

(continued from previous page)

the Bible, reading Terence in his noble library, and talking like a scholar even at the gaming-table; a young Australian of the year of our Lord 1943, nurtured on Hollywood, "Speed Gordon," and radio, struggling with his notes on *Macbeth* for the Intermediate. A culture, aggressive and alive; a culture, narrowed and static but still relevant to the spirit of the age; a culture, fighting a dispirited rearguard action against emotional bankruptcy.

There are still people who will tell you that a study of Intermediate Latin is necessary to salvation. If you ask why, they reply that it provides an impalpable something that enables you to write English better—in which case it is curious that only a very small percentage of those who matriculate can, in fact, use their own language in a reasonably coherent and workmanlike way. I am tired of hearing about "impalpables" in education. A scientific world just because it is scientific is not thereby debarred from what are sometimes patronisingly called "higher things" by the intelligentsia, and it is not a betrayal of such things to its demands if we ask that the results of any educational process shall be measurable within a reasonable margin of error. To insist on impalpables is the hallmark of a culture on the defensive—which is exactly what our Reconstruction does not want.

A Plea for Relevance

The ideas we have to combat can only be defeated by intellectual aggression on every front. My plea, then, is for relevance, for a curriculum which will face the fact that it is dominated by outmoded cultural values, and that there is an overwhelming cultural value in relevance to the times *per se*. Until this fact is faced and very real changes made as a result, we cannot expect to see flourishing the proper child of Relevance, which is Tolerance—tolerance towards the cultural experiments which must precede the flowering of any new order fully worthy of the name.

If you educate for the 18th century in the 20th, you are producing an unnatural combination which can have little chance of healthy survival and will, like the Chimaera, spend much of its time very uncomfortably with its head looking at its tail in a spirit of incredulous and sometimes active disapproval. I ask for more relevance in our curriculum of Reconstruction. Without it, we are condemned to wallow in a morass that may well engulf us, and if our successors have any sense of the fitness of things, they will see to it that the inscription on our tombstones is nicely written in Intermediate Latin.

New Ideals


My last prerequisite for democracy I described as a scale of ethical values which is based upon firm foundations, and not only taught but practised. I have spoken of our enslavement to economic ideals. We want new ideals. Can Reconstruction give them to us? There is a welter of conflicting replies, and one cannot trespass on to their battlefield without danger. But amid it all there is, I believe, something quite simple that can be said. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Hackneyed? Yes, I know it is hackneyed; you read it in every Saturday leading article and hear it from every Sunday pulpit. True? Yes, the truest thing I have said to-night, if we do not use vision as a mere excuse for vagueness. It is so easy to take refuge in pious

platitudes about Truth and Beauty. But we must not be put off with mere words. The vision necessary for this people, if it is not to perish, is nothing more and nothing less than a knowledge of Good and Evil, of Right and Wrong, and a capacity to distinguish between them.

That may sound like mere claptrap. It is actually a note of the harshest realism. Can you look round this community to-day, can you view its standards—its evasions, its complacency, its concentration on itself—and feel that any mere machinery can reconstruct it to a better pattern? I, for one, cannot, and I have no easy prescription for the remedy.

I do not propose to be so adventurous as to embark upon the difficult controversy as to whether it is possible to provide workable ideals on any but a religious basis. But I want to say this. Real religion—define it as you will—is a matter not mainly of learning, but of living, and I am myself content to rest on the plain statement that a proper provision of living religion for the young depends ultimately upon the existence in sufficient numbers of the right kind of teacher—meaning by the right kind, the man or woman whose daily living example is worth all the ethical and religious instruction that was ever given. I am not suggesting that formal religious instruction should not be given in schools as and when it is found to be fit and convenient. What I am saying is that without the daily example of the teacher himself or herself, it can be of little avail. My final, and in many ways my most important Reality of Reconstruction is that on a long view the creation of the spirit which alone can make possible any enduring edifice must involve a radical change in the attitude of the community to the teacher—a change so radical that the teaching profession will be recognised as one which must draw on available Quality as no other, and receive the economic rewards which it merits by its importance. We have, in spite of ourselves, been fortunate in our teachers; for no other profession attracts to it so many of those whose ideals will permit them to abandon all hope of either cash or credit. But there is a relationship even in education between the amount which you pay and the quality of what you receive, and Reconstruction must recognise it. If it refuses to, this people will perish.

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