

PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION¹

THE Catholic Education question has been much discussed from many points of view. Religion, politics, common sense, all have contributed their share. Philosophy also has been by no means neglected. Still it appears to me that the purely psychological aspect has not yet received adequate treatment, and although I do not pretend to be able to provide such treatment myself, yet I think it only fair that we should never point out a defect without first doing our best to remedy it. Therefore, having criticised, I boldly subject myself to criticism in turn, by putting forward some considerations which may serve at least as an essay (in the original sense of the word) on this all-important subject.

We have made large sacrifices in various countries for our convictions. In Ireland, naturally one of the most intellectual countries of Europe, the tempting bait of Knowledge was resolutely put aside when Faithfulness was at stake. In America and the British Empire we are paying for our opponents' schools as well as for our own. Moreover, we cheerfully deny ourselves many educational and social advantages which are open to those whose theories or consciences are easier than ours. For all these sacrifices we are bound to have solid reasons to give; to ourselves on account of our apparent loss; to our people, on account of the burden laid upon them; to our countrymen, on account of our apparent want of patriotism. Reasons, to be solid, must obviously go to the root of

¹ We reprint this Lecture, given some years ago in Cape Town by the Right Reverend Monsignor F. C. Kolbe, D.D., in the hope that it may be of interest at the present moment when Catholic Education has become once more a national topic.

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things; and therefore, as Education is the cultivation of human nature in all its extent, we must find our reasons in our conception of that human nature itself. In other words, our final answer to this question must be psychological.

Of course not all teachers, whether Catholic or Secular,² are philosophers, nor are they all conscious of the influences that have gone to mould their methods of teaching. But men are, on the whole, logical. Action in the long run follows the course of thought; or rather, thought foresees the course of action. The Thinkers of one generation are the forerunners of the Revolutions of the next,—partly by their instinctive sensitiveness for the coming storm, partly by their own reaction helping it on. Education, therefore, consciously or unconsciously, will infallibly follow the line of the prevalent psychology, whatever it is.

Now Catholic psychology and Secular psychology are diametrically opposed. It follows that Catholic education and Secular education must be fundamentally at variance.

The modern theory of Body and Soul (or absence of Soul) practically breaks up the unity of human nature, and thus religion is shelved into a corner as a thing apart. Religion is regarded as only one of the products of sense. Morality is evolved out of animal emotions. Almost all logic is induction from material particulars. Abstraction and generalisation are supposed to spring only from multiplied observation. Thus all activity tends more and more to begin from below. Their highest thinkers are men of physical science, and 'mere' philosophy is despised—a Huxley being on all points a greater authority than

² I do not propose to complicate the question by the consideration of Protestant religious education at all. In so far as it agrees with ours, we rejoice; in so far as it differs, we look on it as Secular.

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a St. Augustine. Even morality is taught from below, and the ethereal virtue of chastity is supposed to arise from a correct knowledge of physiology.

By putting together a few psychological notions, we can construct a kind of map of human nature, and at once see our agreements and differences. In so doing I shall to some extent depart from recognized scholastic terminology, using Secular terms as far as I can, so that (our agreement being fully shown) the immensity of our difference may be the more visible.

Beginning then from below, it is obvious that we have an organic existence of which we are only partly and dimly conscious, in what Bain calls our Systematic Sensations, or as the Scholastics put it, the threefold functions of the body, Nutritive, Augmentative, Reproductive. These issue in activities which we call Appetites and Passions. Thence we rise to the distinct Senses, whereby we gather knowledge with the threefold net of Sense-Memory, Perception, and Attention. Upon Sense are based the activities we call the Emotions. Then on the intellectual side of Feeling, partaking of both, we have the Æsthetic faculties, also threefold, in Memory, Perception, and Production. Upon this again are based the Art-Instincts of our nature. And finally rising fully into the region of Cognition and Conation (to use Hamilton's terms), we have the threefold powers of Rational Memory, Reason itself, and Moral Action. And this rational side of our being expresses itself in the activities which are called the Intellectual and Moral Appetites.

