

EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG

AN ADDRESS BY MR. S. E. MCCARTHY, S.M.

At yesterday afternoon's meeting of the Trinity Church Men's Society, the Rev. H. L. Blamires presiding, an address on 'The Education of the Young' was delivered by Mr. S. E. McCarthy, S.M. (says the *Hawke's Bay Herald* of July 17).

After a few introductory remarks by the chairman, Mr. McCarthy said:—It is not my purpose during the short time at our disposal to traverse the whole subject of education. That would be impossible. To get at the immediate purpose in view we must define what education is. We shall get at this by defining what it is not. Well, then, education is something more than mere physical, or mental, or spiritual training. It is something more than the cultivation of the literary or mathematical sense. It is really a compound of all these. It consists in the gradual unfolding of man's whole nature. It is the growing up in all things to our highest possibilities. The subject matter of education is, then, man. We are not concerned with the training of wild animals for the circus, or the menagerie. Now, man is a composite animal. He has a three-sided nature, consisting of body or matter, mind, and spirit. This fact was appreciated by the ancients and, in the Latin language, there are three words which exactly hit it off, 'anima,' the principle of life common to all living creatures, 'mens,' the intellectual faculty, and 'animus,' the soul with its aspirations and appetites. Any system of education, then, worthy of the name, should not ignore any one of this trinity of qualities. If it does, the result will be a lopsided and not a fully rounded character. If you exalt the body at the expense of the mind and the soul, the result may be a magnificent physique belonging to an individual lacking not only in self control, but in the mental and spiritual faculties, to each of which the body should be kept in subjection. If you exalt the mind and neglect the soul and body, you may develop an exceedingly clever mental machine, but

A Character Lacking in Moral Principle

and a body not able to bear even the ordinary human burdens. You may even so cultivate the spiritual side of man, as to cause degeneration of the mind and the body, and in such a case you may evolve either a religious maniac or a flabby sentimentalist possessing neither driving power nor a sense of responsibility. What I am contending for is that the body, the mind, and the soul, being all God-given, the contemporaneous development of each essential part is a duty resting on all who take up education as their life's work; and here let me say that if any individual is to attain his highest possibilities he must start with a body sound in all its parts. You will not suspect me of a blind worship of mere bodily prowess, and I do not overlook the lives of patient suffering endured by the victims of accident or disease, or by those who have never been strong. I do insist, nevertheless, that we owe a duty to God, to the State, and to ourselves to develop our physical organism along sane and healthy lines. It is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and, as such its highest perfection, consistent with its subordination to the mental and spiritual parts of our nature, should be our constant care. The healthier the body the more vigorous will be our mental and spiritual growth. Moreover, from it there may spring a long line of descendants, every one of whom is liable to inherit some one or other of our physical defects.

It is a Natural Law

that our errors of omission and commission will, to some extent at least, be visited on those who cannot escape the consequences of our neglect or misdoing. This, however, by the way. The importance of education in its widest and truest sense was recognised by the poet, Wordsworth, in his poem, 'The Excursion,' written nearly one hundred years ago. The poet, with almost prophetic vision, thus peeps into the future:—

Oh for the coming of that glorious time,
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth,
And best protection, this Imperial realm,
While she exacts allegiance shall admit
An obligation on her part to teach
Them who are sworn to serve her and obey:
Binding itself by statute to secure
For all the children whom her soil maintains
The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth,
Both understood and practised, so that none
However destitute be left to droop
By kindly culture unstained,
Or run into a wild disorder,
Or be forced to drudge through weary life
Without the aid of intellectual implements and tools
A savage horde among the civilised
A servile band among, the lordly free!

Emphatically a Parent's Question.

Education, then, being what it is, we come to inquire on whom, primarily, rests the duty of educating the young, and the education is our subject. Now, the right upbringing of a child is so sacred a function and it is so closely bound up with its future career that we, at once, and by instinct, apart from all reasoning arrive at the conclusion that this primary duty rests on the parent. The State, indeed, both in England and in this Dominion, has recognised this. For we find that it is the parent who is held responsible for the non-attendance at school of his truant child. But parents, or rather a not inconsiderable number of them, have in times past and do now, neglect the education of their offspring, who tend to grow up in ignorance, and ignorance is one of the handmaidens of crime. It was this neglect and its dire consequences which has caused the State in many countries to interfere in the matter of primary education. When it did so interfere the bewildering number of different religious societies brought it face to face with a difficult problem when it came to deal with the duty of training the religious faculty. This problem the State in this Dominion has solved or rather attempted to solve, by evading it and instituting a system of free, compulsory and secular training. In New Zealand the State at present says: 'We will not attempt to foist on the community anything in the shape of a State religion, we cannot attempt anything in the shape of religious training. Those parents, therefore, who wish to have their children trained in religion, must make other arrangements. The State, then, in providing a system of primary education stands in the place of the parent. To put the matter in another form the whole question of primary education is, in the last analysis, a parent's question. Now, we in this Dominion have had an experience of this system of free, compulsory, and secular education extending over 33 years. It has thus been long enough in vogue to allow us to form an opinion of its results in the formation of character. I have no wish to contend that one of its results has been an increase in crime, but anyone looking with an impartial eye at the young men and women of this Dominion must admit, they are for the most part

Concerned With Material Things

to the exclusion of matters pertaining to the mind and the spirit. There is an undue worship of sport and of all classes of amusement. Gambling and drinking are on the increase, and there is a feverish haste to get rich among the busy few. Apart altogether, then, from its effects on church attendance, we have growing up in our midst lopsided men and women who are neglecting the deep side of eternity for those of time and the senses. If, then, the parents recognising these defects demand, not that the State should undertake the duty of the religious training of the young, but that an opportunity should be afforded to accredited religious teachers to impart the necessary instruction, surely, there is here nothing which can be termed fundamentally wrong in principle. The parents will be merely demanding that the education of their offspring shall proceed along commonsense lines. If it is contended that the State cannot spare the necessary