

TRAINING IN CHARACTER AND FOR CITIZENSHIP.

Training in character is training for citizenship. Good citizenship is dependent upon character. I believe it was Goethe who said "Talent may develop in solitude, but character is created in society." Character is the fruit of fellowship. Genius may shine aloof and alone, like a star, but goodness is social. Man, when developed by training and the rough usage of experience into a clean, true and dependable character, becomes life's greatest masterpiece. Often the tough nut in childhood, if not rejected by the builders (the teachers) may become the keystone to the arch of human society in his community.

Character and good citizenship are in a large measure the by-products of the school, but they are the by-products of everything done in the school. The fact that two and two always make four, builds character as a by-product. It gives the child something that is always dependable. Two and two make four wherever the child finds this problem, whether it be in the city or in the country, the child has found in the school something fixed, something dependable. The juggling of figures to get the answer, as too much of our problem solving is, is immoral, and leads toward bad citizenship. It is training children to get by with it, and this leads toward the life of a crook. Working for just the answer leads to the philosophy "If I can put it over it is right", and that is a false philosophy of life. Let the child be so taught that he sees the great underlying principles of his problem, then the solution becomes easy, and the answer takes care of itself. We have overlooked the fact that the answer is the last thing in the solution. The teaching all belongs back in the problem, and the answer is only the result of the processes that have taken place prior. Let the

answer be used only as the proof of the solution.

Knowledge is essential. I do not have much faith in a course in citizenship as the means of making good citizens. The knowledge in this course may be essential, but the course itself does not make citizens. In a government like ours it is absolutely essential that the young citizen be acquainted with the history of America, and that he be given a correct knowledge of our governmental institutions. He needs to know how laws are made and how they are enforced. This knowledge is essential to good citizenship. I am persuaded, however, that the spirit within the individual is the determining factor. Knowledge in the life of a child may be used for evil purposes as well as for good. The school must put into the lives of the children the right kind of spirit, and this may be done in part by the school in the following way:

(a) The teacher must have faith in her children. The children will realize very quickly if they are being really and truly trusted by their teacher. High school children respond quickly to this kind of treatment. It must come, however, from the teacher to the children. If the teacher has lip faith and not heart faith, the children will realize this. (Tell story of Miss White and Miss deValin).

(b) The teacher must make herself a member of the gang. If she develops the spirit of war between her children and herself, she can never make them law abiding citizens. I have known a student to come into college through a school system in which there was constant war between teacher and pupil, and I have known this student to honestly believe it was honorable to cheat on examination if she could get by with it. (Tell story)

(c) The teacher must love her children. When I hear a teacher

saying she has 30 mean little brats, I do not have to go into her room to know she is a failure. Love overcomes many of the difficulties of the classroom, and is essential in the teaching of character and citizenship "God is Love" To leave love out is to leave Jehovah out of our work. Love has faith in the children; hope for them, and will lead them to a higher and a better type of citizenship. Through love we will overcome evil.

We want to realize also that the child is living his life when he is attending school. School life is just life for the child. Habit formation is going on in the school room as well as out of the school room. The child is forming habits as well as getting ideals and standards that probably will go with him throughout his life. To the child, school is organized authority. If the school is so organized that the child is constantly trying to break the school's laws; if the child is working against the law that is over him, he is forming habits that will go with him as a mature citizen and that will lead him to become a poor citizen, If there is war between student and teacher there is being built up in the student's life a spirit of rebellion against constituted law and authority, and instead of training the child for good citizenship, such a regime trains for poor citizenship. To the child school life is real life, the habits formed here usually remain, and the direction in which the child is starting he will go through the remaining years of his life. Teach for character and citizenship by helping them to be good citizens while in school; for the crook in childhood may become the criminal in maturity. Right doing now makes for correct living later. The wise man saw it all when he said " Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart therefrom."