

The little groups of reformers are more hopeful than they have ever been, and if the land is to be saved from the effects of the reaction from superstition and idolatry, it can only be rescued by the spread of primitive Christianity in a form that appeals to the historic instinct of the people—by a Church framed on the Apostolic model and essentially Spanish. The Spanish Reformed Church with its able Bishop is, above all things, marked by its devotion to the teaching of Holy Scripture and all lovers of Gospel truth will pray that it may have grace to seize its opportunity and to go forward. English and Irish Churchmen have a duty in this great work, which the Spanish and Portuguese Church Aid Society, so long and faithfully presided over by the late Archbishop Plunket, tries to perform. THOMAS J. PULVERTAFT.

MR. HERBERT SPENCER ON EDUCATION.

THE fact of the Rationalist Press Association having some little time back published a sixpenny reprint of the above work, of which more than 60,000 copies are apparently by now in circulation, challenges some criticism of its contents, and I should like to offer the following papers by way of a small contribution to the task.

Amidst much that is admirable and exhibits great powers of observation and of independent thought, it strikes me as a decidedly weak point that Mr. Spencer does not seem clearly to decide for himself, and keep before his mind, whether the object to be aimed at in education is to *acquire the knowledge* most likely to be useful to the learner in life, or to *train the faculties* for subsequently acquiring that knowledge by such a discipline as is most calculated to develop and strengthen them. The curriculum of public schools in England is based on the latter supposition. The study of language (the dead languages by preference, Greek and Latin) and the study of mathematics hold the chief place in it, as the best mental gymnastics. It is believed that, when the instrument of thought has been forged by this discipline, it can be applied to the acquisition of special knowledge, such as the learner requires for his particular career in life, with greater advantage than if his studies had *commenced* with that object.

Mr. Spencer criticises this theory, but he does not seem to me to go to the root of the matter, nor to be quite consistent in his objections. At one time he argues¹ that the things it

¹ Cf. chap. i., *passim*, especially pp. 22, 23, 39, 40.

is most *useful* for a boy to know for the future direction of his energies are left out of the curriculum of education; while at another he repudiates the notion that he should be educated with a view to getting money and making his way in the world.¹ And in enumerating the many subjects the knowledge of which is highly desirable, it never seems to occur to him to ask himself the question, Is it *possible* for anything more than the merest smattering of knowledge about them to be obtained in the years which make up a boy's time for education; and if not, is not *one subject*, or at least very few, *thoroughly learnt*, a far better training for the mental powers, however many valuable things may be left quite unlearnt, and a far better equipment for going on to master what is possible of the others during the ampler years that are going to follow school-days?

If Mr. Spencer would have *everything* that is useful for them taught to boys and girls, is he not advocating a sheer *impossibility*? If he would have *that special thing* taught which the particular boy or girl will find it most useful to know in his or her subsequent career, is he not assuming *another impossibility*: that at the outset of a child's life it is possible to determine the career it is best fitted to excel in, and that, if it is possible, it is desirable—two very debatable propositions?

I am quite in favour of a fairly varied curriculum to suit such variety in powers and tastes as is perceptible in children, even at a quite early stage. It is a mistake to have such a narrow choice that a child may have no aptitude for, or interest in, *anything* that is taught, and so may be led to the depressing conclusion that it is too stupid to master any branch of knowledge successfully. But though I would have the one or two special forms of mental gymnastics better fitted to the nature of the child's abilities and tastes than has always been the case in the educational curriculum, I would still have them remain *but one or two* during his school training. I still believe that the ideal underlying the curriculum of our public schools—that of training and developing *powers*, not that of imparting useful *knowledge*—is the right one, and that it can only be attained by teaching the subjects selected for that purpose *thoroughly* and *scientifically*, even at the cost of considerable mental effort on the part of the pupil, rather than at haphazard and empirically, with a view to making the process of learning more pleasant and popular with him.

Again, Mr. Spencer is a strong advocate for the study of *Nature*, and contrasts it with the general devotion to *Language*, much to the disadvantage of the latter.

