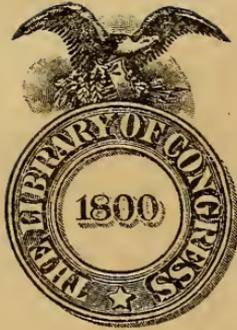


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THE CHRISTIAN IDEA
OF EDUCATION



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The Christian Idea
of Education
as

distinguished from the secular
idea of education.

by
Henry E. Robbins

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THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF EDUCATION

IN his inaugural address the president of an American college calls attention to the fact that the institution over which he was called to preside had been "always distinctively and emphatically Christian in its motives and influence." Another, in his inaugural, says, "the colleges originated in a common impulse. Broadly stated, the impulse was religious; the force that is behind the colleges was the spirit of consecration, of service, and of sacrifice." In precise harmony with the declarations of these two presidents is the well-known motto of Harvard college, "*Christo et Ecclesie*," which very exactly and fitly expresses the high purpose of the men who laid in New England the foundations of our national system of schools. The schools which they planted were, speaking generally, designed to be "distinctively Christian."

But what is meant by the phrase "distinctively Christian"? Why use the limiting word, "distinctively"? The answer to the latter question appears in the fact that there are so many in these later days who profess and call themselves Christians who, nevertheless, differ so widely, and even radically, among themselves in their conception of Christian truth and the Christian life, that the term "Christian" has come to be so indefinite as to convey no accurate thought. Hence the phrase "distinctively Christian" has been adopted

to discriminate a certain phase of Christian belief and life, related as seed and fruit, otherwise designated by the term evangelical. Dr. Josiah Strong, in his plan proposing a "federation of churches" "for the furtherance of whatever concerns human welfare both of soul and body," insists that its "management must be narrowed to those who substantially agree concerning men's spiritual as well as physical needs," that is, "under evangelical management," in order that it may be vital and effective. He assumes that there are certain fundamental principles of revealed Christianity made known in the holy Scriptures which are held in very general and substantial agreement by such churches as compose the "Evangelical Alliance."

Now it is the contention of this paper that these common principles of evangelical Christianity must underlie and shape the distinctively Christian school. Since no denomination of Christians has a monopoly of the principles insisted upon, it is hoped that what is said will have the consent of all who from the heart call Jesus Christ, Master and Lord.

Two things are here necessary to be said to prevent possible misapprehension: first, it is obvious that the principles of which we are speaking are not the principles of practical detail, the principles of the technique of education, drawn from experience and the study of psychology, but of the deeper and more fundamental principles which control the conception of the being to be educated and the supreme end to be sought in his training. In comparison with these the former, important as they are, sink into insignificance. The second thing necessary to be said to guard against misapprehension, although it is something like a reflection

upon the intelligence of readers to say it, is that the inference is illegitimate that the principles lying at the foundation of Christian schools must be the theme of instruction in every class-room. To draw such an inference is to misconceive the case altogether; class-room instruction in these schools is confined to that special department of learning assigned to each instructor. The principles herein affirmed hold the relation to the school that the bones bear to the body: they determine its form. They are not continually exposed to view, essential as they are to the structure; they are covered by muscles and nerves and flesh, and constitute the support of an abounding life.

We now come to closer quarters with our theme; and find upon careful analysis of the Christian idea of education the following principles essential to it and constituting it:

I. THE BIBLE IN A UNIQUE AND SUPREME SENSE IS THE WORD OF GOD.

Those for whom we speak accept the Bible in this sense as a supernatural revelation from God of the only and changeless way of salvation for men of all ages and all climes. Declining to receive unverified assumptions for ascertained facts, they are persuaded that no scrutiny of legitimate criticism has in the slightest degree impaired, but rather confirmed, the claim of the Book of God to be received as the final authority in matters of religious faith and practice. They have no fear of such criticism. On the contrary they conceive that the place of authority given to the Bible imposes such criticism upon them as a duty

which they may not neglect. But they insist that this criticism can be conducted only by men possessing the indispensable qualification of spiritual discernment, the absence of which is an absolute disqualification for the holy task, however well equipped otherwise the critic may be; men consciously dependent in interpretation upon the same Spirit who inspired the writers of the Scriptures; men whose experience of Christian truth fits them to recognize the supernatural element in historic Christianity; men open-eyed to all the light which science and history, philology and philosophy, can throw upon their researches, using these as servants, but not subjected to them as masters, in order that they may attain to an ever-widening apprehension of the thought of God in his holy Book. The Bible thus interpreted by such men, we accept in no esoteric sense,—one sense for the philosophers and another sense for the common people,—but in the meaning which a devout and scholarly exegesis finds in its language. Having in this manner ascertained its import we have no option but to yield to it the complete self-surrender of faith.

