

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AS PART OF GENERAL EDUCATION

C. H. McCloy, (From an article by the author published in the Journal of Physical Education, November, 1928)

Physical Education has for many years proceeded upon the assumptions that Christian virtues were cultivated in the individuals participating in physical education activities and that these virtues in some way could be assumed to influence all of life's activities. In modern educational psychological parlance, it was assumed that these virtues were learned and that they transferred.

These assumptions were based largely upon the writings of a past generation of psychologists who believed in the development of "faculties" of mind, such as memory, reason, moral appreciation, etc., which were applicable to almost any related problem when once they were developed. In addition, this psychological teaching was often taken out of its context in order to make a point. A quotation like the following from G. Stanley Hall:¹

"The motive of bringing out latent, decaying or even new powers, skills, knacks, and feats, in full of inspiration. Patriotism is aroused, for thus the country can be better served; thus the German Fatherland was to be restored and unified after the dark days that followed the humiliation of Jena. Now the ideals of religion are invoked that the soul may have a better and regenerated somatic organism with which to serve Jesus and the Church. Exercise is made a form of praise to God and of service to man and these motives are re-enforced by those of the new hygiene which strives for a new wholeness-holiness, and would purify the body as the temple of the Holy Ghost. Thus in Young Men's Christian Association gymnasiums the gospel of Christianity is preached anew and seeks to bring salvation to man's physical frame, which the still lingering effects of asceticism have caused to be too long neglected in its progressive degeneration. As the Greek games were in honor of the gods, so now the body is trained to better glorify God, and regimen, chastity, and temperance are given a new momentum. The physical salvation thus wrought will be, when adequately written, one of the most splendid chapters in the modern history of Christianity Strength is prayed for as well as worked for, and consecrated to the highest uses. Last but not least, power thus developed over a large surface may be applied to athletic contests in the field, and victories here are valuable as fore-gleams of how sweet the glory of achievements in higher moral and spiritual tasks will taste later."

was not followed by its next paragraph, which reads as follows:

"The dangers and sources of error in this ideal of all-sided training are, alas, only too obvious, although they only qualify its paramount good. First, it is impossible to thus measure the quanta of training needed so as to rightly assign to each its modicum and best modality of training. Indeed no method of doing this has ever been attempted, but the assessments have been arbitrary and conjectural, probably right in some and wrong in other respects, with no adequate criterion or test for either save only empirical experiences. Secondly, heredity, which lays its heavy ictus upon some neglected forms of activity and fails of all support for others, has been ignored. As we shall see later, one of the best norms here is