











A

PRACTICAL VIEW

OF

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

FROM THE SEVENTH LONDON EDITION.

BY T. BABINGTON, ESQ.

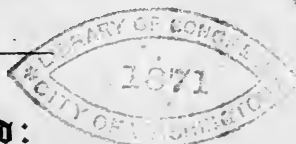
LATE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

WITH

A PRELIMINARY ESSAY.

BY REV. T. H. GALLAUDET.

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133

# CONTENTS.

	Page
Preliminary Essay. By T. H. Gallaudet . . . . .	1
CHAP. I.—Inadequate Attention to Religion in Education—Some of its Causes . . . . .	17
CHAP. II.—The Period from early Infancy to the Learning to Read. —Faulty Course commonly pursued.—A very early attention to Tempers and Habits recommended.—Religion how to be Instilled.—Parental Example . . . . .	32
CHAP. III.—General Observations.—Parents to guard against their Faults in the presence of their Children.—Children not to be made Playthings.—The Child's Good, and not the Parent's Ease, to be the Object.—The Heart to be had in View rather than the Outward Act.—Guard against a Child's Artifices.—Study Consistency of System.—Intercourse with your Children.—Freedom of Conversation.—Study of Character.—Personal Exertion in Education . . . . .	46
CHAP. IV.—The Period between a Child's Beginning to Read and going to School: its Importance.—The Objects of Education, and their relative Value.—Commencement of Instruction in Reading. —Rousseau:— Education a Discipline.—Choice of Books.—Tones and Articulation.—Care in the Use of Religious Books:—Selection of them.—Catechisms . . . . .	68
CHAP. V.—Mechanical Reading: how obviated.—School Lessons to promote Moral Qualities: Obedience; Regularity; Attention; Patience; Alacrity.—Happy Fruits of these Qualities.—Failures to be expected.—How to be borne . . . . .	97

	Page
CHAP. VI.—Means for the Support of Parental Authority and Influence.—Rewards and Punishments . . . . .	112
CHAP. VII.—Example.—Emulation.—Effect of Personal Character of Parents.—Deceit . . . . .	131
CHAP. VIII.—Attention to Children when not at their Lessons.—Amusements.—Behaviour of Children to each other.—Quarrels.—A Domineering, or a Teasing Spirit.—Selfishness and Jealousy.—Conduct of the two Sexes to each other.—Domestic Effects in well and ill educated Families contrasted.—Acquaintance.—Familiarity with Servants . . . . .	147
CHAP. IX.—Hardihood.—Moderate Habits.—Artificial Hardships.—Moderation favorable to Elevation of Character.—Rules.—Preparation for Prayer.—Self-Examination.—Prayer.—How long Boys should be kept under Domestic Education.—Preparation for School.—Governess . . . . .	168
APPENDIX.—No. I. . . . .	185
No. II. . . . .	195
No. III. . . . .	196

# PRELIMINARY ESSAY,

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Infidelity and Atheism are openly avowed in our land. Nay, what is worse, those who reject the Bible, and deny that there is a God, seek to make proselytes to these appalling doctrines.

For this purpose, plans are organized; societies are formed; meetings are held; lectures are delivered; books are published; and the press,—the great moral lever of our country,—is put in motion. *The Ministers of Jesus Christ* are represented as a band of vile impostors. *The Word of God* is treated with contempt and ridicule. *The Sabbath* is declared to be a superstitious observance, and worthy only of being discarded and forgotten. *Marriage* is denounced, as unnatural, selfish, and oppressive. In fine, *Religion*, with its hallowed institutions and awful sanctions; and *Morality*, with all its restraints and obligations; must no more check the innocent propensities of our nature, and man may live, as if *Death were an eternal sleep*.

Let it not be said, that, in all this, there is no just cause of alarm; that the evil will cure itself; that there is too much good sense, and patriotism, and piety in the community, to suffer the interests of religion and morality to be endangered; that opposition will but aggravate the mischief; and that truth is omnipotent, and will triumph in her own majestic strength, without the aid of any auxiliary.

How then has error ever gained the ascendancy in any age or country? Did the monster start into being, *at once*, in all his gigantic and terrific shape? Was not his birth-place often unknown, his growth gradual, his movements insidious? Timely resistance might have prevented his influence; might have for ever annihili-

lated it. But he was not feared, till age had given him strength, and partisans, and victory. And, then, nothing but a tremendous conflict could resist and subdue his power.

So it *may be* in our country. So it *will be*, if the friends of religion do not bestir themselves, and watch every movement of its enemies, and meet their covert wiles, as well as their open attacks, with the weapons of truth and righteousness.

How many of our youth, especially in our large cities, are exposed to the seductive influence of the advocates of infidelity. Some from curiosity; others from a false notion of independence; and not a few, to overcome the reproaches of conscience, that they may riot in sin without remorse; are led to listen to those who scoff at sacred things, to attend their meetings of free debate and inquiry, and to purchase and read their deistical and blasphemous publications. Every one thus corrupted, in his turn, corrupts others. The evil spreads. It is fast spreading. The mere fact, that a public print dares openly to avow these principles of irreligion, and finds supporters, proves this; and shows that no means should be left unemployed to rescue the rising generation, the hope of our beloved country, from the contamination of this deadly poison.

*The religious education of our children and youth is our great, I had almost said, our only security.* The advocates of infidelity know full well the importance of this principle; and hence their dislike of marriage, and of the domestic relations of life. Parental government, in their estimation, is a minor theocracy; the very fountain-head of slavish fear, and of all the horrors of superstition. They would destroy it for ever. Let marriage be dissolved. Let the family circle be broken up. Let the ties of kindred be known and felt no more. Let the children belong to the public, and be nurtured and educated at the public charge. Then you will be able to mould this ductile mass of infantile human nature, and form, as you choose, the combination of circumstances, of which these *men and women in miniature* are to be the creatures. All foreign influence being removed, these children of nature will begin to act in accordance with *the laws of their being*. Each will live only to be happy, and to make all others so. In the progress



of a few generations, the tide of population will begin to flow on, free from every impurity ; never again to have any thing foul or turbid mingle in its waters.

Yes ; *parental government is a minor theocracy*. God, in His wisdom, has instituted it. How admirable this provision which He has made for such creatures as we are ! We have a helpless infancy, and a dependent childhood. We need the watchings of maternal solicitude, and the supplies of a father's care, to cherish and sustain us. The very birds in their nest exemplify and inculcate this truth. The whole animal creation teaches us the force and the value of parental affection. But man, of all other animals, needs to be the object of this affection, far, far the longest portion of time. God, therefore, has made provision for these peculiar wants of our species, *by the distribution of mankind into families*. And in the family state, man is to be prepared for all the relations which he is to sustain in life, as a member of society ; or in eternity, as a subject of God's universal empire.

The authority exercised by the parent ; the moral influence which he exerts upon the child ; the confidence which the child reposes in him ; its filial affection, submission and obedience ; all these are illustrations and enforcements of the obligations that are yet to rest upon the child, as it grows up, in regard to God and to its fellow-men. In the very early stages of education, and while the infantile mind is not yet capable even of comprehending the truth, that there is an infinite and invisible Being to whom it is accountable, and whose will it is bound to obey ; the parent is, as it were, *in the place of God, to the child*. The parent is *the superior being* whom the child recognizes, as having a just claim to its love and obedience. The will of the parent often clashes with the will of the child. The latter learns the necessity and the duty of yielding. It is thus taught, that *its will* must submit to the will of another. It is prepared, in this way, both to understand and to recognize the authority of God himself, and to know and to feel that *His will* is to control, and to bring into complete subjection, the wills of all the beings whom He has formed.

Besides, how should we ever be able to form any adequate conceptions of our *Father who is in heaven*, or of the endearing rela-

tion in which we stand to Him, if we were not acquainted with the bond which unites *the earthly parent and the child*? Having sustained *this relation*, we are prepared to comprehend *that higher one* in which we stand to the Father of our spirits. It is thus, that amid the endearments, instructions, and restraints of the parental roof, the child is to be taught the exercise of those very affections, and the discharge of those very duties, which, under the influence of divine truth, are to form his mature character of piety towards God, and of good-will to men.

Destroy marriage. Break up the family state. And the boldest step is taken; most sure in its progress, and most extensive in its effects,—to banish from the world, both the knowledge and the love of Jehovah.

*The religious instruction of children, given by the parent, in the family, enforced by a consistent example, and accompanied with fervent prayer*, furnishes fathers and mothers with the only well-grounded hope, that their offspring will be secure against the assaults of infidelity and the temptations of the world, and that they will become the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. It furnishes the philanthropist with the only rational expectation, that a succession of patrons and agents will follow on, one after the other, to sustain and carry forward the benevolent institutions and enterprises of the day. It furnishes the patriot with the only sure promise of the future welfare of his country. It furnishes the friends of the Redeemer with the only certain and delightful anticipation of the rapid spread of His gospel, and speedy triumph of His cause. Such is the lofty destiny, and such are the exalted privileges of the rising generation of our land. And in view of them, what momentous responsibilities rest upon those who are fathers and mothers!

Christian parents! weigh well these facts and truths; and say, if there are not obligations of the most solemn and affecting kind, pressing upon you, to attend *personally, faithfully, and prayerfully*, to the religious education of your children.

This volume, containing *A Practical View of Christian Education in its early stages, by Thomas Babington, Esq.*, is one of the best treatises on this subject, in our language. Its author was, not long since, if he is not still, a member of the British Parliament, and

also extensively engaged in commercial transactions in the city of London. His sentiments, therefore, repugnant as they doubtless will be to the feelings of those who entertain vague and low views of Christian faith and practice, are not to be attributed to the narrowness of his sphere of observation or of duty ; to his want of expansion of mind or refinement of feeling ; to his secluded habits and ignorance of the world ; or to a contracted and illiberal estimate of the doctrines and requisitions of the gospel. Nor is he a mere theorist, descanting on what *might be best*, and leaving plain, practical parents to smile at the uselessness of his speculations. He has himself brought up a very numerous family of children, to whose education he has devoted his time and attention, with an assiduity and frequency that very few men, engaged in public life, and the transactions of an extensive business, have been able to bestow upon such an object. What he says, therefore, is to be received as coming from one whose own education, of the most liberal and accomplished kind ; whose situation in society, affording him the best opportunities of an enlarged acquaintance with human nature and the every-day duties of life ; and whose personal experience in reducing his principles to practice, or rather of *deducing his principles from his practice* ; all conspire to give great weight to his opinions and advice, among all parents who regard, as they ought, not merely the temporal, but the eternal, welfare of their offspring.

In the peculiarity of his religious sentiments, Mr. Babington, who is of the English, Protestant Episcopal Church, agrees, in the main, with those expressed in the Christian Observer, or with what may be familiar to more of his readers in this country, the views of Mrs. Hannah More.

The whole work is printed, word for word, from the seventh London edition ; a mode, it is thought, more fair towards the author, and vastly more acceptable to the generality of readers, who wish to judge for themselves of the sentiments that are advanced, than to attempt, by any omissions or alterations, to make such a treatise conform, in all respects, to the peculiar views of an individual, or to any particular standard of doctrine or of duty. In some instances, the sentiments of the author are adapted to the pe-

cular class of society, and to the religious denomination to which he belonged, and to modes of educating children which do not prevail in this country. But, in these respects, it is not difficult to understand his *general principles*, and to accommodate them if they are approved, to the circumstances of the reader.

There are some topics which are not noticed at all, or very cursorily indeed, in this work, which the writer of these preliminary remarks, deems of sufficient importance to present to the consideration of those parents who take an interest in the religious education of their children, and to which he begs leave to invite their serious attention.

I. *The want of religious instruction, by the parent, in the family, can never be adequately supplied in any other way.*

This remark is not intended to depreciate other modes of imparting religious instruction to children and youth. Let such modes, and especially the excellent system of Sabbath school instruction, receive the full amount of praise to which they are justly entitled. But what other teacher, with very few exceptions, can gain such an influence over the child, and find such easy access to his mind and to his heart, as the parent can, and especially the mother, if she has the love of God in her soul. One important object which the Author of our being doubtless had in view, in constituting this endearing relation, was, to make it the means of unfolding the intellectual and moral capacities of the child, and of preparing him to comprehend and appreciate the truths of Revelation, through *the agency of the parent*. From what other human being, if family government has been preserved, and the child inspired with filial confidence, and obedience and love, can instruction be received with such attention, docility, and reverence, as from the lips of a kind and pious father or mother? After having secured that attachment and respect which the watchfulness of parental solicitude has produced in the breast of infancy and early childhood; after having induced those *habits* which are indispensable to the beneficial reception of religious instruction; and after having communicated the elements of this instruction to the expanding and inquiring mind; how can the parent cease to carry on a work so auspiciously begun,—how can

such advantages, so happily secured, be abandoned,—and the tender vine be transplanted from its native soil, to be reared under the care of a foreign and strange hand!

Let it not be said, that the case supposed is an extreme one, and rarely, if ever, has an existence. In all its aggravating circumstances, it may not often be found, and especially among pious fathers and mothers. But it is worthy of serious inquiry, *to what extent parental responsibility is weakened, and parental care diminished, by the provision which is made, in other ways, for the religious instruction of youth.*

The children have their Sabbath-school lesson to learn during the week. How far is this considered as supplying the place of direct religious conversation and instruction, on the part of the parent? How many hours are filled up by a quiet attention to this lesson, affording the parent the better opportunity to transact the common concerns of the family, which formerly used to be devoted to the actual communication of divine truth to the child? The books, too, which are drawn from the Sabbath-school library, or borrowed from the neighbor, or purchased at the book-store, excellent indeed in their kind, and deserving an important place in the course of religious education,—are they not, also, often made to discharge the duty of the parent, and to exonerate from the task of becoming *a teacher of babes*?