Passing now within the sphere of truth revealed in the Scriptures, we discover a second principle constitutive of the Christian idea of education, viz.,

II. THE FACT AND RADICAL NATURE OF SIN IN MAN.

The Scriptures teach that man is not now as to his spiritual relation to God as he was in his original state, but that he has fallen into bondage as the slave of sin. The revelation in the holy Scriptures of the condition of man as a sinner does not, let it be noted, constitute

him a sinner. It exists independent of revelation. The Duke of Argyll is a true witness when he says ("Primeval Man," p. 188): "By the corruption of human nature, I mean the undeniable fact that man has a constant tendency to abuse his powers, to do what according to even his own standard of right or wrong he knows he ought not to do. Human corruption in this sense is as much a fact in the natural history of man as that he is a biped without feathers."

The Holy Scriptures merely reaffirm the fact, make known its nature, and point out its remedy. The fact, thus certified beyond dispute, confronts us always and everywhere in all its tremendous and tragic significance. We are compelled to accept it. But consider what is involved in this acceptance. We are manifestly shut up to the alternative of abandoning the attempt to form a conception of education adequate to the profoundest need of the being to be educated, or the acceptance of the solution which Christianity offers; for the fact and radical nature of sin negatives absolutely the idea of education that it consists merely in the development and training of man's natural endowments. Education of this sort, whatever aspects development may assume, tends by fatal certainty, as all history shows, to final disaster and death. Everything done along this line is death-struck at the heart. The outcome of secular education, except so far as its effects are modified by influences foreign to its conception of its task, is despair both for the individual and the community. We are, we repeat, shut up to the alternative of abandoning the attempt to form a conception of education adequate to the profoundest need of the being to be educated, or the acceptance of the solution of the

problem which Christianity offers. No other alternative is possible.

What then is that solution? We reply that in the Christian scheme sin and redemption are correlatives. It insists upon sin in order that it may say to men, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" Secular education, uttering itself in its own proper character, speaks in the accents of despair. Christian education, on the other hand, speaks in the inspiration of hope. It utters its keynote in the words of Christ, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19 : 10); a mission condensed into one word in the message of the angel to Joseph announcing the advent, "and thou shalt call his name Jesus : for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1 : 21). But salvation from sin is through the reconciliation wrought by God in Christ ; and this involves certain facts and truths of revelation which we accept without reserve or equivocation, these namely : the pre-existence of the Saviour as the Word of God ; his incarnation through his supernatural birth of the virgin ; his sinless and beneficent life ; his sacrificial death on the cross ; his descent into the grave ; his resurrection from the dead ; his ascension and session at the right hand of the Father, where he ever liveth to carry forward by his Spirit working directly on the hearts of men, through nature and through providence, but particularly in and through a living church, a vital, not mechanical, process of saving men. Thus is thrown wide open the iron gate which barred our progress. A divine light falls upon our otherwise darkened path. A way which the eagle eye of secular pedagogical science could not find out is disclosed. We

may advance to urge the third principle constitutive of the Christian idea of education.

III. REGENERATION BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Here we listen to the Great Teacher speaking in the imperative mood to a master in Israel for whom, as to many masters in our day, the truth enunciated had lost its regulative power, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3 : 7). From this language there is no appeal. It declares the necessity of the new birth for every human being in order to his attainment of the destiny for which God created him. The radical nature of sin necessitates a radical change of the springs of action. Sin and regeneration are complementary facts as taught in the Scriptures. Until the divine work of regeneration has been wrought in the soul no development that is essentially true is possible. The Christian school recognizes this fact, and seeks by all legitimate means to effect this radical change in its pupils. President Whitman, of Colby University (now of Columbian), speaking in his character as an educator, in an address before the Alumni Association of Portland, is reported as saying : "The training which the university seeks to give is that of the whole man. Body, mind, and spirit should receive attention . . . He did not wish to be regarded as preaching when he emphasized the importance of spiritual training. To use the expression of the German poet, he would train our young men and women to be Knights of the Holy Ghost." It is easy to push this position into absurdity, and so to discredit it ; just as the foes of Christianity push the precepts of the Ser-

