes the traits of the teacher more than the methods he uses, for a virtuous teacher, in his opinion, can overcome obstacles he may encounter in class and can influence the pupils' conduct.

In this chapter we have noticed many characteristics of school management which are modern in their conception and in their application, namely; the role of the principal in administration, pupil participation, classification and promotion of pupils by subjects, the emphasis on the positive means of discipline, and friendly pupil-teacher relationship. De La Salle does not pose as an originator of modern theories of school management, but advocates a system of class government which his common sense and experience dictated. In other words, he did what any person with insight and understanding would do if he were confronted with the similar problems.

CHAPTER VII

PREPARING THE PUPILS FOR LIFE IN SOCIETY

De La Salle's primary aim in education is religious in nature—the salvation of the pupils' souls through Christian education. The nature of this aim and the means provided for its realization have been discussed in Chapters III and IV. The secondary objective of the Lasallian philosophy is the preparation of the pupils for their life in society. Although subordinate to the chief aim, it is, nevertheless, important. De La Salle reminds the Brothers of the necessity of preparing their pupils for life in society when he says: "You will contribute to the good of your country by teaching them [pupils] to read and write and all that pertains to your functions."¹ He places the task of working for the good of the country next to the labour done for the good of the church.² In his opinion, the formation of good citizens who can support themselves and who are obedient to the authority of their country constitutes the fundamental basis of preparation for life in society.

De La Salle's conception of society is a purely Christian one. The members of this society perform their duties with the motive of pleasing God; they love God as their father and all men

¹ De La Salle, Meditations, trans. W.J. Battersby, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1953), Meditation for the Feast of St. Louis, No. 66, p. 350.

² Ibid., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 2, p. 5.

as their brethren, and their final goal in life is heaven. Every deed that helps the members to achieve this end is good and worthwhile, and every deed that deviates from this goal is, to say the least, useless.³

From the very dawn of civilization, the preparation of pupils for their life in society has been considered important by educational leaders. Even today this objective holds a prominent position in the hierarchy of educational objectives, as is evident from the following two documents, namely: The Unique Function of Education in America and The Purposes of Education in American Democracy edited by the National Education Association with the purpose of showing that preparation for life in a democracy is the chief concern of our educational system.⁴

The training of the pupils for their life in society depends on the curriculum and methods. It is rash to claim that one is more important than the other, since the methods employed in teaching vary with the content of the curriculum.

Curriculum Making

⁵Reeder defines curriculum as, "all the activities and all the experiences in which pupils engage under the direction of the school to achieve the objectives of education." From this definition

³De La Salle, Duties of a Christian, (Montreal: Christian Brothers, 1869), p. 57.

⁴G.A. Yoakom and R.G. Simpson, Modern Methods and Techniques of Teaching, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1949), p. 4.

⁵W.G. Reeder, A First Course in Education, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1950), p. 356.

it is obvious that the curriculum is a vital part of instruction and that both the subject matter and the methods constitute the curriculum.

Since the success of any school depends on the extent and the organization of the curriculum it is essential to see that the latter⁶ has all the salient characteristics. According to Reeder a good curriculum is a co-operative undertaking of the superintendent, principals, supervisors and teachers; it is made with the full knowledge of a philosophy of education and the social conditions or needs of the community and it provides for the individual differences of the pupils. In addition, a good curriculum indicates important topics, suggests proper methods for these topics, and furnishes a system of evaluation. It is also sufficiently flexible to permit any revision that may be necessary in order to keep it up to date. We shall see to what extent the Lasallian curriculum complies with the characteristics named by Reeder.

Evidence to show that De La Salle favours co-operative planning of the curriculum by the teachers and the parents, is indicated in the Preface of The Conduct of the Schools and the Rule of Saint Yon. In the former we read the following:

This method [method of conducting Christian Schools] has been prepared and put in order only after a great number of conferences between him [De La Salle] and the oldest and most capable teachers among the Brothers of the Institute and after several years of experience. 7

The Rules of the boarding school of Saint Yon suggest that the prefect and the teachers meet every Wednesday and Saturday to

6

Ibid., p. 358.

7

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, trans. F. De La Fontainerie, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1935), p. 48.

exchange ideas regarding the school curriculum. In addition, the prefect consults the parents in order to discover what they want their children to learn.

The Conduct of the Schools used as a course of studies and as a book on methodology provides for the individual differences of the pupils by its homogenous grouping of pupils, its frequent promotions by subjects and its attention to the aptitudes and abilities of students. This book also contains a practical philosophy of education, based on Christian ideals, which regulate the aims, curriculum, methods and class management. Whenever necessary the Brothers revised the contents of their pedagogical manual in order to keep it up to date with the current educational improvements.