The Sabbath returns; hallowed, among other objects, for the very purpose of *religious instruction in the family*. The father's daily occupation, and the mother's weekly cares, are suspended. The little group surround the table and the fire-side. All without and within is quietness. Is the occasion, thus furnished by God himself, employed as it ought to be? Or rather, does not the preparation for the Sabbath-school, with the time which it consumes, and the belief of the parent, that *there*, all that is important of religious knowledge will be communicated to the child, serve to abate his interest in his own *personal* discharge of duty, and to lead him to enjoy that ease which is so grateful to human nature; under the impression that *a system of instruction*, approved everywhere by the wise and the good, and which he himself contributes to support and cherish, by his influence and his prayers,

is doing all for his offspring which can be accomplished, and rendering unnecessary any individual efforts of himself or his partner?

The little one who lately hung on the lips of its father or mother, to learn something of God and its soul, and of its destiny beyond the grave, as soon as an elder brother or sister can conduct it to the Sabbath-school, is sent thither, and thus transferred to a *new teacher*, yet to learn its disposition and habits, and to inspire it with confidence and affection. The parent, shall I say, is relieved of one more burden; in a way, too, to remove all anxiety, and to satisfy the demands of conscience.

Are these things exaggerated? Is not the original to the picture which has been drawn, often to be found? And much as Sabbath-schools ought to be encouraged, and sustained, and extended throughout the length and breadth of the land, deserving the prayers, and the support of all the friends of their country and of the Redeemer; are there not *some dangers* attending them, of the kind that have been mentioned, and which need to be pointed out and avoided?

No parent, surely, however faithfully his children may attend the Sabbath-school, and be prepared too for this attendance, can offer this as a reason, or plead it as an excuse, for the neglect of *personal, unremitted, and prayerful attention* to their religious instruction in the family.

Doubtless there are instances, and these very numerous ones, where there is such entire neglect of religious instruction, on the part of the parent, that the Sabbath-school is the only means of supplying this defect; and a few other cases, in which incompetency seems to forbid the hope of the child's receiving any benefit in the bosom of the family. But the evil alluded to still exists, and to no inconsiderable extent. And it seems to be an imperative duty, for ministers of the gospel to press their obligations upon parents, and for parents seriously to consider the weight of these obligations; and while the child is sent regularly, and with careful preparation, to the Sabbath-school, to take care that the salutary influence *there* employed, and the excellent instruction *there* communicated, shall have their efficacy increased and rendered sure, by accompanying efforts and prayers under the paren-

tal roof. How else can the express command of God be complied with, or His blessing be implored or expected?

*And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart : and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in the house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

II. *The religious instruction of children should be made a prominent part of the whole course of their education, and blended with all their other studies and pursuits.*

We are commanded, "whether we eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do, to do all to the glory of God." That religion is but little worth, *the spirit* of which does not manifest itself in the daily concerns and intercourse of life. Children should early be taught this important truth, both by precept and by example. But they will not feel its force, if religious instruction is communicated to them in a solemn, formal way, and only on certain *recurring occasions*.

Suppose a parent is anxious that his child should understand and practise the rules of what is termed good breeding, and that he should acquire the air and manners of refined society. Will he give a set lecture on the subject once a week, and then furnish illustrations of his principles in a very grave and ceremonious manner? Will he not rather seek occasion, daily and familiarly, to lead the child to imbibe those feelings, and to adopt those habits, which, in his opinion, constitute true politeness? And why ought not a similar course to be pursued, if the paramount desire of the parent is, that his offspring should possess, and exhibit in their daily life and conversation, that "wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

The sooner the child can be taught to feel and to act as *an immortal being*; to consider this life as but the threshold of an eternal existence beyond the grave; and to make all its occupations and pursuits subservient to the honor of its Maker, to the cause of the Redeemer, and to the best interests, both temporal and spi-

ritual, of its fellow-men;—the sooner is the great object of Christian education accomplished.

If it is the duty of the mature Christian to blend the very spirit of his religion with all his studies, and business, and intercourse with his fellow-men; and continually to bear in mind the connection which things temporal have with things eternal; and to inscribe *holiness unto the Lord* upon all his occupations and pursuits;—why should not the child be educated on the same elevated principles, and inspired with the same heavenly desires, and form the same consistent habits of thought and of action.

But it is too often the case, that the education of the children, even of pious parents, is conducted far differently. In fact, two processes of influence, and example, and instruction are going on; one, to prepare them *to do well in the world*, in accordance with the maxims and the spirit of the world; the other, (ah! in how languid and desultory a way it is pursued,) to prepare them for the approach of death, and the retributions of eternity. Six days in the week, they must conclude, for the most part, from the general tenor of the conversation which is addressed to them, or which they hear, in the family circle, the school-room, or the common walks of life, that this world is their only stage of action, and that their great aim should be, to secure wealth, respectability, and distinction. The Sabbath, indeed, and now and then some unexpected occurrence in Providence, leads them to more serious reflections, and they are gravely told, that they are *strangers and pilgrims on the earth*, and that they should seek a better, a heavenly country.

Why this strange inconsistency! Why this want of harmony of influence, of unity of design, of singleness of purpose, in training up the heirs of immortality!

What must a child think of this striking fact which is continually presented to his observation? He hears his parent, and his Sabbath-school teacher, and his minister declare, that the concerns of the soul are more important than all others; that his happiness in eternity depends upon his embracing the offers of salvation through Jesus Christ; and that delay in doing this may prove his eternal ruin. And yet *the individual* to whose care he is



principally entrusted during six days of the week ; who is the source of most of the knowledge that he is acquiring to prepare him for usefulness and respectability in life ; whose influence in forming his modes of thinking and of acting, his whole character and habits, is usually quite equal, and often superior, to that of the parent ; *his daily instructor* expresses no interest, gives no advice, inculcates no precepts, communicates no truth, with regard to the welfare of his immortal spirit. How can he account for this ? His parents, and the parents of all his school-mates, he must conclude, have confidence in his teacher, or they would not place their children under his care. And yet this teacher, to say the least, is *neutral on the subject of religion* ; never accompanies his injunctions with any appeal to the sanctions of *duty towards God* ; never reproofs misconduct, or punishes disobedience, with a reference to that omniscient eye that sees us at all times, and to that awful tribunal before whom we must all stand, to render an account for the deeds done in the body ; never encourages to docility and industry, to obedience and kindness by the winning motives which revelation affords ; never invokes the divine blessing on himself and his little flock, or explains to their understandings, or impresses upon their hearts, the interesting and affecting truths of the sacred oracles !

Now, what must the child think of all this ; for think he will, and draw his own conclusions. Must he not suppose, that, after all, religion is not such an important matter, as he has sometimes been taught to believe, and that, at least, he need not take a deeper interest in it than the mass of people do who are around him ?

Is there no remedy for these evils ? In a land called Christian ; among those who profess to be the disciples of Jesus Christ, and who admit, in principle, the solemn obligations which they are under, *to train up their offspring in the nurture and admonition of the Lord* ; shall *no regard* be had to the religious character of the teacher who has the care of their children, the greater part of the time, and whose example and influence have upon them an effect, that must be felt not only in this world, but in that which is to come. I say *no regard* ; for how prevalent the opinion is, that

intellectual qualifications, and a good moral character, are the only requisites to be sought after in selecting a teacher of youth.

It is admitted, that piety, in such cases, is not always to be found, and that such is the state of society, and the difficulties growing out of those differences which exist among the various religious denominations, that very often, this defect cannot be remedied, and must be submitted to.

But is the general apathy on this subject justifiable? Would not a spirit of conciliation and of compromise often produce a better state of things? Surely, if the whole Christian public could be made to view this matter in its true light, *in the light of eternity*, and to appreciate the worth of the immortal souls of their offspring, sectarian feelings would be laid aside; there would be a demand for *pious teachers* of youth; their numbers would gradually increase; and the blessing of heaven would rest upon *one of the most efficacious means of grace,—the conducting of the whole course of education upon the principles of the gospel; and the training up of children and youth, to perform all the duties, and attend to all the concerns of life, with a continual reference to the relation in which they stand to God, and the bearing which their conduct here is to have upon their eternal destiny.*

Such a course, so far from casting the gloom of what some consider *a religious melancholy*, over all the business and intercourse of life, would prove the very means of divesting religion of formality and constraint, by blending it with all our feelings, and conversation and conduct; by applying its principles to the thousand, nameless, every day occurrences which constitute the happiness or the suffering of the great mass of mankind; by transfusing its spirit of peace and love into families, and neighbourhoods, and communities; by redeeming it from the reproach which it has now too often to bear, that its professors can pray and preach, but do not practise; by making it a familiar companion, and not an occasional censor and judge; and thus shedding a cheerfulness, and conferring a dignity upon all that we do or suffer, by connecting it all with the will of our Father who is in heaven, and with His gracious assurance, that all things shall

work together, for the eternal good of those who put their trust in him.

III. *The Bible should be made the great instrument of government in families, and in schools.*

The most efficacious kind of government, is that which is exercised through the medium of *moral influence*. Physical force may control the outward conduct, and in some cases, it is absolutely necessary, but it rarely reaches the heart. The rod cannot safely be laid aside ; but the less frequent the necessity there is of using it the better. The more the child can be brought to understand with a clear conception, and to feel with a delicate sensibility, the distinctions between right and wrong ; to yield to the influence of motives addressed to its sense of duty ; and to act as a free, moral agent, on its own accountability, and with a view to the consequences of its actions ; the sooner will it begin to acquire *settled principles* of thought and of conduct ; to form *habits* of self-control ; to enjoy the satisfaction of doing well, and to tremble at the reproaches of conscience for doing ill ; and thus to be prepared for those responsibilities which must rest upon it, when it is no longer under parental inspection and guardianship.

*The great secret of governing children, is to teach them self-government.* Unless this is, sooner or later, acquired, the child continues to be a mere automaton, moving at the will of another, and fit only, when arrived to mature age, to be a conscript in the army of some military despot. God has made us rational, free, and accountable moral agents. Even He himself will not use physical force to compel us to love and obey Him. His request is, *my son, give me thine heart.*

*My son, give me thine heart.* Let this be the motto, adopted by every parent and teacher in the government of children and youth. Point them to their Father who is in heaven ; to the Saviour who died to redeem them ; to the Spirit of holiness who alone can purify their hearts. Bring them to the Bible as soon as they can be made to comprehend at all, that it is the word of God. Tell them that it is the *letter of His love*, sent to them, to them individually, to them personally. Make them feel its awful sanctions. Recite to them its wonderful history. Explain to them its doc-

trines and precepts, so far as they are capable of understanding them. Let them know, that by this sacred book, they will finally be judged. With tender solemnity, unfold to them what it reveals of their eternal destiny, and of the only way of securing the salvation of their souls. Especially, let Jesus Christ, in all his endearing traits of character, and in all the fulness of his mediatorial office, be presented to them, frequently, earnestly, affectionately, as the friend of children; as the friend of sinners; as their only Saviour; who, if they trust in Him, and obey His precepts, and are faithful in His service, will assuredly guide and protect them through life, sustain them in death, and receive them, at last, to the mansions of eternal rest.

When children feel, or speak, or do wrong, let the parent or the teacher, with great self-possession and kindness, and yet with equal firmness and authority, reason with the little offender *out of the word of God*. Bring him to the divine standard. Convince him *of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*, by a direct appeal to the highest of all authority, *to the declarations of God himself*. Make him perceive and feel that he has sinned against God, and done evil in *His sight*. Lead him, if possible, to a genuine contrition of soul. Make use of the occasion, to show him that he has not only this sin, but many others, to be repented of, and that he needs the forgiveness of his sins, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and the sanctification of his heart, through the influences of the Holy Spirit, before he can hope for the blessing and favor of God in this life, and for communion with Him in that which is to come.

I would not be understood to mean, that this is to be done at all times, with equal formality and solemnity, or that it is to be done on every slight occasion, and for every trivial offence. But the mere recital of a text of Scripture, appropriate to the character and conduct of the child, accompanied with a reference to the omniscient eye, and to *the supreme authority*, of the great Lawgiver, will, in most cases, produce an effect more sensible and more abiding, than any exhibition of *the inferior authority* of the parent or the teacher.

The truth is,—and it has been tested in some families, and

schools, and institutions for the instruction of youth,—*the more prominent the authority of God is made, speaking through His written word, and the authority of the parent and teacher, made subordinate to it, and merely instrumental in carrying it into effect, the more easily have the child and the pupil been brought into a state of uniform subordination and obedience.*

Let the experiment be fairly tried, and it will be found, that in this, as in all other cases, God will honor and bless *his own truth,—that divine word, which is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the joints and the marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

the first of these is the...  
 the second is the...  
 the third is the...  
 the fourth is the...  
 the fifth is the...  
 the sixth is the...  
 the seventh is the...  
 the eighth is the...  
 the ninth is the...  
 the tenth is the...

the eleventh is the...  
 the twelfth is the...  
 the thirteenth is the...  
 the fourteenth is the...  
 the fifteenth is the...

the sixteenth is the...  
 the seventeenth is the...  
 the eighteenth is the...  
 the nineteenth is the...  
 the twentieth is the...  
 the twenty-first is the...  
 the twenty-second is the...  
 the twenty-third is the...  
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A  
PRACTICAL VIEW  
OF  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

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CHAP. I.