mon on the Mount into the region of impracticability, and dismiss them as false on that account. But as the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount are to be applied in the exercise of consecrated common sense, so the application of the principle in education which we now urge is to be made with equally sound discretion. It is not necessary in order to be true to it to turn the sessions of the class-room into a series of evangelistic meetings, but rather that the school shall be pervaded by a pure Christian atmosphere, and that by well-considered means the constant effort shall be made to bring the pupils into vital union with Jesus Christ. Wide and long experience has shown that such means can be employed with perfect justice to the rights of every pupil whatever his religious attitude. Pupils of all shades of religious opinion have been trained in such schools.

One thing more is necessary to be said on this point, namely, we do not forget the warning of our Lord conveyed in the impressive words, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). We set no limitations to the methods of the working of the Divine Spirit. We bear in mind the thought expressed in the Puritan theology by the phrase, "inchoate regeneration," a phrase which recognizes the fact that a long course of preparation may go on before the great and decisive change in the governing disposition of the soul occurs. The divine seed of truth may be long in germinating, and a thousand influences may contribute to the final result, and to the character of the soul when regeneration shall

have occurred. We are then not to wait for it, foregoing all means of a large and generous culture till it has occurred, but, while seeking and expecting it, we are rather to use all means contributing to the best and highest training, assured that nothing in all the history of the regenerate soul is without significance in its spiritual development. Nevertheless, after all has been said to guard against misapprehension, the point to be seized and held fast against all opposition is the fact that no development that is radically true is possible until regeneration has taken place; that the turning point in the destiny of a human soul is when it is translated out of darkness into light, out of the power of Satan unto God. Dr. A. J. Gordon ("Ministry of the Spirit," page 169), speaks in the wisdom of God when he says, "Educate, develop, and refine the natural man to the highest possible point, and yet he is not a spiritual man till, through the new birth, the Holy Ghost renews and indwells him." All mere culture of the unregenerate, even the highest and the best, is, we repeat, death-stricken at the heart, and its final issue must be death. In the practical application of this principle in education, the Christian school finds one of the chief reasons of its existence. But regeneration is only, as has been said, the implanting of the seed of the Divine life, and so we are brought to state the fourth constitutive principle of Christian education, viz.,

IV. THE TRANSFORMATION OF MAN AFTER THE IMAGE OF HIM WHO CREATED HIM.

The realization of the ideal which God has for man in his creation and in his redemption, this and no

lower end, no lower ultimate purpose, controls the administration of the Christian school. "The end of education," says Milton, "is to repair the ruins of the Fall." Yes; not, however, after the image of the first man, but of the second man, the Lord from heaven. To this "one far-off divine event" everything in a rightly conducted school converges. It may be reassuring to any whose wavering faith in the word of God needs the support of the last utterance of "modern thought" to know that Prof. Le Conte, speaking in the name of science, declares that "the end and term of all evolution is the ideal man, *i. e.*, the divine man." At last then, evolutionary philosophy, receiving her inspiration from science after the long tuition of nearly nineteen centuries, lisps in imperfect speech the lesson taught long ago by her Master and Lord. President Tucker of Dartmouth, in his inaugural address delivered in 1893, in a sentence of profound significance says: "There is a clear difference in the method and in the results of intellectual training as you strike at the beginning the religious note, or the note of utility, or the note of culture." Indisputably the end sought in any undertaking will shape the course pursued and the means employed in reaching it. Our position is that the transformation of man after the image of Jesus Christ includes every possible right development of his complex nature, and is the only "crowning good" in education commensurate with the grandeur of man's origin, the dignity of his capacities, and the limitless scope of his destiny. Any less lofty aim degrades him, and must relatively degrade the school.

