

## EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

MODERN EDUCATION. A prevailing tendency to overload the School Curriculum receives attention in the August IRISH ROSARY. In these days an extensive knowledge of as many subjects as possible seems to be preferred to an intensive knowledge of a few; a smattering is considered more important than a grip; it is too often forgotten that education is not so much "putting knowledge in" as "drawing faculties out." Thus the Editor:

We have found considerable interest in a statement on education that "teachers are to furnish children with opportunities for self-activity and creative work." For it seems to us that State education is too often a league against education—by choking opportunities for self-activity and creative work; and therefore choking self-development and mental development which are the primary requisites for the primary purpose of education—individual perfection. For in spite of all the talk about education "as not putting knowledge in but drawing faculties out," State education seems to miss profoundly the meaning of that maxim. For, first, there is the tendency to imagine that the more subjects a child is taught, the better; and there is therefore the constant addition of new subjects as well as the amplification of old subjects. But the effect of this multiplication of subjects on children generally is disastrous. For it simply chokes his "opportunities for self-activity and creative work" by squeezing into him as much compressed knowledge as he can hold short of bursting—without the least reflection whether he can masticate or swallow or turn it into the nourishment of mind or body for "self-activity and creative work." The result is calamitous. The clever boy suffers a surfeit and develops a chronic disgust of knowledge. He will lose all taste for study if he ever had it and face the world with a swelled head—which is far worse than an empty head, because being already full of frothy fatuity there is no room for mental fecundity. No wonder schoolmasters are groaning under the bureaucratic pedantry and experimental faddism of State education: and longing wistfully for a return to the good old hedge-school days when there was no State education—as to-day—in Ireland and every schoolmaster did what seemed right in his own eyes. One can make one's own Herbert Spencer's statement that education "is a preparation for complete living." But "complete living" implies individual perfection with regard to body and soul, the self-development of one's physical, mental

and moral nature. And the interdependence of mind, soul and body gives the development of one's physical nature an importance beyond what it seems at first sight to deserve.

There can be little doubt, however, that this failure of method in modern State education has still deeper roots. It is largely a result of that "pedagogic naturalism" which the Holy Father vigorously condemned in his *Christian Education of Youth*. In another Dominican publication, *THE HOMILETIC AND PASTORAL REVIEW* for August, there appears an important article on this topic calling attention to a valuable essay by Geoffrey O'Connell, Ph.D., recently published in book form under the title *Naturalism in American Education*. It is Dr. O'Connell's thesis that "naturalistic education has failed. Christian education continues to improve. The former was based on a false philosophy of life. The latter has the only sound viewpoint concerning man and life." The writer of the aforementioned article in our esteemed contemporary maintains that

Dr. O'Connell is not alone in this verdict. Certain leaders in education admit fundamental failure in regard to the achievement in education during the last twenty years. This has been a common indictment for some time. Bode, writing of the field of education, tells us that "there appears to be a growing sense that something is lacking. The average man is more sensitive than before to the need of some kind of chart or compass by which to shape his course." The Christian critic will find the root-cause of the failure in the false, anti-Christian philosophy back of educational theory. We must develop a correct philosophy of education; without that, education will continue to lead to confusion and worse . . . .

The apostles of naturalism seems to be oblivious of the chaos. In their philosophy there is no tragedy in the fact that our generation is fast losing religion and God. They boast that "the days of Christian cultural solidarity in America are over." They hold out to the youth of America and the youth of the world the futile promise of a new social order which they themselves may build in the here and now. "This," writes Dr. O'Connell, "is the way out of the world crisis proposed by the philosophy of scientific naturalism which American youth are being taught by many American educators. This solution is an agreement, so far as its anti-Christian character is concerned, with the other theories which naturalism has originated these many years in the world at large" . . . .

