

Character, the sum of all the elements and qualities that make up the man. How is it developed? Look at yonder tree; of what does it consist? One says, "Of roots, and stem, and leaves." Another says, "So many pounds of carbon, so many pounds of oxygen, so many of hydrogen, so many of nitrogen," etc., etc. But yet another who has looked deeper, says, "That tree as it now stands is the resultant of every particle of soil taken up by its roots, of every drop of rain and dew that has ever fallen upon it, of every particle of air taken in by its lungs, of every ray of light and heat that has come in contact with it, nay, more, the strength of its fibre partakes of the strength of every breeze that has ever blown upon it." That is the tree as we now see it. Nothing has ever been lost. Just so with a man. He is not only the resultant of every particle of food and drink taken into the body, under right conditions, of every breath of air, warm and light, or dark and cold, but there is in him now the resultant of every action performed, nay, more than that, of every thought conceived by his mind. Nothing has ever been lost in the formation of that character. Listen:—Heaven has no recording angel, has no need of one. Man writes the record of his life in minutest detail upon his character, his soul, and that is always an open book to the all-seeing eye of the Father.

Granting that children are born with inherent tendencies and that when they come to school these tendencies, good or bad, are much strengthened, you will all, I think, acknowledge the value of training in the information of character. In many old orchards in western Ontario, all the trees incline toward the east, because they have been subject to a prevailing west wind. Farmers and fruit growers now plant trees leaning toward the west so that the continual influence of the wind may only make them erect. So with young character, if there seems a natural inclination to evil it requires a prevailing wind of good training to correct it. But some teachers say we have not time for moral training; we must leave that to the home, the Church, and the Sabbath school. Listen:—You can't help it if you try. Character of some kind is being formed every moment whether you will or not. Every action (not automatic) is preceded by a thought. Thoughts lead to actions, actions repeated become habits, and the sum of all our habits is our character. There are just two ways for a teacher to get away from the responsibility of developing the character of his pupils—make them lunatics or kill them. Every moment that a human being lives and thinks, his character is growing.

The question for the teacher to decide is,—what are the elements of a *good* character and how can these be developed! It would take much space to name all, but we shall probably agree that obedience, kindness, love of truth and honesty, industry and temperance, are among the essential elements of a good character. I shall not pretend to treat the training of these in any order of importance, because on that point there is much room for differences of opinion.