It is of course understood that the Christian school is one only of many agencies employed by God for the

attainment of the sublime consummation ; but next to the various ministries of the church itself no agency has been, or can be made, more effective to that end. Christian men may well ponder the language of the United States Commissioner of Education, Dr. Harris, who in a recent article says : " I do not know of any educational reform so much needed as a theory and practice of education which unites and adjusts these two tendencies—that of the old education toward will-training (holding that character is more important than knowledge) ; and that of the new education towards intellectual insight and power of independent thought." He adds : " We are on the point of losing sight of the most valuable heritage of the old education, the ideal of a liberal or rounded education which contains within it the means of opening the five windows of the soul." These are weighty words from a recognized authority in pedagogics, whose high position gives him an unequalled opportunity for wide and intelligent observation of current tendencies in education. We quote Dr. Harris, it will be observed, only as directing attention in vigorous and definite language to an imminent peril to which our schools are exposed. He may or may not agree with us in the view we take as to the proper means of defense against the impending danger. Our agreement with him is in our earnest protest against the unnatural divorce of the two tendencies to which he refers. We strenuously believe that any education which does not make it its aim to " open the five windows of the soul," that does not seek the perfection of the whole man, that loses sight of the supreme truth that character is of more importance now and forever than knowledge, is fatally

defective. We hold with equal tenacity of conviction that the ideal of education which we cherish is the only one that can reconcile the two opposing tendencies referred to; for the reason that no other can give full scope to both, and so bring them into effective harmony. For how can the tendency to exalt character as the supreme end in education reach its highest efficiency unless the term character is given definite content, and a practical motive is supplied whereby its realization may be secured? But philosophical or secular ethics is powerless to define character in any such sense as to command common agreement, or to supply the indispensable motive. Christian ethics, however, which a Christian school is pledged to teach, gives a personal definition in the living example of Jesus Christ, so commanding the assent not only of the Christian church, but, speaking generally, of the world at large. And not only does it furnish an accepted definition of the term character in the example of Jesus Christ, but it points out a way to its attainment in its insistence upon a vital union with him in the absence of which that peerless example must ever remain an unattainable and mocking ideal. It is evident then, that unless the school is controlled by the principles of Christianity, its conception of character must be essentially defective, and the style of character which it can produce by training legitimate to itself, which it must produce unless the result is modified by influences foreign to its idea, will certainly be lacking in the most essential element. Reserving an attempt to show that the second tendency in education referred to by Dr. Harris can find full scope only in a Christian school for a subsequent part of this paper,

we pass here to inquire: How shall the example of Jesus Christ be convincingly exhibited, and the vital motive for its translation into life be brought into action? In answer to this question we urge as the fifth constitutive principle of the Christian idea of education,

V. THE INDISPENSABLE NECESSITY OF THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER.

This point in our discussion requires acute emphasis. It has pleased God to make his people channels of his redeeming grace. While we do not deny, but affirm, that the Spirit of Christ operates directly on the hearts of men, through nature and through providence, we are now concerned with the great truth declared by Him who as its source is the Light of the world when he said to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5 : 14). The history of the church is in great part a record and proof of the enlightening and saving power of consecrated men. There is confessedly no influence so potent in molding character and in determining destiny as that which goes out from them. They are God's supreme attestation of his continued presence among men. They are living temples of the Holy Ghost. Christians recognize this fact, and accordingly have given the Christian teacher the supreme place among the means of education. What an array of noble names has adorned the history of Christian education! What man is there among us whose heart does not bound in gratitude to God that he was brought face to face as a pupil with some instructor whose name is to him a synonym for learning, for nobility of manhood, for unselfish devotion to Christ and his

fellow-men, the memory of whom has been throughout the intervening years an unflinching inspiration to all high endeavor and holy living! Who will not say that he owes more to such contact than to all other means of culture besides? Our supreme need to-day, as it has ever been, and, in the nature of the case, always will be, is men, pure, unselfish, consecrated, Christlike men; not money less; not buildings and laboratories and museums and libraries less; but men more, men indispensably. The question is sometimes asked in a spirit akin to that with which Pilate put his skeptical query to our Lord: Is there then Christian Greek? What matters it who teaches it, so that the instructor is qualified in the language? Yes, we answer, Greek taught by such a Greek, for example, as the late Dr. A. C. Kendrick, Christian and scholar, is Christian Greek. Will any thoughtful man say that it makes no difference in the results of a young man's study of Plato whether his interpretation of that great thinker is under the guidance of one whose thinking is dominated by Christian philosophy, or of one who is fitly described, to use a significant current phrase, as a "modern pagan"?