Christianity has a solution, the only real solution of the present

crisis. It lies in the acceptance of the Christian philosophy of life and education. That conception is based upon an organic conception of God, man, and life. Nowhere are the principles of that philosophy more clearly and succinctly stated than in the Pastoral Letter of the American Hierarchy of 1919. A knowledge of these simple principles enables a Christian educator to evaluate the attitudes, the theories, the tendencies of naturalistic education. We take the liberty of presenting the five principles of Catholic Education in a much abbreviated form.

(1) The right of the child to receive education and the correlative duty of providing it are established on the fact that man has a soul created by God and endowed with capacities which need to be developed for the good of the individual and the good of society. In its highest meaning, therefore, education is a co-operation by human agencies with the Creator for the attainment of His purpose in regard to the individual who is to be educated and in regard to the social order of which he is a member.

(2) Since the child is endowed with physical, intellectual and moral capacities, all these must be developed harmoniously. The exclusion of moral training from the educative process is more dangerous in proportion to the thoroughness with which the intellectual powers are developed, because it gives the impression that morality is of little importance, and thus sends the pupil into life with a false idea which is not easily corrected.

(3) Since the duties we owe our Creator take precedence of all other duties, moral training must accord the first place to religion, that is, to the knowledge of God and His law, and must cultivate a spirit of obedience to His commands. The performance, sincere and complete, of religious duties, ensures the fulfilment of other obligations.

(4) Moral and religious training is most efficacious when it is joined with instruction in other kinds of knowledge. It should so permeate these that its influence will be felt in every circumstance of life, and be strengthened as the mind advances to a fuller acquaintance with nature and a riper experience with the realities of human existence.

(5) An education that unites intellectual, moral and religious elements is the best training for citizenship. It inculcates the necessary foundations of civic virtue—more necessary where, as in a democracy, the citizen, enjoying a larger freedom, has a greater obligation to govern himself. We are convinced that, as religion and morality are essential to right living and to the public welfare, both should be included in the work of education.

Our own acquaintance with Catholic schools does not

convince us that these principles are entirely accepted in practice; but in most cases where this is the case the real obstruction comes from parents who insist upon public examinations for their children and thus foster that largely false and "naturalistic pedagogy" against which the Holy Father uttered his solemn warning.

But there is perhaps a final word to be said, and it has been said in an excellent article by Father B. Perquin, O.P., printed in the July issue of *THE CATHOLIC TIMES OF SOUTH AFRICA*. The article in question is the third of a series on *Catholic Action*. We quote a passage which needs no further comment:

It is clear that when we examine the relationship between Catholic Action and Catholic Education we are primarily concerned with the teachers. Teachers have a great influence on their pupils by reason of their close contact with them and also by the knowledge, religious or secular, which they impart to them in the course of their lectures. Besides, Catholic education is not a question of mere knowledge; it is the whole atmosphere of the school, the attitude of the teachers towards the Church, their outlook on life, the religious practices of the children, that are of more formative value than the actual knowledge given them by the teachers.

Good teachers do not merely give information, or prepare for examinations; they form or reform characters, training them, fostering virtue and suppressing vice, and all this is done in accordance with the teaching and example of Christ. They have to remember that there can be no true education which is not wholly directed to man's last end . . .

MARY'S MEDIATION. "It is our misfortune in these days to have forgotten very much of the ancient devotion to our blessed Lady . . . the scriptural, rational and theological grounds on which it is based. Happily we are now recovering two doctrines of great importance, the Mystical Body of Christ and the Universal Mediation of Our Blessed Lady. Both these will loom large in the near future for they furnish, under God's providence, just that weapon which is required to meet the anti-God campaign of our times." So Dom Ambrose Agius opens, in *THE DOWNSIDE REVIEW*, a remarkable article entitled *The Universal Mediation of Our Lady: A Return to Reality*. These opening words, as well as the subtitle, are challenging; for many, even among

devout Catholics, regard the doctrine of Our Lady's universal mediation and co-redemption as an ultra-modern pietistic aberration. Perhaps this is due in some measure to the fact that the doctrine is commonly explained exclusively in terms of necessarily problematical—and sometimes question-begging—principles of *merit*, which may engender a not unhealthy—if misplaced—suspicion that the doctrine is somehow derogatory to the mediation and merits of Christ. Dom Agius'

point is that Mary's universal mediation does not depend upon her "contributing to the *price* of Redemption," with the emphasis on *price*. It has to be carried further back than that—just as Eve's co-operation depended not on the amount of her own guilt but on the nature of her instigation and its consequences, so Our Lady's co-operation depended not on her personal merit, but on the nature of her association with the Redeemer.