Curriculum to Meet the Needs of the Time

It is amazing how sensitive De La Salle was to the needs of his time. He went to considerable trouble to help the student become an efficient member of society. One example of his social awareness is seen in the establishment of a Latinless secondary education for the Irish boys who came to France with King James II. The Cardinal of Paris, Noailles, entrusted their education to De La Salle who appointed a Brother to look after their conduct and to give them necessary instruction so that "within a short time they were able to fill honourably the posts for which they were destined." One can surmise that a curriculum suitable for the training of the young nobles was drawn up to the satisfaction of King James.

Witnessing the success of De La Salle in the education of the Irish youth, the parents of the bourgeoisie of Rouen persuaded the Founder of the Christian Brothers to establish a similar kind of institution for their sons, who were unable to get any technical education. De La Salle with the help of the parents, prepared a curriculum which allowed such electives as: hydgrography, mechanics, cosmography, differential and integral calculus, music and modern
10
languages.

Aware too, that many of the boys frequenting his schools, obtained but a limited education, De La Salle established for them continuation schools, in which the pupils were divided into two main groups. Pupils who had already a knowledge of such rudimentary subjects as reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic were taught
11
geometry, architecture and religion, and students who never went to school received the same type of education as those in the Lasallian elementary schools. These adult classes prepared the young men to earn their living and to become good citizens of their country.

The founding of reformatories for maladjusted youths best illustrates De La Salle's concern regarding the needs of his time. Because there was no rehabilitation institution for social deviates, many of the delinquents were sent to prison where they associated with obdurate criminals, who had a bad effect on these youngsters. De La Salle's reformatory included such modern features of rehabilitation

10

J.B. Blain, La Vie du Vénérable Serviteur de Dieu
Jean Baptiste de La Salle, (Paris: Procure Generale, 1887), p. 404.

11

Ibid., p. 100.

as daily religious instruction and practical lessons in carpentry,
12
sculpturing, botany and mechanics. As soon as the delinquent became
more docile, he was allowed to associate with his mates.

The tables on pages 106 and 107 show how modern De La Salle
was in the formulation of the various curricula, proving convincingly
his concern for the preparation of pupils for their life in society. It
is true that the Lasallian elementary school curriculum is limited
when compared with the present elementary school curriculum, but the
poor children of France during the seventeenth century could afford
to spend only a short time in school. Even with such limitations
Adamson considers the course of study prescribed by the Conduct of
the Schools "as one which under any circumstances would make a by
no means unsatisfactory elementary school programme." He goes on to
say that "it deserves much more than this lukewarm praise when one
remembers that the school-life of the pupils was brief, and that
Europe at large was then only just awakening to the need for popular
13
education."

Correlated Curriculum

Most of the subjects in the Lasallian elementary school
are correlated with religion. The pupils acquire the skill of reading
by learning the prayers from given charts. Once they know French well
enough they begin the study of Latin from the Psalter, a book containing

12

J. Herment, Les Idées Pédagogiques de Saint Jean-Baptiste
De La Salle, (Paris: Lethiellieux, 1932), p. 59.

13

J.W. Adamson, Pioneers of Modern Education 1600-1700,
(London: Cambridge University Press, 1921), p. 234.

Table II
15
Elementary School Curricula at Various Periods

1642	1775	1875	At Present
Reading Writing Bible	Reading Writing Arithmetic Spelling Bible	Reading Writing Arithmetic Spelling Conduct Language and grammar Geography History and Civics Drawing Music Nature Study Physical exercises	Reading Writing Arithmetic Spelling Character education Language & Grammar Geography History Art Music Science Health Industrial Arts Home Economics Agriculture Commercial Subjects Consumer education Citizenship education Intercultural education

15
W.J. Reeder, A First Course in Education, op. cit., p. 348.

16

religious psalms. When they are in the third section in Latin, they begin to read the book on Christian Civility, a book which contains the duties towards God, towards their classmates and towards them-

17

selves. Evidently, the purpose of this textbook is not merely to provide a book for reading; it also contains valuable instruction on proper Christian decorum:

The Christian youth, at his entrance into society, should be well instructed not only in his religious duties, but also in those duties of politeness without which virtue itself loses much of its influence and learning, and that respect to which it is so justly entitled. 18

Writing and spelling are also associated with religion. For instance, the pupils make use of models composed of sentences from Holy Scripture or maxims from the works of the Fathers of the Church, because these passages strongly impress the mind of the child. For the same reason, words for spelling dictation are taken from the catechism, a small religion book. 19

The Christian Brothers today, adjust the school curriculum to the requirements of the educational system of the districts in which they teach. Even though the Brothers have accepted the courses of studies prescribed by the provincial or state departments of education, they have insisted on having religious instruction in their schools.