The truth is, as every one knows who is at all conversant with the exigencies of the class-room, a teacher's attitude toward Christianity cannot be concealed whatever may be the subject taught. A look, the lifting of the eyebrows, a gesture, a single word, often goes freighted with destiny into the mind and heart of the watchful and receptive pupil. In fact a teacher's influence for or against Christianity is determined more by what he is than by what he says or does. Virtue goes out of him, if he is a living Christian, insensibly to

himself. That which is deepest and most vital in him must find expression. We cannot safely forget in our plans of education that there is a fathomless gulf of separation between the regenerate and the unregenerate. It exists, whether we forget it or not. No mortal sagacity, indeed, can infallibly detect it. No external organization certainly discriminates those who are on the one side or the other. But the gulf is there, fixed in the spiritual constitution of every human being by personal choice. "Things are what they are," says Bishop Butler, "and the consequences of them will be what they will be. Why then should we wish to be deceived?"

An unregenerate man is by moral certainty an enemy of Christ, and he will show it even though he have no conscious volition in the case. A distinguished educator of Massachusetts gives it as his judgment that, "The most effective moral training of the school is indirect and incidental, resulting from its operations, and the unconscious tuition of the teacher." President Hovey says, "Some of the greatest and best results are brought to pass by almost aimless acts of a holy soul." The teacher then, let us not forget, cannot, if he would, be a mere functionary, a sort of animated phonograph grinding out only the specialties of his own department. If he could be that, he would not be fit to teach. Since he is, and must be more, the more of a man he is, the more sure is it that his influence will be correspondingly determined for or against Christ. Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, with his usual incisiveness, gives the true conception of the teacher in a recent sermon in which he said: "Not a college graduate of us but would be greater, mightier, and more luscious

man to-day if we had not been held for four years of our life in enforced contact with so much commonplace material and cultivated diminutiveness in the shape of tutors and professors who could amuse us with their erudition, but could not work in us a profound inspiration. I do believe that a great Christian college, manhood manufactory, manned by men that are every inch men, wide, vigorous, sweet, and apostolic, and that hold the college for Christ and mankind and the ages to come, I do believe that such a college must be to the Lord a deep and perpetual joy." Prof. Le Conte, whom we have before quoted, insists that in order to social progress "rational selection" must take the place of the "natural selection" of organic development; and maintains accordingly that the improvement of society is possible only through the careful choice, among other social forces, of our teachers. In view of the blind, haphazard way in which they are usually charged with their high responsibility, he exclaims, thus repeating the thought of so ancient an observer as Plutarch: "Alas! how little even yet does reason control our selection in these things! How largely are we yet under the control of the law of organic evolution!" The indispensable necessity of the Christian teacher is made inescapably evident when we consider the sixth constitutive principle of Christian education, viz.,

VI. THE DUTY OF THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH WHEREVER IT MAY BE FOUND.

The second tendency noted by Dr. Harris is the tendency of the new education toward intellectual insight and power of independent thought. We have

maintained that the first tendency, that which makes character the supreme end in education, can find full scope only in the ideal of education which we are defending. We are now to attempt to show that the same is true of the second tendency. This, we think, is evident from the following considerations :

(1) Because of the insistence of Christian education upon personal conviction in religious concerns. The duty, and hence the right, of private judgment constitutes the corner-stone of evangelical Christianity. We cannot, if true to our principles, seek to impose mere authority upon the human soul, since "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." We cannot strive to win mere proselytes ; for a proselyte, using that word in a secondary sense, is one who has adopted a new set of religious opinions and practices for the sake of convenience, or for social reasons, or at the dictate of taste, or from some other motive lower than loyalty to Christ. Such action we abhor as sacrilege. We seek not proselytes, but converts of the heart. To us the conscience of every pupil is a sacred thing, never on any pretence to be influenced by unhallowed motives. This very attitude in itself insures intellectual earnestness and honesty, liberality and breadth of view.

(2) We maintain, secondly, that the tendency of the new education toward intellectual insight and power of independent thought can find full scope only in the ideal of education which we cherish, because of the insistence by evangelical Christianity upon life in Christ as the true life of man, his restoration to his normal relation to God, the Source of life. The soul is one, and not a thing of compartments like a modern steamship, so that one part can be shut off from the

other parts. Intellect, sensibility, and will move always simultaneously in a unity of action. So man as a complex personality, made up of the physical, mental, and spiritual elements, acts as a unity. What affects one part affects every other part. There is no such thing possible as a training of one element that is not, in some sense, a training of the whole. Since the soul of man then, is a unit, a defect in one part limits in some way the effectiveness of the action of the whole, and a defect in the highest element in man's complex nature makes certain the most serious results.

