

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION

(By T.E.R.)

The question of the hour for Catholics in New Zealand is the education question. The attitude of the Government towards our educational grievances, just at the time when Catholics, out of all proportion to their numbers, are shedding their blood and giving their life for the country, has stirred the feelings of Catholics from one end of the land to the other. They now realise that the time for acting the part of humble suppliants of charity has come to an end, and that henceforth the claim of justice must make itself heard. For, let us be convinced once and for all, that we are not asking for gifts and favors, but for justice and equal rights with our fellow-citizens. The time is now ripe for action. Our motto henceforth must be—*'Non Verba sed Facta.'* Catholics must gather together and unite for the common cause. The cause is a great one, for it is the cause of justice and truth. For this we must be prepared to fight to our last breath, and if need be, to die in the last trench. But we shall have won long before that: the claim of justice and truth will win at last. *Magna est Veritas et prevalebit.*

I. WHAT EDUCATION IS.

Although there is no subject more commonly discussed the world over, it is remarkable how little the true nature of education is understood. Education comes from the Latin word *'e-ducio,'* which means to bring forth or to draw out the latent capacities in the subject. Applying this to human beings, we find in man three sets of powers—physical, intellectual, and moral. True education develops not *one or other* of these powers, but *all three*. It is evident that it would be foolish to exaggerate the importance of physical development and sacrifice to its intellectual and moral education. It would be just as great a folly—in fact, as we shall see, far greater—to pay so much attention to the development of the mind, that the education of the will and the heart is neglected or ignored. This is the great defect in the education in the State schools of New Zealand.

II.—THE SECULAR SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.

The secular system of education followed in the State schools of New Zealand, is the bringing together of children of all religions and of no religion, and instructing them together in secular learning to the utter exclusion of religion. During school hours there must be no religious teaching of any kind. The name of religion is not to be mentioned. No religious object is ever to meet the eye of the child in the school, no passing allusion must be made to angel or saint. To open the minds of the children to the great truths of religion—to tell them of their Father in heaven, of their Saviour Who died for them, of their immortal souls or of heaven—all this would be considered a waste of time, and an obstacle to the work of the school. The authors of this system would seem to regard the child as simply a soulless human unit, and would develop this entity into a mere literary machine. Such schools have well been called, and truly, are, Godless schools. God is turned out of them, and the door locked against Him. We shall see later the evils arising from this system of education. Let it suffice here to say that it leads to infidelity. Father T. Burke, O.P., writes: 'The first step towards making an infidel is to give the child a low, mean estimate of religion. Let secular education be all in all, let religion be put aside, no matter from what cause; let there be no specific teaching or practice of any form of religion, and you infallibly make the child a latitudinarian, which is another name for an infidel.'

III.—THE TRUE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.

Education as we have seen, in order to be worthy of the name, must develop all the powers of man. Together, then, with physical and intellectual development, the will, the heart, the affections, and in general

the moral character must be educated. We are Christians, and as Christians we know that man has come from the hands of the Creator, Who has inalienable rights over him. These rights beget corresponding duties on the part of man, who is created to know God, to serve Him and to love—this is the end of his being. Consequently the child must be taught who God is, that He is present everywhere, that He knows all things, that He will one day judge all men, and will reward the good and punish the wicked. The child must be taught to serve and love God by obeying the teachings of faith and the precepts of Divine law. He must be taught to obey his conscience, which is the living voice of God within him. Moreover, since no one can lead a good life without the help and assistance of God, so the child must be taught the actual practice of prayer, and the other means by which that aid and assistance can be obtained. It is thus by the education of the will, the heart, and the moral character side by side with the physical and intellectual development, that education is made complete, and the child is fully and properly trained to discharge those duties which the Creator has assigned to him in this world—duties to God, to his fellow-creatures, and to himself.

There is but one law for all men, whatsoever may be their after-part in the great spectacle of life, in the pomp of courts and parliaments, in crowded cities or in lonely hamlets, high-born or low, lettered or unlettered, ruling or obeying, urging on the advances of science or plying some unheeded craft, for all men of all ranks, characters, and destinies. There is one and only one great idea running through all, the first aim and ground-work of education, the vital element and perfecter of the whole work, and that is the right determination of the will confirmed by the formation of Christian habits for God's service here, and for salvation hereafter.' (Cardinal Manning. Sermon on Education.)

Governments and politicians may say:—'This matter of religion is no concern of ours. Suffice it for us to equip men and women for this world, to take their places in society, to earn a decent living, to provide for themselves and for their families.'

But here they are mistaken, for is it no concern of the State whether men obey the laws of the land or not, whether they be degraded by vice or live pure and noble lives, whether they be honest, upright, truthful, etc? Now, there is only one means of producing obedient, pure, honest, and self-respecting citizens, and that is by the teaching of religion in the schools. This point will be made clearer in the following paragraph, where we state the attitude of the Catholic Church towards education.

IV.—THE ATTITUDE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TOWARDS EDUCATION.

The Catholic Church throughout the world has clearly before her mind the ideal which she desires her schools to produce—namely, true Christian men and women, with a full sense of their duty to God, to their fellow-men, and to themselves. Consequently, she adheres unswervingly, and has ever adhered to the following principles in education:—

1.—*Mental Development Must not be Divorced From Religious and Moral Training.*

Education from which religion is excluded is only a one-sided formation, and is opposed to the true idea of education. Again, no amount of intellectual education alone will make a man or a woman virtuous. It is well known that the most refined and highly-cultivated people are sometimes the most corrupt in morals. 'Knowledge,' says Cardinal Newman, 'is one thing, virtue another, good sense is not conscience, refinement is not humility, nor is largeness of view, faith. Knowledge, however enlightened, however profound, gives no command over the passions. Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk, then you may hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend with those giants—the passions and the pride of man.'