

Editorial

Why are we educating our children?

It is to be supposed that every parent faced with this question would have a somewhat different answer. Some answers:

We want our children to have a better life than we did.

We want our children to be fitted for the life they have to live.

We want our children to be equipped for a job by which they will make a large amount of money.

We want our children to be equipped to serve their fellow man.

We want our children to be happy.

It would be interesting to see how many parents would indicate that primarily they wanted their children educated to make money. They might justify their answer by saying that the possession of money would put a person in the position to achieve other goals in life.

With money, one is equipped to serve his fellow man.

With money, one has the means to live a comfortable life; the word comfortable meaning to live in a fine home, drive a good car, travel, have plenty of leisure to pursue hobbies, and indulge tastes, to provide the family with good clothes, good schooling, etc.

With money, the individual is freed from the corroding and degrading subterfuges that poverty imposes.

True, most people agree that the possession of money does not necessarily mean happiness and are quick to point out that the possession of money is often the root of terrible unhappiness. But this sad state, we are told, is because the individual or family has failed to recognize that there are responsibilities that the possession of money imposes. This would not happen to us if we were to acquire a large sum of money, of course!

Many people who have known great poverty and deprivation in their early lives are desperately anxious for their children to have an easier life than they ever knew. To this end they struggle hard and make desperate sacrifices. Too many times the children fail to understand and appreciate the sacrifices, causing disappointment and heartache to the parents. The aim of these parents is certainly understandable but it would appear that in their struggle they have somewhere failed.

How many parents consciously educate their children to be able to serve their fellow man? It is true that most work implies service to our fellows. The doctor serves his patients, the lawyer serves his clients, but so also does the waitress in the restaurant and the supposedly humble man who keeps our streets clean. By whatever means we make our living, most people in some way or other serve other people. But which is more important, the service we render, or the making of money? Herein lies a quality that should be instilled by a parent. If the profession, trade, work is carried out only to make money, a fine quality is lost. If the underlying thinking behind the daily labour is "how much money can I make?" a golden god is being pursued. What is happiness? At its best it is often a transient thing. Most people exist in an in-between state, neither consciously happy nor consciously unhappy. They have no violent desires, no desperate loves or burning hates. A certain and satisfactory form of happiness can come from pleasure in one's family and friends, and enjoyment in the labour that is our daily lot.

Many of today's young people are rejecting their parents' affluence and scorning the values that some parents may talk about but disregard in their personal affairs. "What is money?" they demand. "It has nothing to do with happiness; it does not promote love," they say. No doubt some of these young people are sincere thinking people trying to sort out their thoughts and to establish guidelines for themselves. Some are parasites. Their attitude is that life owes them a living. But life is sometimes slow in paying up. They are prepared to put very little into life and protest when they get very little out.

What can concerned parents do? Perhaps they ought first of all to examine their own values. Are their lives totally occupied in acquiring the means to buy the latest car, the finest television set, the beautifully furnished house, the swimming pool? In the struggle for money, are the children being bypassed and neglected?

o. In her remarks when opening the session, Miss Jean Scott, Supervisor of Junior Extension with the Home Economics Branch of the Ontario Department of Agriculture and Food said, "The girls here are representing 100,000 Club girls in Ontario and 70,000 Clubs in Canada. You are here because you have made a real contribution to your Home Communities. You are to be congratulated for your achievements which have made you eligible to attend this Conference."

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