Now according to the Scriptures there is by nature a defect in man's spiritual relation to God so serious as to find adequate expression only by such metaphors as blindness, deafness, palsy, and death. In pagan nations, therefore, even among the most cultivated peoples of antiquity, the intellect of man seems to grope bewildered in darkness; there is no certainty in its processes and no agreement in its results. Hence it is that the first indispensable step in a true Christian education is the restoration of the soul to spiritual life, in order to the best and highest and harmonious exercise of its powers. Accordingly, if history teaches anything, it proves that awakened spiritual life has always and everywhere been followed, both in the individual case and in communities, by mental activity before unknown; by "intellectual insight and power of independent thought." In fact the disunion of the two tendencies deprecated by Dr. Harris is but an echo of the sin of Eden by which man was alienated from the life of God; is a violation of the conception of the unity of the spiritual life everywhere inculcated in the Scriptures; is a perpetuation of the old and pernicious



superstition which mechanically separates the religious from the secular, the sacred from the profane, the priesthood from the laity, substituting a tradition of a mechanical churchism for the teaching of a living Christianity. On this point Phillips Brooks says: "The true idea of relationship (between God and man) involves the presence of God in every highest activity of man; to separate them is not simply to deny man a power he needs, it is to break a unity, and to set a part of the power to do what the whole power ought to do as one." It is the glory of Christianity that it reveals the provision and supplies the means whereby man may be renewed in the spiritual life of God, so that whatever he does in any sphere of action may be energized and consecrated by one living motive.

We maintain, in the third place, that the tendency of the new education toward intellectual insight and power of independent thought can find full scope only in the ideal of education which we cherish, because of its insistence upon the truth as the supreme good. Giving the supremacy to the truth as revealed in the Scriptures, as Christian education must, we insist upon that truth, first, as the instrument of regeneration; secondly, as the means of the development of the life of God in the soul; and thirdly, as in its last analysis personal, and embracing truth of whatever nature.

We insist upon truth, firstly, as the instrument of regeneration. It is a fact, heavily freighted with meaning, that Christianity makes its appeal to the intellect of man. It comes to him as the thought of God toward him. It challenges investigation, and asks rational acceptance, loving assent, and willing obedience. God's saving purpose is communicated to us in a Book, the

word of God. At the outset it asks for intellectual insight and power of independent thought. Everywhere in its pages, by precept and example, the indispensable necessity of knowing the truth, loving the truth, and obeying the truth, is inculcated. The Saviour of men claims himself to be the Truth (John 14 : 6). "Every one that is of the truth," he says, "heareth my voice" (John 18 : 37). "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8 : 32). Regeneration is not a magical process, but the work of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the truth. In striving to effect it, we seek to bring the soul under the direct influence of unadulterated truth. We refuse to interpose any creed, any interpretation of doctors, any religious customs and institutions, however hoary with age and venerable with sacred associations, between the soul and God. We strive to bring it under the full blaze of the Sun of Righteousness, as his rays stream forth from the whole and every part of the Holy Scriptures, unrefracted by the intervention of human teaching, in order that under the quickening power of the truth it may be awakened from the sleep of death into the life of God. It is the truth of the Holy Scriptures which is the sword of the Spirit of Christ by which he wins his conquest over the souls of men.

Secondly, we insist on the truth because it is the means of the development of the life of Christ in man. For this the whole and every part of the Holy Scriptures are requisite. "Every Scripture . . . is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, . . . for instruction . . . in righteousness : that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2

Tim. 3 : 16, 17). Precisely here we find the reason why some thoughtful men object to creeds ; not because they are not useful in their place, and may not be true as far as they go, but because they are necessarily insufficient for the great end, namely, the nurture of the spiritual life, for which truth is revealed. No wit of man has conceived, or can conceive, a creed broad enough and comprehensive enough and minute enough to embrace all that the Scriptures teach in their marvelous adaptation to every phase of character and every exigency of human experience. When, then, any among thoughtful evangelical Christians object to creeds, it is not because they believe so little and so apathetically, but because they believe so much and so intensely ; it is because they are persuaded that not only the truth, but the whole truth in its amazing unity in variety is necessary to the full and harmonious development of the life of Christ in the soul.