*Inadequate Attention to Religion in Education.—Some of its Causes.*

MOST persons have occasionally met with a new mansion, showy in its appearance, and commanding a fine prospect, but destitute of that first of all requisites—good water. Captivated by the beauties of a favorite spot, and anticipating a long and happy residence in the midst of attractive domains, the gentlemen who build houses sometimes forget that there are certain necessaries of life, for the want of which none of its embellishments or honors can compensate. A similar disappointment, but of a more affecting nature, very frequently awaits the builders of that figurative house—a family of children. Their parents have taken the greatest pains to enable them to make a figure in the world; but they have neglected to use the proper means for furnishing their minds with certain items in the catalogue of qualifications for a useful, respectable, and happy life—namely, religious principles and habits. The house

is erected ; but, alas, there is no water !—That those who despise religion should not wish the minds of their children to be imbued with it, is natural and to be expected ; and that those who, while they ostensibly acknowledge the value of religion, yet hold that the heart of man is naturally good—and that the evils which abound in the world may be ascribed to the prejudice of nurses, the reveries of enthusiasts, the craft of priests, and the tyranny of rulers—should deem religious education almost superfluous, is by no means surprising. However, such characters would slight all my admonitions, and therefore it is in vain to address them. Those whose attention I would solicit are decent and respectable parents, who wish to entertain those views of human nature, and of the duties of man, which the holy Scriptures exhibit. That such persons should venture to hope that their children will perform, in subsequent life, the duties they owe to God and their fellow-creatures, when little care has been taken to prepare them for this great work, is perfectly astonishing. Do we form such absurd expectations in other things ? Does any man suppose that his son will be fit for any profession, or business, without substantial and persevering instruction ? Does he venture to send him out into the world as a lawyer, a surgeon, or a tradesman, without a long preparation, expressly calculated to qualify him for the line of life to which he is destined ? And yet how many fathers expect their children to maintain the character of Christians, with very little appropriate education to lead them to conquer, through Divine grace,



their natural alienation from God, and to become new creatures under Christ their Saviour! God does not treat man in this manner, but furnishes him, in the Scriptures, with the most august and persuasive teachers, and the greatest variety of instruction and exhortation, calculated to turn him from darkness to light, and to induce him to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. But man, deaf to the Divine voice, which says, "Go and do thou likewise," and deaf also to the call even of parental affection, not seldom suffers the early years of his offspring to pass without any systematic and adequate plan of instruction and discipline expressly calculated for the attainment of those great ends.

But let us view this subject a little more narrowly. Is a son intended for a learned profession? He is sent to school. The father is earnest that the master should ground him well in grammar, give him a taste for classical literature, and call forth his powers in composition. Afterwards, when the youth is removed to the university, a college and tutor are selected with anxious care to promote his intellectual improvement. An earnest solicitude is felt that he should become a sound and elegant scholar; and inquiring friends are told what progress he makes in his literary pursuits.—Again: suppose that a more humble walk in life is chosen by the parent, and that his boy is to be a tradesman: with what care does he select a master who perfectly understands his business, and will be likely to make the boy thoroughly acquainted with it? And as the years of apprenticeship draw towards their close, he is solicitous that

his son should be instructed in all the higher parts of the trade, that he may be in no respect deficient, when he becomes his own master, and is to establish himself in life. Let any one who allows these to be just pictures of parental care in providing for the worldly interests of children, say how seldom their spiritual interests are the object of equal solicitude. Are masters chosen with the same care for the promotion of *these* interests? In fixing on schools and colleges for boys destined to the higher professions, and on masters and counting-houses for those who are to move in a more humble line, it is a matter of *prime* consideration to select those which are known to be favorable to true religion? During education, is the progress of the boy in religion watched with unremitting solicitude, and promoted by all those measures which solicitude suggests? Are pains anxiously taken to remove all the obstacles in the way? And finally, is the boy himself removed (when that is possible) to a more favorable situation, if those obstacles are such as essentially to counteract his advancement in religious attainments? In most cases, I fear, even where better things might be hoped, these questions must be answered in the negative. The efforts made in favor of the religious improvement of youth are partial and unsystematic, and generally cold and languid. But, even when accompanied by a considerable degree of earnestness, they very seldom evince a care and thought at all proportioned to the greatness of the object. An attention to the externals of religion is enforced, and glaring sins are forbidden and punished; and

perhaps also the leading principles of the Gospel are occasionally inculcated;—but are the temper, the taste, and the habits narrowly watched? Is evil counteracted, not only in its commencement, but even before it appears, by guarding against dispositions and practices which, though not wrong in themselves, are dangerous from their natural alliance with those which are so? Are the dawns of good early descried and carefully cherished? And above all, is the youthful mind continually taught to raise itself to the only source of safety and strength; to be diligent in self examination, penitence, prayer, and praise? I fear it can seldom be said that a plan of this kind is followed earnestly, assiduously, and, with due allowance for casual interruptions, daily from youth to manhood. And yet earnestly, assiduously, and daily is the child taught his reading and spelling; the school-boy his grammar and classics; the academian his Euclid, Locke, and Newton; and the clerk or apprentice his master's business. Can we consult our experience on these points without exclaiming; What prudent care in human things! What negligence in divine! The result of such negligence may easily be anticipated, and is lamentably apparent in the character and habits of our young men.

Is this negligence to be accounted for from any peculiar facility with which Christian truths are imbibed, and Christian habits formed? Is the path of true religion so easily discovered, and so inviting, that the young scarcely want a monitor to point it out and recommend it to their choice; while that of

human science is thorny, and arduous, and disgusting, and never willingly chosen? Let the word of God and human experience answer. In fact, truth requires that this picture should be almost reversed. Religion is that which is, beyond all things, repulsive to the nature of man; while human science has many charms for him, and meets with little opposition from his native propensities. In inculcating religion we are rolling a stone up-hill, which must be watched every moment, or it will soon bound down again; nor can we hope to make any progress in our work without continued and painful efforts.

To those who acknowledge the natural propensity of man to evil, and yet take so little pains to correct it in his education, I cannot refrain from addressing a few expostulations. Do you act in a similar manner with respect to any corporeal deformity to which your children may be subject? Do you not take the best medical advice, and persevere, perhaps for many years, and at a great expense, and with very serious inconveniences both to yourselves and your child, in the use of such means as may be recommended to you for his recovery? And yet the evil you labor to correct probably affects only one part of his frame; or the efforts of unassisted nature may remove it; and even if he should carry it with him to his grave, it may not be fatal to his present welfare, much less to his future happiness. But the disease to which his soul is subject is universal, pervading all its faculties and dispositions. Nature, instead of affording a remedy, is its source, and, if not counteracted, will infallibly render it more and

more desperate ; and the evils it threatens are of infinite magnitude, and of eternal duration. What, then, can you think of your negligence? Are you not most cruelly deficient in your care of your offspring? And how will you render an account to that Being who has given you a sacred charge to act as his vicegerents in their education?

The causes of those lamentable and very general defects in religious education which have been noticed are various. At present, I will mention only two or three of them.

When parents, though they may have a great respect for religion, are not truly religious, there is no difficulty in accounting for their lukewarmness in providing for the religious education of their children. If they do not consider Christianity as the pearl of great price ; if in practice they make it rather the handmaid of their worldly interest and pleasures, than the unrivalled empress of their hearts, and the sovereign guide of their actions : if this is *practically* the estimation in which they hold it, of course, they will give it but a second, a third, or a fourth place among the objects on which their view is fixed in the education of their children. If, in their passage through life, they do not *in fact* (whatever they may hold in theory) sacrifice their own profit, or pleasure, or reputation, at the shrine of Religion, when these cannot be secured without some dereliction of duty, it must be expected that, whatever they may profess as to their plans of education, they will *in fact* attend more to the worldly advancement, or pleasure, or reputation of their children, than to their progress

in vital Christianity. As such parents, however, frequently lament in themselves defects which they have not a heart to remedy; let them be asked whether they would willingly see their offspring in the same state of thralldom, pursuing a course which they disapprove, and breathing fruitless wishes after that holiness which they have not the courage to practise. If their minds revolt at this prospect, let them endeavor, in their choice of masters and instructors, to rescue their children at least from the evils which press upon themselves. They may think it impracticable in their own case (though in truth if they undertook the work in a right spirit, they would conquer every difficulty by the all-powerful aid of Divine grace) to break through inveterate habits, and to brave, amidst a circle of acquaintance, like themselves, the books, the language, the demeanor, to which a prompt and universal obedience to the calls of duty would expose them. But let them have pity on their offspring; and put them in a course which, with God's blessing, may preserve them from the galling fetters which bind their parents.

There are certain classes of upright Christians, (and I solicit their attention with far better hope,) whose efforts in the great work of Christian Education are feeble, from causes of a very different kind. Two of these causes, which arise immediately out of their religious principles, I will now mention.

Some parents, of a truly Christian character, are of opinion, that although the instruction of the head is in a good measure left to man, God vindicates to himself in a peculiar manner the empire of

the heart, and carries on his own work of conversion in his own way. They therefore regard human endeavors to lead the hearts of the young to God as (to say the least) of very doubtful efficacy; and perhaps look with some jealousy on a very sedulous use of means, for the attainment of this object, as indicative of a disposition to *depend* on means, rather than on the power and mercy of God. They hope that if they preserve their children as far as may be, from the contamination of the world, make them well acquainted with the Christian doctrine, and use them to a regular attendance on religious ordinances, He will hear the earnest prayers offered up for them, and in His good time work on their affections and bring them to Himself. These sentiments, in which there is a specious mixture of truth and error, are accompanied by Christian graces and habits which have a powerful tendency to counteract their practical effects. Parents who are wanting in sedulous attention to their children, are often very strict in the examination of themselves, and eminent for tenderness of conscience, for hatred of sin, for love of holiness, and for adorning the Gospel of their Saviour, by presenting in themselves no dubious image of that mind which shone forth in him. By an attentive observer, however, well acquainted with the interior of their families, the operation of the foregoing opinions will not unfrequently be distinctly traced: and in whatever degree they operate, their tendency must be to weaken, if not to paralyze, parental exertions. The hearts and the habits of the rising generation will not be watched with due so-

licitude; and evils will not be checked and anticipated, nor promising appearances cherished, with that wakeful and unremitting anxiety which the incalculable importance of education demands. Nature, with its corruptions, will be allowed to gather strength; and grace, if assisted will be feebly assisted, by parental co-operation, (a co-operation which must itself also be altogether the fruit of grace), till the little victims of this false system contract a most pernicious and fatal habit of hearing and repeating religious truths with indifference, and sometimes perhaps are in nearly as bad a state as the offspring of irreligious parents.

How can such a case be contemplated without an unusual share of pity? Of pity for children with bright prospects so blasted; and for parents, whose very piety, under partial and therefore mistaken views of Gospel-truth, prepares disappointment and bitter pangs in future life, if not eternal ruin, for those whom they have brought into being, and whom, under a better system of education, they might have found their glory, and joy, and crown of rejoicing in the great day of the Lord.

That the parents have adopted partial and erroneous views of religious truth, who can doubt? God is, in the strictest sense, the Giver of all good, both in the natural and in the spiritual world; but in both he employs means to effect his objects; and the well-directed efforts of his creatures form a most important branch of those means. Who expects to reap if he will not sow, or to read if he will not learn his alphabet? Nor is the connexion between the



acquisition of spiritual advantages and the use of means less intimate. Thus, though Christ is our salvation, yet the salvation of mankind is spoken of in Scripture as depending on the exertions of the Apostles and their followers. They are called the *light of the world*. When it is declared, that they who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, immediately afterwards, for the special purpose, as it should seem, of pointing out the absolute necessity of employing means, the Apostle proceeds to ask, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" (Rom. x. 14, 15.) And in strict conformity with this view of things, he declares himself willing, in his own ministerial labors, *to spend and be spent* for the benefit of others; and charges his spiritual son Timothy, in the episcopal office assigned to him, to *be instant in season* and (by a sort of hyperbole of speech, arising from his deep impression of the unspeakable importance of exertion,) *out of season*. So when indolent or bad teachers are mentioned, the efficacy of means is no less strongly marked. Under the Mosaic dispensation, the sins of the people are continually ascribed to the negligence or the false doctrine of the priests. Our Saviour holds similar language when, speaking of the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees, he says, that "if the blind lead the blind, *both* shall fall into the ditch." And, under the Gospel, the effect of the errors of the well-meaning but mistaken builders of

“hay, straw, stubble,” on the true foundation, Christ, is pointedly noticed. It is declared, that such teachers shall *suffer loss*; their people not being prepared by them to abide the fiery ordeal by which every teacher’s work, that is, the flock converted by him to Christianity—was to be tried. (1 Cor. iii. 11—15.) So fatal would be the effect of the wrong measures taken by them in their Christian ministry!—Not to multiply quotations, I will close what I have to advance on this head with pointing out some few parts of Scripture respecting the very case before us; namely, the instruction of children. How earnestly does Moses charge the Israelites *to teach the law to their children, as they rise up and sit down, and come in and go out!* Could he have more strongly characterized instant, constant, unremitting instruction? Solomon is scarcely less pressing in his exhortations *to train up a child in the way in which he should go*; and he is most distinct in his promise of a blessing and success to such instruction. When the Lord appeared as an angel to Abraham, he plainly intimated, that the patriarch’s exertions, among his children and the rising generation in his household, would be effectual as means of securing them in the true faith. (Gen. xviii. 19.) And I cannot but think that children were allowed to partake of the initiating rites of circumcision and baptism, at so early an age, on the general presumption that the appointed means, if duly employed by their parents and sponsors, would secure, under God’s blessing, the great object of conversion to God.

