

East Carolina Teachers College

Dec. 6, 1923.

22 verses from the 4th chapter of the Books of Acts.

There are in the public schools of America just about 25 million children with between 600 and 900 thousand teachers working with these 25 million school folks. A large percent of the people of this country are intensely interested in the proper education of our children. The different organizations other than the National Education Association are beginning to give considerable thought and attention to the public school. As I told you some time ago the American Legion is very much interested in having the right type of public schools for the childhood of this country.

The American Bar Association has a committee working on the problem of how to help to improve the public schools of America. The medical profession is finding that much of their work has to be done through the public school; the health work, preventive methods, is constantly using public schools to spread its information. In fact nearly every organization in this country is making some kind of study and contribution to the American public school. I mention those things just to let you see what a wonderful influence the public school of America is in shaping the spirit of the American people. There is a movement on foot by the Bar Association to see that the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the several states is taught to the children in the grades, to give those children a concept, and a right concept of the Government they are living in, because many of the children do not get out of the grades, and for that reason the Bar Association is trying to see to it that the fundamental laws are taught even to children in the grades. I wanted to make that much of additional reasons why the public schools are at least one of the great factors in shaping the spirit of the American people.

I want to talk a little while this morning on the influence of the church as another one of those influences that we find every where in America, and it is entering into the spirit of the American people, and when I speak of the church I am not talking about any one denomination, I am not having in mind any particular branch of the church. The American people are as all other people are a religious people. We are divided up into all kinds of denominations, but we are religious, we are religious minded. I know of no other organization with the power of holding people day in and day out, week in and week out, year in and year out, like the church. I don't know of any other organization in the world where the people will go twice or three times a week, and hear some public speaker dealing with one general theme, and continue to go year in and year out to hear some one talk on the same theme. There isn't any other subject that the people will go to and pay the attention to, and contribute to like the church. That means, of course, that religion is a fundamental part of American life, and where the people gather together Sunday after Sunday, and Wednesday night after Wednesday night going into the different churches, studying in their Sunday School and Bible classes, and I like to include in this talk the Y.W.C.A. and the Y.M.C.A., the religious organization, all of them,



week after week, going to these places to study and to hear, to sing songs and offer up prayers. That influence is in a large measure the one influence that saves the civilization. It is the influence being constantly thrown out to the American people that brings them out of the sordid things of every day life to a higher, clearer and a nobler purpose in life. It is the influence that appeals to the spirit side of man, it is the influence that helps the outcast to readjust himself in human society; it is the influence that brings to the individual the desire to make the most possible out of his individual life, and therefore it is absolutely impossible to estimate how much the religious organizations of America enter into the spirit of the American people. But there is no question about that religious influence being one of the tremendous factors in shaping the spirit of the American people. It is a spirit that will take a convict and make him a minister; it is the spirit that will take hold of the outcast and bring him back as an active factor in human society for good. It is the influence that will take the ball player and convert him into a great revivalist. It is the influence that will take hold of those who have lost hope, and give them a vision of hope and open to them a field of activity and service. It works individually, but in its individual working it also works through the individuals for the entire community. It is the one influence that makes life a universal thing, and you know this world isn't such an awful place to live in. It's the best I ever lived in, I never did live in as good a place as this world before, not that I remember. You go down the street any where, I don't care where, I don't mean down the street in Greenville; you go along the public highway any where, and if you need help there is always some where near you some person who will not only help, but who will be glad to help you. If you are unfortunate, if you have lost your parents they will take you, give you a home, give you an opportunity, or if you have worse than lost your parents, if you happen to be one of the few unfortunate children of America whose parents are worse than no parents, they will take you and give you a chance.

I was talking to a doctor not long ago about a little boy, a little waif, more or less an outcast, and he was affected with tuberculosis, tuberculosis in one of his legs and one of his arms. In visiting a patient in that community where the child was the doctor saw the child, he wasn't called there for him, the child didn't have any body to call the doctor, but the doctor saw him, took the little child and carried him to a hospital, and had him operated on. and he was talking to me about how the nurses, the internes, the surgeons and every body in that hospital, how they couldn't do too much for the little child. Why, he said, the King of England couldn't be treated any better than that child is being treated. If you want to touch the spirit of the American people, just let the world see, the American people see that you need their help. That is the thing that I am trying to bring to you, and that comes out of this religious life. They are ready and willing to give you a helping hand.

Have a blow out of a tire on the hard surface road, and see how many people as they come by will slow up and say, is there any thing I can do for you, can I help you? Let anything happen to you, and the world that goes by is ready to stop and help. Much



of that spirit that is every where in this great country of ours comes out of our religious life. It makes America a good place in which to live.

You are excused.