Free and Obligatory Education

We have noted how eager De La Salle was to provide a suitable

16

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 80.

17

Ibid., p. 81.

18

De La Salle, Duties of a Christian, op. cit., p. 339.

19

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 109.

education for the youth of his day. But he realized that the parents of the poor could not send their children to school unless education was free. The schools operated by the writing masters and by the teachers of the Little Schools gave elementary education to those who were able to pay for it. In the latter, provision was made for the acceptance of poor children, but neither the teachers nor the pupils of the bourgeoisie favoured the admission of these poor, ill-bred children into their schools.

Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles to free education of the masses in France was her writers. La Chalotois claimed that it was not proper for the schools to teach the poor how to read or write because the educated artisans might refuse to devote their lives to manual labor.²⁰ Voltaire, too, had little esteem for the educated peasantry, or as he called them, clerks. Writing to Chalotois, he said: "I am grateful to you for dissuading peasants from studying. I, who cultivate the ground, forward you a request for labourers,²¹ not for clerks."

By making education free to poor children, De La Salle brought a great blessing to the masses. In the Lasallian schools the poor children were welcomed and were made to feel that they were appreciated, despite their exterior appearances or their poverty.

In his book, The Common Rules, De La Salle requests the Brothers to teach the poor children without taking any tuition: "The

20

F. Thompson, The Life and Labours of Saint John Baptist De La Salle, (London: Burns and Oats, 1911), p. 82

21

F. Buisson, Dictionnaire de Pédagogie, as quoted in W.J. Battersby, De La Salle: A Pioneer of Modern Education, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), p. 219.

Brothers everywhere keep schools gratuitously; this is essential to their Institute.²² The Brothers are forbidden to charge for the instruction they give and are urged to refuse any gifts or presents from the pupils. To assure that they observe this rule of gratuity, the Brothers take a Vow of Gratuity which obliges them to work for the sole purpose of saving the souls of the pupils, and not for any monetary gain.

Lasallian education makes the attendance of poor children compulsory. Whenever absences occur a monitor visits the homes of these children in order to discover the reason for their absence. The teacher's duty is to speak to the negligent parents making them understand:

The obligation under which they are of having their children taught, the wrong that they do them in not making them learn to read and write, and how much that can harm them since for lack of this knowledge they will never be capable of any employment. ²³

If persuasion fails to induce the parents to send their children to school, then the teacher gives the list of such truant children to the parish priest who discontinues giving alms to these parents until they compel their children to attend the school regularly. The teacher is urged to eliminate truancy by making his teaching interesting and by treating his pupils with kindness.²⁴

²² De La Salle, The Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, (Lembecq-Lez-Hall.....1925), p. 14

²³

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 198.

²⁴

Ibid., p. 198.

England and the United States waited until the nineteenth century for free and compulsory education of children. In 1880, attendance of children under ten was made compulsory in all private and public schools in England, and in 1891, all public schools received²⁵ financial support from the state. Such countries as Russia and Italy initiated mass education in the twentieth century. Judging from the foregoing discussion, we can see that De La Salle was ahead of his time in his emphasis on free and compulsory education.

Teaching Procedure

We have already noted that methods of teaching cannot be divorced from the subject-matter nor from the aims of education. Essentially, a teaching method is a designed arrangement of favourable conditions necessary for effective learning, and not a matter of tricks to "put over" something on the unsuspecting or unwilling child nor a device to sugar-coat disagreeable subject matter. In other words, the teacher is the stage manager who arranges proper learning conditions and who helps the pupils, the chief actors, to²⁶ educate themselves.

De La Salle advocates the following methods of teaching; expository, demonstration, questioning and actual performance. The expository method is used in the teaching of religion, arithmetic²⁷ and penmanship. In the last two subjects, the teacher gives the

25

H.C. Thomas and W.A. Hamm, Modern Europe, (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Co., 1945), p. 328

26

E.A. Fitzpatrick, Philosophy of Education, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1953), p. 237.

27

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 93.

necessary explanations when the pupils are not able to discover them
28
for themselves. This method of instruction seems to be very sound for
it relies on the maxim: "Do not tell the pupils anything they can
discover for themselves." Too many explanations often remain ineffect-
29
ive because the teacher, rather than the pupils, does the explaining.

Instruction by demonstration, a method in use in our present
day schools, was also employed in Lasallian schools. For instance, the
Lasallian teacher shows the pupils how to trim the pens, how to form
30
letters correctly and how to solve mathematical problems. In the case
of arithmetic, the pupils take turns in demonstrating the correct
31
method of solving the problems.

