

WISDOM IN EDUCATION

SOME weeks ago in two articles in *The Tablet*, entitled: "Education and Technique", J. B. Sandeman, O.S.B., described the rejection by the 1944 Education Act of the idea of liberal education and asked what the Wisdom of Christ's Church has to say and do at this time. He epitomised the historical facts thus: "In 1870 we abolished God, or at least reduced him to the rank of an idea . . . And now we are engaged in the abolition of man, for he too, in his turn, is to be sacrificed to something lower than himself, to the exigencies of technique".

The State rejects liberal education because it only understands it as a pagan thing, as the practice of traditions, which, rising from the noble but pagan ideal, "mens sana in corpore sano", have become corrupt and moribund, lacking the principle of life; it rejects a "classical education" because it knows no reason for its existence. When the Holy Spirit ceased to pour the water of life through Christ's Church into our schools, when in fact, "God was abolished, or at least, reduced to the rank of an idea", the virtue went out of our schools, the virtue went out of liberal education. When the study of the classics became an end in itself, instead of being part of the means and methods of training minds to logical and later to theological thought, in fact when man was abolished or at least "in his turn sacrificed to something lower than himself, to the exigencies of technique", the idea of a classical education came into disrepute. But the Church lives still in Europe. It may once again pour the waters of life into our European culture, and its true Catholic tradition may live again in our schools. The Church, if it will, can show the way back to the Christian idea of a truly liberal education, as Cardinal Newman saw it, by re-creating an education which treats man as if he is in fact the creature that scholastic theology declares him to be, the creature in need of his creator, man in need of Christ. The child will be treated once again as possessing an immortal soul whose salvation is the first consideration; a soul with the intellectual faculties of memory, reason and will, a soul primarily differentiated from purely animal creatures by the faculty of reason.

Now it is at the period when the secular world is rejecting even the reflection of the Church's wisdom which it possessed in the European tradition of humanism and its ideas of a liberal education, that the Church, the *Ecclesia docens*, should return to her own springs of wisdom, her own depths of riches, and astonish the world with the wisdom which produces those judgments "desiderabilia super aurum, et lapidem pretiosum multum; et dulciora super mel et favum".

How can this be done? Are we not tied, hand and foot? Is there not the School Certificate, set and examined by external secular authorities? Is there not the 1944 Education Act confining and directing our every step? That would be an incorrect picture, less than half the truth. The other side of the picture is that of detailed and factual day-to-day experience, the experience of directions and orders, countermanded as soon as given, of avowed ignorance of what is immediately or ultimately likely or desirable in the administration of the 1944 Education Act. No one seems to know for instance whether the recommendations of the Norwood Report in regard to the School Certificate are to be implemented or not. This is the opportunity for Catholic Schools to create a syllabus and a reputation of their own in a pagan world which is now rejecting even the natural law which previously formed the basis for a liberal education common to Church and state. The official educational mind at Whitehall is divided in a chaos of conflicting specialist and general ideas. They want technicians; and they want culture. But they have forgotten that technician originally meant craftsman, and that culture meant the cultivation or training of the mind. If this muddle and vagueness is the opportunity for dictators in the interpretations and directions of the executive, it is also the opportunity for the Church who possesses all wisdom and knows what her children need. It is the opportunity to provide again a wholly Christian education, Christian in height and depth and breadth, displaying in all its parts the wisdom which resides in the Church of Christ, himself the teacher and king of all truth.

That Catholic schools in England had reached the limit of the possibilities of compromise with secular authority stood more than half acknowledged by the setting up by the Conference of Catholic Colleges of a committee to work out a Catholic syllabus based on ideas outlined by Fr. Boyle, S.J., of Beaumont College. Behind this action lay the dissatisfaction of many Catholic teachers and their belief that the scheme of syllabuses to which they were compelled to adhere often implicitly denied the truths which they taught in the period of Religious Instruction. Instead of being able to present their pupils with a clear scheme of knowledge, comprehended by the Faith taught in the R.I. period, instead of being able to show them an array of sciences crowned with the science of theology and instead of being able to train their minds in the systematic fashion indicated by the old trivium of Grammar, Rhetoric and Logic, they had to teach a set of secular subjects and theories of modern science, at the best of small importance, at the worst of doubtful truth and conflicting with accepted Christian

tradition. This secular education has in fact become a set of compartments for facts, disconnected from each other and, when viewed from the standpoint of Christian faith, presenting an appearance of chaos and disintegration which could hardly help a child to save its own soul or the souls of others. And most of these teachers were, and are still very largely, only trained to give this second kind of education; they would find it hard, if not impossible, suddenly to start giving children an intellectually integrated Catholic education. They have never been asked to consider what Christian theology would logically demand to be taught, nor how it should be taught.

