

MODERN TRENDS IN EDUCATION

from the

Christian Point of View

by

Prof. H. R. Klatt

1 Kings 18, 21. "And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word." These words were spoken in a time of depression, confusion, and immorality which according to God's own verdict, reached its height during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel.

The people answered him not a word. Why not? Their attitude was a sign of hard-heartedness, indifference, and defeatism. God had visited them with three years of famine, They had failed to heed his call to repent, had failed to listen to the comforting message of the prophets, had failed to teach His Word diligently unto their children, and, therefore, had become so weak and ignorant spiritually that they could not answer the simple question of Elijah.

After the miraculous revelation on Mt. Carmel they shouted, "The Lord, He is God, the Lord, He is God!" But how long did it last before they were again worshipping and consulting Baal? This delinquency brought on God's judgment. Shalmaneser invaded the land and Sargon II scattered the inhabitants into all parts of his mighty Assyrian Empire. This has been written for our instruction and may we profit by their example.

You may ask what has all this to do with modern trends in education. Trends are the result of opinions. Opinions are based upon viewpoints. We believe that the Bible is the sole authority on faith and conduct, the only correct "Weltanschauung", the point of view from which we can answer all problems of life, death, and the hereafter. Diametrically opposed to this is the world's viewpoint which is based upon philosophy. By philosophy we mean all attempts to solve the problems of life, death, and the hereafter in a way - yes, we may say many ways, other than that of the Bible. This fact continually stares us in the face in our everyday life. When talking about salvation the Word of God teaches us to say, "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling." The world says, Something in my hands I bring, for which God - if there is one - will do the right thing. In matters of government Scripture says that government is a divine institution. Philosophy says, it's a human device. God threatens with damnation whosoever resisted that power. The philosopher justifies rebellion under certain conditions. About wars Scripture tells us that they shall continue to the end of time. In 1917 they told us to fight to end all wars and they have been fighting ever since. In Scripture we read that God has created heaven and earth and has laid down the laws of nature that we may carry out His command, Be fruitful, replenish the earth, subdue it, and have dominion over everything for His glory and the welfare of our fellowman. (That is our sole reason for teaching and studying the exact sciences.) The world misuses the sciences to depose God, to bolster up their philosophy, to glorify themselves, and satisfy their carnal pleasures. We could continue down through the

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hundreds of phases of our spiritual, social, economic, and political life and find these two diametrically opposed viewpoints in all attempts to solve the problems that confront mankind.

Since the philosophers have come to the conclusion that all problems can be solved and all evils remedied through education, they have with their philosophy built up an ungodly, anti-Christian, glamorous educational system, by means of which they hope to create a heaven on earth, but in reality are undermining everything that is holy and sacred to us, yes, even that which they consider the greatest blessing, democracy with its precious liberties. Since their viewpoint is an absolute contradiction of Scripture, why are we so reluctant and feeble in answering the Lord's question, "How long halt ye between two opinions" when confronted with the education of our children? It must be due to the fact that we are either indifferent or to ignorant of the conditions in the educational world. It is, therefore, very important that we acquaint ourselves with modern trends in education.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: Effects upon the individual and upon society as a whole.

We are living in the Machine Age. Our generation has witnessed such tremendous changes, that our whole economic, social, and political life is entirely different from that of our fathers. Invention has become a well-financed and highly specialized profession. More and more men and women lose their jobs. Formerly most of these that lost their jobs due to some invention found work in producing, controlling, regulating, repairing, or selling the new product, or they left for the frontier which offered free or cheap land and the opportunity to start life anew. Today industry does not absorb its unemployed, neither is there a frontier to which they can flee. This condition demands changes in education to make the worker able to cope with the new problems confronting him.

A century ago 80% of the people in the United States lived on the farm; today only 25%. The children on the farm acquired most of the fundamental elements out of school by observation and participation. Their leisure time, if any, was spent in the old swimming hole, or at some sport that kept them sound in mind and body. Today seventy millions are herded together in towns and villages. Congestion breeds delinquency, disease, and contagion. The child has lost his natural playground. The mind is stunted by lack of the right kind of surroundings. Contact with parents is reduced. The home, the most important agency in training, has given way to the school, the club, or some other organizations, which now assume all responsibility for the child. Such conditions again demand an entirely different educational procedure from that of the horse and buggy days.

