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SPENCER ON EDUCATION.



MHAT knowledge is of most worth? Such is the question proposed by this great English philosopher and educationalist, as an introduction to his very remarkable treatise on Education. And what is his answer? "That knowledge," says he, "is of most importance which enables us to live completely." But what must we know in order that we may live completely? We must understand how our bodies are to be treated that health may be preserved, and disease guarded against, consequently a knowledge of physiology and hygiene is necessary. The mind requires an especial treatment, therefore psychology must be studied. A family must be brought up and fitted for society demanding an acquaintance with the laws of domestic economy and morals. Nature's resources cannot be properly utilized without a knowledge of chemistry, physics, mineralogy and agriculture, nor can we understand our social and political relations unless we have given some attention to moral philosophy and political economy. Such then is the programme which children must follow if they would attain the end of education as seen by Mr. Spencer. This is what he means by complete living, and this is the test which must be applied consciously, methodically and in all cases.

Direct self-preservation, indirect self-preservation, preparation for parenthood and citizenship, together with the miscellaneous refinements of life, make up his entire curriculum of studies. Now, all this sounds very well, and apparently embraces all that is required to be known,

but does it satisfactorily answer the question, "what knowledge is of most worth?" We fancy not. That knowledge is of most worth, which best enables us to fulfil the end for which we were created. But for what end was man created? To know and serve God here on earth, and after to see and enjoy Him for ever in Heaven. This is clear to all, for otherwise a knowledge of the creature would take precedence of a knowledge of his Creator, our interests would be superior to God's interests, and Heaven, so far as we are concerned, would have been created in vain. In vain too, would Christ have left the bosom of his heavenly Father to live in the womb of his earthly mother. In vain would he have taught and preached concerning the kingdom of his Father, and in vain would he have shed his blood on the hill of Calvary for the redemption of man. "Who are those" asked Father Faber in one of his conferences "that have avoided hell?" Those and those only, who on earth took up their cross, and took it up daily, and so and only so, and always so, have followed Christ." Is not then a knowledge of God, and our duty towards Him, really of *more worth* than the transitory things of this world? For what will it profit a man if he has lived this life completely, if he suffer the loss of his immortal soul? "Self-preservation is the first law of nature," is a maxim, which though true to a certain extent, admits of limits. The soldier, obedient to the orders of his commander, risks his life on the battle-field that the honor, peace and integrity of his country may be preserved. So, too, the soldiers of Christ, obedient to their Master's orders, to teach all nations, have sacrificed all earthly comforts and pleasures, exposed