Here it would seem we might stop. Man is a rational animal, and we have planned both his animal and his rational functions. The accepted books of Secular Psychology certainly do not give a hint of anything beyond. Even up to this we do not agree with them, but beyond this there is no question of agreement or disagreement, for here we have reached

their limit. And of course Secular Educationalists follow suit. If they can train the body, the senses and the mind, and can give Culture and Character, they have reached the heights of their ambition. They have not only no other aim, but they are not even conscious that there is any other aim to be had. We may take it, therefore, that here their Education stops.

Well, it is just here that the chief part of Catholic Education begins.

That something vital has been omitted can easily be shown to every Catholic mind by the consideration of the virtues which correspond to the mental activities we have so far laid down. The Passions are ruled by Temperance, the Emotions by Fortitude, the Intellectual and Moral Appetites by Prudence and Justice. These are the four cardinal virtues which go to perfect humanity. So far the Educationalist is right; if his education up to this mark is perfect and has a perfect result, he will have produced a perfect man. This however, does not satisfy the Catholic. Not because we do not aim at perfect humanity, but because we know that humanity cannot become perfectly human without first becoming divine. In other words, it is only in the light of the Theological virtues that the Cardinal virtues can have their perfect work. Every Catholic therefore will at once ask, what in our scheme corresponds to the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity? This question puts its finger on the main point at issue. Secular Psychology, and therefore Secular Education, practically ignores the whole *spiritual* side of humanity.

Therefore, to complete our scheme—above Rational Memory, which is mainly concerned with the orderly conservation of principles, connected but detailed, there is the Spiritual Memory which may almost be defined as the continuous conscious life of the mind—a power which never so fully finds its feet amid the

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currents of this world as in the life of 'recollection' in the presence of God. Above the Reason, which is mainly occupied in comparing and arranging things from below, there is the Understanding or Intellect which looks into the heart of things from above. And above the mere rational aspect of moral action, towers the spiritual Will, which never finds the fulness of its freedom except in the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free. Memory is the home of Hope; Understanding of Faith; Will, of Charity. And upon this the highest portion of our soul are based those activities which form our strongest and most absorbing Appetites, Instincts, Emotions, Passions, all in one, which we may sum up in one name as the Godward Tendency.

Let us be fully understood. Although this spiritual aspect of our nature finds its fullest expression in Religion, that does not mean to say that it is absent when Religion is absent. We *are* spiritual beings, whether we like it or not; and Secular Education ignores the fact.

It is the more important to remember this in matters of elementary education, because the spiritual faculties seem to awake before the rational. It is a long time before the child can reason properly, but it is marvellous how soon he shows signs of spiritual insight. By the lovingkindness of God, a child knows how to believe and hope and love before he knows how to sin. And under the influence of grace many of the Saints have reached a high level of spiritual intelligence long before their rational powers had any chance of displaying themselves. Ruskin has said, 'Childhood often holds a truth with its feeble fingers, which the grasp of manhood cannot retain—which it is the pride of utmost age to recover.' And we cannot forget that our Blessed Lord thanked His Heavenly Father because things hidden from the wise and

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prudent, and the secular, had been revealed unto babes. Therefore already in the Infant School we begin from above as much as from below. Like everybody else, we give our children games to train the body, Kindergarten exercises with reading and writing to train the sense and art faculties, arithmetic to train the reason. To this we also add the catechism, that the earliest use of reason may go towards Almighty God. Yet teaching catechism is not teaching religion, as some people suppose. It is only teaching religious knowledge, which is a very different thing. What, then, do we do for the spiritual training of childhood? We teach them to live lives of prayer. Intercourse with God and with the world of grace is interwoven with all the actions of their school life, as it ought to be also in their own homes. Children take to prayer as easily as ducklings to water. The possibilities of the higher life in their innocent little souls would astonish those who have never seen the experiment properly tried.

