On Sunday, students, educators and citizens throughout the United States will begin the observance of American Education Week. This observance will have as its theme "Education for the Atomic Age."

The discovery of the secrets of the atom and the unleashing of its tremendous power have placed upon our teachers and our students a major challenge. They must develop a leadership that will be needed to rebuild the world and to direct the energies of the atom into channels of peace and righteous living. They must devote their talents to prepare the youth of this generation for living in the atomic age.

And so on the eve of this celebration and this serious realization of the tremendous responsibilities that you students and you teachers---yes, every member of our citizenship---face, I think that you should have made plain to you the grave responsibilities that education brings with it; and the great opportunities that education provides.

I know that you have marveled at the undreamed-of power contained in one atomic bomb. I know that you must have felt awe and a sincere fear at this unnatural achievement of mankind. I know that you must believe that atomic power is the greatest destructive force in the world. I know that you—or some of you—must feel that this great force can be turned into peaceful pursuits and can be made to serve mankind rather than destroy civilization.

But I believe that it is important for you to realize this one thing—and this thing is within your grasp: Education is the most powerful dynamite in the world. Yes, education is the most powerful force in the world. With it, you and your fellow students can blast the vast remaining depths of ignorance from the face of this earth. With education, you can change the complexion of our civilization just as much as the atomic scientists can, even with all of their complex apparatus and their amazing knowledge.

Don't let this opportunity that is yours here at Dreher high school slip through unresponsive fingers. Don't shun the opportunities that the city of Columbia and the state of South Carolina are
offering you. (Take your education gladly and willingly and not as though it were a dose of medicine)

This is the time for you to realize the advantages of an education. Perhaps many of you have already reached that realization and are now applying yourself toward achieving a sound basis upon which to place more complex studies or to go out into the business world and earn your living. But whatever are your plans for the future, you should never forget that education will give you the power to control your own destiny.

And by education I do not mean only the study of the Classics or of mathematics or of languages. I mean, too, the mastering of vocational work and of home economics; of sports and of manual training; and, perhaps, more important than any of these, the discovery of the value of good health and sound character.

To me one of the finest things that education may achieve for the youth of South Carolina is to instill into our boys and girls an acceptance of high moral character as a pervading goal in this life. Character training should include the ability to tell right from wrong and to build hearts and minds to the point that we shall always want to do the right thing, and not be tempted to drop slightly to the shady side. Character training should include the realization that truth is essential to all transactions between individuals or groups. Acceptance of truth as the guiding principle of all your dealings with your fellow students and with outside people will mean that you will not only profit by the lift that acceptance will give to your character but also you will gain stature in the eyes of your friends. Short cuts around the truth may have paid short-term dividends to a few people, but never do these people get by continuously. Truly, their faults find them out, sooner or later.

Another important phase of education, particularly in our secondary schools, is that of health. Here in Columbia and in many other cities students have distinct advantages by being able to participate in expertly directed physical training programs and in a state-and federal school lunch program. It is true that virtually all of South Carolina schools do have adequate lunches served at the schools for all of the pupils but nevertheless it is axiomatic that
cities have many more advantages in such an undertaking.

A lot of you participate in organized athletics. You play on your football teams, either for the city schools or for various playgrounds. You play volleyball or other games. You take part in seasonal activities. And you have splendid athletic equipment with which to train your bodies and build them into healthy adjuncts to your mind, and your heart, and your soul. Don't let anything interfere with these wonderful opportunities. Just because you happen to be too small for varsity sports or to compete evenly with other students of your age, you should not be discouraged. You should put your physical training to the best of your ability and follow the instructions and suggestions of your teachers.

And the final important function of your education should be the acquisition of a skill. This skill may be a thorough foundation in English and History for those who want to write; or mathematics for those who want to become scientists; or manual training for those boys whose post-school work will be in the building trades. But whatever skill you are now acquiring or you are planning to get while in school, you should apply yourself now to that skill and when you are graduated you should be proficient in it.

There is no degree of importance among skills. It is just as honorable for you to be a skilled carpenter as a skilled professor. You and your advisors should decide early in your school careers just what type of skill should receive emphasis in your training. Whatever your selection, you should strive to be perfect in that field.

