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Against “Intellectualism”: The Proximate Aim of Education

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are luminaries who have carved niches in the Philippine historical firmament with dazzling brilliance and towed the Philippine star of promise in the dizzying heights of present-day atmosphere. We have searched deep and wide in the panorama of Philippine personalities with such siftingly selective eyes that in the process only the refined, only the brilliant, only the constant remain." The editors, however, show themselves no more fastidious in their choice of persons than in the unconventional diction of their prose.

ANTONIO G. MANUUD

AGAINST "INTELLECTUALISM"

THE PROXIMATE AIM OF EDUCATION. A Study of the Proper and Immediate End of Education. By Kevin J. O'Brien, C.S.S.R., M.A. The Bruce Publishing Company. Milwaukee. 1958. Pp. x, 267.

In his insistence upon Christian perfection as the *proximate* end of education, Father O'Brien intends to part company with those Catholic philosophers of education whom he terms the "Intellectualists." He sums up the intellectualist view as follows: "The school's proximate end is intellectual formation. Its remote end to which intellectual formation, a good in itself, is directly ordained, is man's Christian perfection. Its ultimate end is man's possession of God in heaven."

According to the author, this view cannot be reconciled with Papal doctrine on the end of education. The Popes do not speak of Christian perfection as a remote end, nor as an end pertaining merely to the integrity of education; they describe it as a proximate, essential end. "The teacher in the school is to be immediately and essentially concerned with the pupil's moral formation in Christ." Moral formation and intellectual formation: this is the proximate end of true education. Nor do the Popes make any distinction between "education" and the "school."

After developing his main thesis that Christian perfection is the proximate end of the school's activity, the author then proceeds to explain the teaching function of the school in a manner which, to this reviewer, seems to be scarcely reconcilable with his main thesis. As the author himself might express it (for he shows himself extremely fond of homely illustrations) he goes around a sharp corner without sufficiently signaling for the turn.

Since the teaching function of the school is an "instrument," it must have its own proper effect. The author explains that this proper effect of the teaching function is *the production of knowledge*: "Left to itself, this is all that human teaching, properly speaking, does..."

In thus explaining the instrumental role of the school in education, the author seems to admit that the strictly academic activity of a school has for its proper end *intellectual formation*. Thus, it seems to this reviewer, there is no real difference between the author's view and that of the "intellectualists." This impression is confirmed by the practical applications of his doctrine which the author makes with regard to the curriculum of the Catholic school. They would satisfy the most ardent of intellectualists.

Let us say that the proximate end of a school's strictly academic activity is the intellectual formation of the student. The proximate end of the school as a whole, and the remote end of the academic activity, is the development of all the student's gifts and capabilities. The remote end of the school is Christian perfection. The ultimate end is God supernaturally attained. Such a view—by no means original—would not be out of conformity with Papal doctrine on the end of education. Would there be a real difference between it and the doctrine of our author, and between it and the view of the "intellectualists"? This reviewer confesses that after many readings of the book, he is not certain.

JAMES J. MEANY

PUBLIC FUNDS FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLS

PUBLIC FUNDS FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN A DEMOCRACY.
Theory and Practice in Fifty-one Countries. By Benigno Benabarre,
O.S.B., Ph.D. Manila. M.C.S. Enterprises. 1958. Pp. xvii, 325.

An earlier, mimeographed edition of this book was reviewed in this Quarterly two years ago (Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 104-105). Its appearance in a printed edition, revised and improved, is an event worth attention. A long list of errata—and not complete, at that—appears in the front of the book. It would be unfortunate if this should discourage the prospective reader. Except for these lapses of the printer or proof-reader, there is every indication of careful thoroughness in the preparation of the work.