
Is Youth Its Own Best Guide?

Football news over the week-end practically swamped out all mention of a conference held at Northwestern last Friday and Saturday on the place of religion in education. We must wait for a published report of the conference -- if there is to be one -- for an adequate discussion of the proceedings, but some of the reports in the Sunday papers call for comment while the matter is still fresh.

Dr. George A. Coe, of Columbia, is quoted as saying: "I have seen no evidence of moral decline in young people, but there is great confusion in current standards. The young people are thinking more about the problems of conduct than ever before. The standards of yesterday do not fit the young people of today. A new code needs to be developed. This necessity is made more poignant by the fact that there is knowledge of good and evil everywhere in the land that was not available to our forefathers."

Another educator, Dr. Rugh, professor of education at the University of California, is said to have "pointed out that the present day educational policy aims to look after the needs of the learners, and not follow the whims of the professors. He told of an educator who spent many hours trying to discover what the needs of the learners were. Finally, some one suggested that the pupils themselves, as the learners, could tell best what their needs were. A canvass was instituted, and the educational world was startled by the common sense of the composite answer.

"Education, according to a summary of the answers of these students, must develop an understanding first, of self; second, of nature and the physical world; third, of organized society; and fourth, of the force of law and love -- God and religion -- working in the world. Character results from the adjustment of the individual to his understanding and appreciation of these four elements."

"If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit," -- St. Matthew, xv, 14. Whether it is a blind professor leading a blind class, or a sightless class guiding the professor, the end is in the same ditch.

When Dr. Coe finds no moral decline in young people, we long to ask him what he means by moral and what he means by decline. If there are no fixed standards of conduct, then it is rash to speak of either decline or improvement -- one never knows whether he is going up or down.

When Dr. Rugh objects to professors following their whims, we quite agree with him, but we long to point out to him that professors should have something more solid than whims in their pedagogical repertoire. When he finds common sense in a hierarchy of understandings that places self first, the physical world second, organized society third, and God fourth, we regret that he is in a position to confirm young minds in their folly. Leopold and Loeb, educated at Michigan and Chicago, placed self so very much first that they didn't get beyond first and second base in their educational career; the pineapple throwers concentrate on first.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment." -- Matthew xx, 37, 38. If there is one best way to promote moral anarchy in the world, it is to upset the divinely established order of placing the knowledge and love of God first in man's duties. Man, as man, with no responsibility to his Creator as first beginning and last end, is a selfish brute. Humanitarianism is the bunk.

Prayers.

Worb Cavanaugh, a graduate and recent instructor, is very ill. Four special intentions. Three thanksgivings.