

Letters From The People

Education's False Gods

Toronto, Canada, June 1.—To the Editor of The Independent: To my way of thinking there can be no greater exhibition of blasphemous impudence than for the finite to attempt to measure the infinite, than for man to presume to be able to dissect, to analyze, to explain and to apologize for the Almighty God.

Instead of being as a nation serving God, we have become slaves of education, science, philosophy, reason, or more often the counterfeit presentations of these things. We build a shrine and put thereon the frail works of our feeble minds, and then fall in worshipful adoration before it.

Take for example, education. You can scarcely take up a publication but what somewhere within its pages you will find "education" prescribed as a cure for all political, social and moral ills.

Educate the fool and you have the fool still. Educate the vicious and you have the villain still.

The worship of God comes first; it is the foundation; then build thereon your education.

Do not be too strenuous about it even then. Recollect that there is a limit to mental, as well as to physical strength, and don't pile an eighteen-by-twenty education on a two-by-four mental capacity. All along the track of educational development, there are many pitiful wrecks, so overloaded with superfluous knowledge that they are incapable of independent, original thought.

Now do not understand me to mean, that the educational products I have just described are either useless or vicious. On the contrary they are necessary, almost essential. The world could scarcely spare them. The trouble is that we sometimes so over-do the thing by attributing infallibility to this style of thinker, that what is called the "common mind" is blinded or bluffed into the idea that it must not think for itself, but must accord worshipful attention to the expressed thoughts of the learned, without analysis or question.

Herein is the harm, not in the learned or educated, for they are necessary, but in elevating these to a sphere above and beyond what is called the "common herd" in paying worshipful respect to the opinions of the "higher class" whether they are worthy of it or not.

The American public has worked itself into such a state of humble servility toward the oracles of these things we call education, science, philosophy, that it will absolutely refuse to receive a thought, no matter how much that thought may be worth, no matter how simply and plainly expressed, unless it happens to be endorsed by some high educational authority, and couched in grandiloquent phraseology.

Witness for example this proposition coming from a prominent thought leader to chloroform all men over forty years of age. What could be more foolishly vicious than that. If that thought had been uttered by a hod-carrier there would have been no attention paid to it, but coming from the source it did it commanded instantly world-wide attention, and barrels of ink were spilt, tons upon tons of paper were consumed, acres of comment were printed and sown broadcast over the land, until the worthless, brutal thought was presented again and again to many millions of minds.

We have become so idolatrous that we dare not think for ourselves.

We ask not what is the value of a thought, but "who said it?" If it comes from the direction in which we worship, we receive; if from any other direction, we refuse it, however much it may appeal to our reason or judgment. Even though convinced of its worth we struggle in desperation against it.

It is the trustful acceptance of the words of the learned that makes it such an easy matter to make fools of modern audiences. Since the modern listener has thrown away his privilege of criticizing, analyzing, sitting in judgment upon

that which he hears, it is an easy matter to make a fool of him. All that is necessary is to announce with a loud and long enough blast upon the educational trumpet, that your writer, speaker, lecturer, is "away up in G" in educational, scientific and philosophic matter.

His auditors may not understand, may not get his thought, but they will be all the more impressed on that account. The thought will never occur to such auditors that the reason they do not understand is because there is nothing to understand, but their worshipful feeling will cause them to conclude that the subject of discourse is too "broad and deep" too "wide and high" for them to comprehend, and be impressed accordingly.

Better be a self-worshipper, there is some chance for a character of this kind, for he may come to see the futility, emptiness, and unworthiness of all human attempts to solve the great problems of life and death. Such an one may look within his own heart at the rottenness of his own nature, then in his helplessness and distress he may cry out into the surrounding darkness and mystery, he may sound the wailing note that will be quickly heard and quickly answered by his God, the Saviour of his soul.

The pride of man revolts at the idea of humbleness or self-abasement, but there is no escaping it. All must pass through the experience, but between the worshiper of God and the idolater there is this difference, the one prostrates himself before the One object infinitely greater than himself, the other before some object less than himself.

Meantime let us not forget that the command, "thou shalt have no other gods before me," means just as much today, as it meant when it was thundered out of the clouds of Mount Sinai.

SID FOREE.

Organizing the Farmers

Gordon, Neb., June 3.—To the Editor of The Independent: Are you aware that there is a stir

among men of the soil—stockmen and farmers—amounting almost to an uprising? The voters of Chicago recently became aroused at the indifference of the traction corporations. They spoke at the ballot box for a new deal—a "square deal," as President Roosevelt would say—and they have been heard around the world, wherever large cities are laboring under similar abuses of public utilities of private corporations.

Fellow stockmen and farmers of the west, we have opposition and imposition to overcome. Every individual grain shipper knows what he has to contend with—grain dealers' associations, etc., etc. Stock shippers have many wrongs which no one man can successfully fight against—discrimination in rates, etc. What is the one quick and sure way out of such troubles?

I appeal to you who read and think and who have independence enough to act, that the cure for all things which today most obstruct producers and shippers' prosperity is organization. The watch-word for farmers today is "unite!"

Do not regard first steps toward complete farmer organization as something difficult. Begin among your neighbors in your home school district. Send delegates to a township meeting where a simple pledge can be signed to stand together in all business matters. Elect officers, report them to National Farmers' Association headquarters, 96 Board of Trade, Chicago, and you are in the fight—for the most important reform ever undertaken for producers and shippers. This is not a spasmodic move. It is the natural outgrowth of a system of agitation covering years, started and persistently urged upon farmers by H. H. Carr, known as "The Farmers' Friend," asking them to do direct marketing, and add \$100 to \$300 yearly to the income for each, well cultivated western farm. Profits in direct shipments will make grain raisers stand firm when once united. Then, too, there is something inspiring about forming the greatest brotherhood of workers the world knows from the bone, brain and sinews of men of the soil. From Texas to Dakota the work of organization is in progress. The press scents the importance of this latest unionizing force on American soil.

I ask you to rally and engage in calling farmers and stockmen's meetings and let us throw the whole force of our great numbers into building up perfect organization for these two ringing ideas—"profit and power."

W. A. DENNIS.

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