Now this result cannot be attained by an occasional half hour's class. It demands an all-embracing atmosphere, not a perfunctory whiff now and then. For this reason our education is much in the hands of religious orders—bodies of men and women who, having consecrated themselves to God, bear about with them a perpetual odour of sacrifice. And there is a special further appropriateness here. In the religious life, the threefold virtue of Hope, Faith and Charity—and therefore the whole spiritual portion of the soul—is perfected by the threefold virtue and vow of Poverty, Obedience and Chastity. Now let it be observed that these are just the essential virtues of childhood. The vows of the nun are in all their extent the strict obligations of the child; and it is immaterial whether we say that the nun must be as poor and obedient and chaste as a child, or that the child must be as chaste

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and obedient and poor as a nun. That we must become like little children in order to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, reaches both ways; it tells us that the spiritual are childlike, and also that children are spiritual. Thus it is our custom to provide our children with a *kindred* atmosphere for their early growth. They are spiritual creatures, and we cherish above all things their spiritual life. Wordsworth was not merely a poet when he saw the 'soul's immensity' through the child's 'exterior semblance.' 'Shades of the prison house begin to close' upon our little ones quite soon enough, without secular education coming to bang the door of that prison upon them before the time.

Some people may think that the flowery land of childhood is leading me to indulge in fancy; so let me hasten to other considerations. As a proof and a consequence of modern neglect of spirituality, I would instance the ever increasing scorn of the 'unintellectual.' Such scorn is wholly unjustified, for secular education does not do more than put a polish on humanity, sometimes only a veneer. We frequently see quite uneducated men much sounder in their judgments than others of most brilliant parts; and surely soundness of judgment is as intellectual a quality as knowledge of the differential calculus. We must never forget St. Thomas's golden distinction: '*Sapientia importat quamdam rectitudinem iudicii secundum rationes divinas. Rectitudo autem, iudicii potest contingere dupliciter: uno modo, secundum perfectum usum rationis; alio modo, propter connaturalitatem quamdam ad ea de quibus jam est iudicandum.*' (IIa. IIæ q. xlv, a. 2). That is to say, in matters of religion, virtue, art, and even science, a man can establish a kinship between his soul and the things themselves, and thus attain to a power of judgment quite equal to that of many a man who has

reached his level by mere study. To put it a little unphilosophically, a good heart will often make a man as intellectual as a good head. St. Thomas's distinction ought to be engraved in letters of gold on the walls of every College to give consolation to those students whose talents are not equal to their virtues. The College examination room does not tell everything, and in the world's big examination, in which moral and intellectual attainments are more or less weighed together, the 'dull' student very often deservedly comes out top in the end.

To give the matter a practical turn towards Education: suppose two teachers apply for a post, one of whom has splendid certificates, but, without openly violating morality, is utterly careless of religious duties, while the other has barely passed his examinations, but is animated with sterling piety, which should we choose? The Secular Board would not have the slightest hesitation; nor should we. They would choose the former; we should choose the latter. And what is more, our choice would be made on intellectual grounds.

I will be so bold as to affirm that saying the Rosary is a higher intellectual occupation than reading Shakespeare. There are, of course, different ways of saying the Rosary; there are also different ways of reading Shakespeare. What I mean is that the possibilities of the Rosary are higher in intellectual results than the possibilities of Shakespeare. I have studied a good deal; but when I meet a humble lay-brother who says the Rosary better than I do, I reverence him, without any mock-modesty, as my intellectual superior. I might teach him a little in this life; he will be able to teach me much in the next. So in the same way we do not hesitate to say that a little child whose spirit communes with God, lives on a higher intellectual plane than any Huxley or Haeckel in the

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world. This truth impresses itself sublimely on the world when a St. Teresa, without any of what the world calls education, is raised by the Church to a position alongside of the great Doctors of Theology. These are religious truths and experiences, it may be said, not philosophical. It may be so, but the Catholic refuses to draw any distinctive line between truth and truth, and persists in acting 'as if his religion were really true.'