In this democracy of ours political equality has been an accepted fact since the adoption of woman suffrage. The people now demand economic and cultural equality. They want an equal share in the profits and the pleasures. Therefore, all children, rich and poor alike, should have the opportunity to get an education, which makes them able fighters for this equality and able to enjoy the fruits of their victories. Back in the 90's most of our population received four or five years of schooling. Today there is a demand to make high school and college education universal. To meet the above demands subject

matter has either been eliminated from or added to existing curricula. The school age has been extended. New devices of teaching were introduced and schools were better equipped. All this is self-evident and nobody would oppose any sane improvement along such lines.

But the Machine Age has created conditions the problems of which cannot be solved by additional knowledge, or better equipment, or new devices in teaching, but require a regeneration of man. Such a condition is human interdependence. We are dependent for our food, clothing, and other necessities upon a complicated mechanical process which only a few technicians understand in detail and which nobody understands as a whole. We turn a handle and water comes, but we hardly ever realize upon how many people we depend for that supply of water. About one hundred keymen, operating the veins of water, power, gas, milk supply, communication, and transportation could bring the life of a great city to an end almost as neatly and maybe more thoroughly than a squadron of airplanes supplied with the most poisonous bombs. Each human being has become a cog in the great machine. Therefore each must be trained and fitted into his position. But it takes oil to make a machine run smoothly, and in this great human machine the oil is brotherly love - and not greed.

Another condition is the growth of classes, capitalist and laboring man, hostile to each other. The greed of the capitalist had soon enslaved the worker to such a degree that our Southern slavery was heaven in comparison with the misery thus created. Reform movements were started, labor organized, the government began to regulate and control. The evils were partly curbed, but the present labor troubles still show the hostility of both classes toward each other. Legislation does not change a man's heart.

As a further result of this greed whole nations have become imperialistic. Mass production demands a market for surplus goods and a source for raw material. This led to all kinds of foreign entanglements. In spite of pacifist movements, international laws and agreements even our nation has been drawn into imperialistic wars and as it seems is heading for the next one.

And now to cap the climax: Poverty in the midst of plenty. We have a surplus of everything needed for food, clothing, and shelter, and yet in the midst of it millions are at the point of starvation. That is a confession of bankruptcy of the world's philosophy and its handmaid science, - and man is asking, Where do we go from here?

THE EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION: "New" viewpoints and resulting trends.

Many earnest thinkers realized that something must be done. The many reform movements and the resulting legislation are ample evidence of that fact. But when they dug down deeper they found the root of all evil lay in the education of our nation and concluded that the whole educational system must be revamped. 35,000 new courses of study since 1915 - that represents the response of the educators to this demand. Aims and objectives were set up and overthrown. Subject matter was added or eliminated, and finally completely reorganized. At the beginning of the 19th century they taught the government-hands-off policy, now they preach government regulation, control, and even ownership. At first they stressed individualism, now co-operation and even

regimentation is the thing. Some say build upon the past, others cut away from the past.

At the end of the World War Franklin Bobbitt wrote a book "The Curriculum", in which he states the following: "The present social debacle demonstrates the inadequacy of types of education upon which we relied in the past. - - We needed something (World War) that would shake us out of the grooves and which at the same time was violent enough to obliterate them and set thought free. - - The first necessary thing is for our whole educational profession to acquire a social rather than a mere academic point of view. - - And then study and develop our curriculum problems from this point of view." In this book he sets up the program that has been followed more or less in curriculum making down to the present time. The five points of this program are, 1) Training for occupational efficiency. 2) Education for citizenship. 3) Education for physical efficiency. 4) Education for leisure occupation. 5) Education for social intercommunication. The aim - To make life more abundant for all.

This first book on the curriculum was followed by an avalanche of literature offering all kinds of solutions. If we make a survey of the period 1918 - 1928 we are reminded of the man that bought all kinds of gas saving devices and attached them to his car. According to his figures he ought to be able to sell a gallon of gas every ten miles, but he never made the ten miles, because he spent most his time adjusting his gadgets.