If this view of the scriptural doctrine respecting,

not the importance only, but the necessity of using means zealously, diligently, unceasingly, for the attainment of spiritual ends, be just; what shall we say of those parents who excuse their want of assiduity and vigor, in taking proper measures to impress the hearts, as well as to inform the understandings, of their children, on the plea that conversion is God's work, and that the times and the seasons for carrying it on are in his hand? I will not argue with them, but leave them to the admonitory voice of their own conscience. When we look forward to the advancement of religion among the rising generation, there are no promoters of that great work on whom we fix our eyes with so much hope as on pious parents. How deeply then must we lament that there should be found among them such principles as I have mentioned; which—operating on parental partiality, or love of ease or other dispositions unfavorable to watchfulness and vigor in conducting education—present us, in a spiritual sense at least, with “ashes and mourning,” in families where we expected “beauty and the oil of gladness!”

But the foregoing error is most to be deplored when joined with another, also arising from a source which challenges our respect and veneration; I mean, the hope entertained by some parents, remiss in the spiritual nurture of their children, that the promised blessing to the offspring of pious ancestors will be realised, sooner or later, in their conversion. On the influence of such a sentiment, when united with that which was last under consideration, I need not dwell. Every one must see that when, on the

one hand, a low opinion is entertained by parents of the efficacy of human endeavors, in leading their children to true conversion ; and on the other, a hope is indulged that the great Shepherd will, at some time or other, gather them to his fold ; the efforts in education will be altogether destitute of watchful and persevering energy, and the worst effects may be expected. Whether, however, this latter sentiment be combined with the former or not, it is of an importance sufficient to claim our serious attention. Let us then examine how far it is warranted by Scripture and experience. Those who hold it, rely on the numerous passages in the word of God, in which a blessing is promised to the seed of his true servants, and more particularly on the gracious declaration in the Second Commandment. These Divine promises are sources of great comfort to Christian parents, strenuously exerting themselves in bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. What numbers have been supported by them, when toiling, apparently without success, in the discharge of their parental duties ! But even those who are so employed may expect more than the promises were intended to convey. And if such persons, the very persons for whose benefit the promises were given, may look forward for the conversion and final salvation of their children with unwarranted confidence ; what shall we say of confidence, what shall we say even of hope, in those who are ill performing the duties of parents, and who, though they will scarcely allow it, make the promises themselves the ground of their neglect ?

How far a misplaced hope of this kind may have contributed to the lamentable declension, in many instances, of succeeding generations from the piety of those which preceded them, cannot be determined: but certain it is, that such declensions stain the page of history in almost all times. Look at the successors of Joshua, and of the Elders of his appointment; at the sons of Samuel and of Eli, of Jehoshaphat, and of Josiah; at the descendants from the members of the first Christian Churches, as well as of the Churches reformed from Popery; at the descendants from the pious ministers ejected in this country at the time of the Restoration, and from their hearers: in short, search the annals of the Jewish or Christian church in almost any age, and you will be convinced that the piety of ancestors is very far indeed from being a security to their offspring.

To humble, zealous, well-directed, and persevering efforts, in the work of Christian Education, God gives a signal blessing: but those who will not employ such efforts, have no ground to expect any blessing. They may rather look with awful apprehension to the curses every where denounced in the word of God, against those who have mercies placed within their reach, but will not accept them in the appointed way.

## CHAP. II.

*The Period from early Infancy to the Learning to read—  
Faulty Course commonly pursued—A very early At-  
tention to Tempers and Habits recommended—Religion  
how to be instilled—Parental Example.*

THE years which precede manhood are naturally divided into several periods. The first is, from early infancy to the time when the child begins to read. The next is, from that time to the time of going (if a boy) to school or to a private tutor; and, if a girl, to the age of ten or twelve. On the present occasion my remarks will be confined to these incipient but highly important stages in education.

The period of infancy is generally suffered to slide away with little or no attention to the work of education. The child is supposed to be in a kind of irrational state, which will scarcely admit of moral discipline, and its parents seem to think only of its health and amusement. If it wants any thing, its wish must be gratified; if it cries, it is to be quieted by indulgence; or if this cannot be effected, attempts are frequently made to cheat it into a belief that the desired object has suddenly vanished. If it has been hurt, the immediate cause of its misfortune, whether animate or inanimate, is not seldom to be beaten, and the child itself is encouraged to join in inflicting the punishment. Things proceed in this way nearly

till the time when the child can talk, and often much longer; and when this system is changed for another, still it gives way very slowly, and in many cases some remains of it may be discerned for years after the child is allowed to be capable of instruction. What is the true character and tendency of this course of proceeding? It unquestionably fosters those seeds of evil which abound in our nature. Is man naturally self-indulgent? What then must be the effect of a studied system of indulgence? Is he impatient, and passionate, and vindictive? How greatly must these dispositions be cherished, by not only permitting but encouraging their gratification! Is he disposed, when in pursuit of favorite objects, to be little scrupulous with respect to violations of plain-dealing and truth? The artifices to which nurses and female relations resort would almost create such a disposition, were it not originally in his bosom. With what eyes, then, must the Almighty look upon such a course of proceeding! It would be trifling with my readers to pursue this topic any further.

But now we proceed to the important inquiry, What system of management ought to be substituted in the place of that which has been described? All persons who do not think that a plea of necessity (a very unfounded plea, however, in the present case) may be urged in favor of the practice of positive evil, must allow that every thing should be avoided by mothers and nurses which has a tendency to cherish and bring into activity that depraved nature, which—if there be any truth in Scripture, or any reliance can be placed on experience—

we all bring into the world. They will grant therefore, that Nanny, or the cat, or the chair, are not to be *slapped* because they happen to have displeased the child. But must not we confine ourselves to mere abstinence from fostering evils? Is it not visionary and chimerical to attempt to check bad tempers and habits, and to lay a foundation for good ones? Or if an attempt of this kind be not altogether hopeless, is it not at least unnecessary to make it at so early a period, when little success can be expected; and most advisable to defer it till the reason of the child is further advanced, and its ability to submit to discipline is greater? My experience gives me a view of parental duty very different from that to which these questions would lead. The Almighty Creator very soon begins to unfold in man those intellectual and moral faculties which are destined, when rightly employed, to qualify him for the highest services and enjoyments through the ages of eternity. In a few weeks after its birth, the child's reason begins to dawn; and with the first dawn of reason ought to commence the moral culture which may be best suited to counteract the evils of its nature, and to prepare the way for that radical change, that new birth promised in baptism,\* and the

\* The reader's attention is called to this passage, that he may weigh well the import of the sentiment which it contains. The language is susceptible of two meanings. Does the author intend to say, that *a radical change, a new birth, actually takes place in baptism*, and that every child, at the very time of administering this ordinance, receives the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and is *created anew in Christ Jesus*? Or, which more pro-



darling object of the hopes of every parent who looks on the covenants in that holy rite, not as forms but as realities. Let me appeal to every mother who delights to view her infant as it lies in her lap, whether it does not soon begin to read "the human face divine," to recognise her smile, and to shew itself sensible of her affection in the little arts she

bably is his meaning, does he intend, that, at the time of baptism, the future regeneration of the child, his being born of the Spirit, is promised to such parents as enter into this covenant with that living and affectionate faith which entitles them to this blessing on their offspring, as a fulfilment of the divine engagement?

The former opinion has no sanction from the sacred Scriptures, and is at variance with the testimony of experience. Where has God promised, that He will invariably, or that He will ever, grant the renewing and sanctifying influences of His Holy Spirit to the baptized infant, at the very time of performing this rite. The general law in His kingdom of grace, as well as of nature, is, that He acts through the instrumentality of means. In the case of adults, we are expressly taught, *that of His own will, they are begotten by the word of truth; that their faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; and that they are sanctified through the truth, the truth of the word of God.* Divine truth is the instrument which the Spirit of God uses in the conversion of sinners, and the renovation of their hearts. This is the general law. We have no right to consider the case of infants dedicated to God in baptism, as furnishing an exception to it, without His express declaration to that effect.

Besides, if every baptized infant is born again and created anew in Christ Jesus, how happens it, that there are so many lamentable instances, in which the child, as its intellectual and moral character is developed, gives not the least evidence of piety, and lives and dies without a shadow of such evidence? Can such a mighty, such a *radical change* take place without any perceptible effect upon the heart and the conduct?

employs to entertain it. Does it not, in no long time, return that smile, and repay her maternal caresses with looks and motions so expressive that she cannot mistake their import? She will not doubt, then, the importance of fostering in its bosom those benevolent sympathies which delight her, by banishing from her nursery whatever is likely to counteract them. She will not tolerate in a nurse that selfish indifference to the wants of an infant, which sometimes leaves it to cry while she finishes her breakfast

With regard to the other opinion, that, in baptism, the future regeneration of the child by the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, is promised *to the believing parent*, it is a question of very serious import, and of difficult decision. Are there any express promises in Scripture to that effect? Is there any thing in the nature of the ordinance which implies this pledge on the part of God? How far can the parent feel assured, that his child will undoubtedly receive this blessing, unless he also feels assured, that he himself will continue faithfully and constantly to use all the appointed means of grace, in the future education of the child, in bringing it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Nay, how far can he feel assured, that God gives this pledge, unless the church of Christ, also, of which he is a member, and into which he wishes to introduce his child, shall fulfil its part of the engagements, in watching over *the lambs of the flock*? These inquiries are serious and affecting. And let every reader who wishes to arrive to a satisfactory result, in deciding the important question referred to in this note, consider well the solemn obligations which rest upon Christian parents, and upon the Christian church, with regard to baptized children, and the extent to which these obligations are fulfilled, before he too hastily concludes, that the dedication of his offspring to God in baptism, however sincerely and faithfully it may be performed, will of itself insure the renovation of their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

or chats with a companion. Much less will she tolerate passionate snatches and scolding names, and hard and impatient tones of voice, in the management of her child. I may be pronounced fanciful; but I certainly think it would be of importance to keep sour and ill-humored faces out of a nursery, even though such faces were not commonly accompanied by corresponding conduct. I am persuaded that I have seen a very bad effect produced by a face of this kind on the countenance and mind of an infant. Is it not reasonable to suppose, that if an infant sympathises with a smile, it may also sympathise with a scowl, and catch somewhat of the inward disposition which distorts the features of the nurse? Thus begin the efforts of a parent to cherish all that is benevolent and affectionate in the bosom of a child; and to prevent the growth of every thing of an opposite nature. And who shall presume to assign limits to the importance of such efforts in the education of a being whose leading disposition, if it fulfil the will of its Maker, must, both through life and through all eternity, be *love*?

But parental cares soon extend. In a short time, impatience and selfishness show themselves in a child, and are accompanied by fretfulness, jealousy, anger, and envy. At so early a period does innate corruption display its powers, and call for the restraining hand of a parent! But how are these evils to be counteracted at an age when both the body and mind are so tender, and when neither arguments nor explanations can be understood? Undoubtedly great delicacy of treatment is required.

The character of the child must be studied ; and, if possible, such correctives must be applied, as will not deeply wound its feelings. It is surprising what female ingenuity, quickened by maternal tenderness, will achieve in this way. Does a child, too young to listen to reason, want something it ought not to have ? Its mother will suddenly turn its attention to another object, and thus prevent the rise of improper tempers, or arrest them in their course. Is it jealous of the attention paid to a brother ? While she perseveres, perhaps, in showing to the brother the kindness which has raised this jealousy, she will pour such a stream of affection on both the children as shall at once show them how much each is the object of her love, and lead them by sympathy to feel a similar love for each other. This will be the best antidote to jealousy. But cases will arise, in which, with all her ingenuity, she will not be able to effect her purpose in this way. On such occasions if the child is too young to understand reason and persuasion, she will as far as possible, shorten and sweeten its trial, but without fostering bad dispositions in its bosom ; if it is a little older, she will endeavor to turn the trial to good account, by holding up to it such Christian and filial motives as suit its capacity and character. These will be accompanied by such a description and exemplification, on the one hand, of the effects they ought to produce, and of the sunshine of soul to which they lead ; and on the other, of the hatefulness of the fault in question, of the unhappiness which must attend the commission of it, and of the regret and bad consequences which

must follow ; as may, by God's help, prepare its tender mind for spiritual discrimination, and a spiritual taste, (if I may so speak,) and give its infant affections some bias on the side of God and duty.

But how, some parents may ask, how can this be effected at so tender an age? It seems to us impossible. Believe me, much may be done, with very young children, by placing gradually before them, with cheerfulness and affection, and in a spirit suited to the occasion, religious truths, associated as much as may be with images pleasing to their minds. The appellations, God and Jesus, should soon be made familiar to them ; and the dwelling-place of these Divine Persons may be so pointed out and described ; and their power and their holiness, and more especially their love, may be so set forth and brought home to the feelings, by little and simple illustrations, that, while the tender mind is imbued with the first rudiments of religious knowledge, reverence, and affection for Divine things, if God smile on the endeavor, shall be excited in the heart. But special care must be taken not to give fatiguing lectures, nor to make too powerful calls on the feelings. "Here a little and there a little," must be the parent's motto in conveying instruction at this age ; and for that little, the seasons must be chosen when the child is most likely to lend a willing ear : and the subject must always be dropped before it becomes tiresome, unless there be some very pressing call for its being continued ; in which case, indeed, the occasion itself will generally make it interesting. Very short and simple stories from Holy Writ may be employed

with great advantage; as that of Jesus taking the little children in his arms and blessing them; that of his restoring the widow's son to life; and many others. If these are told in a cheerful manner, and with such little appropriate touches as will present the scene to the imagination of the child, they will seldom fail to delight it, and will be called for again and again. When they are fixed in its memory, it is evident with what great advantage reference may be made to them when the parent finds occasion to have recourse to dissuasion, or reproof, or exhortation.

