

never do the job; the farmers are not prepared for it; the sportsmen will help, but they will need assistance and sympathetic guidance; skilled and unskilled laborers cannot, in the nature of the case be counted on. The teachers seem to be *it*. By judicious preparation for

and leadership of a campaign of public education, in diplomatic cooperation with all the other groups mentioned, the teachers can make a larger and more significant contribution than ever before to man's vast future in the United States of America.

I Am the Science Teacher

JAMES R. IRVING*

Somewhere in America, today, I plant an idea that may well influence our civilization twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years from today . . . maybe, just a few years from now.

Somewhere in a classroom this morning or perhaps this afternoon in a laboratory, I am guiding a thought or a hand that will someday hold the surgeon's scalpel, the fate of a vicious disease in a test tube, our technological destiny . . . a world of nuclear power for mankind's edification and benefit.

Somewhere in a school, today, my own love for my subject might well cast a spark into the tinder of a boy's or girl's mind. He or she, too, will then reap the boundless satisfaction from examination and study of the world around them.

Somewhere in the quiet of my office, tired, after the day's work, the enthusiasm that I show—the answer that I give—could easily be the turning point in the life of that freckle-faced boy. For bad or for good . . . a life of contribution, or one of mere existence.

Somewhere among the laboratory benches of our nation's schools, as we look through the eyepiece of a microscope, confirm Ohm's law or watch the brilliant flash of magnesium ribbon, I alone am responsible for the degree of impact of these experiences upon the observer's mind . . . whether they care about it . . . whether they remember a part of it . . . whether it's just another "laboratory exercise."

Somewhere, today, in one of America's classrooms, I have the privilege of enhancing young people's awe and reverence for a Supreme Power—God—in whose image they are created. Mine is truly a magnificent and splendid work. For he who thrills to the wonders

of himself and the universe about him takes from that experience a greater reverence for Him.

Somewhere, today, I am guiding the learner's mind to the beautiful realization that scientific progress is evolutionary rather than revolutionary in character . . . that nuclear energy concepts of this moment began with Thales' observation 556 B.C. and before . . . that each searcher for the Truth slowly and laboriously adds his bit to the Log of Truth until periodically, one of us is given insight into the cumulative value of such isolated observations—and ways of the universe are changed overnight.

Somewhere, today, let me call attention to the actual feebleness of man's unaided senses . . . that we alone cannot see so many of the world's beauties with the eye; that much of God's music is never heard; that many times forces we cannot feel predestine our existence; that taste and smell are many times muted to our environment.

Somewhere, today and every day, mine is the constant thrill of having to completely change my own thinking because of a new discovery in the research laboratories of the world. Mine is the satisfaction of a dynamic teaching life—a mind constantly in quest of the Truth.

Somewhere, . . . maybe today or tomorrow, but sometime before they leave me—I must lead my students to an appreciation of the power of humility . . . an element as closely entwined with the science scholar's soul as the love of search itself.

Somewhere, today, boys and girls will love science.

I am the science teacher!

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