

from St. Luke's College, Exeter

Preliminary Points.

On Thursday June 20th I found that I did not have enough time for all I wanted to say. I therefore put a few preliminary points in writing so that some who come early may consider them before, and others who come late may become aware of them after I have spoken.

I HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT:

(1) All teaching is selection - from the vast ocean of what we might put before our students, for their consideration and concern, we select just a very few bucketfuls.

(2) All teaching (at any rate up to Secondary Stage inclusive) is simplification - we cannot (at any rate before tertiary stage) offer any subject in all its depth and complexity.

(3) Teachers, therefore, need some basic principle to guide the selections and the simplifications that they will make.

(4) The principle that ought to guide us is that the selections and the simplifications that we make shall be such that by time the children (who come to us at five) are about to leave us at whatever age they may leave, they shall understand the world into which they are being lead forth in such a way that they shall

(5) It does not much matter what words we use to end that sentence: so that they will live good lives, live satisfying lives, live whole lives, live dedicated lives, live lives in and through which they will make some positive contribution to other people and perhaps to the day and age in which they live. There are many other words that could have been chosen; but they all mean the same thing in the end.

(6) We should therefore so select and simplify that our pupils, when they leave us, may feel that they have been offered a perspective on the world they are called to live in - a panorama on the vast on-going cavalcade of past, present and probable future, within which they may see, under all the superficial chaos, some kind of worthy purpose working itself out - some purpose to which each may make his or her tiny contribution.

(7). If we succeed in offering such a perspective, it will be supportive to whatever of good may have been implanted in the pupils by the heredity and environment that they have enjoyed or endured; and inhibitive against the forces of idleness, self-centredness, aggressiveness and all other kinds of loathsomeness that are inevitably inherent in all of us.

(8) If we fail to offer this perspective, of course we shall not utterly destroy the good that struggles to express itself in the lives of those who have been lucky both in nature and nurture; but we shall leave them trying to do good with a tinge of anxiety lest, perchance, they are behaving like fools in the tough world where the right rule is to go out and get what you can for yourself. If we fail to offer this perspective - if our pupils leave us supposing that they go forth into a cavalcade of bloody nonsense signifying nothing - then it will be just that much harder for them to restrain the destructive forces that are at work in varying degrees in all of us.

(9) History teachers in Secondary Schools have particular responsibilities in all this. But others must not shrug out. All the teachers in all schools for all ages have a common and shared responsibility for achieving, or for failing to achieve, the result that needs to be achieved.

If anyone, in the History Department or elsewhere, disputes any of these or she/ "self-evident" propositions, he/ only needs to identify the point that she or he disputes and it can be picked out for detailed debate between me and him-or-her next term.

LESSON NOTE

Pupils: College Students

Age and Sex: Mixed

Ability: High

Date and Time: 20/24.VI.74. 12.10 - 2.00. pm.

Connection with previous work: A suggested summary of 9 months experience with an invitation to look forward to a teaching future.

CRITERION BEHAVIOUR: The pupils will know that teachers in Secondary Schools (particularly but not exclusively history teachers) almost wholly fail to offer pupils a panorama or perspective on past, present and probable future within which they can see some sublime purpose working itself out - a purpose to which they might make their tiny but definite contributions; they will see that there is a framework within which a far better curriculum could be offered.

RESOURCES

Held by Teacher:

Books
Maps of England & France
Camera with gadgets.

Held by Pupils:

Pad of paper,
a writing instrument,
a copy of the Lesson Note.

TEACHER'S PART

TALK 12.10. - 1.00.

LISTEN 1.10. - 2.00

PUPILS' PART

LISTEN

TALK

E.H.Dance in History the Betrayer said that teachers teach what they learned when they were students twenty or forty years previously; and from them their pupils learn what they will teach to others twenty or forty years later. "Thus the history taught in our schools and colleges falls far short of the needs of the real world for which it is supposed to teach our citizens".

Herbert Butterfield (Regius Professor of History, Cambridge) in History and Christianity (G.Bell & Son, 1949) p.4. "I am not the only person who thinks that present-day history . . . is in reality a more serious obstruction to Christianity than the natural sciences."

J. H. Plumb (reviewing The Study of History by Toynbee) Daily Telegraph 19.X.72: "Most professional historians think the effort to give a coherent pattern of understanding to the history of mankind almost worthless."

Arnold Toynbee, Surviving the Future (OUP 1971), p.106: "We had been expecting that the tendency which had been dominant in the Western world since before the close of the seventeenth century would persist there and would also assert itself in the non-Western parts of the World. We had expected that life throughout the World would become more rational, more humane, more democratic, and that, slowly but surely, political democracy would produce greater social equality." (After corresponding hopes about increase and fairer distribution of wealth) "We thought that mankind's course was set for an earthly paradise, and that our approach towards this goal was predestined for us by historical necessity."

M.V.C.Jeffreys, Professor of Education, Birmingham, Personal Values in the Modern World (Penguin 1962): "On the surface we have never had it so good. But beneath that day-to-day security is a gulf of deep insecurity such as the

Teilhard de Chardin, Vision of the Past (Collins 1966) p.76: "So long as only their individual advantage seems to them to be at stake in earth's adventure the men of our day will never submit their mind and will to anything greater than themselves. Explain to them the greatness of the current of which they are a part . . . inheritors of a labour as old as the world, and charged with transmitting the accumulated capital to all those who are to come. Then you will have overcome their tendency to inertia and disorder, and shown them what they perhaps worshipped without giving it a name."

Professor Hayakawa, Address to American Psychological Association, 1968: "Advertising says that material possession is everything; that this headache remedy, this luxurious carpeting, this model Jaguar, will bring you charm, popularity, sex fulfilment, domestic tranquility, and the envy of your neighbours. All happiness, all significance, all values that human beings might strive for are translated by advertising into purchasable commodities."

J.M.Keynes, The End of Laissez-Faire 1926, republished with foreword by Richard Acland and available to you today, 50p: "I think that Capitalism, wisely managed, can probably be made more efficient for attaining economic ends than any alternative system yet in sight, but that in itself it is in many ways extremely objectionable."

Professor Dennis Gabor, Lecture to Malvern VI, 1973: "Either steer society into a state of zero economic growth or else face collapse of our industrial civilisation."

Professor Barry Commoner, Address to the Council of Europe 1971: On purely theoretical grounds it is self-evident that an economic system which is impelled to grow by constantly increasing the rate at which it extracts wealth from the ecosystem must eventually drive the ecosystem to a state of collapse."

FACTS summarised from interview with Scientific Counsellor, German Embassy: Nuclear fission lands humanity with radioactive waste to be stored and monitored for over 1000 years. Today scientists "see no reason in principle why energy from fusion is impossible." A hopeful estimate for the first prototype fusion plant is 1984 at £1,000,000,000. If we don't then build all the fusion plants humanity will need by 2030 there will be an energy famine when your children are 40-50.

Professor Dennis Meadows, Limits of Growth (Earth Island), p.174: "Any human activity that does not need a large flow of irreplaceable resources... in particular pursuits that many would list as the most satisfying activities of man - art, education, music, religion, basic scientific research, athletics and social interaction - could flourish."

BOOKS referred to but not quoted: Lynn White, Medieval Technology and Social Change (OUP 1962); Kenneth Clark (BBC and John Murray 1969); Dr. Joseph Needham The Grand Titration (George Allen & Unwin 1969); Hugh Montefiore Doom or Deliverance (Manchester University 1971); John Strachey, End of Empire (Golans 1955); Richard Acland The Next Step (Acland Publications, PO Box 41, Exeter, 1974)