In conveying instruction, it is a most important point for the parent always to bear in mind, that far more may be done by exciting the sympathy of the child than by appealing to its reason. Things indeed should always be presented to it in the garb of truth and good sense: but unless its feelings are in unison with its convictions, it may be perfectly persuaded of truths without being influenced by them in practice. And how are the appropriate feelings to be excited in its bosom? Chiefly by the feelings of the parent being in unison with the subject on which he speaks. Is he dwelling on the greatness of God, or on his all-seeing eye, or on his eternity, or on his glory? Let his own heart harmonise with his lofty theme, and probably the right string in that of his child will vibrate. Is he describing the Divine love, and tenderness, and mercy, especially as exemplified in Jesus Christ? If his own feelings are impressed by the picture he presents, those of his child are not likely to be altogether un-

moved. But reverse the case as to the parent, and what is to be expected from the child? Who can be so absurd as to hope, that when religious truths are taught as a schoolmaster teaches the grammar, good impressions will be made on the heart? Do we see, in fact, that when the Catechism is so taught, any such impression is made? Step into a village-school where that excellent compendium of our holy religion has been learnt merely as a task, and you will find the children as little affected by its truths (even if they understand it) as they are by the lessons in their spelling-book. One would almost think that they conceived it pointed out the high privileges and the sacred duties of the inhabitants of the moon, and that they had nothing to do with it but to get it by heart. Few, if any, parents, it is hoped, who make religion a branch of education, proceed in a way so utterly irrational as the generality of village-schoolmasters in teaching the Catechism; but in whatever degree the approach to the village-school system, in that degree must they look for a similar result. If

“Si vis me flere, dolendum est  
Primum ipsi tibi,”\*

be a just description of human nature, when applied to adults, it is doubly and trebly so in the case of children. Adults have been used to attach certain

\* If you would have me weep, you must first be affected with grief yourself.

feelings to certain truths and certain incidents, the recurrence of which will do much towards exciting those feelings; but children have not yet learnt, (except in some obvious instances,) how the circumstances of life will influence their own welfare, and the welfare of others; and therefore it is no wonder that their feelings should not be excited, until they see how others feel. The great Creator has ordained, that in early childhood all the powers and faculties of man shall be placed under the guidance, and in a very great degree under the forming hand of his parents. His feelings are as ready as his intellectual powers to take the impression that may be given them. How strong are the prejudices imbibed from parents in early youth! When pains are taken to produce a similarity, how clearly do we see the prominent features in the manners, habits, and feelings of parents reflected in their offspring! A little Gipsy is an adult Gipsy in miniature. I am told that among the Gentoos a like similarity is very apparent; and I have myself been struck by it among the Quakers—a sect whom I by no means mention to dishonor. Why may not the potent engine which produces such striking effects among these and other classes of men, and often promotes feelings and habits adverse to good sense and propriety, to good order or to true religion, be employed in favor of the best interests of man and the glory of God? To suffer it to lie idle, is folly and sin. But in fact it will not be absolutely idle. One thing or another children will always be catching from their parents; and, through the corrupt bias of human nature,



they will be far more ready to catch the evil than the good : and even in copying what is innocent, if not positively good, in parents, they will be very apt to give it some turn, or associate it with some quality, which may make it subservient to evil. What then is likely to be the effect of negligence in this great point? In truth, can we look around us, and not have lamentable proofs of its effect? How many children of good parents do we see imitating little, in parental example, but neglect of duty! In the parent, this neglect has been chiefly visible perhaps in education; but the child, as might be expected, extends it much farther. Or, suppose the parent to be led by a blind fondness to humor his child, to overlook his faults, and to allow himself to omit the present duty of restraining and ruling him, under some vague hope that a more favorable time will arrive for the exercise of his power, or that God will in his own time, by his own providence, and by the teaching of his own Spirit, correct the faults which the father tolerates. Shall we not be extremely likely to find that a child so educated will chiefly resemble his parent in giving way to self-delusion and self-indulgence, and in indistinct and unscriptural reliance on future gifts of Providence, to the neglect of present duties? But it is not only by copying his faults that a child derives evil from a parent; if care be not taken, qualities and habits innocent, or even commendable, will be so caught or so imitated by the child as to administer to the gratification of his evil passions.—Is the parent ener-

getic? Let him guard against his child's adopting his energy as an engine of pride or ambition.—Is he jocose? His playful humor may be imitated by the child, for the purpose of putting aside serious thought or vigorous application; or of indulging in ridicule or satire; or of practising tricks not consistent with simplicity and sincerity of character, and employed probably for selfish purposes. Nay, unless care be taken, Piety itself in a parent, that child of Heaven, may lead to fanaticism, or cant, or hypocrisy in a child. Certain tones and gestures, which (though, as I think, to be avoided) are in the parent the accompaniment of true communion with his Maker, often become quite pitiable or disgusting in the child, not being connected with those deep devotional feelings which can alone make them tolerable; or, if so connected, being utterly unsuited to his age.

This subject may be pursued farther; but enough has been said to excite the reflections of well-meaning parents; and those reflections will naturally point to the particular circumstances of each individual, and be far more useful than any thing I could add. No one can doubt the deep responsibility of every parent to make a good use of his power over the dispositions and affections of his offspring. And since in exercising that power, nothing will be so operative as his own example, how earnest should he be, that the light which shines in him may be the true light of the Gospel, purified as much as may be from every thing that may obscure or defile it!

And also how earnest should he be to join to such an example a sagacious watchfulness, and even a holy jealousy, to prevent his child from misunderstanding it, or the principles and motives from which it springs; and to prevent a perverse or deceptive use being made of it!

## CHAP. III.

*General Observations—Parents to guard against their Faults in the Presence of their Children—Children not to be made Playthings—The Child's Good and not the Parent's Ease, to be the Object—The Heart to be had in View rather than the Outward Act—Guard against a Child's Artifices—Study Consistency of System—Intercourse with your Children—Freedom of Conversation—Study of Character—Personal Exertion in Education.*

I SHALL proceed to offer to parents some general recommendations, which may guard them against evils not uncommon in families, and may shorten my remarks on many of the details of education in subsequent parts of this essay.

1. Let a parent be particularly on his guard against his faults and weaknesses when in the bosom of his family.

The reverse is not seldom the case. The circumspection and restraint practised abroad, are often greatly relaxed at home. Here liberties and self-indulgences are thought more allowable; wrong tempers are not instantly repressed in the bosom, and are suffered to deform the countenance, and also sometimes to break out in unchristian tones, expressions, and conduct. We must all have observed this in others; and few of us, I conceive, are unconscious of having been sometimes taken by surprise on the entrance of a friend, and of having felt that

it was necessary to recall both the mind and the face to greater serenity and benignity, in order to receive him properly. Now, can we seriously think that a heart and a countenance unfit for our friend, was fit for our children, who surrounded us before his arrival? Can we estimate the mischief which such moral deformity, placed before their eyes in the person of their father, may produce! Some one says, that no man is a hero before his valet-de-chambre. I will not stop to inquire what is becoming in a hero; but a Christian certainly ought, if possible, to be *more* a Christian before his family, where his influence is greatest, and the effects of his example the most important, than in any other situation. Juvenal has said, "Maxima debetur pueris reverentia;"\* though his view of education was only to prepare youth for an upright and able discharge of their common duties in this life, with little regard to God or eternity. How deep then ought this maxim to sink into the heart of a Christian, whose views are so much higher, and who is to educate beings called to perform all their duties as those who now sit in heavenly places, and are kings and priests unto God!

2. Never make mere playthings of your children.

Many fathers treat their little ones as if nothing was to be sought in their society but mutual amusement. All is good humor when they are together; and therefore all is supposed to be right, though there be little besides folly and self-indulgence on

\* The most circumspect deportment should be maintained in the presence of children.

one side, and improper liberties, caprice, self-will, or artifice, on the other. In short, there seems to be a sort of conspiracy between the parties to indulge the natural man. The child is often even taught to be indecorous, and mischievous, and saucy, for the amusement of its parent. What excuse can be made for such a scene? The poor child is greatly to be pitied: but really the parent, if we were to look no further, would appear to be a sort of monster, devoid of principle, of feeling, and of common sense. Follow him, however, to his serious occupations, and you may find him a useful and respectable man. What a shame, that he is insensible to the high destiny and unspeakable value of the little creature whom he is spoiling for the sake of half an hour's fooling trifling! What would he say of any one who threw about his gold repeater as if it were a ball, or sported with his wife's jewels as if they were marbles? And yet his own folly is infinitely greater. The creatures whom he is placing in such danger for his sport are infinitely more precious than gold, which perisheth; and pearls and diamonds are worthless compared with them. One would think that mere selfishness might restrain such absurdity even in a man who did not extend his view beyond this world. The time may come, when the evil fostered in the child will be a scourge to the parent, and when his sufferings will excite the less compassion in others, from their recollection that these scenes of egregious folly had undermined that natural respect which would otherwise have been a check to ill conduct on the part of his child. May

parents, then, never relax with their children? Must they always sustain the grave character of a tutor? Most certainly they may, and ought, frequently to relax with them, and even to take pains to make them happy by joining in their little amusements: but they may combine this course of proceeding extremely well with a constant recollection of the immortal nature and high value of their children, for whom Christ died, and with a suitable behaviour towards them. A father will soon learn, in such playful moments, “*miscere utile dulci;*” or, according to our English proverb, to “be merry and wise;” and he will rank such seasons among those which are most important for checking what is wrong in a child, fostering what is right, instilling good principles, infusing a just appreciation of things, and a taste for what is lovely and of good report. All the good seed sown on such occasions will be so combined with the child’s pleasures and affections, as, with God’s blessing, to take deep root in the soul, and promise a vigorous and permanent growth.

3. In managing a child, let a parent always have the child’s good, rather than his own ease, in view.

In domestic education, when parents speak to their children, in a tone of dissatisfaction, what is heard so frequently as, “Don’t be so troublesome!” It is true, children ought not to be suffered to be troublesome, since both kindness and propriety forbid them to be so: but the tone of the complaint generally shows very clearly that the great grievance is, not that the child has those dispositions

which make it troublesome, but that others, and particularly the complainant, are troubled. Thus the child soon discovers, that it is corrected rather for the ease of its parents and attendants, than for its own good; and it has before it an example and a lesson of selfishness, which may do it as much harm as it receives benefit from the check given to a bad habit.—What ought to be done on such occasions? Undoubtedly the troublesome practice should be prevented; but this should be done in such a way as to show the child that the parent would willingly submit to trouble, to promote its good; but that such dispositions as lead it to trouble others, are unholy, and must be eradicated. The pleasure a Christian will have in giving pleasure, and his pain in occasioning pain, must be pointed out, and proved and illustrated. As nothing is to be combated in children with more care and perseverance than selfishness, so nothing is to be more strictly guarded against in parental example. The child is to be taught to make sacrifices cheerfully, and to deny himself, and take up his cross; and the parent must be especially careful that his own example forward the learning of this difficult lesson. On occasions in which the admonition is, “Don’t be troublesome,” would not “Don’t be thoughtless,” “don’t be violent,” or, “don’t be unkind,” often be more appropriate? Is it expedient very generally to use a mode of expression which points to the effect rather than the cause of a child’s conduct,—to the inconveniences brought on others, rather than to the state of his mind?



4. In correcting a fault, look to the heart rather than to the outward act.

How common is it for parents to pursue the opposite course! They are satisfied with condemning and preventing wrong conduct, without much attending to the temper of mind in which their animadversions are received; and the child is often left unhumbled and discontented, and in a state as displeasing to God as when it was committing the fault in question. This mode of proceeding appears to me essentially wrong, and productive of serious evil. It does not bring the child to repentance before God, and to peace with him. It directs its view to the maintenance of decency in externals, rather than to a jealous scrutiny of its motives and dispositions, and an earnest desire of reconciliation with its God, after having offended him. Though these marks of true repentance cannot be expected at so early an age in their full extent, yet a broad foundation for them is often laid during the two or three first years of infancy. On the other hand, when we see a child scowl, or snatch up his shoulders, or pout and redden, on being blamed, can the rebellious and unbending spirit within be doubted? Is he humbled for his fault, and in a spirit to forsake it and seek forgiveness? Is there any putting off of the old man, and putting on of the new man? And yet, can it be denied, that this is the only temper to which the promise of pardon is made? It is the temper in which adults must come to Christ for pardon and peace; and it is therefore the temper to

which, from the very dawn of reason, we should endeavor to bring children.