All that our Catholic teachers can do in the periods of secular instruction is to keep their own faith pure and intact, and by their personalities, by the personality of Christ formed in them, to infuse Christian principles into their manner of teaching, and so to treat the matter, that it bears some appearance of a Christian lesson. This is much. And every good Catholic teacher does much in this way. Assuredly the man is more than the matter, the teacher more than the syllabus. But this is not a position which is permanently tenable. And it is just in this situation that Dom Sandeman aptly describes the Church as being for the child and teacher, not so much the ark of salvation as a plank to which we cling for our lives amidst the threatening and stormy waves of paganism.

Month after month the Holy Father urges us to positive action as witness to and product of our Faith. He is reported as having said, on June 10th, to some 5,000 members of the Youth Section of Italian Catholic Action: "Our time appreciates only men of strong, secure convictions . . . We who possess the pure Truth, the Truth which comes from God, should cherish a holy pride in our Faith and be determined to profess and defend it with unshakable constancy. A Christian who believes must embrace firmly all the articles of revealed dogma, and all the truths which necessarily derive from dogma itself, and therefore too, in a special way, the fundamental principles on which rest the structure of every wholesome social doctrine . . . Such fundamental principles oblige in conscience all Catholics, not one of whom may lawfully make compromises with systems and tendencies which contradict those same principles, or against which the Church has set the faithful on their guard".

Now then is surely the time and opportunity to recreate a Catholic syllabus based on the teachings of theology, and the needs of the Christian man who wishes to use his body and soul to the greater glory of God. We should not wait upon the Norwood Re-

port to see whether it is to be implemented and we are thus to have permission to give a Christian education. We could draw up the syllabus during this period of uncertainty, and then petition the Examining Boards to conduct the examination of Catholic Schools on this syllabus. We could at the same time undertake a parallel task in our Training Colleges and Houses of Study⁽¹⁾ from which proceed those who educate our future Catholic bishops, priests and laity. We ought now to try to gain the reputation for sound learning which Catholic schools have so often enjoyed in a unique fashion in Europe.

Now indeed is the time to cease from clinging to the Faith, as Dom Sandeman says, as if it were "a plank to be clutched in the shipwreck", crying, "we will be true to thee till death". As members of Christ's Mystical Body we might build again in the twentieth century that House of Wisdom with its seven pillars. Let us at least raise again the first three pillars, the mediaeval trivium, the foundation of a truly liberal education, the trinity of subjects which, using the civilisation into which Christ was born and the language of the Roman Empire, the language of the Church, trained the mind in clear and Christian thought. Our Catholic education should, too, include some teaching of the arts for making the material necessities of life. Training in these arts was not included in the mediaeval school curriculum since it was simply a necessary and accepted part of the childhood and family life of most people. Though education is primarily of the mind, the mind has to be maintained in the body. It seems almost ludicrous to have to point out the necessity of learning crafts concerned with producing food, clothing or shelter; but in our age of specialisation the body is no longer maintained as the temple of the Holy Spirit, nor is the mind cultivated as the highest power of the soul, brother-soul of the incarnate wisdom and love of God. In our teaching we must remember that the body was once immortal and is destined once again to be immortal in glory, that the mind, made in the image of God's mind, once conversed with him and is destined once again to see him in Heaven. We must return to a simple Christian training of mind and body.

