

“SÓLO LA ENSEÑANZA CATÓLICA ES MEDIO FÁCIL SEGURO
PARA EL PROGRESO CIENTIFICO BAJO SUS VARIAS FORMAS”

DISCURSO

EN LA APERTURA ANUAL
DE LOS ESTUDIOS
DE LA UNIVERSIDAD DE MANILA

EL 2 DE JULIO DE 1872

POR

EL R. P. FR. MANUEL PUEBLA
DEL ÓRDEN DE PREDICADORES

PROFESOR DE FILOSOFÍA Y DIRECTOR DE COLEGIALES

EN LA MISMA UNIVERSIDAD

LA FE ES EL FUNDAMENTO...
Y EL CRITERIO DE LA CIENCIA.
CLEMENTE ALEJANDRINO.

MANILA

ESTABLECIMIENTO TIPOGRÁFICO DEL
COLEGIO DE SANTO TOMÁS,
A CARGO DE A. AOIZ.

1872

FOREWORD

Belén L. Tangco, OP

CATHOLIC EDUCATION ALONE IS A CERTAIN EASY MEANS OF A SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS

The author of this lecture, Rev. Fr. Manuel Puebla of the Order of Preachers, delivered this address during the annual opening of classes on July 2, 1872 at the University of Manila. It was printed at the printing press of the Colegio de Santo Tomas.

In his humble expression of the lofty honors bestowed upon him, Fr. Puebla conveys appreciation and thanks to the convened literary assembly. He focuses on addressing the youth on their status of not having reached yet the summit, a precipitous height, which separates them from the sciences. There is no use for flaunting the number of laurels claimed if there would not be any realization of the imitable diligence in studies which they practised. The youth rarely see the future through a truth prism. In this they would see the tranquility in the fruition of their hard work, sweat, fatigue and anxieties. Not only their sacrifices should be realized but also the contribution of their educational institutions, the professors, the parents and the mother country under the aegis of Spain. Gratitude brings forth peace and calm.

In the impossibility of appreciating one by one the immense benefits which had been recognized as imported from Spain, the lecturer chooses to delve on science education, a vital element in the whole society, rich in adventures, or fraught with discord and conflict. Which could have been the bases and foundation of education? This is a delicate branch of concern. The reigning Pontiff protector of the sacred deposit of truth, had remarked that:

It is indubitable that the human society is afflicted with the gravest damage where the public and private education of the youth, where the high level of felicity of the civil and religious society springs forth, nourished by the moderate authority of the Church and her awesome function. In this way, she becomes privy little by little, to the human society with such Christian spirit, the only one which can conserve solidly the fundamental of tranquility and of public order, procure and arrange the useful and veritable progress in civilization... An education which limits itself not only to the natural sciences and to the social and earthly ends of life, but also takes off from the revealed truths, inevitably falls out from the spirit of error and lies; and

the education that pretends to form, without the help of the doctrine and the law of Christian moral, the spirits and hearts of the youth, so tender and so susceptible to the paths of evil, has to engender forcibly a race disposed to bad passions and the pride of its reason; and some generations educated in this way cannot bring less than the grand calamities to the family and to the State.

From here, it is clearly shown that there is the necessity of establishing in communities an education molded in the Catholic doctrine, the only one that could work for the well-being of nations and ennoble the intellect, bringing these without hindrances to the intricate labyrinths of science. Pius IX, in proclaiming before the cities the imperious duty to construct education under the direction and protection of the Catholic religion, did not introduce any novelty in the doctrine; he just thundered his anathemas against the bragging presumption of the century gaining ground in divorcing science and religion, and highly sanctioning the autonomy of human reason, emancipating the teaching of the authority and moderate action of the Church. There is no possible salvation for society which, following from the start its autonomy in its phases, organizes a teaching disconnected from religious principle; it is a depository of the element of perturbation and dissolution, and a delay in the advancement of the sciences. It is only Catholic education which can neutralize the evils in society, give joy to the communities, elevate the intelligence by way of knowing, because “ONLY CATHOLIC TEACHING IS A CERTAIN AND EASY MEANS FOR SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS IN VARIOUS FORMS.”

In stamping man with the seal of intelligence, the Lord gave him an unlimited capacity, as part of His objective, an inextinguishable desire to know. Participation of human reason in the divine intelligence, impression of divine light in our souls, luminous ray that radiates from the Primary Truth, does not have marked boundaries on his amazing activities. That which manifests under the rude covering of matter and that which participates in the condition of beings apart from the corporal world; that which has real existence and that which, enclosed in the profundities of the omnipotence only has the reason of being in the archetypal ideas of divine reason; that which subsists in itself and that which enjoys borrowed existence; the sky, the earth, the seas, the creature, the Creator and the mysterious bond that unites them, and everything finally forms and enters into the object of human understanding when it participates in the universal reason of being. From the perfection of our mind originates the innate propensity of all men towards the tranquil and sweet possession of the truth, using the continuous exercise of the cognitive faculty. And in the manner that the eye looks for light that makes things visible, and the body, the food and the drink that conserve and strengthen it, the human reason looks for acquisition of the truth, its natural retention, looks for it indefatigably and being on this condition at times, it goes beyond limits elevating itself to God that which in between finite and

infinite and hear the seductive voice which says: “immeasurable is your perfection, you will arrive at the height of knowing fixing your seat beside the throne of the Most High, you will surprise men with your secrets, you will be a perfect image of the Lord if you touch the fruit of that tree, and you like it and eat it, and satisfy yourself with the fruit, at wrong time is the prohibition imposed on man.”

This seduction made in the solitudes of Eden is repeated at all times when man allows himself to go downhill and more than ever in our century, that this is of pride and of the unmodulated desire of science, if it puts to relieve the sad condition of man, it patents once more the common saying of old: “all men have an innate desire to know, an inclination resulting from his rational nature.” The source of all natural inclination can be traced to God who upon creating all things provided these with wise providence and put at the bosom of everything a principle of activity of analogous conditions to the nature of beings and to the mission they carry to the world. The desire to learn has its primitive origin in God, author of rational nature and prudent rules of the universe, which moves smoothly to the deign of His hands towards the private and universal ends so that happiness could be had and hymns of glory could be chanted to the Supreme Creator who produces happiness out of nothing. And if the reason of man were to move towards the truth, like the body to its corporal maintenance, like the rock to its native center, would it be dutiful for science to venture out and work towards the patrimony of all, making society an assembly of wise men, a universal lyceum?

The insufficiency of human reason to resolve scientific problem in all phases of knowledge, and with education as a known necessity as auxiliary element in molding human nature, only manifests that catholic education is the only one which recognizes the natural process of reason to follow footprints and movements. The natural movement of reason does not suffice to resolve the complex problem of science. As averred by the Angelic Master, like art to nature, education compares with the natural movement of reason; the arts ought to imitate nature; then, education ought to follow, in a parallel mode, the natural movement of reason. Only the Catholic teaching accommodates the order of nature; later, this teaching unites all methods directed by the mind, to procure with security all the ways necessary to obtain science.

The honored lecturer evinced the smooth flow of reason behind the facility that Catholic education wields in procuring progress in science in its various forms. He unraveled the beauty of human nature, natural reasoning and the very ends of human existence. He lectured and reaffirmed trust in the Supreme Creator.