In our endeavors to effect this great object, kind and mild and serene, but unyielding, perseverance is to be employed. There must be neither violence nor hurry. If the child is impatient, some constraint, if necessary, must be used to prevent ebullitions of passion or fretfulness, and time must be given for it to recover itself; then steady, and unwearied, but calm and affectionate, addresses to its reason and feelings, suited to its age, and habits, and natural disposition, must be employed. The sagacity and ingenuity of the parent must be tasked to select the best topics, and handle them in the best manner for the production of the desired effect. But, above all, his eye must be upon God for guidance and a blessing, and for putting his own mind in the frame best adapted to win upon the affections of the child, and impress his heart. The dawnings of a right spirit in him must be hailed; openness and confidence must be courted and encouraged; the kindness of God and Christ to penitents must be as fully and touchingly portrayed as their hatred of sin. Care must be taken not to overstrain or overpower the feelings; and when any danger of doing so appears, a pause must take place till they are relieved, and self-command is regained. This course admits of great variations, and must be carefully adapted to the age and character and attainments of the child: but I think I can say from experience, that it will seldom if ever fail of ultimate success, if steadily and habitually pursued. It may be said to

begin from nothing ; and for several months a very small part of it will be brought forward, though there will be a continual progress as the mind of the child opens, and *something* right in moral feeling and habit is established. He will begin to learn the difference between being good and naughty ; then, that though he desists from doing a naughty thing, he continues naughty till he is sorry for it and good-humored ; and then, and not till then, he may expect the kiss of forgiveness, and regain the favor of his parent. Next he will be taught to reflect on his happiness when good, and on the pain he suffers when naughty ; and he will be told that this is from God, who loves goodness and hates naughtiness, as he sees his parents do. Then he will proceed to learn that, like his parents, God expects sorrow for sin, and a mild and humble prayer for forgiveness, before he will forgive a naughty child, and love him, and make him happy. While this is in progress, the parent will endeavor to make the child feel the evil and folly of naughtiness, and the beauty and true wisdom of being good. This will not be very difficult to inculcate, when the child is sensible that sin and misery, and holiness and happiness, generally go together. During the latter part of this course, gospel facts and principles will be gradually opened. The child will have heard of Christ ever since he first heard of God ; and now the distinct character and offices of Christ will begin to be unfolded. He will be painted as the Friend of mankind ; as the great Refuge of all who have done wrong ; as always willing to help them, and beg his Father to

forgive them ; as all kindness and goodness, and as setting us an example of all that is lovely and excellent ; and as now exalted in glory, and all-wise, and all-powerful. Pains will be taken to make him the object of affection attempered by reverence, and to make it pleasant to the child to please him, and painful to offend him. The child will in like manner be made acquainted with the Holy Ghost, and heaven, and hell, and the day of judgment, and eternity, and the lost state of man, and redemption. All these things will be taught with an immediate reference to practice and the heart. They must be unfolded gradually, and with a strict attention to the abilities and temperament of the child ; and especial care must be taken, that by God's blessing the feelings shall be properly affected as the understanding is informed.

5. Be on your guard against the little wiles and artifices which children will soon employ to obtain their ends.

It is surprising how ingenious and adroit they will be in this way. They will endeavor to do, as mere play, something which they know to be wrong and forbidden ; and to put you off by a laugh and a joke when you require them to acknowledge that they have done wrong. These little tricks lead to much evil. They undermine sincerity and simplicity of character ; and instead of being amused by them, as is often the case, a parent should view them with concern, and in that spirit carefully repress them. It is a good general rule in early youth, that nothing shall be said or done in joke which would be wrong

if in earnest. More latitude may be allowed to those who are grown up : but children cannot discriminate between what is innocent in jokes, and what is not ; and if they could, they have not sufficient steadiness of principle, and sufficient self-command, to confine themselves within the proper bounds, when suffered in their moments of gaiety to approach the brink of what is wrong. It is of the greatest possible importance, to preserve the mind from the taint of cunning and deceit ; and therefore we ought to be more anxious to avoid doing too little than too much to secure this point. Simplicity and integrity of character, the great foundation of every thing good, depend upon it.

6. Do all you can to secure a consistency of system in the management of your children.

It is quite apparent how indispensable it is that the father and mother should at least not counteract each other. If they do not and cannot think alike on the subject of education, by mutual concessions and accommodations they should pursue a similar plan with their children. Grievous are the consequences when they proceed differently. The children presume to erect themselves into judges between their parents : they play off one against the other. Not only one parent sinks in their esteem, but they often lose respect for both, and are disobedient to both. Thus the Fifth Commandment is habitually broken ; and bad principles and bad habits are as likely to be established by education in a young family so circumstanced, as good ones. Let me entreat parents to shun this fatal rock. If one

of them is conscious that the other is best qualified for the work of education, let such parent be disposed to yield points as far as duty will allow, and to strengthen the hands of the other. And even that other, instead of presuming on superior ability in this line, and carrying matters with a high hand, and peremptorily insisting on points respecting which there may be a difference of opinion between them, should proceed with as much accommodation as can be made consistent with duty; and where a point cannot be yielded, still the *suaviter in modo*\* should be practised with peculiar care, and the necessary duty performed in a way as little grating and offensive to the parent who disapproves, as may be. Let the more enlightened parent recollect, that an indifferent plan of education, in which parents harmoniously join, will generally answer much better than a superior one respecting which they differ. Besides, by kind accommodations, the misjudging parent is often won by degrees to see things in a more just light, and to acquiesce in a better system. Where both parents act on principle, and refer to the Bible as their standard, and do not interpret it in a very different way, a degree of accordance, which will answer tolerably well for practical purposes, may reasonably be expected. The greatest difficulty arises when one of the parents does not act on principle, or refers, substantially, to a different standard from the other. Even in these distressing cases, the *suaviter in modo*,† on a true Christian foundation, will do wonders. It often disarms hostility and counter-

\* Mild and pleasant.

† A gentle and accommodating manner.

action, and leaves the young family very much in the hands of the parent best qualified to educate it. And I fully believe, from personal observation, that the Divine blessing rests in an uncommon degree on the labors of a Christian parent so unhappily circumstanced, and fruits follow excellent and abundant beyond all human expectation. With what pleasure have I seen a majority of the young members of a family, most lamentably exposed to temptation by one parent, snatched out of the fire, as it were, by the pious and constant, but meek and unassuming, labors of the other!

In families where the parents proceed harmoniously and well in the work of education, their plan is often lamentably counteracted in the nursery, or the school-room. If the children are indulged there in bad tempers and habits; and still more, if they there meet with bad examples; with passion, or pride, or deceit, or a love of ease and luxury; all which is done in the parlour may be undone, and perhaps more than undone: and notwithstanding all the efforts of the parents, the progress of the child may be not in good, but in evil. Even on the most favorable supposition, the fruits produced by the exertions of the parents, under such circumstances, will be scanty and crude. The bias of nature will be so in favor of what is wrong, and so against what is right, that, if Divine Grace did not wonderfully favor the exertions of true piety in education, the task of the parents would be hopeless. How carefully, then, should nurses and others, who are put about children, be selected! And how atten-

tively should the course of things in the nursery and the school-room be watched and regulated! To this end, the nurse or the governess should be impressed with a sense of the very high importance which the parent attaches to good tempers and good habits; to which must be added, good principles, if the child is old enough to understand them. But it will by no means be sufficient to endeavour to make this impression by general declarations. It must be made in detail and by example, and with a persevering, but not a harrassing, recurrence to those points which seem to be not sufficiently understood, or not properly carried into practice. The vigilant eye of the parent will always be wanted to keep things in the right course, as well as to put them into it at first. It must be laid down as a principle, that nothing must be concealed by the child. That vile maxim against telling tales out of school (vile, when employed to keep parents in ignorance,) must be utterly proscribed; and openness and confidence must be zealously cultivated, both in the child and in those who have the charge of him. But the parents must not trust to being informed of every thing important to be known. They must delicately, but affectionately, make the requisite inquiries; and also take care by personal inspection (conducted, however, with kindness and delicacy to the nurse or the governess) to ascertain the real state of things. But, with all that can be done, it will seldom be found possible to put the management of children in the nursery on a truly good footing. The class of persons to be employed is so ill-educated and unenlightened, and



such of them as are pious are generally so injudicious, that not only the plan of the parent with the child will scarcely ever be even tolerably maintained when the child is out of his sight, but positive and serious evils will be produced and cherished. It is highly important, therefore, that the child should be as much with the parent as circumstances will permit. Every hour in the society of a parent who understands education, and pays proper attention to it, is an hour gained to moral improvement, and, (as far at least as regards children yet in the nursery) is too often an hour redeemed from what is far from deserving that appellation. In whatever way the child is employed, whether in talking or playing, a moral lesson may be instilled, moral habits may be encouraged, and bad ones repressed: the parent will continually be obtaining a greater insight into the child's character, and the child greater affection for its parent. Thus good will be doing, and a foundation laying for still greater good. Indeed, God seems to me to afford no slight ground for presuming that children should be much with their parents, by making the society of each so pleasant to the other, where the parent performs his part as he ought, and the child has not been spoiled by excessive indulgence in some other quarter. But the evidence of his will, which arises from the benefit resulting to the child, and also, I believe, to the parent, from this intercourse, is irrefragable and decisive.

It often happens, however, that there is an inconsistency in education more to be deplored than any which has yet been mentioned:—this is the incon-

sistency of the parent with himself. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, contrasting the correction employed by parents with that used by the Almighty in his government of his true servants, says, "They," (the parents) "verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure,\* but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." What a picture is this ! God, the Sovereign Proprietor of all his creatures, invariably pursues the good of those whom he deigns to call his sons, in all the discipline to which he subjects them ; while man, who can call nothing his own, who is a mere trustee under the Almighty, who, in his conduct towards his children, should always bear in mind that both they and he are bought with a price, and that not his own gratification, but the will of God, should be his rule in all he does as a father,—man presumes to forget his imperious duties in education, and to make it his object to please himself rather than his Sovereign Lord ! If we did not continually see the fact, we should not believe it possible that the work of education would be so often carried on under the supreme influence of selfishness. His own ease and convenience and the indulgence of his own feeling and humor, frequently seem to engage a father's first at-

\* A friend has intimated that the Greek phrase, translated "after their own pleasure," would be better rendered "as they thought fitting." If the latter be the real import of the original, the passage will not form so broad a foundation for my observations as if it were that given in our translation. But however this may be, I am convinced that the extent of the evil pointed out in them is but too fully proved by fact and experience.

tion in his proceedings with his children ; and, except in striking cases, which oblige him, as it were, to depart from so lax a system, the good of the child is clearly made, in practice, though not in theory, a secondary object : so true is the description of the Apostle : he proceeds according to his own pleasure, rather than for the profit of his children. When education is not conducted so very ill, and the good of the child is *generally* the main object of the parent, and his own inclinations are *generally* made to bend to it ; yet, in many families, this general course is subject to most numerous and grievous exceptions. When the stimulus to self-gratification is strong, the parent yields to it, the rules of good education are violated, and the child cannot but be injured. The injury (unless God avert it) will be in proportion to the extent of this fault. *Some* portion of it is found in all parents : but I am speaking not of a few thinly scattered instances rarely occurring, such as must be expected from so weak a creature as man even in his best estate, but of its more frequent and glaring recurrence, to the serious interruption of a good system of education.

Now it is clear that this fault, in whatever degree it may exist, is an enemy to consistency of conduct. As it proceeds from the parent yielding to a different motive from that which ought to actuate him, and sometimes at least does actuate him, when with his children ; this new motive must lead to different results from those which would flow from the other, and produce inconsistency. But this is by no means all. A man with whom self-gratification is a lead-

ing motive, is inconsistent with himself. He will conduct himself towards his child according to his present humor. One hour he will be indulgent, and the next severe : at one time he will allow his child to do things which at another he would forbid. The child also will find out that he can carry points by management ;—by making his request when the parent is in a yielding humor, or by bringing him into such a humour by coaxing and wheedling, or by overcoming his objections by importunity. Inconsistency must be the consequence : and an inconsistency the more to be deplored, because it will be connected with a failure in respect for the parent who is the author of it, and with the practice of cunning and art in the child,—habits of mind most adverse to all that is good.

The very high importance of consistency must be apparent to all. Will children be likely to value good principles as they ought, when their parents do not steadily act upon them, and enforce them ? Will good habits be rooted and fixed in the child when he is allowed at times to indulge in the opposite bad ones ? Will he be led to see the beauty of holiness of heart, and of holy conduct, when he is *allowed* at times to taste the sweets of sin (for every fault is a sin) from which he ought to be weaned, and when he finds his own self-indulgence sanctioned by the self-indulgence of his parent ? “ The ways of Religion are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace ;” but to those only who steadily walk in them. They have no charms for those whose conduct is marked by frequent or gross inconsistencies.

7. Spend much time with your children : encourage them to be free before you ; and carefully study their characters.

For what is education ? It is co-operating with the Divine Spirit in forming the mind and changing the heart of an immortal being, whose nature is extremely complex, by no means easily understood, and differing greatly in different individuals ; in all, however, weak and corrupt, and averse to the change to be wrought in it. Is it possible to doubt, that what is above recommended must be necessary in this work ? Can too great pains be taken where so much is at stake ? Can success be rationally expected, unless great pains are taken, and your labors are enlightened and judicious ? And can you flatter yourself that you take due pains, or that your labors will have a proper direction, if you give little time to your arduous task, and do not employ proper means for becoming well acquainted with the characters of your children ?

It is wonderful that a parent can *hope* to be an effectual instrument under Divine Grace, in leading his children from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, by proceeding in the way in which religious education is often conducted. Is it not generally true, that even in religious families, more thought, and care, and time are employed in teaching children to read, than in teaching and persuading them, by God's help, to be real Christians ? The father sees but little of those who are young, and much less than is desirable of such as are older.

The first he considers as scarcely at all under his

care; and though he probably gives some instructions to the latter, they are commonly such as are more calculated to enlarge their knowledge, and improve their understandings, than to regulate their dispositions, and make them new creatures. His avocations often are such as to make it impossible for him to be a great deal with his children; but he generally might be much more with them than he is; and when with them, might employ the time much more usefully for the promotion of their best interests than he does. It often happens that they are under a degree of restraint in his presence, which, added to the little time he spends with them, prevents his obtaining a deep insight into their characters; and, therefore, either many evils escape his notice, or he adopts some wrong mode of correcting them; and many a tender germ of good passes unobserved, and withers for want of his fostering care.—The mother is much more with her children, but generally, I think, not so much as she ought to be. This is the more to be lamented, because women are admirably fitted for training their offspring in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They have a remarkable quick insight into character: and a warmth of affection, a tenderness and a delicacy, which win the affection of others, and enable them to correct faults without giving offence, and to present Christian principles and virtues to their children in their most amiable form. I believe that there has seldom been a man who had a good and amiable mother, that has not in after-life looked back on her instructions and example with reverence and delight. Cowper's ad-

mirable little poem on viewing his mother's picture, touches the hearts of all of us, because it describes scenes and feelings dear to every virtuous mind ; scenes and feelings of which many of us have partaken, and all wish to partake.

