

May 8, 1926

What Price the Modern Boy? X.13. Religious Antipathy.

Is it possible, after the considerations that have been gone over, for a daily communicant to be a modern boy? Oh, yes. Religious emotion may exist in a heart without a solid background of conviction. Is it possible for a daily communicant to leave the church suddenly and engage in some such public scandal as marriage to a divorced woman? Quite so. It has happened.

The usual form of religious antipathy found in the modern boy is that growing out of flippancy and frivolity; either the pleasures of the world drive out the idea of God, or God is engineered out of his life by the flippant repartee of the half-baked atheist. The public high schools are taking quite a toll these days, from both Catholicism and Protestantism. Still another form of the same disease is brought on by mulishness on the part of students in Catholic boarding schools who are determined that their manhood shall not be jeopardized by any "forced religion." Only time or serious catastrophe can cure this last case, because it is founded on a false assumption of the supremacy of the retarded adolescent mind over the wisdom of centuries.

The other form is a deeper, more hidden, and more dangerous evil, -- dangerous because so often it is recognized only in its fruit. God is accepted and loved, often with deep emotion and great piety, but the Cross is rejected. There is no sacrifice. How many people are there who go along shedding sweetness and light until a trial reveals their real nature! While there is a showy form of religion, at times with much gush, there is a profound antipathy to the real essence of Christianity, the crucifixion of the flesh. Modern youth loves comfort; scourging, crowning with thorns, crucifixion are not popular. See what mortification of the flesh accompanies daily Communion and you have an indication of the depth of religious feeling; see what mortification of the spirit (obedience, unquestioning acceptance of Church regulations, humility) accompany it, and you have the final test. God and Mammon cannot be reconciled.

14. Fatheadedness.

The modern boy has one sure admirer -- himself. Like the modern girl who "lives her own life," he is sufficient to himself. He is his own philosopher, his own spiritual adviser, his own critic, his own press agent. He is quite an all-around man.

Last summer one of the beauty parlors of South Bend came close to financial ruin because one of its chief sources of patronage closed with the final examinations at Notre Dame. Permanent waves are for fatheaded boys.

So long as the boy remains satisfied with himself there is no possibility of cure. The longer the period of self-complacency remains, the fewer are the chances of cure short of cyanide of potassium (which is a playful practical joke resorted to frequently by slapper wives who are poor shots). Mild cases can be treated by periodical duckings, although these are sometimes regarded as signs of popularity by puffed-rice heddles. Public disgrace, such as the publication of one's diary in a breach of promise suit, or an arrest for burglary, bigamy, or wife-beating, may also be effective if self-admiration is not too complete. Wheeling brick for a year between the freshman and sophomore years is a wonderful cure.

But the question remains; is a cure worth while? Will God get any service out of him if you reform him? Will the state have a useful servant? Will civilization be any better off for his having lived? Wouldn't it perhaps be better to hit him over the head with a crowbar and let him die happy? Still, he serves one useful purpose: like the mosquito and Friday fish, the modern boy develops patience in others.

FOUND: Bro. Alphonsus has recently received several articles found some time ago.

LOST: By a workman who can ill afford the loss, fourteen dollars.