

# **THE REFORM OF EDUCATION**

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The reform of education by Giovanni Gentile

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**GIOVANNI GENTILE**

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OF EDUCATION**



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BY  
GIOVANNI GENTILE

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With an Introduction by  
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## NOTE

SHORTLY after Trieste fell into Italian hands, a series of lectures was arranged for the school teachers of the city, in order to welcome them to their new duties as citizens and officials of Italy. The task of opening the series was assigned to Giovanni Gentile, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Rome, who delivered the lectures which constitute the present volume. At my request Signor Gentile has rewritten the first chapter, eliminating some of the more local of the allusions which the nature of the original occasion called forth, and Senatore Croce has very generously contributed his illuminating Introduction. The volume as it stands is more than a treatise on education: it is at one and the same time an introduction to the thought of one of the greatest of living philosophers, and an introduction to the study of all philosophy. If the teachers of Trieste were able to understand and to enjoy a philosophic discussion of their chosen work, why should not the teachers of England and America?

J. E. S.

## INTRODUCTION

THE author of this book has been working in the same field with me for over a quarter of a century, ever since the time when we undertook—be a very young man, and I somewhat his senior—to shake Italy out of the doze of naturalism and positivism back to idealistic philosophy; or, as it would be better to say, to philosophy pure and simple, if indeed philosophy is always idealism.

Together we founded a review, the *Critica*, and kept it going by our contributions; together we edited collections of classical authors; and together we engaged in many lively controversies. And it seems indeed as though we really succeeded in laying hold of and again firmly re-establishing in Italy the tradition of philosophical studies, thus welding a chain which evidently has withstood the strain and destructive fury of the war and its afterclaps.

By this I do not mean to imply that our gradual achievements were the result of a definite preconceived plan. Our work was the spontaneous consequence of our spontaneous mental development and of the spontaneous agreement of our minds. And therefore this common task, too, gradually becoming differentiated

in accordance with the peculiarities of our temperaments, our tendencies, and our attitudes, resulted in a kind of division of labour between us. So that whereas I by preference have devoted my attention to the history of literature, Gentile has dedicated himself more particularly to the history of philosophy and especially of Italian philosophy, not only as a thinker but as a scholar too, and as a philologist. He may be said to have covered the entire field from the Middle Ages to the present time by his works on Scholasticism in Italy, on Bruno, on Telesio, on Renaissance philosophy, on Neapolitan philosophy from Genovesi to Galluppi, on Rosmini, on Gioberti, and on the philosophical writers from 1850 to 1900. And though his comprehensive *History of Italian Philosophy*, published in parts, is far from being finished, the several sections of it have been elaborated and cast in the various monographs which I have just mentioned.

In addition to this, Gentile has been devoting special attention to religious problems. He took a very important part in the inquiry into and criticism of "modernism," the hybrid nature of which he laid bare, exposing both the inner contradictions and the scanty sincerity of the movement. His handling of this question was shown to be effective by the fact, among others, that the authors of the encyclical *Pascendi*, which brought upon Modernism the condemnation of the Church, availed themselves of the sharp edge of