Every hour which a Christian mother spends with her children has balm on its wings. She contrives to make even their pastimes a moral lesson ; and though she cannot (and it is not desirable that she should) make their regular lessons a pastime, yet she adapts them well to the abilities of her scholars, accommodates them well to times and circumstances, and divests them of whatever is oppressive and revolting. To mix the pleasant with the useful, is at least as important in education as in poetry ; but good mothers far exceed good poets in that art. Surely, then, a mother should be jealous of every thing which keeps her from the bosom of her family ; — a sphere in which she is so gifted to shine, and to be a blessing to those most dear to her. How sad it is, when she throws away this pure gold for mere dross, by giving up those hours to an excess of visiting and company, or even of reading, which ought to be spent among her children ! And how sad, too, when such high powers to train her young charge for Christ and glory are not under the guidance of an enlightened judgement, or receive a wrong direction ! I have been grieved to see maternal sensibility much more alive to the bodily than to the spiritual health of the objects of its solicitude : electrified when there was an idea that a child had received some slight hurt, but little moved while it

was contesting a point with a nurse, or teasing a brother. And I have been much more grieved, when I have seen it fall into partiality and favouritism; or exhaust itself in anxieties about the persons of the girls, to the comparative neglect of their understandings, and to the great injury of their feelings and dispositions; or employ itself in heaping on them accomplishments, instead of leading them on in useful attainments and Christian habits; or yielding to the influence of humour or caprice; or (worse than all) giving itself over to a blindness to the faults of the objects of its love, and ruining them by indulgence and commendation.

The only plausible excuse which parents, possessing health and sufficient time, can make for not employing themselves actively in the education of their children is, that they put them into hands more fit for that task. This may be a good reason for sending boys, after a certain age, to school, or to a tutor; though still, even in their case, much remains to be done by parents. Waving, however the consideration of this part of the subject, the excuse which has been mentioned does not appear to be admissible, under any common circumstances, in the case of girls and of younger boys. Of these, the parents are certainly the natural guides and instructors. By long knowledge of their offspring, by their just title to respect as parents, and by affections and sympathies on both sides, they are fitted for this task far better than strangers can be. And if they suffer these great instruments of good to be lost, or perverted to evil; or if they fail to qualify themselves



for their task by obtaining other requisites, and by allotting to it sufficient time and thought, and taking due care and pains; they must be answerable to God. They may, with much propriety, call in assistance, especially in the mechanical parts of education; but should always consider themselves as keeping the higher branches, which respect the principles, dispositions, and habits, chiefly in their own hands. Can they entrust these to nurse-maids? They must certainly answer, No! Or to governesses? These, in general, are but ill qualified to undertake this most important part of education. Besides, being extremely inferior to the parents in the points which have been mentioned, they are almost always unprepared for the task. The boarding-schools, at which they are educated, afford them little instruction in this line, beyond what is necessary for ensuring the getting of lessons, and the maintenance of peace and subordination.

## CHAP. IV.

*The Period between a Child's beginning to read and going to School:—its Importance.—The Objects of Education, and their relative Value.—Commencement of Instruction in Reading.—Rosseau:—Education a Discipline.—Choice of Books.—Tones and Articulation.—Care in the Use of Religious Books:—Selection of them.—Catechisms.*

DURING the period between a child's first beginning to read and the time of his going to school, the mind becomes capable of more continued and systematic instruction. Its powers expand and acquire a degree of firmness; and a far more regular foundation may be laid for the opinions, dispositions, and habits which ought to predominate in mature age. That wondrous being, man, displaying so many marks of his high origin, as well as of his deplorable fall; whose astonishing progress in knowledge, when his powers are cultivated, and whose more astonishing capabilities of knowledge, clearly point him out as destined to a more exalted state of being; and whose no less astonishing progress in good or in evil, and further capabilities of both according to the course he takes, afford clear indications that that future state will be one of righteous retribution, eminently blessed or eminently wretched:—that wondrous being, at an early age, receives impressions which

sink deep into his as yet soft and yielding nature, and acquires habits which take such firm hold of that nature as almost to become part of it. With what anxious care, then, should this spring-time of life be employed in preparations for the future harvest! If there be not a harvest of good, there *must* be one of evil. The heavenly sickle will most assuredly, in due time, gather either the one or the other: and then with what unspeakable joy or grief will parents look back on their conduct towards their offspring during the years of early childhood!

There is a further consideration, which, in the case of boys, adds extremely to the importance of parental exertions in education during the period in question. On its expiration, they usually leave their father's house, never afterwards, during the whole course of their education, to spend in it any very large portion of their time. And whither do they go? To school, where they are surrounded by new companions, and find in abundance new sentiments, new habits, and new temptations. Their parents are no longer at hand; and it is impossible for the master to afford them the protection which parents can afford against the inroads of folly and vice, especially out of school hours. His time is too much occupied, and his family is too numerous to admit of close personal attention to his individual scholars, in their general manners and habits. If they enter this new world without decidedly good principles, and corresponding conduct of some continuance, what is to be expected? Can it be rationally hoped that they will resist their own natural bias to evil, stimulated,

as it will be, by bad example and false shame? If the father sees, on his son's return home for the holidays, a change which shocks him (though parental partiality will often make him in a great measure blind to that which is apparent to others), how is he to remedy the evil? He will exert himself during the boy's continuance at home. But that is short; and to be followed by a much longer period, during which his son will again be exposed to the same temptations which he was before too weak to resist; —temptations now more formidable from not having been resisted. The parent will engage the master to counteract the evils he deplors: but the master, whatever may be his ability and good intentions, cannot perform impossibilities, nor, if the number of his pupils is not extremely small, give the time and attention to the case of this one boy which it would probably require. Supposing, however, his engagements to admit of his executing this task effectually, I confess I should be apprehensive that he will very rarely be found disposed to do so. His affection for the child cannot be expected to be that of a parent, and therefore he will generally be found deficient in the delicate and unceasing duties of an office which requires all the tender solicitude that flows from parental affection. The father also writes frequently to his son. Letters, in such a case, are a very inadequate substitute for ocular inspection and *viva voce*\* admonition. Perhaps, however, he adopts what he deems the most efficacious measure, and sends his

\* Admonition by word of mouth.

boy to another school. Is there not reason to fear that the new school will have its own peculiar disadvantages? But supposing it to introduce him to no new evils, is there any valid reason to hope that it will furnish a radical cure for the old mischiefs? God's grace can do every thing; and his mercy often effects more than we can ask or think; but I cannot avoid looking upon the prospect of a parent, whose child has not taken to school with him a good foundation of religious principles and habits, and enters on bad courses there, as very gloomy and discouraging.

Enough, I hope, has been said on the vast importance of making the best use of that period in education which is now under review. How is this purpose to be effected? Without presuming to give a full answer to that momentous inquiry, I will offer some practical observations on this subject.

First, then, in taking a Christian view of the objects of education, there can be no doubt that the first is to instil and cherish, in dependence on the Divine blessing, true religion, both in the soul and in the daily and hourly habits of life: and the second, to convey general knowledge and form the mind and the manners. These objects are in no small degree coincident each with the other. Nothing is so conducive to whatever things are lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy in the various walks and stations of life, as a heart renewed by the Holy Spirit, and a demeanor corresponding with such a renewal. But, so far as they are distinct, the first has a decided pre-eminence. Happy is it when in

practice it meets with the superior care, attention, and solicitude, which in theory is readily allowed to be its due! Partly from causes which have been pointed out, and partly from the example of that vast majority of mankind which has not true religion really at heart, even Christian parents are apt to slide into a system of education, if not directly opposed to the foregoing principle, yet certainly one which, in the opinion of St. Peter or St. Paul, would be thought too nearly approaching to "the course of this world." Let it be strongly borne in mind, that if we do not set out with a just and distinct view of our objects in the management of our children; and if we do not continually try our practice by our principles, and use vigorous and unceasing endeavors to keep it up to their standard, the stream will be poisoned at the very fountain, and we shall have cause to deplore the consequences.

An attention to the relative importance of the objects in education, is necessary, even in the very first step to be taken by a parent in the period under consideration. He must determine at what age it will be best to begin to teach his child to read. Were he to make mere progress in reading his chief concern, I am by no means certain that he might not defer the commencement of his instructions a year or two longer than is desirable, if he considers the acquisition of good habits as of still greater importance, and to be greatly promoted by calling a child to the obedience, attention, patience, self-denial, and other good habits which he must practise, in acquiring the first rudiments of reading. However,

the weakness and volatility of the little scholar, and the great repugnancy of our nature to exchange ease and play for restraint and toil, must be borne in mind. But little must be put upon him. For a time, attention must not be required for more than a very few minutes, and that not more than once or twice a day. But what is done, be it ever so little should be done with a regular aim at correctness. "A little and well," should be the teacher's motto. Above all, the utmost endeavors, consistent with sober and sound instruction, must be used to sweeten the labor, and not only to prevent bad tempers, but to foster every thing good and amiable. Times must be chosen for lessons, when no particular cause exists for ill humor or impatience; and whatever is likely to excite such tempers must be kept out of the way. If any thing unexpectedly occurs to make the child greatly wish for an earlier release than usual, it will be generally right to indulge him more or less, according to circumstances, in this point, if he has been tolerably good in his lesson: and even when he has not, and it is impossible to speak of the favour as in any degree the fruit of his good conduct; or if from any other cause, from bad temper, for instance, it is doubtful whether he is in a state to go on properly with his reading; it will usually be best to stop the lesson. But for obvious reasons he must not, in the latter case, be treated with indulgence, but made to feel that he has been an offender by some little restraint or privation, and above all, by a suitable conversation on the subject. A delicacy of manage-

ment is requisite on these occasions. They call not only for a due appreciation of their importance, but for sagacity, thought, lively and well-poised feelings, self-command, and active and sound principle in the parent. In most of these requisites, mothers far exceed fathers. Let this consideration, while it gives confidence and vigour to the exertions of the mother, also point out to her the extent of her criminality, if she fail to make a good use of a talent bestowed upon her for the benefit of her offspring; and let it impress on the father the necessity of using double diligence in qualifying himself for the discharge of his parental duties, than, which none can be more clearly indispensable or more sacred.

As the child becomes rather older, and a little habituated to his business, his lessons will naturally be increased both in length and in frequency. Less care will be requisite in choosing the time for them; and after a while that care will cease, and the school hours will be stated and determinate: less weight will be given to obstacles in the way of proceeding with a lesson: and in all points more regularity, more self-possession, more voluntary exertion, and longer and stricter attention will be expected from him.—I would, however, caution parents against looking for a rapid or uninterrupted change in these respects. They will so much wish for such a change, both for the sake of their scholar, and to lighten their own burthen as teachers, that they will be under a great temptation to expect it, and to be somewhat impatient and harsh when disappointed.



This state of mind in parents will be very prejudicial to both parties ; and unless there be a timely consciousness of error, and a recurrence to a better course, the most disastrous consequences will follow. The bonds of affection will be loosened, the confidence of the child will be lost ; and he will be led to feel towards his parent as a severe master, instead of a wise and tender friend, armed indeed by the Almighty with extraordinary power, but always unwilling to use it, and effecting his purposes, if possible, by the most mild and gentle means. In truth, it is highly unreasonable to expect little creatures to make a regular and rapid improvement in their reading. Such an improvement may now and then take place : but in general the change will be very gradual, and subject to great fluctuations. For a time, a child may make great progress, then suddenly appear to make none at all, or even to retrograde. Surely, this is very natural in a little being come into the world with a strong disposition to please itself, rather than to do its duty ; and ready to be impatient and fretful and self-willed, when thwarted in its wishes ; and with mental powers but just opening, and habits, if on the whole good, yet very new and imperfect, and affording no security against the sudden inroads of temptation. I have often seen parents so highly unreasonable as to treat evils of this kind as if they were quite extraordinary, or almost intolerable, and such as call for expressions of dissatisfaction, and a severity of treatment, not at all to be vindicated ; and the course they have pursued in addition to other bad consequences

has often tended to aggravate the very evil they so irrationally deplore, and treat in so unjudicious, not to say in so unchristian a manner. Undoubtedly such faults are to be counteracted; but by moderate measures, unaccompanied by anger or discontent in the parent, and not habitually harrassing to the child, or likely to make him hate reading, and dread the lesson-hour, and, worse than all, likely to alienate his affections from his natural protector and guide.