It is upon considerations such as these that we base our scheme of Higher Education as well. A reference to the appended table will show what position we assign to the Physical Sciences, to the Arts of Culture, to the Abstract Sciences, Logic, Mental and Moral Philosophy, Theology and Religion, and how we endeavour to evoke enthusiasm, ingenuity, originality, character, and (if possible) sanctity, which embraces them all. In fact, this column of the table is simply a sketch of a Catholic University. Let a man, of course, specialise in any direction he likes, but let him remember the essential relations of things and not arrogate to himself the results of the higher branches while he chooses the lower. A knowledge of Biology does not constitute a man a theologian, any more than it makes him an art-critic. So long, however, as he spiritualises whatever he specialises, he will be second to none, for after all he must never forget that the highest results of education are always attainable *per viam connaturalitatis*.

A living picture of such an *Universitas* may be taken from ideal representatives of the various branches of education in the Golden Age of Catholic Culture. It will be noted how, as a matter of history, the whole ideal received its impulse from the spiritual region above—in which St. Francis represents the *viam connaturalitatis*, and St. Dominic the *perfectum usum rationis*. We have the twin philosopher-theologians

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St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas—the Seraphic and the Angelic. In the region of Art, we have Dante, the most spiritual poet the world has ever seen; Giotto, the most spiritual architect; Fra Angelico, the most spiritual painter. In Physical Science, no names are greater than those of Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon—friars of the same two Orders. And to represent Athletics, we have St. Louis of France, most spiritual of warriors, the knight *sans peur et sans reproche*. A very similar list might easily be compiled from the times of the refflorescence of Catholic education under St. Ignatius Loyola, himself an uneducated soldier, whose *connaturalitas* carried him to the very summits of wisdom and learning. And indeed, whenever and wherever Catholic education has had free course, we need never be ashamed of the completeness and perfection of our record.

It may be said that these are ideals, and indeed that the whole scheme is somewhat visionary. The Golden Age will not return. Granted; but is not the whole Christian life a striving after unattained ideals? We do not count ourselves to have apprehended, but one thing we do; forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth ourselves to those that are before, we press towards the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation. Who knows when the touch of God may in some special degree wake up the ideal in actuality? It is for us to keep the way open before Him. Throughout the ages, there is no motto that the Catholic Church has been more careful to observe than this—Thou shalt not shut the door upon any of the ideals of humanity.

Referring once more to our table, we may show its completeness and symmetry by one or two further considerations. Of course, we are composed of only two principles, the material and the immaterial, of which the second is the whole *form* and more than

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the form of the first. But when St. Paul wants to pronounce his most emphatic and all-round blessing, he divides us into *three* :—‘ May the God of peace sanctify you in all things ; that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ’ (I Thess. v. 23). The same thought reveals to us what a fulness of meaning there is in the first verse of the Magnificat. Remembering that in Mary the Word Incarnate was bodily present, we may understand her to say, ‘ My *soul* doth magnify the Lord—all its powers, nutritive, augmentative and reproductive, with their passions ; all its sensibilities and emotions ; all its instincts, ideas and desires ; all, in *every* sense of the word, magnify the Lord on earth ; and then, springing up with glorious freedom into the very Bosom of the Godhead, my *spirit* hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. ’ We may observe also the threefold division running through the whole of the third column. We know that we are the image of the One God in Three Persons, by reason of our Memory, Understanding and Will—the Memory (the *continuity* of the soul’s life) generating the activity of the Understanding, and the Will proceeding from their interaction. We now see that this image of God casts its shadow all the way down through the various stages of the soul, even the body having a kind of memory and understanding and will of its own. And yet in our education they want us to thrust God into a corner apart. We indignantly refuse. We have only one life, God-marked throughout. We have not pigeon-hole souls, and we will not have a pigeon-hole education.