In 1929 came the depression and a complete break-down. Where was the trouble? What was wrong? They again began a grand overhauling of the whole educational system. They found the trouble - Wrong training of character. They made an appraisal of the means by which educators had tried to cultivate character in youth. To what conclusions did they come? This is nicely summed up in a book, "Character in Human Relations" by H. Hartshorne. At about this time a viewpoint had taken form and had already been expressed in articles on education that the scientific method be applied in training character. That is the method the chemist uses when working with his test tubes, or the engineer when he applies the laws of nature in building an automobile or a dam. This method has its place in the exact sciences. In this scientific way they now began to appraise all the different methods used to train character in the past. Here are some of their conclusions, 1) Discipline is not a dependable method of training character. Discipline suppresses personality and that suppression causes complexes and ruined lives. 2) The Story is a dangerous instrument and has probably done more harm than good when used as a means of moral education. This includes the Bible Stories. 3) Exhortation often gets immediate results, but there is absolutely no connection between such types of control and those inner sources of motivation and self-direction which we ordinarily associate with character. 4) They also appraised about fifty outside agencies that are supposed to train character - Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Big Brothers, Girl Scouts, etc. They found no difference or very little difference between members and non-members. 5) The Lord's method of training character was found to be obsolete. All told they had very little left to begin with.

The next step was the establishment of child guidance clinics, staffed with physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, and all kinds of social case workers. With standardized objective tests they began

to gather the data to construct a scientific method for the rehabilitation of bad characters and the preservation of good characters. Suddenly they were confronted by two questions, What is character? What is human nature? They set up theories. Out came the test tubes and did they ever shake them! Just a few samples of their findings - Character is the power of self-chosen organization for self-chosen ends. - A child has a right to self-direction from the beginning. - Human nature is what human nature does under certain conditions, when it is in socially functioning relations. - Human nature has the capacity to learn, that is, TO CHANGE ITSELF. Three things determine what a child does or is, 1) The nature of the situation. 2) What a child has already learned in similar situations. 3) His awareness of the implications of his behavior. (Lying, cheating, stealing are mainly products of unfortunate situations.) They found many more things, but very few on which they could agree. So they came to the conclusion that their philosophy about human nature needed a little overhauling.

They had been coasting on that philosophy since 1700. At that time John Locke, denying the depravity of man, proclaimed that a newborn child is like a blank sheet of white paper, void of all character, without any ideas. How comes it to be furnished? he then asked and answered his own question with one word, "Experience". The tendencies that grew out of this philosophy were the elimination of revealed religion, which was replaced by Deism (belief in a supreme being, a fatherhood of God, and a brotherhood of man), and an emphasis on the study of nature or the exact sciences.

Then came the 19th century with the industrial revolution and its crass materialism and the question narrowed down to, What knowledge pays? The results of this materialistic tendency were the World War with its disillusioning aftermath and the 1929 crash with a complete break-down along economic, social, and political lines.

When they had finished overhauling this old philosophy in education, they thought they had found something new, but it was only a modified form of the old. It may be summed up as follows: The child has by nature a vast complex of stored-up readiness to do good providing the correct environment allows this readiness to function. This did not satisfy the radical fringe in the educational world, the so-called Progressives. They adopted the following philosophy: Man when born is a perfectly integrated being. The whole human being is a field of energy governed by definite universal laws called dynamics. These laws of learning, of character development, are the same that govern physiological growth. If this field of energy is disturbed or unbalanced action sets in and the whole potential energy will be expended in the direction of maintaining its integratedness and always in the shortest way possible under existing conditions. Therefore all that needs to be done is to integrate that perfectly integrated human being with the correct environment. Result - Intelligent behavior and all problems of education solved. - - But Scripture mentions three dis-integrating factors, the devil, the world, and our flesh, and therefore teaching from such a viewpoint is absolutely futile.

Based upon such philosophy they set up guidance programs for the teachers.

1. The teacher is to arrange opportunities which make provision for creative purposeful activity. These activities must be graded and

continuous with the fundamental processes of the community.

2. Since human nature has the tendency to direct its own activity, the child will choose the ends that promise the best in the long run and lead to the highest and most enduring satisfaction.

