

Within this vast Commonwealth of ours, we embrace almost every known faith and creed. But this creates no barrier between any of us, when we seek to define the aim and content of education within a free society. Through the religious faith to which each one of us adheres, we seek our own spiritual salvation, but surely we must agree that if the use of the word "Education" is to have any meaning we should be able to declare its purpose within the Commonwealth:

"Holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all".

To have all the examples of the past from which to draw is a storehouse of immense value. There was the teaching for religious office in the ancient civilizations of Asia, the Middle East and Egypt. There was the stern discipline of Sparta. There was the great period of education in Athens during the golden days of Greece. We can look back upon the steady growth of education and of culture in Europe. All these, including the firm growth of education here in Britain and throughout the Commonwealth, suggest alternatives and indicate the course which we should follow. Nor should we forget the straitjacket within which education has been confined in the dictatorships which have emerged in recent years.

Our plans, it seems to me, should be an expression of our belief in freedom. While governments must of necessity play their necessary and important role in working out the details of any plans formulated and approved by this Conference, the ultimate responsibility for their operation and their success will, of necessity, rest mainly upon our universities. As we seek an answer to this fundamental question, "what do we mean by Education?", I venture to suggest that all universities today should ask themselves three questions.

- (1) Is not the most important problem for the world today a moral and a spiritual one? On the material side we are doing very well and we shall do still better and expand it. Our real weakness and the real division between the totalitarian state and the free society lies in the other field.
- (2) What are the universities going to do to cure this weakness, whose existence they cannot possibly deny?
- (3) Having regard to the fact that our future will be so largely shaped by the thoughts implanted in the universities, ought anyone to be allowed to pass through a university without thinking about this problem? Can we ignore what Plato called "the noblest of all studies - the study of what a man should be and how he should live"?