The questioning technique is used in Lasallian schools in
the teaching of every subject on the course of studies, particularly
32
religion. In order to be effective, the questions must be concise,
33
accurate, specific and graded to the ability of the pupils. Questions
34
are used to clarify new knowledge, to discover whether the pupil is

28

Ibid., p. 80.

29

A.G. Hughes and E.H. Hughes, Learning and Teaching,
(Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943), p. 335.

30

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 96.

31

Ibid., p. 107.

32

Ibid., p. 129.

33

Ibid., p. 133.

34

Ibid., p. 108.

35 following the lesson, to test the extent of pupil's learning, and to review the work. The teacher questions all the pupils at least once a day, and those who are slow in learning, many times a day. If the pupil is not able to give the correct answer, the teacher asks another pupil for the answer or gives it himself. The Conduct of the Schools does not treat of pupils' questions—an omission which seems to indicate that the teacher must discover the needs, doubts or perplexities of the child, without the latter expressing them verbally.

36
37 Yoakam and Simpson claim that the questioning technique is an important teaching device. According to them the characteristics of good questions are: clarity, simplicity, stimulation, specificity and definiteness...a list which agrees favourably with De La Salle's enumeration. These authors also maintain that the chief purposes of questions are to review the work, to develop the knowledge of the pupil, to examine him on the work assigned and to fix knowledge by means of drill questions. Here again, we notice a similarity between De La Salle's and Yoakam and Simpson's purposes of questions.

"Learning by doing" is the last, but not the least of the methods advocated by De La Salle. This method is particularly used in Lasallian character training, which includes such activities as the recitation of prayers, assistance at the Holy Mass and the practice of politeness and of charity. By putting into practice what

35

Ibid., p. 66.

36

Ibid., p. 133.

37

G.A. Yoakam, and R.S. Simpson, Modern Methods and Techniques of Teaching, op. cit., p. 186.

38

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 55.

they had learned during the religion lesson, the pupils bridged the divorce between theory and practice, which is the cause of many of our educational problems.³⁹

Perhaps the Decroly Method of "learning through living" best resembles the Lasallian method of "learning by doing." The Decroly school is a miniature society in which pupils learn the principal facts of life through actual experience.⁴⁰ However, it does not agree with the Lasallian philosophy on the question of freedom. In the Decroly school, the pupils are permitted to walk around while working on a project and to talk whenever they please. No formal discipline is used. De La Salle, on the other hand, insists on silence and on teacher-controlled activities.

Characteristics of Lasallian Methodology

The main characteristics of Lasallian methodology are: simultaneous or group instruction, care for individual differences, pupil-activity, appeal to understanding, motivated learning, meaningful learning, mastery of subject matter, remedial teaching and the use of the vernacular in teaching.

Simultaneous or Group Instruction

Simultaneous or group instruction is a deviation from such traditional modes of teaching as the individual or mutual. In the former, the pupil is tutored by the teacher; whereas in the latter, the monitors teach other pupils. Before De La Salle's time, both

³⁹
R. Livingstone, On Education, (Toronto: The MacMillan Co., 1953), p. 295.

⁴⁰
A.G. Hughes and E.H. Hughes, Learning and Teaching, op. cit., pp. 386-387.

Comenius and Fourier advocated the simultaneous mode of instruction, but failed to outline the manner of applying it to the classroom. It is true that the Jesuits employed group instruction in secondary schools even before De La Salle was born. However, the latter's contribution to education lies in the application of the simultaneous mode of instruction in primary schools, which were made superior to the existing types of elementary schools as a result of this innovation.⁴¹

The Conduct of the Schools goes into detail showing how the simultaneous mode of instruction is applied in actual practice. All the pupils of the same grade use the same books, receive the same instruction from the same teacher and recite the same lessons before the entire class.⁴² Through such group instruction, the classroom becomes a workshop where collective work is done. All the pupils see the same object; all hear the same sounds and each is influenced by the achievement of the others. Indeed, group dynamics operates.

The simultaneous mode of teaching was a means of satisfying the needs of the time, for thousands of poor children were waiting for an education, and only a small number of well trained teachers existed. De La Salle disapproved of the monitorial system since the the pupils who acted as monitors were incapable of teaching their classmates properly or of forming their characters. Only masters

⁴¹

W.J. Battersby, De La Salle: A Pioneer of Modern Education, (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), p. 80.

⁴²

Brother H.C. Gilmartin, "The Perfection and Application of the Simultaneous Method of St. John Baptist De La Salle," Unpublished M.A. thesis, (St. Louis University, 1949), p. 90.

who possessed a high degree of virtue and learning could qualify for the important mission of the Christian teacher.