Here also, while I can go a bit of the way with him, I am quite unable to go the rest of it. What is called "natural science" is extremely interesting, and undoubtedly most useful in the business of life, the arts and crafts of civilization, with all the branches of commerce, being but the application of its teaching to practical ends. But it never seems to dawn on Mr. Spencer that *Nature* and *Man* are *not exclusive* of one another, but that *Man* is the *greatest thing in Nature*; that his thoughts and emotions and aspirations are as worthy objects as we can possibly have for our study; that Language is the key to the understanding and interpretation of them; and that if, as I have contended, a little learnt thoroughly is a far better preparation for after-life than many things learnt superficially, language may well stand high among the subjects which may profitably make up that little, a literary education, conducted on philosophical principles, being not only an excellent mental gymnastic, but also sure to be interesting as long as human nature lasts, and the *most fascinating study for man is himself*. Let the study of external Nature by all means form part of *advanced* education.¹ Mr. Spencer has some very true remarks on its tendency, besides other advantages it has, to help in forming a habit of right judgment.² But though I will not presume to dogmatize on the point, in the earlier stage of education, language, as the key to *human thought*, seems to me to hold a deserved pre-eminence. And of all languages, those which are styled "the classics" are the fittest for the end proposed. What we call a dead language—*i.e.*, one that is no longer spoken, having all its forms and its vocabulary fixed beyond the reach of modification, which is a process always going on more or less in a living language—lends itself much better to scientific analysis. And of dead languages none are comparable to Greek and Latin. The former is not only the most beautiful, the most copious, and the most flexible of known tongues, but it is the vehicle of thought employed by the greatest thinkers and artists the world has ever seen, for it is a very remarkable fact, and one with which the theory of the evolution of man has to reckon, that brain-power has not, in all the centuries which have intervened since their day, apparently reached a higher level than that attained by such men as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Æschylus, Pheidias, to name no others amongst the pioneers

¹ This is not intended to depreciate in the smallest degree the training of children at a very early age to observe the sights and sounds of Nature around them, but only to deprecate the scientific treatment of them forming any but the slightest element in elementary school work.

² *Cf.* p. 37.

and leaders of human thought. While Latin, as the parent of a large group of modern languages, gives us the key to their structure and vocabulary, and very much facilitates the acquisition of them, besides having been for many centuries the universal speech of scholars, much as French has been of diplomacy and society, and so embalming the processes and conclusions of a vast deal of the thought which has gone to the making of modern Europe. If it be contended, as perhaps it reasonably may be, that too much time is at present usually devoted in schools to the acquisition of these two languages, a remedy may be found in the use of good "Eclogæ" from the works of classical authors in the place of the works themselves.

Yet again, Mr. Spencer lays much stress on the desirability of not introducing a child's mind to *generalizations*,¹ of which previous to experience he cannot appreciate the truth or the value, but of presenting to him only *concrete objects*, and making him go for himself through the inductive process by which generalizations are reached. Let the process of learning, is his formula, be for each member of the human race that which it has perforce been for the race itself.²

Here, also, I find myself able to go only a bit of the way with him, soon arriving at a point when we part company. For what does the method Mr. Spencer advocates come to but this—that for the proper education of a child all the accumulated knowledge handed down from past generations is to be for him as though it was not; he is to have no mental equipment in his search for truth but that with which he can supply himself by the application to Nature of his own powers?

Surely it might as reasonably be argued that the child should go naked and unfed till, like primeval man, he had found out by his own experience what it was best for him to eat and drink, and what clothing was the best protection against heat and cold, as to say that he should be debarred from appropriating any of the *mental* furniture which he finds ready to his hand till he has put it all together *de novo* for himself, as the very first of human thinkers had to do. Heir of the experience of all the ages, he is not to be allowed to enter upon his grand inheritance. All that is to be permitted to him is to occupy that little corner of it which he is able to buy at the cost of going through in his own person all the blundering steps and the repeated failures which his earliest predecessors had to do before success crowned their efforts!

It seems to me that a far more sensible way of going

¹ Cf. pp. 52, 53.

