

Quotes from George Santayana (1863-1952)



Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

The Life of Reason: The Phases of Human Progress (1905-1906)

Vol. I, Reason in Common Sense

To call war the soil of courage and virtue is like calling debauchery the soil of love.

Vol. II, Reason in Society, Ch. III: Industry, Government, and War

Injustice in this world is not something comparative; the wrong is deep, clear, and absolute in each private fate.

Vol. II, Reason in Society, Ch. IV: The Aristocratic Ideal

In the Gospels, for instance, we sometimes find the kingdom of heaven illustrated by principles drawn from observation of this world rather than from an ideal conception of justice; ... They remind us that the God we are seeking is present and active, that he is the living God; they are doubtless necessary if we are to keep religion from passing into a mere idealism and God into the vanishing point of our thought and endeavor.

Interpretations of Poetry and Religion (1900), p. 54

Religion in its humility restores man to his only dignity, the courage to live by grace.

Dialogues in Limbo (1926), Ch. 4

[The empiricist] thinks he believes only what he sees, but he is much better at believing than at seeing.

Skepticism and Animal Faith (1923), "Objections to Belief in Substance", p. 201

To the mind of the ancients, who knew something of such matters, liberty and prosperity seemed hardly compatible, yet modern liberalism wants them together.

Prosperity, both for individuals and for states, means possessions; and possessions mean burdens and harness and slavery; and slavery for the mind, too, because it is not only the rich man's time that is pre-empted, but his affections, his judgment, and the range of his thoughts.

It is not politics that can bring true liberty to the soul; that must be achieved, if at all, by philosophy;

Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies (1922), "The Irony of Liberalism"

The truth is cruel, but it can be loved, and it makes free those who have loved it.

Little Essays (1921), p. 107

To covet truth is a very distinguished passion.

The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy (1911), p. 48

Experience has repeatedly confirmed that well-known maxim of Bacon's that "a little philosophy inclines a man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy brings men's minds about to religion." At the same time, when Bacon penned that sage epigram... he forgot to add that the God to whom depth in philosophy brings back men's minds is far from being the same from whom a little philosophy estranges them.

Reason in Religion, Ch. I

The idea of Christ is much older than Christianity.

The Idea of Christ in the Gospels (1946)

A child educated only at school is an uneducated child.

"Why I Am Not a Marxist" "Modern Monthly: Volume: 9" (April 1935); Page: 77-79.