Care For Individual Differences

The simultaneous mode of instruction has both merits and demerits. Unfortunately, a student may become but a number whose personality is fashioned by a "group mould" with little or no regard for individual differences. De La Salle realized this danger and urged the Brothers to pay special attention to the physical, mental and moral traits of the pupils:

It is also necessary that your instructions be suited to their [children's] capacity, otherwise they would be of little use to them. ⁴³

Since the age of the pupils determines their interest, De La Salle asks the Brothers to teach all they should know, having "regard ⁴⁴ to their age and capacity." Young children are influenced by the senses and by material things and should be taught accordingly. On the other hand, in teaching older pupils the teacher should appeal to their ⁴⁵ reason.

In order to know the abilities and experiences of the child De La Salle urges the Brother Director and the teacher to keep a conscientious record of the pupil's life history, achievement and aptitudes. At the beginning of the year, the Brother Director in an interview with the pupil gets the following information:

⁴³
De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditation for the Second Sunday after Easter, No. 33, p. 116,

⁴⁴
Ibid., Meditation for the Retreat, No. 14, p. 37.

⁴⁵
Ibid., No. 5, p. 12.

- (a) Christian name and surname of child and parents
- (b) Place of occupation
- (c) Address
- (d) Name of the parish
- (e) Age of pupil
- (f) Was he confirmed? Has he made his First Communion?
- (g) Previous schooling and reason for transfer?
- (h) What his parents had in mind for him as life work?
- (i) His ability to read and write
- (j) His good and bad habits
- (k) His physical defects
- (l) His past sicknesses
- (m) His last confession 46
- (n) Whether he associates with truants.

At the end of the school year the teacher, who is in a position to evaluate the assets and liabilities of his students, supplements the information of the pupil by the following:

- (a) Duration of his schooling
- (b) His scholastic standing
- (c) Appraisal of his mind
- (d) His piety in church and during prayers
- (e) His bad habits
- (f) Whether he has good will or is incorrigible
- (g) How to handle him
- (h) His punctuality
- (i) His application
- (j) If he does the work allotted to him, if not why not?
- (k) His knowledge of catechism and prayers
- (l) His obedience and respect for his teacher
- (m) If spoiled by parents
- (n) If he has a sense of responsibility 47
- (o) Any complaints of the parents to teachers about him.

We have already noted how the various Lasallian schools, by frequent promotions, by subjects and by the wide range of electives, provided for the individual differences of pupils. Perhaps the program for the rehabilitation of delinquents best illustrates De La Salle's concern for each individual. The maladjusted boy is under the

46

Brother Anselme, "La Modernité de Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle en Pédagogie," Bulletin des Ecoles Chrétiennes, XXVI, (Jan. 1938), p. 65.

47

Ibid., p. 66.

constant surveillance of a Brother who reports his progress to the Brother Director and the Brother Prefect. As soon as the culprit becomes more docile, discipline is relaxed permitting him to join the group for meals, recreation and vocational work.⁴⁸ In order that the delinquent may give his attention to useful and recreational enterprises, a library and a small garden are made available.

Self-Activity of Pupil

At no time must the individual assistance given by the teacher degenerate into "spoon-feeding" of the pupil. Recognizing the teacher as a guide and a helper rather than a monopolizer, the Lasallian educational system provides ample opportunities for pupil activity, which is either physical or mental or both. Certainly silence is enforced, but it does not interfere with the activity of the pupil; on the contrary, it aids the pupil's learning by promoting favourable learning conditions.

"Learning by doing," discussed previously, is essentially the self-activity of the pupil and is used in character formation. Pupil activity is also used in class work. For instance, in learning the alphabet from the chart, the teacher points at various letters and the pupils recite them aloud.⁴⁹ Mistakes in arithmetic are corrected⁵⁰ by the pupils rather than by the teacher. In addition, the pupils are encouraged to devise problems in arithmetic and to provide solutions for them, a process which entails self-initiative and self-activity⁵¹ of students. Generally speaking, the pupils in Lasallian schools are

⁴⁸ J. Herment, Les Idées Pédagogiques de Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, op. cit., p. 59.

⁴⁹ De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 80.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 107.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 102.

continuously engaged in purposeful activities--listening to the reading, answering questions, correcting other pupils, solving problems in arithmetic, writing from models, reciting prayers, assisting at the Holy Mass and copying dictations.

Appeal to Understanding

As it was pointed out, the Lasallian teaching appeals to the intellect as well as to the memory. The teacher makes the pupils recognize the defects in their writing by showing them a perfectly written model.⁵² The pupils are taught why some letters are vowels and others, consonants.⁵³ During the arithmetic lesson, the teacher interrogates the pupils to ascertain whether they understand the solution to the problem.⁵⁴

The foregoing evidence seems to contradict Compayré's claim that the "character of the pedagogy of the Christian Schools, at first, was a mechanical and routine exercise of the memory and the absence of life."⁵⁵ One of the first editions of The Conduct of the Schools indicates conclusively that Lasallian educational philosophy encouraged pupil-activity and pupil understanding--two characteristics emphasized by modern pedagogy.⁵⁶

⁵²
Ibid., p. 102.