The fundamentum of Mary's universal mediation is the idea and design of Almighty God for our Redemption. So that to prove such mediation it is not necessary to prove that Mary merited it. That is a thing an opponent might deny. For example, however holy and meritorious we prove Mary to be, we can never *prove* that she was strictly *worthy* to be the Mother of God.

But we can prove from the naked text of the New Testament what the Mystical Body of Christ means and our incorporation into Christ, and also on what terms the offer of maternity was made to Mary, discussed and accepted by her.

Now this acceptance and its implement by Mary establishes the universality of her mediation, apart from the degree of her personal merit.

Whatever, then, be the truth of Our Lady's actual "handling" of graces, her distinctive mediation, Dom Agius argues, differs not only in degree but in kind from the mediation of the saints. It arises from the fact that the redeemed are incorporated into the "Mary-moulded" Christ. This teaching is shown to be far more in line with Scripture, Tradition and some recent Encyclicals than much of the more recent legalistic speculation.—An article which we warmly recommend not only to the many who are bewildered and shocked by less worthy presentations of the doctrine, but to all who do not fully appreciate the motherhood in Mary, nor, consequently, the real basis of the Church's filial and grateful devotion to her.

U.S.S.R. The newer trials of the Church in Spain, Germany, Mexico, China, Italy—and ominous events still nearer home—may distract our thoughts and prayers from Soviet Russia and from the needs of the Russian Church both at “home” and in exile. But periodicals continue to publish interesting information. A particularly moving account of the religious renaissance in Russia, and of the corresponding renewal of persecution that it has aroused, appeared from the pen of Hélène Iswolsky in the July *ESPRIT*:

An outstanding feature of the renascent religious life in Russia is *poverty*. All the sumptuousness of the Orthodox rite has disappeared in the agony. It has given way to surroundings which recall those of the primitive Christian communities. The Liturgy has retained only the barest essentials: the chalices are of pewter or wood, the chasubles of crudely coloured cloth; the priest lives on alms and dwells in a tumbled-down ruin or hides in the woods. Perhaps he is a young man who has been secretly ordained, or an old monk rendered homeless by the persecution. In any case, very different from the big-bellied pope which the anti-religious propaganda represents with guns and bags of gold holding out his hand to the capitalist.

The social influence of the priest has thus grown considerably. Especially in the country districts, the clergy share more and more in the daily life and work of their parishioners. He joins in the activity of the Kolkhoze and even of the factory, and there he is often particularly useful in expounding the economic or social measures taken by the government, or for the part he plays in union activity, or in putting at the disposal of his faithful his culture and technical experience.

A foreigner who returned from U.S.S.R. in 1937 confided to the Parisian Russian newspaper, *Les Dernières Nouvelles*, his impressions of the new clergy of the Soviet:

The priest is a typical representative of the sovietic intelligentsia . . . He has a passion for reading—books, reviews and newspapers. He is intensely interested in current events and in what is called sovietic social activity. He has submitted to the general trend of Russian life; having become more “realistic” he has by that fact become more Europeanised. He is more like a Catholic curé or a Protestant pastor than his predecessors. He is in turns a medical practitioner, and agriculturalist or a horticulturalist. He seeks to penetrate everywhere, and he often succeeds: he works for the development of aviation, and takes active part in the various “days” of “Youth,” of “Woman” of “Frontier Defence.” It often happens that the local Party head

and the priest, although officially hostile to one another, work hand in hand to inspire the seasonal agricultural activities or in the propaganda campaigns which have social aims. Whenever there is a call "to mobilise all the forces of the country," the Soviet priest will be in the front line.

