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The Chasm.

A wide chasm separates Catholic from secular education. Certain similarities hold between the two, but there are far more important differences.

The purpose of Catholic education is to save souls by imparting Catholic culture, - a consistent attitude towards life as a whole. Secular education does not, cannot, in this sense, impart a culture, because, possessing no unified view of life, it has no culture to impart.

Secular education, for this reason, of necessity, splits up the educational process: physics is divorced from metaphysics; philosophy from science, education from religion, religion from morality. And, quite naturally and logically, the modern product of secular education splits up his own life into compartments: his business or professional or political activities and sins can be considered quite apart from his creed. His social "affairs" do not necessarily detract from his character as church-goer and parent.

On the contrary, a distinctive note of Catholic culture is unity, unity derived from the Church, from common acceptance of God the creator, of God the end, of a single set of doctrines and mandates designed as means to conduct man to his end. No violation of faith or morals can be tolerated in any branch of human activity.

Catholic culture, too, places emphasis on the next life, rather than on this, - the great human mistake is to strive to win this world while sacrificing eternal happiness in the next.

Secular education attempts, chiefly, to prepare man to spend this life happily. Does marriage irk the parties? Then have a divorce. Do children cut in on comforts and plans? Then artificially regulate the number of children. The divine or natural law doesn't enter into the reasoning.

Secular education develops a man's natural virtues and faculties, aims at inculcating social respectability, and stops there. Catholic education develops the natural chiefly as a foundation for the supernatural, - for a life of grace, begot and continued by reception of the sacraments, by prayer, and other devotional practises. Catholic education does not altogether ignore the natural: it, too, attempts to train the polished gentleman, the competent professor and doctor and scientist and engineer and business man, but it points always to the secondary function of any of the arts and sciences. The are courses for a strong and noble stream of life which carries man to the City of God.

The welfare of the individual soul is directly the concern of Catholic education. Society will be right if the individual is right. That's the Catholic theory. Faithfulness to the principles of Christ in actual living, - this is the criterion of success.

Secular education, endeavoring, it is true, to perfect the individual in a temporal sense, nevertheless does so to discharge its duty to society, which supports it. Fitness for society, with its varying standards, is final arbiter of success.

The student, misconceiving the function of Catholic education, may wonder why the secular university is not the Catholic ideal. These briefly-traced, radical differences between the two systems should indicate to him the reason. The acquisition of learning is but a part, and not the most important part, of the Catholic educative process. Education in the full sense is not complete until a life, the Catholic life, is actually adopted and practised.