And while you are acquiring your skills to go along with good health and excellent character, you should strive to attain a high degree of comradeship. You should realize that team work is one of the most important phases of any endeavor. I am sure that you have already learned how the atomic bomb was developed. Specialists in various fields of atomic energy developed their specialty to the point that it would fit into the whole pattern. And yet these specialists worked together for the production of the final bomb. Without this cooperative spirit of team work, all
of the brilliant individual exploits of our leading physicists would have been wasted. If team work had not been present, it would have been impossible for the scientists to piece together the final steps and the ultimate product which has changed the outlook of the world.

Too few people realize the monetary value of education. There is a definite link between the level of a person's education and his value to the community. His earnings automatically rise when his educational opportunities are greater—provided, of course, he takes full advantage of this education.

Numerous studies have been made along this line. Every one of them shows that the degree of education directly affects the income of the students. There can be no denial of the statement that a high school graduate is worth more in earning power than a student who stopped school in one of the lower grades. A college degree increases the potential earnings tremendously. I believe that one thorough study showed that the value of a high school education, measured only in dollars, averages at least $9 per day of schooling, and that a college education increases a person's worth to $27 a day. That, my friends, is a lot of money.

I think that it is important for you to realize, too, that a community's riches increase with the education level of its citizens. A nation is as rich as its educated populace. This fact is ably demonstrated in the comparison between Holland and the Argentine. Holland, a small country with few natural resources, but with a wonderful education system and a high degree of education among its citizens, has one of the highest average incomes in the world. Argentina, which as you know has tremendous natural resources not only in the soil but in its beef and sheep, however, has a much lower average income, simply because its educational standards are extremely low.

Absence from class room cuts down on efficiency, not only for the student who is away but also for those who attend classes regularly. Teaching efficiency is reduced because it is necessary for instructors to mark time to allow the absentees to catch up upon their return to the class rooms. I am happy to learn that Columbia school pupils have a splendid record in attendance in
that your average is 90 percent of your enrollment. This record has been maintained for several years as compared with the general state average attendance of only about 80 per cent. This high attendance record demonstrates that you students are interested in your work and that you realize the value of consistent participation in your classes.

Education is simply change. Back in the first grade your life was changed when you learned the alphabet. To many people believe that learning letters and numerals qualifies them to read and write. Nothing could be a more erroneous idea. Many college graduates actually do not know how to read and write in the true sense. A true understanding of the written word is a great achievement, and I know that many of you are going to reach that goal.

Don't let your education stop when you receive your diploma. Make it a continuous process. Continue to learn. Learn through additional reading; learn through new experiences; learn by doing new things.

At the present, most of the emphasis upon adult education has rightly been placed on assisting those adults who did not have school opportunities as youths. I want to see this program grow until all of our population has at least received the fundamentals of education. But we should look forward to the day when most of our adult population will return to school for part of the year in order to acquire new skills and new information. Night classes and citizenship courses should attract thousands. I understand that in Columbia you do have informative and helpful lectures on many important subjects. These lectures and night classes for the adult public should be encouraged and improved and their scope increased.

If we do continue to learn and most of our people participate in such a program, then we can say we are a truly educated people. If we are content to accept our diplomas as a mark of education, then we are an indifferent and lazy people.

Now that you have seen the advantages of education, and how you should apply yourself in acquiring the proper knowledge to help you make a respectable and honorable citizen, I want to urge you to accept one more responsibility. And that responsibility
is one of accurate thought. A person whose mind is trained to think accurately is a person of tremendous value. A person who thinks carelessly is not only confusing himself but he is a hindrance to all of his friends. Think before speaking.

Some extremely wise man once remarked that the habit of accurate thinking was worth 1,000 thoughts. You will be wise, indeed, if you can train your mind to be an accurate thinker. You can not place monetary values upon thoughts, but I believe that you will understand what I mean when I say that $1 in your head is worth $1,000 in your pocket.

The accurate, valuable thought that you possess cannot be taken from you, but the money that you have acquired can be lost or stolen or wasted.

I want to congratulate you for the splendid evidence shown here today that you students of Dreher high school are anxious to become leaders in citizenship, leaders in health, leaders in character. The leadership that you have demonstrated and that has been demonstrated to me personally by so many other high school students, means that South Carolina is going to progress; that we are going to increase in wealth and happiness and that our state, of which all of us are so proud, will be the leader in righteous, civilized living. And from the youth of today, I am sure that we are going to secure unexcelled leadership for our state in the coming years.

--00--