

Natural Indolence

The intellectual decadence of the day is not limited to the Church, or to the subject of religion, but appears in secular education as well. Sometimes it is assisted by absurd pedagogic theories, which, whatever their variety in detail, are alike in their depreciation of the labor of learning facts.

Facts, in the sphere of education, are having a hard time. The old-fashioned notion of reading a book or hearing a lecture and simply storing up in the mind what the book or the lecture contains—this is regarded as entirely out of date.

A year or so ago I heard a noted educator give some advice to a company of college professors advice which was typical of the present tendency in education. It is a great mistake, he said in effect, to suppose that a college professor ought to teach; on the contrary he ought simply to give the students an opportunity to learn.

This pedagogic theory of following the line of least resistance in education and avoiding all drudgery and all hard work has been having its natural result; it has joined forces with the natural indolence of youth to produce in present-day education a very lamentable decline.

(What is Faith? by J. Gresham Machen, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1946, 15, e-book, Paragraph structure modified)