⁵³
Ibid., p. 79.

⁵⁴
Ibid., p. 108.

⁵⁵
G. Compayré, The History of Pedagogy, trans. by W.H. Payne, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Co., 1886), p. 269.

⁵⁶
G.A. Yoakam and R.G. Simpson, Modern Methods and Techniques of Teaching, op. cit., p. 27.

Motivated Learning

Proper motivation is required for all learning. In its broadest sense, motivation means anything that impels or moves the pupil to activity, be it physical or intellectual. It involves three factors, namely; the pupil, the teacher and the techniques and devices.⁵⁷ The development, learning and conduct of the pupil are objects of motivation; the teacher guides and directs the interest and effort of the pupil towards the goal, and the techniques and devices stimulate the learner.

Motivation varies with the intensity and the kind of interest possessed by the pupil.⁵⁸ According to Ewing interest may be either intrinsic or extrinsic. The former is considered more effective and more enduring than the latter, which is engendered by prizes, awards, marks, praise or punishment. Even these incentives vary in their effectiveness.⁵⁹ In the conclusion of their research, Monroe and Engelhart claim that success is one of the strongest motives for effective learning, that praise, rewards or marks are more effective incentives than blame or punishment, and that the pupil makes greatest progress in learning when he recognizes the work or activity as meaningful.

The predominant motive for earnest application and study in the Lasallian school is religious. The pupils are urged to do their work out of love for God and with the purpose of doing His Holy Will.⁶⁰

57

W.A. Kelly, Educational Psychology, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1935), p. 257.

58

J.M. Ewing, Understanding Yourself and Your Society, (Toronto: The MacMillan Co., 1946), pp. 116-117.

59

H.S. Monroe, and M.D. Engelhart, "Stimulating Learning Activity," University of Illinois Bulletin, Vol. XXVIII, No. 51, Chapter IV.

60

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 132.

If this motive is inadequate to compel the pupil to study, then he is reminded of the punishment meted out by God for work poorly done.

We have seen that awards and punishments are also used as incentives for proper behaviour, assiduity and application. Penances and corporal punishment are considered inferior to such positive incentives as rewards and encouragement. In fact, De La Salle insists that corporal punishment should be used sparingly and never during the religion lesson since it creates a distaste for the subject.⁶¹

Besides the artificial incentives of awards and prizes, De La Salle recommends the natural incentives that proceed from frequent promotion and from inherent interest. By the former, success is assured in some aspect of school work, and by the latter, the pupils are encouraged to learn by purposeful activities and by interesting subject matter.⁶²

Meaningful Learning

Learning is more rapid, useful and effective when it is purposeful, that is, when it is related to the individual's interest, when it is related to actual life, and when it not only contributes to his purposes at the time, but enables him to make more intelligent adjustments in the future.⁶³ We recognize these characteristics of meaningful learning in the Lasallian educational system.

De La Salle tells the Brothers that they should teach the pupils not only truths which are speculative, but also those which are

⁶¹

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 132.

⁶²

Ibid., p. 132.

⁶³

A.I. Gates, A.T. Jersild, T.R. McConnell, R.C. Challman, Educational Psychology, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1943), p. 317.

practical, that is truths which are related to the everyday life of
64 a Christian. Silence, religious pictures, prayers, assistance at
Holy Mass and the cultivation of virtues are meaningful since they
help the student to become a true Christian.

Pupils learn every subject on the curriculum for a definite
reason. The knowledge of Latin enables the students to follow the
Holy Mass; the mastery of the French language makes it possible for
the students to associate with their fellow men; the skills of reading
and writing help them to become more enlightened citizens, and the
acquisition of the knowledge of various skills prepares them for their
life in society.

Mastery of Subject Matter

A very important characteristic of De La Salle's methodology
is the complete mastery of subject matter. With the exception of older
boys who are placed in the next grade regardless of their achievement,
none of the pupils are promoted unless they know their work thoroughly.
For instance, the pupils do not begin studying the second book before
65 they are able to spell perfectly and without hesitation. In like
manner, students start the study of Latin when they know how to read
66 French perfectly. It appears that De La Salle firmly believed in
67 the two commandments listed by Whitehead: "Do not teach too many
subjects," and "What you teach, teach thoroughly."