An anxious question occurs, Do we lose by it? Well, do we lose by any sacrifice? If you give something to the poor, you are so much out of pocket ; but is it a loss? As a rule, generosity is wisdom even for this world, as honesty is the best policy ; but here and

Man.	Psychological Grades.	Analysis of the Soul.	Virtues perfecting the Soul.	Elementary Education.	Higher Education.	Ideals of the Golden Age.
Spirit..... Soul..... Body.....	Intuition.	[Tendency Godward.] — Memory, Understanding, Will.	Faith, Hope, Charity.	Prayer.	[Sanctity.] — Religion.	St. Francis and St. Dominic.
	Cognition and Conation.	[Intellectual & Moral Appetites] — Rational Memory, Reason, Moral Action.	Prudence and Justice.	Catechism, Arithmetic.	[Originality.] [Character.] — Theology. Mental and Moral Philosophy. Logic and Abstract Sciences.	St. Bona- venture and St. Thomas.
	Feeling.	[Artistic Instincts.] — Æsthetic Memory, Æsth. Per- ception, Æsth. Production.		Writing, Kinder- garten.	[Ingenuity.] — Arts and Accomplishments, Literature, Culture.	Dante, Giotto, Fra Angelico.
	Sense.	[Emotions.] — Sense Memory, Perception, Attention.	Fortitude.	Reading, Kinder- garten.	[Enthusiasm.] — Physical Science.	Albertus Magnus, and Roger Bacon.
	Organism.	[Appetites and Passions.] — Nutritive, Augmentative, Reproductive.	Temper- ance.	Games.	Athletics.	St. Louis.

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there we find a man who is the richer for devoting all his energies to getting and keeping. So, as a rule, developing the spiritual faculties mainly has a beneficial effect on the mind in all its extent, but certainly you will find some students beating ours in the physical sciences or excelling them in culture, simply because they have devoted all their time and energy to such attainments. If this is a loss it is one we may well bear. Over-development of muscle is a deformity; much more so is over-development of sense observation or aesthetic instinct. We may lose now and then in a partial test, as we should lose in prize-fighting; but we certainly shall not lose in the wide test of humanity, if we are faithful to our principles—nor shall we lose in the great Final Examination which the whole human race must undergo before the Throne of God.

Here, then, we may stop and summarise. Our complaint against Secular Education is that it is partial and defective. If 'Council School' training be all—as for thousands of children it is—it barely does more than give us cultivated animals. If Culture be the limit and the summit, it transforms itself even in our grasp, and becomes an object of ridicule instead of reverence. Even if Thought be aimed at merely for its own sake, it always wastes itself away in the wilderness of doubt.

We complain, moreover, that the highest and strongest passion of the soul—the Godward Tendency—the satisfaction of which constitutes the chief bliss of Heaven, and the frustration of which the chief misery of Hell, is completely ignored and therefore undirected, leading the soul practically to as dark an idolatry as any Paganism the world has seen. Undirected energies mean spoiled characters. It has been well said that one great aim of education should be to let no Giotto be lost among the shepherd boys—

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Secular Education is losing thousands of spiritual Giottos to the human race.

Or, to put it in metaphor—do you bury a seed deep because hereafter its roots must go deep? Must we therefore altogether immerse the child's soul in matter, because many of its energies are to be fed from below? Not so: our growth is from near the surface, and strikes up and down simultaneously. Not only must the *earth* bud forth—the *heavens* must also drop down dew.

Yet we are reluctant to close the discussion without some qualifying consideration. Does all this mean that we pour unmitigated scorn on the prevalent mode of education? Certainly not. To the adherents of Secular Education we say: 'You have a certain theory, and a method in accord with it; you yourselves, as God made you, are better than your theory; therefore, since you are not in conscious opposition, you often achieve results better than your method. But if we with our theory were to adopt your method, we should establish in our souls a conscious inconsistency which would eventually spoil both our religion and the best results of our education. Act by all means as you think, but leave us free to act as we think. It is a pity we do not all think alike; but since we do not, and since all are agreed that thought should be free, we ought at least not to be hampered in trying to act logically in accordance with our thoughts.'

F. C. KOLBE.