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IN MEMORIAM

William Anderson arrived from Glasgow in 1921 to become the first professor of philosophy at the Auckland University College. (Before his arrival we had been content with a lecturer in mental and moral science, who was also professor of history and professor of economics.) Last month, on the eve of his retirement, Professor Anderson died suddenly and peacefully at his bach on Waiheke Island from a cerebral thrombosis. I have never seen more genuine grief at any funeral.

He was an exceedingly nice man to work with—humorous, friendly, helpful, loyal. As a teacher he had a unique knack of illuminating a subject by presenting it from a completely unexpected point of view. But he was also a man with extremely definite ideas about the nature of philosophy and consequently about the role of philosophy in the community. And he will be mostly remembered, I imagine, for the crusades he undertook in pursuance of these ideas.

Professor Anderson's fullest statement about the nature of philosophy is to be found in a discussion he had with Professor Muscio and Professor Boyce Gibson in the first volume of this *Journal*. Philosophy to him, as to the Greeks, involved a search for wisdom and it was in practice that he found wisdom exemplified. Thus he defined philosophy as the theory of practice and by this means he arrived at a very neat statement of its relations both to science and to politics.

Practice, he held, involves three factors: "(a) a form of activity, relevant to the recognition, (b) that something is good, and (c) that something is a means to that". But science, in the contemporary sense, is concerned entirely with the last of these factors, "namely with the erection of our opinions about the relations of means to ends into laws of causation". Hence, although it is true that the existing sciences are, in a sense, offshoots of philosophy, it is absurd to think that philosophy will ever be replaced by science. To suppose that, in Professor Anderson's opinion, was to suppose that a whole can be replaced by a part.

On the other hand, he found that there was a much more intimate connection between politics and philosophy. The important consideration here is that the good, which is the end of practice, is never, as a matter of fact, a good peculiar to this subject or that, but rather a good common to various subjects. "Now the common recognition of the good, specifically realised through the volition attendant on that recognition, constitutes society." Hence the nearest analogue of philosophy for Professor Anderson is to be found in the deliberative and legislative functions of a democratic community; and indeed he goes so far as to say that "philosophy is co-extensive with political theory".

It is in the light of this conception of philosophy that we should estimate the numerous controversies in which Professor Anderson engaged in regard to education. Education for him was primarily a matter of politics. Indeed, it was the primary problem of politics, since it is only through education that the young are trained to take part in those deliberations about practice which constitute politics. But education, he found, had in these days fallen into the hands of people who were altogether ignorant of its proper function. It seemed to him, therefore, that it was the bounden duty of the philosopher to oppose their influence to the full extent of his power.

Moreover, Professor Anderson could claim some very respectable precedents for his attitude here. In the terminology of the Scottish school, he was fighting for common sense against the devastating inroads of naturalism. And he could find an even closer parallel in the teaching of Socrates. Like Socrates, he always proclaimed that the unexamined life was not worth living; but like Socrates again, he always held that the good life was the life of the ordinary good man who knew what he was doing. Was he not, therefore, justified in attacking the latter-day sophists who were undermining the faith of the common man and thereby imperilling the structure of society?

To a large extent, the dispute between Professor Anderson and the new educationists turned upon the notion of individuality. For over a century it had been proclaimed that the great danger of our closely knit modern civilisation is that it will produce a race of conformists, incapable of thinking for themselves and incapable, consequently, of sustaining the civilisation of which they are the products. It has also been widely held that the only possible remedy for this infirmity of modern civilisation is to be found in the proper development of individuality. And so far, I think, there is no dispute. Dispute only arises when an attempt is made to define individuality, and then it appears that

there are two quite different schools of thought upon the subject—the school of Mill and the new educationists and the school of Hegel and Professor Anderson.

For Mill (or at least for the Mill of the essay *On Liberty*), individuality consists in the free development of all the potentialities of men. But he always assumed at the same time that when men are encouraged to develop all their potentialities they will inevitably develop in different directions. Hence for Mill the development of individuality which is to save us from the mediocrity of mass-production requires a good deal of self-restraint on the part of the state. It must never coerce its citizens and it must always tolerate their eccentricities. And it is in similar *laisser-faire* terms that the new educationists think of the relation between the school and its pupils.

For Hegel and Professor Anderson, however, the relation between the state and its citizens and consequently between the school and its pupils is quite different. The essential thing in both cases is that the society in question embodies a certain tradition which is to be assimilated by its members. In both cases this requires the society to pursue an active policy towards its members and in both cases this policy must be supported by coercion when necessary. But it is altogether wrong to regard coercion of this sort as an aimless or sadistic exercise of capricious power. It is justified in both cases by the fact that it is only through the assimilation of a common tradition that genuine individuality is ever attained.

Consider the case of the great artist or scientist or philosopher. It is sheer Bohemian nonsense to suppose that he attains his individuality by ignoring or denying the traditions of his calling. He has first to put in some very painful years learning them and then afterwards he has the opportunity of adding to them. The only genuine individuality, in short, is that which works within a tradition, and it is because the new educationists so consistently neglected this fundamental fact that Professor Anderson so consistently opposed them. "Individuality", as he puts it, "depends on the realisation of a common world; only thus can the particular be secured against disruption from without."

In this obituary notice I have tried to give a brief survey of Professor Anderson's philosophy. He would have preferred it so, because the reality of a man for him always consisted in what he believed and was prepared to act on. I have reduced his fundamental ideas to two—the idea of philosophy as the theory of practice and the idea of individuality as involving the

assimilation of tradition. I have also pointed out that these are both traditional ideas. This is scarcely the place to notice that a good deal of disagreement is still possible on the basis of these ideas, for example, on the subject of academic freedom. It is, however, the place to observe that, like all traditional ideas, these have to be learned anew by each generation; and I shall always be profoundly grateful to Professor Anderson for teaching them to me.

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