Thirdly, we insist upon the truth because in its last analysis it is personal, embracing truth of whatever realm. We mean by saying that truth is personal, to affirm that all truth must be traced back to its source in God in order to find for it a sufficient cause and voucher. Consider the moral law. It has no existence in the abstract. As abstract we may make it a theme of thought, but it has no real existence except in a moral being. Thought has no real existence unless there is a thinker ; love has no existence unless there is one who loves ; will has no existence unless there is one who wills. Now the moral law, involving the activity of intellect, sensibility, and will, while in a sense it is in man, is also above him ; he did not enact it ; he cannot annul it ; its rewards and its penalties

are independent of his will; its ought comes down upon him from an authority above him to which, willing or unwilling, he is subject. Nor can the source of this authority be found in any number of subjects—in humanity—it can be found only in God, Creator and Sovereign, in him whose image as a moral being man bears. In the moral law man stands face to face with the Father of our spirits; it is “the expression and witness of a living, personal relation and interaction between God and man.” We must go farther than this. Truth in the created material world is in its last analysis personal. Its laws are not self-enacted, nor are they self-operative. The basal efficiency in them, upon which they every moment depend is, to use the language of Dr. Hodge, “the ever-present and ever-active God.” They are exhibitions, object-lessons of his power and wisdom, of his love and righteousness. Though he abides in the eternal separateness of his incommunicable infinity, nevertheless we see him in all created persons and things. As created they possess a secondary reality of their own, but beneath it stands the Primal Reality, God.

Since truth is in this sense personal, is God revealed, Christian education regards it as a high duty, to neglect which would be a betrayal of its trust, to search for truth wherever it may be found. Holding aloft the Holy Scriptures as a light unto our feet and a lamp unto our path, we push our way cautiously but fearlessly into all realms of investigation in order to read “God’s thought after him.” Cautiously, we say; for we do not forget the presence and work of the “prince of this world.” He can speak God’s truth in a false sense, and in such relations as to make truth false-

hood, as he did to our Lord in the temptation. He can pervert the operation of beneficent laws, through the working of evil wills, so that they issue in misery and death. We recognize God as present in judgment as well as in mercy. We carefully discriminate voices, and distinguish between agents. We do not believe every spirit, knowing that many deceivers are entered into the world (1 John 4 : 1 ; 2 John 1 : 7). We listen, however, eagerly for the voice of God whether speaking by the direct monitions of his Spirit, by his providence in history, in the interpretations of nature which physical science makes, whenever, wheresoever or by whomsoever he speaks, and, assuring ourselves that it is the voice of God, hearing we obey. We are indifferent to no truth. All truth, provided it be assimilated by a devout soul, and translated into life, has its relation to the Christian life, the Christian character, making it larger, richer, more symmetrical, transforming man into the image of Him who created him. In this manner we demonstrate that narrowness of view and intellectual stagnation are impossible in a rightly conceived and properly conducted Christian school. In fact, we do not claim too much, nay, it is simple fidelity to the facts in the case, when we assert that no other school can have an open vision toward all truth ; and hence no other school can have the spirit and purpose to interpret fearlessly and faithfully the revelation which God has made of himself in his universe.

Two possible objections must here be briefly noted in conclusion.

It may be objected, first, that the ideal of education herein sketched cannot be realized in our public

schools. Granted. It may be suggested, also, that it cannot be realized in strictly technical schools and in universities properly so called, designed for those who have received their general disciplinary training and whose judgment is supposed to be measurably mature. Perhaps not; but waiving now a discussion of the possibility of realizing the ideal in technical schools and in universities properly so called, the case is plain as respects our public institutions. They are supported by general taxation; and in communities of mixed population our doctrine of religious liberty seems to forbid that pupils shall be surrounded by the religious influences which Christian schools permit and require. This is their serious defect and limitation. While insisting upon this let no one suppose that we intend to suggest that our public school system should be abandoned. We think, on the contrary, that it should be maintained against all foes. It is the best in its main features that in the present condition of things can be supported at the public cost.

