

FEATURES OF THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

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MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET.

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiae causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.

Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.

April 4, 1900.

LEO XIII., Pope.



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1924.

TRUE EDUCATION

A UNIVERSITY professor remarks that since the time of the French Revolution education has been extended and cheapened with the result that there has been a vast increase of self-confident ignorance. Just as the Protestant Reformation destroyed the sound ethical principles of political economy, the French Revolution swept away the true principles of the science of education, with the all too obvious results which Professor Grandgeut scathingly describes as a vast increase of self-confident ignorance. He continues in this strain—and his words are worth weighing:—"Vocational training, now first in favor, is surely an excellent thing in its place. But let us not make the mistake of calling it 'education.' It should prepare a boy to succeed in his business; probably it will, when it is better developed. But it affords no more education than is to be found from the business itself. . . . The individuals we have to deal with are not mechanics; they are human beings. They must be capable of living the life of the spirit, of appreciating the good things in nature, in conduct, and in art; they must be able to cope intelligently with weighty problems of public utility." Clearly what is nowadays understood in non-Catholic countries by "education" does not remember that men are human beings, composed of body and soul, and that the soul is the more important part of the components. Plato knew well what modern pagans like our political experimenters do not know: "An intelligent man," Plato says, "will prize those studies which result in his soul getting soberness, righteousness, and wisdom, and will value less the others."

We have much to learn from pagans who died nearly two thousand years ago. Let us learn more from Newman, who probably knew more about the subject than any man in modern times. "Call things by their right names," he insists. "A memory for detail is not a philosophical or comprehensive view. Recreations are not education; accomplishments are not education. Do not say, people must be educated, when, after all, you only mean amused, refreshed, soothed, put into good spirits and good humor, or kept from vicious excesses. I do not say that such amusements, such occupations are not a great gain; but

they are not education." Add to that John Stuart Mill's warning: "Men may be competent lawyers without general education; but it depends on general education to make them lawyers who demand and are capable of apprehending principles, instead of merely cramming their memory with details." Education is a thing of the soul; it is not a cramming of the memory; it deals with principles not with facts. And, in this connection, remember that it has been said with perfect truth that the majority of people educated in this country would imagine they heard a foreign language if a man spoke to them about principles: the reason being that education in New Zealand—outside of private schools—has nothing to do with the soul, and is directed by men who are in all likelihood ignorant of the fact that man has a soul. Materialism is at the root of all the modern mistakes concerning education. The Protestant Revolution made broad the way for the atheistic spirit of Voltaire and his fellows, and to-day governments, politicians, professors are all alike blind to one side of human nature, and that the important side. Men have forgotten the simple truth that God created them to know, love, and serve Him on earth, and afterwards to enjoy Him in Heaven. They have ceased to regard themselves as stewards who shall one day render an account for their stewardship. They have blinded their eyes to what is beyond, and they look on this life and the one-sided concerns it involves as the end of all. Wealth, position, amusement, luxury are the ideals which inspire political economy; and education is directed by men whose sole religion is the materialist political economy inspired by such low ideals. Hence, education is actually a return to barbarism. It degrades the conception of human nature. It makes of man a creature as low as the beast of the field for which temporal well-being is the end of all things. And this mistake springs from the material outlook of people who have inherited the corruption of mind and heart sowed by the Protestant Reformation and by the French Revolution. Shorn of the rhetoric of Ministers of Education, modern schools aim at turning out successful men of business; while they jealously exclude from their sphere those eternal principles which aim at making good men rather than rich men, and gentlemen rather than efficient men. All this is emphasised once more by Mr. Sampson—a member of the Departmental Committee reporting (in 1922) on English education. He says:

"Our present national scheme of education is a failure; because it tends to produce a mentally over-crammed population, prepared neither for livelihood nor for life in the broader sense. . . . I believe that the recommended interest of teachers in the 'science' of education means excessive concern with the heads of children and no concern with their souls."

There we have, from one who has seen for himself, an honest confession of the rank failure of "education" which forgets the souls of the children. The same confession was made twenty-two years ago by the French experts who declared that education without a religious basis was only productive of vice and anarchy. It all comes back to the teaching of the little catechism which impresses on us all that only by keeping the Ten Commandments and walking in the footsteps of Christ can we become good men and women in the whole sense of the word good. Some time ago a learned writer of a Saturday evening column in the *Dunedin Star* spoke of the need of Sunday schools, while pointing out that the Catholic Church did not take the same interest in them as the other Churches did. The reason is obvious: we Catholics do not want religion to be a thing confined to only one day of the seven days of the week: we believe in making it a wholtime subject; and our lack of interest in Sunday Schools really means that our schools are Sunday schools on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, as well as on Sunday.

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