3. Since that happy self-direction can be developed to its full capacity only when human nature is surrounded by an atmosphere of co-operation, good will, faith, and respect, the child must be given every opportunity to participate in the control of his own affairs.

4. To provide a motive and a standard of behavior, this self-development requires the projection of an ideal self and an ideal society.

5. As youth thus gradually awakens to his capacity to stand on his own feet; he will by his self-obtained standards sift the knowledge of the past, which in turn will give youth power to better evaluate, enrich, and control present life and the ability to meet and solve the problems of the future.

6. In all this the teacher's business is to plan the situations, so that they will serve as an arena of free activity for the child.

Following this set-up they began - and are at it yet - to remodel curricula and class room procedures to carry out their grand objective - To bring forth on this continent in the form of a co-operative commonwealth a civilization of abundance, democratic behavior and integrity, and of beauty. The whole set-up is a contradiction of what the Word of God teaches as to the place of the child as to God's way of training a child. Indoctrination of any kind is out of place in such schools. There is no place for Christ Crucified, no place for God's THOU SHALT and THOU SHALT NOT, not one comforting thought about the hereafter. It encourages the child to follow his own impulses, thus paving the way for corruption, crime and all "isms", that will eventually end all our precious religious and political liberties. (A Christian cannot be a progressive teacher in the above sense.)

And that in broad outlines has been and is the philosophy of modern educators and the source of modern trends in education.

OUR CHRISTIAN VIEWPOINT IN EDUCATION

What does the Lord tell us about education? The Scriptural viewpoint may be summed up as follows: The child is by nature a sinner, and only through a washing of regeneration and a renewal of the Holy Ghost can traits, virtues, and ideals function to the glory of God and the welfare of humanity.

Our aim in education must be - An abundant life in Christ here and hereafter in eternity - as so beautifully stated Ephesians 4.

The directives for our teaching may be stated as follows:

1. The teacher is to prepare and arrange all opportunities which make the child realize his position in this world and provide the activities to carry out his mission.

2. Since human nature has the tendency to act contrary to the will of God, the child must learn to know that will of God and that godliness is profitable unto all things of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

3. Since such godliness can be developed only in a Christian atmosphere, the home, the school, and the church must give the child every opportunity to grow up to Him in all things, which is the head. (Eph. 4, 15)

4. To provide the motive and the standard of behavior, the child must learn to look upon Christ, his Savior.

5. As youth thus gradually realizes what it means to be a child of God through Jesus Christ his Savior and in that light studies the knowledge of the past, only then will he have the power to evaluate and enrich the present life and successfully participate in it, and the ability to meet and help in solving the problems of the future.

6. In all this the teacher as the coworker and representative of God and parent is to carry out the aim stated above with all means suggested by Scripture, as St. Paul points out in his letter to Timothy, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Tim. 4, 2). And don't forget that, and that only, is the way to attain our objectives in teaching any subject.

COMPARATIVE PRACTICAL APPLICATION - Teaching the Social Studies

The term social studies embraces all subjects that deal with human beings in their relations to one another and to their environment, such as history, geography, civics, economics, and sociology.

Their Place in the Curriculum - In the educational world of today the social studies are the basic course, the core subject, yes, more than that, - the "bible" with which the educators hope to solve all problems of life, because they believe that man by his own reason and strength, alone or together with others, influenced and aided by natural causes, has guided and can guide the destiny of nations, sometimes for the bad, but ultimately always for his own and humanity's welfare and glory.

In our Christian schools the social studies are subservient to the Word of God to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, because we believe that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ holds the destiny of all peoples in His hands, and He so directs their course that even the doings of the ungodly, unconscious to themselves, must contribute to His glory and the welfare of His Kingdom.

Objectives - Several years ago a questionnaire relative to the teaching of the social studies was sent out and about 3325 forms were returned and tabulated. The statements relative to the objectives of the social studies covered a wide range of items. Those that loomed large in the responses of the teachers were, good character, good citizenship, individual responsibility, social co-operation, tolerance, development of proper social attitudes.