64 De La Salle, Meditations, op. cit., Meditations for the
Retreat, No. 5, p. 13.

65 De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 77.

66 Ibid., p. 80.

67 A.N. Whitehead, The Aims of Education, (New York: The
New American Library of World Literature, 1954), p. 14.

Remedial Teaching

To make the complete mastery of subject matter a possibility a certain amount of remedial teaching is necessary, which consists of detection and correction of errors by both the teacher and the students. During reading the teacher points out the errors of pronunciation and gives the correct one.⁶⁸ Great care is taken to show the proper way of holding the pen while writing. If the pupil makes any mistakes in forming letters, the monitor or the teacher helps him by showing him⁶⁹ the correct way of forming these letters.

De La Salle's emphasis on remedial work agrees favourably⁷⁰ with the modern methods as voiced by Yoakam and Simpson, who claim that all good teaching must include some remedial work. Success that follows such procedure enhances the interest of the pupils and diminishes the number of failures.

The Use of the Vernacular in Teaching

The last, but not the least, characteristic of Lasallian methodology is the use of the vernacular as a medium of instruction, which is a deviation from the custom of the times when Latin was the chief medium of teaching in French elementary schools.

De La Salle's reasons for using French as a medium of instruction rather than the traditional Latin, are explained in his memorandum which he sent to Godet des Marois, the Bishop of Chartres.

68

De La Salle, The Conduct of the Schools, op. cit., p. 96.

69

Ibid., p. 99.

70

G.A. Yoakam and R.S. Simpson, Modern Methods and Techniques of Teaching, op. cit., p. 15.

He based his arguments on the utility of French as a means of preparing the pupil for his life in society and as a basis for the study of Latin. He considers Latin of little value to boys and girls who are to become artisans and not professional men and women. No doubt, French and Latin could be studied for their cultural value, but the school life of the poor children was so short that it made the mastery of both languages impossible.

Even from the psychological point of view, the vernacular ought to be taught before Latin. "Reading French is a preparation for reading Latin," states De La Salle, "but the contrary is not true as experience proves."⁷¹ He explains this statement by claiming that Latin words are strange to beginners and that the stress on Latin syllables becomes comparatively easy once French is mastered. Finally, very few boys or girls have sufficient understanding of Latin to read it properly.

It is agreed today that a mastery of the mother tongue is⁷² necessary for the learning of modern languages. Instruction through the vernacular is so common that its use needs no defence. Perhaps, the only place where the Latin language is still used as a medium of instruction is in seminaries, where the thoughts of Saint Thomas Aquinas are explained in the Latin language in order to prevent any distortion of the original meaning.

Conclusion

Religion is considered the most important subject on

71

De La Salle, "Memorandum on the Vernacular," as quoted in E.A. Fitzpatrick, De La Salle, Patron of All Teachers, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1951), pp. 306-307.

72

Publications of the American and Canadian Committees on Modern Languages, Volume VII, Modern Language Instruction in Canada, (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1928), p. 11.

the Lasallian curriculum and is correlated with the other subjects. Thus reading is taught from charts containing the prayers, "Our Father" and "Hail Mary;" Latin is studied from a Psalter, and the models for writing are composed of passages from Scripture. Education is made free so that all poor children can attend school and receive religious instruction, making them effective citizens of a Christian society.

Much has been said in Chapter V about the necessity of the religious formation of the Christian teacher. Without this training the character formation of pupils is an impossibility, since the teacher cannot make others true Christians if he is not one himself. Moreover, the effectiveness of teaching methods depends on the teacher, who can make his instruction either interesting, meaningful and rational or create a distaste for the subject by a repulsive personality.

Many aspects of the Lasallian curriculum and methodology are modern. The curriculum is the result of the co-operative effort of the parents, the principal and teachers, and is designed to meet the needs of the pupils. His methodology has such modern characteristics as: provision for individual differences, proper motivation, pupil-activity, appeal to the understanding, remedial teaching, meaningful learning and mastery of subject matter.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

At the outset of this dissertation the author stated that his purpose was to organize, systematize and discuss the Lasallian educational philosophy, hoping to substantiate the following claims: De La Salle's philosophy is permeated by religion; a well-trained teacher is essential to his system, and many aspects of his philosophy are modern. This chapter will summarize and critically evaluate the arguments to see whether these statements are valid.

Religion Permeates Lasallian Philosophy

Every phase of the Lasallian philosophy is either directly or indirectly connected with religion. The main objective of education is the salvation of the pupils' souls through Christian character formation; the chief means of realizing this objective are prayer, the sacraments, Holy Mass and religious instruction; the principal subject on the curriculum is religion, whose spirit governs the other subjects; most of the school activities are related to Church services; the school year follows the Church calendar year; the majority of Lasallian textbooks contain prayers, psalms or religious instruction; the awards consisting of rosaries and prayerbooks are distributed to pupils who advanced most in the practice of Christian virtues; the severest punishment is meted out to those boys who violate the Commandments of God or refuse to attend the Catechism instruction on Sundays; the classroom is decorated with religious pictures, statues and a crucifix;

the pupils regard their teacher as a representative of God, and the religious formation of the teacher is considered more important than his academic or professional attributes.