There is little space for detail. Perhaps the most important change must be made in secondary education. Between eleven and fifteen or sixteen the child's mind is growing fast; the intellect has to be trained in clear thought and the whole mind educated to an intellectual comprehension of the faith. In the mediaeval

(1) Whether this is to be done through a closer co-operation with, or absorption by, Universities or in combination with established Catholic colleges at Oxford and Cambridge and Provincial Universities has yet to be settled.

trivium are contained the essentials of any training of the mind. Grammar teaches the correct use of words; Rhetoric teaches how to use them most aptly to express and describe ideas and objects; logic teaches the precise use of language to represent reasonable ideas and their relationship with one another. Latin is the easiest language in which to give this training. Latin is the language of the Church and of the Western liturgy. Latin is an international Catholic language. Latin is the language of the Roman Empire and gives the key to the understanding of a world which craved for the truth and found it in Christ, found it in the writings of the New Testament and the Early Fathers. The liturgy, the Church's year, history, science, philosophy, poetry, music, plastic art, may all be studied as they reveal the faith, the infinite riches of the Truth, which is Christ, rather than simply for their sake as separate "subjects". Lastly, every child should learn one craft thoroughly; this may be done, according to circumstances either through teachers who follow the crafts in their spare time, through teachers specially qualified to teach them, through help from a local technical school, or through some system of apprenticeship. Part of the time usually given to organised games would be better spent in learning to weave, spin, sew, make furniture, build in brick or stone, grow vegetables or cereals; produce milk or eggs, rear animals or produce wool or flax. There are very few schools which could not transfer some of the energy and materials expended on organised games to furthering a few of the many elementary crafts. And possibly the children would benefit as a whole from playing games in a spirit of play and recreation rather than of the seriousness and competition which in many schools are given to them for several hours a day.

The whole burden of the Spens Report on Secondary Education was its disintegration through the variety of subjects taught in water-tight compartments. The report spoke vaguely of the necessity of philosophy and religion; finally in its desire to find a humanistic solution acceptable to all it recommended the integrating of secondary education round the English Subjects. Any teacher will recognise its failure to speak logically of its aims or to produce an educational plan which he could follow with any hope of integrating the subjects he teaches into a whole, articulated body of knowledge. But Catholics do know a real principle of integration; they know that all truth is one. They have a theology nearly 2,000 years old. They have indeed Christ from whose lips came forth the wisdom and love of God incarnate in human words, and in the infallible teaching of the Church they have the continued incarnation of that wisdom. Shall we not then use it as well as boast of

it? Let us again deliberately educate children to be soldiers of Christ who will go forth to save the souls of others. If we will really be true to Christ till death we must say: "We will go forth and teach Thee to all nations".

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PSYCHOTHERAPY AND ETHICS:

A POSTSCRIPT

THE present writer had already sent to the printer his reflections on Psychotherapy and Ethics⁽¹⁾ before the opportunity came to him of reading Dr. J. C. Flugel's recent book⁽²⁾ on the same subject. Dr. Flugel's approach is, naturally enough, very different from our own. He writes as a psychologist pure and simple, and with a minimum (at least in intention) of extra-psychological pre-suppositions. He is moreover a convinced and orthodox—though also a "progressive" and by no means uncritical—Freudian; but he is unusually open to interests and considerations outside his own professional province and writes with an ease and urbanity uncommon to his kind. Last but not least, he is gifted with a quality which, as has often been remarked, seems to be singularly rare (but, one might have thought, singularly necessary) among psychologists—a keen sense of humour.

The great value and importance of Dr. Flugel's book lies in the fact that it presents us with a remarkably candid, thorough and comprehensive treatment, from a psychoanalyst's own viewpoint, of the subject which has recently engaged our own attention. In certain important matters his conclusions strikingly anticipate and confirm our own. In particular we would draw attention to the frankness with which he dismisses the contention that psychotherapy, as a "pure science", can confine its attention to the *means* of human conduct and disregard consideration of the ends and values which are the province of ethics (pp. 12 ff., 30 ff.) Indeed it is precisely because he believes that the analytical exploration of psychological means modifies our apprehension of these ends and values that he has written and published the book at all; in the belief, that is to say, that from psychoanalysis (notwithstanding its many candidly recognised insufficiencies) many lessons may be learned "concerning the general nature of human morality

(1) BLACKFRIARS, August, 1945, pp. 287 ff.

(2) *Man, Morals and Society: A Psycho-analytical Study*, by J. C. Flugel, B.A., D.Sc. (London: Duckworth; 21s.).