But it is precisely this new type of priest, who differs so enormously from that ridiculed by the anti-religious propaganda, that causes anxiety to the soviet leaders. On the eve of the elections these realised that the warnings of Kroupskaya were only too well grounded, and that the clergy were a very important factor in the electoral campaign . . . Yaroslavsky (head of the "Godless") cited these figures: "If it is remembered that the number of believers constitutes 30% of the population of the towns, it will at once be seen that there are millions of soviet subjects who are faithful to religion. Among the rural population, two thirds are believers."

Yaroslavsky continued: "There are some people who take comfort from the thought that a great number of churches are closed, and think that that means the end of religion. That is a great mistake. The danger consists precisely in the fact that although the churches have been closed, our work has not been seriously effective among the masses. The popes are without their churches, but they are surrounded by their faithful. They have simply become 'travelling popes.' The 'travelling pope' sets out with his paraphernalia, which can all be carried in a light suitcase: a censer, some bread and a flask of wine for Communion. He goes from village to village. If he has not visited a village for a year or so, he baptises all the children who have been born in the meanwhile, conducts marriages and funerals. Though the churches have been shut, the popes continue to be necessary in the eyes of the people . . ."

According to the official figures quoted by Yaroslavsky, there are at the present time 30,000 parishes in the U.S.S.R. legally recognised and registered. Each of these parishes counts some twenty-five religious enthusiasts forming a sort of confraternity to assist the priests. There are therefore about 750,000 *militant* Christians working legally among the masses and contributing largely to the upkeep and development of Christian life.

The article concludes with an interesting account of the part played by the clergy in the so-called election of December 20th, and of the renewal of persecution which the religious renaissance has prompted:

In spite of the anti-religious offensive launched before Easter, the churches were packed. The soviet press continues to deplore the collective baptisms of the "travelling popes" and the immense

attraction which religion still exercises on the peasants and workers. Confronted with this invincible spiritual power, terrorism itself remains impotent.

Father Evgrav Kovalevsky, a Russian Orthodox priest writing in *COLOSSEUM*, evidently does not like the "loss of all shade of anti-bolshevism" among his co-religionists in his fatherland ("it is Judas that is to be feared and not Pilate who represents power, or the pharisees who represent the ungodly"). But the concluding words of his significantly incoherent article point to us the moral of the foregoing:

The principal feature of the members of the clergy and of the churchmen in Soviet Russia as noted by all who happened to meet with any of them, is the absence of febrility, of petty anxiety, of indignation, of fanaticism; the tranquillity, clear insight and real peace. This is so striking to everyone, so in contradiction to the psychological aspect of the outer setting, that it cannot fail to cause surprise. As a result, all those who until now have failed to understand the real meaning of the experience of the Russian Church will, sooner or later, be brought to revise their opinion of it, and to many it will be a cause for the counter-estimation of their outlook upon the fundamental problems of life.

In this connexion it may be noted that the quarterly *RUSSIE ET CHRETIENITE* continues to provide magnificent documentation on all things Russian. The Dominican centre "Istina" from which it is published has now moved from Lille to 39 rue François-Gérard, Paris, 16e. "Istina" now announces a new periodical in Russian called *BESSEDY* as a further indication of the enterprise of this institution and the fine work it is doing for Russian émigrés and Christian reunion under the guidance of Père Dumont, O.P., who has recently been made an archimandrite of the Slavonic rite.

*WORSHIPFUL WORK.* Russians are not the only persecuted Christians who can shame our rush, nervous pothers and petty anxieties. In spite of, or because of, its trials, German Catholicism has similar lessons for us. Romano Guardini's *SCHILDGENOSSEN* deserves to be far better known among us, and its lessons to be taken to heart. The current number is again devoted to the praise of God through sacred—liturgical and other—art. Rudolf Schwarz writes on *Worshipful Work*, Robert Grosche on *The Theology of Church-Building*, Guardini on *Human Creativeness*, several leading



priests and architects on church-planning, accompanied by splendid photographs. And all this in the Third Reich! Escapism? On the contrary, the expression of a revived consciousness of the Christian community and of the praise of God through human endeavour, than which nothing could better meet the needs of the time.—Our own English ART NOTES covers similar ground. The double summer number includes studies of the architecture of E. Bower Norris by Peter Anson, of *Jacob Epstein and Religious Art* by Amelia Defries, and on *Art and Catholic Action* by Joan Morris, S.P. This review, richly illustrated, is obtainable from 40 Eccleston Square, S.W.1.