² P. 53.

to work from the point of view of a *practical* education, to be effected within a *limited period of time*, is to present to a child a *selected number* of generalizations gathered from the general stock of knowledge, to explain to him the process by which they were reached, and to invite him to go under your guidance through the same induction from his own experiences, and see whether, travelling along the same road, he would reach the same end. If it is beyond him, as I contend that it is, to strike out generalizations *de novo* for himself, he can at all events do more or less to *verify* those he receives on the authority of his teachers with more experience; and to verify your principles is as good advice, and as good a piece of training, as to verify your quotations. This is a process which will not only save him from the waste of time and the depressing effect of wandering at random along wrong roads before finding the right one, which would be the inevitable result of starting forth to seek his generalizations with no material but the very slender stock of his own personal experience of particular facts, but, by enabling him to verify the generalizations of his *teachers in a limited number* of instances, will give him confidence *generally* in the truth of that vast body of knowledge which every man must perforce receive on the authority of others, so that he will be able to use it as firm ground from which he can set forth to conquer new regions of truth for himself when his powers have been fully disciplined and matured.

The last bone I have to pick with Mr. Spencer—and here I am much more fundamentally at issue with him—is furnished by his teaching on *moral* education.

A great deal that he says about the unwisdom exhibited by parents in the moral training of their children is only too true.¹ Unnecessary interference, angry interference, selfish interference, are frequently *en évidence*, and are discreditable to the thoughtfulness and temper with which parents ought to approach their responsible task. It is excellent advice that a child should sometimes be allowed, after warning, to feel the effect of violating the laws of Nature, instead of being forcibly prevented violating them.² But the chapter seems to me to present, on the whole, an *utterly inadequate* view of *moral obligation*, and consequently of the right process of moral training.

Mr. Spencer speaks throughout as if the test of an action being good or bad consisted entirely in its production of beneficent results or the contrary. “Weigh whether what you propose to do will promote your own happiness and the

¹ Cf. pp. 71, 72.

² Cf. p. 74.

happiness of others, and do it, or not, accordingly," is what, unless I do him injustice, his advice comes to. His philosophy of right and wrong is purely utilitarian.¹ It is characteristic of his point of view that he mentions *conscience* only once, and that in a sort of *obiter dictum*.² Of conscience as the supreme element in the composite nature of man, passing in review before it all his thoughts and actions, and judging them as right or wrong, and so by this very instinctive act announcing itself as possessing fundamental authority over all the other factors of his constitution, as Bishop Butler long ago so well showed—of this all-important truth Mr. Spencer knows *absolutely nothing*. And to ignore it is to make the most fatal mistake possible in a paper on moral education.

Antecedently to, and independently of, our experience of the effects on our welfare, or that of others, of what we propose to do, conscience issues its imperative command, "Do this; don't do that." An ill-instructed conscience, or a conscience warped by prepossessions, may issue a wrong order. If it is to judge truly, it requires to be informed of the essential facts of the case by an enlightened intellect, and to be kept clear by self-discipline from the attempts of passion and self-interest to mislead it. But when he has been at pains to secure these conditions, the religious man will in the last resort see in the *place of rule*, which conscience fills in his system, an intimation on the part of his Creator that he is to *obey* it; and to the Christian man its authority will be still further enhanced by the consideration that through it speaks the Holy Spirit, Who dwelleth in him. "For conscience' sake" means something far different from, "I am going to do this because, as the result of a calculation of pros and cons, I am persuaded that it is in the best interests of myself and others." It means, "I am going to do it because it is the nearest approximation at which I can arrive to the will for me of One Who is my Father and my Redeemer, to Whom I am responsible for all my thoughts and words and actions, and Whom I am bound to obey at all costs to myself." I do not mean for a moment that prudential considerations are not to come into the reckoning. Undoubtedly they are to have their place. And it is a great argument for the existence of a God, Whose supreme characteristic is love, that *right* actions prove in the long-run to be *beneficent* actions too. But it is

¹ Cf. p. 74.