It may be argued that the Lasallian educational philosophy over-emphasizes religion and excludes all other human motives. On the other hand, De La Salle's schools were for Catholic children who could afford but a short time in formal education and who would, most likely, receive no other religious instruction than that given in school. The objective of the Lasallian school was, therefore, to give the pupils as much religious formation as was possible to give during the limited time. This stress on religion was in keeping with the practice of the time, when both Protestants and Catholics aimed to prepare the children for the life hereafter.

The Christian Teacher

De La Salle raised the dignity of the teaching profession from a degraded and part-time job to that of a respectable and life-time mission. The Christian teacher is not merely an instructor who imparts knowledge to children, nor an administrator who keeps the children orderly; he is essentially a moulder or a fashioner of pupils' character.

The success of the Lasallian educational system depends on the efficiency and the personality of the teacher. Any method no matter how good, becomes a mechanized routine in the hands of ill-prepared teachers, who neither know the subject matter nor carry out the duties of their state. In addition, no character formation of the pupils is possible without intensely spiritual teachers, who imbue those under their care with Christian principles by means of

their example, prayers and instruction. Indeed, the Christian teacher engenders life in others by the over-abundance of it in himself.

Although De La Salle's academic and professional teacher-training was one of the best offered during the seventeenth century, it is limited when compared with the present programme as prescribed by the Departments of Education. It would be rash to say that the Lasallian teacher had an academic education equivalent to the present senior matriculation, but at the same time, it was adequate enough for elementary school teachers who taught religion, reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling.

It seems that the Lasallian teacher has his liberty curtailed by the regulations found in The Conduct of the Schools, and by his dependence on the Brother Director. The teacher must get permission from his superior to deviate from the programme and the methods. This adherence to the wishes of the superior and to the regulations is not to stifle the initiative of the teacher, but to make certain that he gets the merit which results from a joyous and a religious obedience.

Modernity in the Lasallian Philosophy

Although De La Salle established his Institute in the seventeenth century many aspects of his educational philosophy conform favourably with modern theories and practices. On the other hand, some aspects of his pedagogy are condemned by historians.

Besides elevating teaching to a dignified profession, De La Salle provides a programme for the training of candidates for this profession, which includes such modern features as practice teaching, in-service training, teacher selection and an academic and professional education.

His school management also demonstrates such aspects of modernity as pupil participation in classroom management, homogenous grouping, frequent and subject promotions, friendly pupil-teacher relationship, attractive classroom and positive means of discipline. Some historians, particularly Compayré, consider Lasallian discipline restrictive and repressive, whereas, others claim that the discipline was mild and wholesome compared with the practices of the time.

Certainly there was too much regimentation and artificiality in the Lasallian school system, characteristics which are condemned by modern pedagogy. Pupils were forced to maintain an unnatural, rigid posture during class time; they marched to and from Church in silence, and they ate their lunch in silence. All laughter was prohibited during meals and no recreational periods were provided for the pupils during the school day. After receiving punishment, the culprit thanked the teacher for it, a practice which invites insincerity.

Perhaps nowhere else are the modern aspects of Lasallian philosophy so conspicuous as in the curriculum and methodology. In the former we notice such current practices as co-operative curriculum making and a wide selection of subjects in the vocational and secondary schools; and in the latter, we note such modern characteristics of methodology as group instruction, care for the individual differences, pupil-activity, appeal to understanding, motivated and meaningful learning, mastery of subject matter, remedial teaching, practical teaching and the use of the vernacular as a medium of instruction. In addition, De La Salle inaugurated free and obligatory education for the children of the artisans and the poor.

Although it is true that Lasallian methodology attempts to cultivate the intellect and the will of the pupils, it is also true that it over-emphasizes the training of the memory. The large classes, the short time for schooling and the textbooks tended to turn the techniques of teaching into regurgitation of subject matter taught by the teacher. Pupils were asked to commit to memory answers from the catechism, prayers, spelling words and solutions to problems in arithmetic.

Judging from the evidence presented in this study, one may be quite justified in classifying De La Salle as one of the pioneers of modern educational theories and practices, thus taking him away from the hinterland to which he was so long confined. Certainly, the shortcomings of his educational system are over-shadowed by his contributions, which can be neither ignored nor minimized by any conscientious historian or educator.

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