DERNIER CRI. The current number of THE CRITERION is one that should appeal strongly to our own readers: the number of "Reverends" in the table of contents indicates the extent to which the divines are taking the helm of "the good ship Cri." In *Plato, Aristotle and the Christian Church*, Philip S. Richards turns the tables on the perennial Christian-Platonist argument against the Christian-Aristotelian. That argument is, briefly, that Plato is religious, while Aristotle is uncompromisingly secular: so St. Bonaventure, for instance, thought Aristotle Antichrist because he "shut out the Word." Mr. Richards shows that Platonism is dangerous to Christianity just *because* it is religious, and so tends to substitute a naturalistic "religious" philosophy for revelation and theology. It does not matter that the sharp Plato-Aristotle antithesis is probably unhistorical, or that historic Platonism has not been so disastrous to true religion as it might have been. Plato and Aristotle are, at very least, useful symbols for two incompatible world-views; and Mr. Richards sums up admirably and simply the religious-pragmatic case for St. Thomas's "baptism of Aristotle."—Father Edward Quinn gives a useful elementary outline of *Christian Politics*, understanding thereby rather the Christian Philosophy of Politics. A very helpful summary; but what is his reason or authority for the theory that "the common good and the community itself are universals"?—Geoffrey Tandy's *Broadcasting Chronicle* sternly chastises the B.B.C. for their Good Friday efforts, and Antonio Marichalar's *Spanish Chronicle* is devoted to the *Ideas and*

*Beliefs of José Ortega y Gasset.*—There is a grim story of T. O. Beachcroft; W. Force Stead reveals sympathetically *Christopher Smart's Cat*; and Ezra Pound shames our Kulchur: "I am convinced that the most fantastically foolish or at best crassly inadequate notions both of Kung-futsu and of Mang tze are current not only among the weak-minded but among that class which, if it can't quite be considered an intelligentsia, has at least a greater domesticity with books than has the average reader."

HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY NEWS "which will appear periodically is concerned with the ideals and work of the Wigan House of Hospitality and the other Houses of Hospitality that are beginning to grow up in England—St. Joseph's House, recently opened in London, being the first of these. It is hoped that the ideals of these Houses will show many the way Christ taught us to love our neighbours." It costs, absurdly, one penny, and though its concerns are all domestic it will be welcomed by many who miss the touch of the CATHOLIC WORKER before its recent change of editorship. More important, it will propagate the House of Hospitality idea and win the support it needs. Apply: The House of Hospitality, 6r Darlington Street, Wigan, Lancs.

CONGRATULATIONS to our Dominican brethren of Les Editions du Cerf on their incorrigible enterprise. They have started two new brave ventures. LA CHRIETIENNE AVEC NOTRE DAME is a magnificently illustrated one-franc monthly review of spirituality, intended for the masses which LA VIE SPIRITUELLE leaves cold. QU'EN PENSEZ VOUS? is a new series of fortnightly brochures listed at 3 fr.75: first titles are *Hitler contre le Pape*, *Les Juifs* (by Maritain) and *Les Bombardements des Villes ouvertes*. Meanwhile the same French Dominican publishing House is bringing up plenty of artillery, heavy and light, for a determined assault on the "Ecumenical" front: the *Unam Sanctam* on Protestantism progress. Inquiries to Les Editions du Cerf, 29 Boulevard de la Tour-Maubourg, Paris, 7e.

CONTEMPORANEA and review of August periodicals are held over till the next number.