In the 14th Yearbook, 1936, Department of Superintendence, the following objectives are listed: 1) To give the pupils the truest and most realistic knowledge that is possible of the social and physical setting in which they live, are to live, and make their way. 2) To prepare the pupils for promoting a wiser and more effective co-operation interracial, interreligious, and intereconomic. 3) To develop character - to give pupils a love of truth, an appreciation of the beautiful, a bent toward the good, a desire and will to use knowledge for beneficent ends. 4) To give the pupils a training in the intellectual processes indispensable to the functioning of society.

The futility of attaining the above objectives through the social studies is self-evident to us, because the Word of God has no place in this set-up.

Since the social studies are subservient to the Word of God in our Christian schools the objectives are different and attainable. We teach the social studies, 1) To show our pupils the wonderful works of God. 2) To give them the correct "Weltanschauung", to give them the knowledge and training that they as Christians may better function in home, community, and nation, and so become the salt of the earth to make it at least livable and to preserve it from complete decay until the coming of the Lord.

Selection of Subject Matter - Even in selecting the content for the courses in the social studies there will be a difference. The following examples may serve to explain this difference:

From our point of view the Birth of Christ and the Reformation are the two great turning points in history, and we, therefore, select the subject matter to emphasize that fact. From the world's point of view these two events are only side-issues or by-products. They select their subject matter to present the story of man's evolution and achievement. Note the amount of prehistoric material in some of the textbooks and outlines for the social studies. It has reached such an extent that we simply cannot use certain material, for we would be forced to spend most of our time refuting their statements. (Please keep the Ape Man and Cave Man stuff from your little ones, because of the dangerous and lasting impressions that are made upon their pliable hearts and minds.)

Interpretation of Subject Matter - Let us consider the slavery question. They say that slavery is a moral wrong. How can it be if God in the Old Testament regulates the buying and selling of slaves?

Compare our ideas about government with theirs. Scripture tells us about origin, purpose, rights, and powers of all governments (Rom. 13; 1 Tim. 2, 2; 1 Petr. 2, 13-25). It also states that it is our duty to honor, obey, support, and pray for our government, and in that way only can we do our part of our religion. Since they reject Romans 13, they believe that government is a human device, that a democracy contains within itself the means of its own correction and preservation. But they forget that all governments are managed by human beings and that no process has yet been discovered by which promotion to a position of public responsibility will do away with man's selfishness, loves, hates, fears, ambitions, and partialities. That requires a complete regeneration and that can only be accomplished by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

If that is the condition in the educational world of today and if I sincerely believe and recognize that fact

1) I cannot halt between two opinions when as a father I am confronted with the problem of my child's education. My desire above everything else will be to give my child a Christian training, if possible, in a Christian day school.

2) I cannot halt between two opinions as a church member and be satisfied with a Sunday school and allow the children to be influenced by the world's philosophy all week, but shall do all in my power to work for the establishment of a Christian day school, yes, more than that, for the establishment of a complete system of Christian education.

3) I cannot halt between two opinions as a pastor, but I shall enlighten my congregation as to the dangers in modern trends in education; I shall give them the correct viewpoint in education; I shall bring to their attention every agency known to the church for perfecting and rounding out the Christian training begun in the home, and shall stress as the ultimate aim the establishment of a Christian day school.

4) I cannot halt between two opinions as a Christian teacher and conform my school to the educational philosophies of this world, but make every subject subservient to the Word of God. Neither can I feel satisfied to teach in schools where such philosophy prevails.

If you agree with me why then halt between two opinions and delay? The devil has found the weakest spot in our defense. Let us with a renewed fervent spirit go out and restore the conception of Christian education in the hearts and minds of our people, and so with the help of God save, preserve, and expand our system of Christian elementary and higher education.

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The above essay was read by Prof. H. R. Klatt at the 1940 convention of the Minnesota District of Joint Synod. By resolution of that district the essay was submitted to the Schoolboard of Joint Synod with the request to dispose of it as the board saw fit.

The Schoolboard resolved to send a mimeographed copy of this timely essay to every pastor and teacher in the Synod with the suggestion that it be discussed in the various societies within our congregations in order that as many as possible of our laymen become acquainted with the contents of this essay. The difference between secular and Christian education is shown very clearly and expressed with no mistaken terms.

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We hope that many will avail themselves of this opportunity.

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