PERSONAL AND IDEAL ELEMENTS IN EDUCATION

BY

HENRY CHURCHILL KING

PRESIDENT OF OBERLIN COLLEGE; AUTHOR OF "RECONSTRUCTION IN THEOLOGY" "THEOLOGY AND THE SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS"

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PREFACE

OUR age, as has been truly said, is so strongly characterized by "a stupendous reliance upon the trustworthiness of machinery" that one can hardly doubt that there is constant need of emphasis upon the personal and ideal elements of life. Both the scientific and the industrial expansion of our time, which involve such universal use of the mechanical as to both means and point of view, are so impressive that we are unconsciously drawn into an overestimation of mere mechanism. And we are thus in danger of forgetting that in education, in ethics, in religion, and in all true living, it is still true that the most important facts are persons; and that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Not in one-sided reaction against the mechanical view, then, but in full recognition of the indis-

pensableness of mechanism everywhere, we yet have great need to insist that mechanism is to be completely subordinated to the personal and ideal interests of life; that in the making of men we must take into account the entire man in the whole range of his interests, and must see that the personal factor is of supreme importance.

These convictions underlie all the addresses which make up this book, and may serve to justify its title; and the addresses are here brought together, thus, because it is hoped that they will be found to have some real unity, pertinence, and suggestion. At the same time, this very fact involves some repeated use of similar lines of thought.

The addresses can hardly fail to have the unity that arises from an emphasis upon the same great principles applied to related but different important problems: the problem of college education; the problem of the fundamental relation of religion to education, ethics, and life; the problem of the ed-

ucational side of religion; the problem of a psychological comparison of educational and evangelistic methods in religious work; and the problem of the conditions of individual ethical attainment. In these varied discussions I express my conviction that college education cannot hope either to retain or regain, as the case may be, its important place in the national life, except as it recognizes itself as giving preëminently the supreme training of the entire man for living; that our life, individual and national, must suffer if we do not recognize the essentially fundamental nature of religion; that religious education itself can only count as it ought, when its breadth and its preëminently personal character are clearly recognized; that real justice can be done to the different methods naturally used in religious work only by a careful psychological study; and that, as the mechanical view everywhere requires an ideal view to complete it, so, on the other hand, in the attainment of high character, the definite physical and psychological con-

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ditions involved in our natures cannot be overlooked. The immediate practical nature of the last address will be pardoned.

All the discussions, I trust, may be found to have, also, some special pertinence at the present time, in view of the serious questions raised concerning the precise function of college education, and in view of the awakened interest in religious needs, and in the educational side of religion.

For the very reason that the problems discussed are in no case without some special difficulty, and because the attempt is made to apply, in their discussion, principles that seem in real danger of being too much overlooked, it may be hoped that the treatment of the problems may have, too, some real suggestiveness.

HENRY CHURCHILL KING.

OBERLIN COLLEGE, September, 1904.

CONTENTS

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PERSONAL AND IDEAL ELEMENTS IN EDUCATION

THE PRIMACY OF THE PERSON IN COLLEGE EDUCATION

THE numerous inaugurations of college presidents in the last three or four years have necessarily called out extended discussions of educational aims. A late-comer in the field hardly feels at liberty to ignore, and he certainly does not wish merely to repeat, what has been already well said. To a certain extent he *must* probably do both; for he can hardly contribute more than his individual viewpoint, and may, perhaps, count himself fortunate if, taking advantage of the discussions of his predecessors, he can by a single degree advance to greater clearness the exact problem of college education.

But he may still find encouragement to

believe that the task naturally set him is not wholly useless, when he remembers that, in spite of a considerable consensus of opinion on the part of college presidents as to what a college education in general ought to be, the problem of the precise place of the college in our actual educational system has perhaps never been at a more critical stage than now. That at least an increasing number of thoughtful observers feel this to be the case, there can be no doubt. President Butler only voices the fear of many when he says: "The American college hardly exists nowadays, and, unless all signs mislead, those who want to get it back in all its useful excellence will have to fight for it pretty vigorously. The milk-and-water substitutes, and the *fiat* universities that have taken the place of the colleges, are a pretty poor return for what we have lost."

For the rapid changes that have taken place in college education in the last twenty-five years have carried with them, in many quarters at least, unforeseen and far-

reaching consequences. The study of these consequences has brought to some of the most careful students of education, with whatever recognition of gain, a distinct sense of loss, most definitely expressed, perhaps, by Dean Briggs in his "Old-fashioned Doubts Concerning New-fashioned Education."

Other changes in other departments of education have greatly complicated the problem of the relation of the different members of our educational system. Revolutionary changes, that seem almost if not quite to involve the elimination of the college, are soberly, even if reluctantly, suggested by distinguished educators. And other changes of relations that appear at first sight less serious, in which the colleges themselves are acquiescing, may in the end make any adequate attainment of the older college ideal equally impossible. The result of the entire situation, therefore, is to press today upon American educators, as never before, these questions: Has the American college a real function, a logical and vital place in a comprehensive

system of education? or is it the blunder of a crude time and a crude people, an illogical hybrid between the secondary school and the university, that ought to hand over a part of its work to the secondary school and the rest to the university, and to retire promptly from the scene with such grace as it can muster? or, at best, is its older function now incapable of realization?

I. THE FUNCTION OF COLLEGE EDUCATION

Just because these questions concern the place of college education in a system of education, they can be answered only in the light of a comprehensive survey of the entire problem of education.

The problem of education in its broadest scope may perhaps be said to be the problem of preparation for meeting the needs of the world's life and work. Much of the training belongs necessarily to the home and to the interactions of the inevitable relations of life. Much of it, probably, can never be brought

into any organized system. But organized education must do what it can to insure, first, that no men shall lack that elementary training and knowledge without which they are hardly fitted at all for ordinary human intercourse, or for intelligent work of any kind in society, still less for growing and happy lives; second, that there shall be those who can carry on the various occupations demanded by our complex civilization, in the trades, in business, and in the professions; third, that there shall be investigators, scientific specialists, extenders of human knowledge, in all spheres. None of these needs are likely to be denied—not even the last; for our age has had so many demonstrations of the practical value of scientific discoveries that it is even ready to grant the value of the extension of knowledge for its own sake. That, then, every man should have the education necessary to render him a useful member of society; that the necessary occupations should be provided for; that there should be a class of scientific specialists constantly push-

ing out the boundaries of human knowledge, —we are all agreed. And to this extent, at least, the problems, first of the elementary schools; second, of the trade, technical and professional schools; and third, of the university proper, are recognized and justified.

Our difficulties begin when we try to define more narrowly just what is to be included in our first group of schools. Exactly what education is indispensable that one may become a useful member of society? Virtually, we seem to have decided that that indispensable education is covered in our primary and grammar grades; for the majority do not go further, and compulsory education does not require more. And yet, with practical unanimity, the United States have decided that the State is justified in furnishing, and, indeed, is bound to furnish, that smaller number of its children who are willing and able to take further schooling, opportunity to continue for three or four years longer in studies of so-called "secondary" grade. The State can justify this procedure only upon the

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