Nevertheless we must not be blind to the deterioration of the system in the matter of religious influence from the ideal of its founders. We forget at our peril its serious defect and limitation; how serious, becomes clear if we accept in its full force the monitory words of the Father of his Country in his farewell address, where he says: "Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles." This impressive language takes on

a new emphasis of meaning when it is read in the light of the Prussian pedagogical maxim, the condensed expression of long and scientific observation, namely, "Whatever you would have appear in the nation's life you must put into the public schools." There are ominous portents in our national sky which only an ostrich optimism can treat lightly, but which thoughtful patriots will deeply ponder, not indeed in the spirit of a despairing pessimism, but with a quenchless hope that we shall be able by wise measures and strenuous exertions to avert impending dangers.

We have said that the service rendered to our country by our public schools is great and beneficent. This is due, first, to the fact that there are many earnest Christian teachers in them who, perhaps insensibly to themselves, are by their influence purifying these fountains of the nation's life; but it must be remembered that the presence of such teachers in the schools is an element foreign to the strictly secular idea of education, and the inestimable advantage thus arising must in justice be credited to the Christian idea of education. The value of the service rendered by the public schools is due, secondly, to the fact that as far as they teach truth in any department of human research, since all truth, as we have maintained, is God revealed, the effect of such teaching is salutary, even though not in an evangelical sense saving. More than this must be said: God is in his world, and is only seemingly conquered by evil. "By the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" guilty agents, guilty so far as and because they were acting in the full exercise of a free choice, delivered our Lord to condemnation and death; the hand of God was

immanent in the guilty human hands that nailed him to the cross, for thereby he spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them, triumphing over them in it (Col. 2 : 15). We exult exceedingly in the wisdom and power of God who girds the Cyrus of indifferentism to himself and his cause, boasting it may be that it does not know him, and who puts a hook in the nose of willful and determined opposition, so that in the serene confidence of faith we may say of those who set themselves against the Lord and against his Anointed, they mean it for evil, but he means it for good. Nevertheless we insist that this serene confidence of faith is not a *laissez faire* spirit. Those who hold this faith well grounded in intelligence know that the secret of the final victory on the world's great battlefield is entrusted to the church of regenerate souls, and to it only, and that through that church Christ is making his real conquests.

It is for this reason that Christian men who discern the signs of the times persistently refuse to abandon to alien control that most potent agency for determining the destiny of men for time and eternity, the education of the young. Perceiving clearly the defect at present inseparable from our public institutions, undeterred by the unintended sophistry of friends or the antagonism of avowed foes, they set their faces like a flint to establish and maintain distinctively Christian academies and colleges where our youth who are passing through the most critical period of life may be brought under the most favorable and powerful influences tending to the formation of pure, strong, noble, and Christlike characters. They are not unmindful of the difficulties of the task. It requires courage and

perseverance, self-sacrifice and, more than all, faith in the living God, to found and conduct such schools. But the end attained will be worth all that it will cost.

It may be objected, secondly, that the ideal herein sketched is clearly impracticable, and that it is useless to attempt to realize it. It is sufficient answer to this objection to call attention once more to the fact that this ideal is not new, but has been partially realized in experience, and has yielded the best results in education which this country has ever known. We may, however, make further reply by quoting a sentiment from Mr. Herbert Spencer, which carries with it the force of axiomatic truth. He is writing in defense of ideals in education pronounced to be in advance of the time. He supposes his critic to maintain that there can be no advantage in elaborating and recommending such methods; and disposes of the objection in the following masterly style: "We must contend," he says, "for the contrary. Just as in the case of political government, though pure rectitude may at present be impracticable, it is requisite to know where the right lies, so that the changes we may make may be toward the right instead of away from it." Precisely so. Fit ideals must ever be beyond the reach of present realization, and herein lies their value: they are ever beckoning incentives to a nobler future than any past can have known. In the matter of attainment in the Christian sphere it is emphatically true. Our Master is the world's incomparable idealist. From the beginning, and still always through the lagging centuries, he goes before his own people, calling them onward and upward; and yet not to fruitless aspirations and hopeless struggles. He assures them that nothing is impossible

to a rightly grounded faith, and by the girding of his Spirit in the inner man he strengthens them with his own omnipotence. It will be a day of decline in Christian civilization when the divine discontent of lofty ideals ceases to urge men on to higher and better things in all departments of human action.



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