² So strikingly is "conscience" ignored, that, having failed to make a note of it on first reading the book, I cannot, in searching for it since, light on the single sentence in which, to the best of my recollection, the word cursorily occurs.

by no means always the case that they are so *proximately* and to our short-sighted eyes. And it makes a world-wide difference whether we do them because we calculate they are likely to prove so, or because we believe them to be indications of the Divine will.

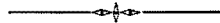
It is well, indeed, as Mr. Spencer urges, to explain to a child the laws of the *physical* universe of which he forms a part, and if, in spite of warning, he persists in disregarding them, to let him discover by his own experience that the breach of them inflicts pain and suffering on himself. But it is of still more consequence to make him understand the laws of the *moral* world, of which, as a spiritual being, he also forms a part, and the relation to him of that Supreme Spiritual Being Who has stamped these laws on both the spheres of existence in which he moves. And here, too, he needs, even more than in the other case, to be warned that he disregards these laws at his own peril; that his conscience, neglected as a teacher and guide, will become an *accuser*; and that, surrounded though he may be with every material element which makes for happiness, he is just as much *bound* to be self-dissatisfied, wretched, unhappy, beneath its stinging reproaches, as he would be if he violated the laws of his physical nature, until by penitence and self-amendment he is brought through God's grace again into accord with the eternal law of righteousness.

And it is just because Mr. Spencer has no word of this kind for the child, moves altogether in his teaching on a lower plane of thought, mutilating the grand conception of our moral education by making it equivalent to a mere enlightened prudential forecast of the interests of ourselves and our neighbours; it is because his system seems to leave God out of the world which He has made, and which He is guiding to its goal; and to leave the child out of sight of the Father, Whom to know and love and serve with all our heart is true liberty and the only happiness—it is for this reason, far above any others I have suggested, that I venture to call Mr. Spencer's theory of education, spite of its many merits, not only inadequate, but *positively misleading*.

5. I would ask, in conclusion, whether we may not find in a consideration on the one hand of Mr. Spencer's mental characteristics, and on the other of his environment, a clue to the secret both of his power and of his weakness as an educationalist? Roughly speaking, his merits seem to be his own, and his faults those of his antecedents and surroundings. Gifted with an acute intellect and a commanding will, he is keenly alive to the part which the human child is capable of playing in the education and development of himself, and is

unwearied in claiming for him deliverance from the trammels of thoughtless routine and short-sighted interference, which so often prove prejudicial to it. But having had no experience of such a training in his own case, he is quite out of sympathy with a *literary* education, as putting the individual in touch with the best thought of the race and being the best discipline for the formation of *thought-power* in himself; and he gives the preference to the observation of Nature, as the best means of acquiring the *knowledge* most likely to be *useful* to him in his subsequent career. Further,¹ he carries his *dislike of authority* to what I cannot help calling such an irrational extreme, as to let it apparently blind him to the fact that in natural science, just as much as in other departments of knowledge, the learner is *obliged* to take the *vast bulk of the facts* with which he has to deal on the *authority* of his teachers, and that life itself would prove too short for the task, if he must verify more than a mere fraction of them in his own experience before he is to be allowed to set forth on the discovery of new ones. And in the domain of morals he lets the same dislike lead him into the still more serious error of dropping out of sight the *authoritative position and functions of conscience*, and making a man's own experience of the consequence of his actions his sole criterion for the discernment of right and wrong.

W. JEFFERYS HILLS.



THE ARCHBISHOPS OF CANTERBURY AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH SUSSEX.

PART V.

ISLIP died at Mayfield in 1366, and was succeeded by SIMON LANGHAM. In the first year of his primacy he visited Sussex, and resided at Mayfield for a time. He was early concerned with matters connected with the county, and in his first year of office issued a commission of inquiry into the charge of non-residency against John, Vicar of Cuckfield, a village in the Weald. Again at Mayfield in 1368 he confirmed the grant by the Prior of Lewes of tithes from Perching to Edburton. His short tenure of the primacy ended the same year, and WILLIAM DE WHITTLESEA ruled the Church in his stead. During his by no means lengthy primacy he does not

¹ Cf. p. 42.