What has been said will show, that though a warm advocate for mildness, temperance, and forbearance in education, I am no friend to Rousseau's plan, or those, built on the same foundation, which have been proposed by others. I shall not stop to speak of such plans at any length, because I do not believe they now receive much countenance among those who are likely to read these observations, and shall only say that they are founded on not merely an erroneous view of human nature, but on a view the very reverse of that given of it in the Scriptures; and that in their operation they are calculated to set aside the Christian system, and to steel the mind against it. What can be more false and mischievous than to represent, and treat man as a creature disposed of himself to act rightly, and to cultivate every good disposition, if he be but preserved from being spoiled by priests and pedants, and be put in the way to see, by the established order of things in the world, that virtue will best promote his happiness? Had this been agreeable to-truth, since man confessedly wishes to be happy, we should have seen virtue

clearly predominant among men, if not universal; and vice merely an exception to the general state of things. It is true, that God, in his wisdom and mercy has so ordered things, that virtue does promote happiness, and vice leads to misery, even in this world. At least, this is the strong tendency of things; and it is very important to point out this truth to children, and to accustom them to feel it in the common occurrences of life. Doubtless, the writers under consideration have ingenious devices for effecting this object: devices, however, in which there is by far too much address and management to suit my taste. I should be very apprehensive, that placing a child in the midst of so artificial a system was a bad introduction to the sincerity and godly simplicity of the Gospel. But if this objection were unfounded; if these devices were as innocent and useful as they are ingenious; still as to adopt the system of such writers, as a whole, would be most ruinous, so to recommend their works without great circumspection to those around us, is, in my opinion, highly dangerous. I have thought some good people very unguarded on this point. Such a recommendation is, in fact, a recommendation of poison, for the sake of the virtues that, by a chemical process, may be extracted from it. But in the cases to which I allude there has been no due caution against the deleterious qualities of the poison, and no due consideration whether those to whom the recommendation was given had any competent skill in Christian chemistry.

According to a just view of human nature, whe-

ther derived from religion, from observation, or from history, in education it cannot be left to the choice of the child, what he will learn, and when he will learn it. Education cannot by any means be reduced to a sort of play; but it must be a discipline upheld by parental authority—mild indeed, and gentle in its exercise, and sweetened by affection, but still a discipline—having for its object, in humble dependence on the Divine blessing, the conducting of an immortal creature, in the first stage of its existence, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Its great business must necessarily be the counteracting of the natural bent of the mind to evil, and the instilling and fostering, under the guidance and by the help of the Holy Spirit, of a new nature, the very reverse of that which we all bring into the world.—How can this be effected on the plan of Rosseau or his followers? It is plainly impossible; and the attempt would only increase the evils which education should remedy, and fill the mind with fascinating but deadly errors which it would be very difficult afterwards to eradicate.

The ends of education are to be attained partly by regular lessons, and partly by attention to the child out of school hours.

With respect to lessons, I have already made some remarks, and now proceed to offer others.

It is important that the lesson should be learnt in the presence of the teacher for some years after reading commences. A young child is too thoughtless, and has too little self-command, to be left by himself, while he learns a lesson. His time will pro-

bably be mispent, and the lesson will be neglected, and he will accustom himself to trifle over his book: and, what is more important, he will fall into a habit of omitting what he knows he ought to do, which will naturally be extended to other branches of duty; and this failure will, in all probability, lead to another and a worse evil—namely, that of making disingenuous excuses, and even of telling direct lies, in order to avoid punishment.

Another circumstance, nearly allied to the foregoing, deserves attention. A parent should be ready, if possible, to hear a child his lesson as soon as he offers to say it. It is not uncommon with teachers to make their scholars wait as long as suits their own convenience, and expect them to be getting their lessons better during this delay. Such expectation is not at all rational, and will almost always be disappointed. It is not easy to induce a child to attend to his lesson, even when he is convinced of the impossibility of saying it unless he gives his attention. But to expect continued attention from him to the study of a lesson in which he thinks himself already perfect; to expect that he will bestow on the lesson time and labor which appear to him superfluous, and proceed in the same dull round of getting and getting what he thinks he can say already, this surely is absurd. Is it not also an offence against that law of love, which, while it demands an attention to the feelings, and a condescension to the weaknesses of all mankind, lays us under a peculiar and more pressing obligation to consult the happiness of our children, and forbids us to expect to oc-

copy the place we ought in their affection and confidence, if he will not obey its dictates? An unnecessary delay in hearing lessons must tend not only to disgust the scholar, but to add to the labors of the teacher, who will generally find that a lesson which would have been said ten minutes before with good humor and alacrity, is now either not said at all, or said in an imperfect manner, and with weariness and dissatisfaction. Where there are several scholars, it will be difficult entirely to avoid this evil; but by good management it may be brought within such narrow bounds as not to be formidable. When children become somewhat older, say eight or nine, they may bear waiting for a short time till a teacher is ready; and, under proper guards against attendant evils, it may sometimes be even a useful discipline.

Something will shortly be said as to religious books. With respect to others, there is ample choice of proper ones; but there is a still greater number of such as are improper. Those ought to be selected which are not so easy as to require little, if any, mental exertion, nor so difficult as to be necessarily a burthen; which will be interesting to the child, but not frivolous or absurd, or bearing a resemblance to novels; which convey useful instruction, and which harmonize with good principles.

Little children are apt to contract unnatural tones in reading, and also a low, indistinct, and muttering articulation. A teacher must guard against these evils. The latter is best prevented by placing the scholar first at a little distance, and by degrees at a

greater, till he and his instructor, each having a book, are removed several yards asunder. As the bad articulation usually arises from their being close together, and poring over the same book, so it is prevented by changing that system. The only objection to the course I propose, is the interruption to other scholars who are getting lessons, by the loud voice of the one who is engaged with the teacher. In some cases this may be so great an evil as to make that course unadvisable; in others, a little ingenuity in arrangement will be necessary to make it practicable; and this will be cheerfully employed, if its benefits are properly appreciated. Of course, it cannot be adopted until the time is arrived when the teacher is no longer obliged to point to the letter or word to be read by the scholar.

With respect to books of a strictly religious description, some further remarks are necessary. In using such books, care should be taken to keep their *great* object constantly in view. It would be a desecration of the awful subject to use a book of this kind entirely, or even principally, for the purpose of teaching a child to read. Such a proceeding would be somewhat like employing a church for some common worldly purpose. It is of high importance, that religion should always wear her holy garb, and that the youthful mind should never approach her but with the sentiments which she ought to inspire. Whatever tends to dissociate her from such sentiments; to habituate children to hear her truths, or use her language, without such sentiments; does them an injury which it may be very difficult to re-

pair. To speak of God, his word, or his will, without holy reverence, is, I conceive, repugnant to the spirit of the Third Commandment, and therefore a breach of it : and that reverence will not be retained, if books on such subjects are taken up when religious improvement is not the leading object.

If this be so, let parents beware of using such books merely as vehicles even of religious knowledge. Religious knowledge, without religious dispositions will not impress the mind with reverence. The head may be stored ; but when the heart remains cold, Divine Truth not only fails to produce the effect intended by it, but the mind is gradually hardened against right impressions at a future time. To hear solemn truths, without feeling them, grows into a habit. God forbid that any approach to so awful a state should be contemplated with indifference ! We all know how tremendous it is, as exhibited in the case of some loud but hollow professors of religion. We also may have seen or heard of instances of desperate obduracy in persons who have grown old in assisting in the outward services of religion, without yielding to its power. How attentive, then, should parents be to the frame of their own minds, and how desirous of promoting a devout spirit in those of their children, when the reading or conversation is on religious subjects ! Let them endeavor to make it a holy exercise to both parties. Let them endeavor to exclude a curious, or a cavilling, or a controversial, no less than a formal spirit, in the little beings to whom they are opening the heavenly path. Let them be quite in earnest in



making their lessons lessons of humility, reverence, modesty, devotedness to God, and trust in him, and love of him, as well as lessons of religious truth. Then, with the Divine blessing, will a beautiful harmony exist between the head and the heart. Then will parents have the highest gratification which they can enjoy as parents; that of seeing their charge make sensible progress towards perfect men and women in Christ, and grow in favor both with God and man.

But among the books to which these remarks may apply, the holy Scriptures are beyond comparison pre-eminent. They never should be approached but with *deep* reverence for the Divine Author, and a *deep* sense of their inestimable value. When employed in reading them, the parent should set an example sometimes of short aspirations to God, (short, simple, and modest, but from the heart,) for his blessing, and always of a devout spirit; and the very book should be used and preserved with more than ordinary care. Somewhat of the temper of mind inculcated on Moses, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground," should be sought and cherished on such occasions. In order the better to instil and preserve a proper reverence for the Bible, I would recommend the not beginning to read either the Old or the New Testament with children before their general respect for religion, and their progress in self-command, afford reasonable security that they will conduct themselves rightly while so engaged. They should also have attained some facility in reading,

that the difficulties they find in a sentence may not so far occupy their attention as not to leave it sufficiently disengaged for the attaining of the spiritual advantages which ought to be the great object in view. When they do begin to read the Scriptures, let those parts be carefully selected which they can best understand, and which are most likely to interest them; and let the readings always be short, and be held out rather as a favor than as a task, and always as a religious duty.

Perhaps there is no religious book with which it is better to begin than Watts's Hymns for Children. They are very simple and attractive, and contain (if I may so say) a body of sound nursery divinity; and this is presented in such a dress as to gratify the imagination, and affect the heart while it informs the understanding. Some of these hymns may with great advantage be gradually taught to children from the mouth of the parent before they can be read. This work may commence even before a child knows his letters. It cannot, however, be conducted too tenderly, and scarcely too gradually. Very great care should be taken not to disgust the little one with that occupation. He should never have religion brought before him but with a smiling though a serious aspect;—such an aspect as may invite to a further acquaintance. These hymns should be carefully explained, as they are learned, and in a tone, and with little illustrations, and with gentle but lively applications to the experience and conscience of the scholar, all congenial with the spirit of Watts's poetry: and they should continue a standing book

until all of them have been learned and repeated (and never without appropriate observations from the parent) two or three times over.

Some short and easy Bible History (as Mrs. Trimmer's) is very useful as soon as the child can read with tolerable ease. It will convey some general idea of the longer narratives; and while it will furnish useful lessons at the time, and give the parent a wider range in his illustrations, and in his appeals to the conduct of others either in the way of example or of warning in his incidental conversations with the child, it will prepare the way for reading the Bible itself at a rather later period with more advantage. The different parts of a long historical narration, interrupted often by digressions in the Sacred Volume, will thus be more easily kept in the memory so as to form a whole in the child's mind as he proceeds. There is another history of the Bible of a higher class, which has great merit, and will be found extremely useful in its proper season. Its title is, "The History of the Bible in familiar Dialogues, by a Lady," 4 vols. 12mo. printed for and sold by Gardiner, 19, Prince's Street, Cavendish Square. This is a work which combines solid instruction and sound views of religion with that share of dialogue, and that ease of manner and style, which are pleasant to children. Parents are much indebted to the authoress.

As to catechisms, it is best to begin with Watts's, which are far better calculated for very young children than the admirable one of the Church of England. They should be learnt, like his hymns, very

gradually, and with explanations and illustrations. His first is adapted to a child just beginning to put letters together; and his second to one two to three years older.

To the second will succeed our Church Catechism. It appears to me a sad mistake to make children say this by heart, without suitable explanations and remarks from the teacher. When this course is followed (and it is too common) the child generally understands very imperfectly what he is repeating; the repetition, it is to be feared, is accompanied by no devotional feelings or self-application; and as far as the child does attend to the sense of what he is saying, there is reason to apprehend that the evils will accrue which have been already noticed as flowing from religious truths passing through the mind without making religious impressions on the heart. To avoid such evils, and to derive from the catechism the good it was intended to convey, it is advisable, I think, to divide it into four or five parts: and to let one part be said every Sunday, (or oftener,) and made a ground work for considerable explanations and illustrations. Questions will be put to the children, to try how far they understand what they have been saying, and are acquainted with those parts of Scripture which have a close connexion with it. Their answers should be kindly elicited, and kindly treated. They will often be erroneous, and generally crude and imperfect; but instead of being forward to find fault, the teacher should give what encouragement he properly can, and gently and often indirectly, correct errors and supply de-

ficiencies by his amplification and illustration of an answer, and by his further questions on the subject. He should not only be willing to answer questions himself, but should rather invite them ; taking care, however, not to be materially drawn away from his object, or led into desultory conversation. The whole, on his part, should be marked by Christian seriousness, attempered by parental love and condescension. He should be

Much impressed

Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,  
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds  
May feel it too : affectionate in look,  
And tender in address.

But care must be taken that the conversation or lecture (whichever it may be called) shall not harrass or agitate, but wear a soft and smiling dress, and rather slide gently into the heart than seize and appal it. The new situations and circumstances which his children respectively have before them, with their attendant temptations, wants, advantages, and duties, will be borne in mind, and have considerable influence as to the turn he will give to his discourse. They will suggest much information to be communicated, much advice, many warnings, and much encouragement.

The parent will also have an eye to the present faults and defects of the individuals of his little audience, and he will now and then openly speak of them ; but he will always execute this part of his duty with delicacy and tenderness, and qualify what

he says by introducing, when he honestly can, some commendation of those whose faults he mentions, and always by laying a stress on the means of improvement, and on the grounds of hope that such means will be employed. *Such* a mention of faults is useful: but it must be managed with some address, and with a careful attention to the disposition of the child; or it may be revolting, and do mischief, especially, if other children are present. I have always found these catechetical conversations pleasant to children, and highly beneficial. As the little circle becomes older and better informed on religious subjects, the illustration and application of the several heads will become more extensive, and the several divisions of the catechism as they are repeated in their turns, may be considered as each consisting of two parts, which may be alternately the subjects of comment. Thus, if the *first* parts are the special objects of attention in one course of these lectures, the *second* parts will be so in the next course; and the same portion will recur for illustration only on every eighth or tenth Sunday, or five or six times in the year. This plan will afford a pleasing variety to older pupils and yet bring each part of the catechism sufficiently often under review. I usually continue these lectures with my children till they are fifteen or older.

It may be proper here to introduce some remarks on the importance, and on the best means, of fixing passages of Scripture in the memory of children.

I fear it is too common to be satisfied with a less

intimate acquaintance with the Word of God than becomes creatures to whom so inestimable a treasure is given. The Bible is at hand, and is often, perhaps is regularly, read. Its different parts are recognised as old acquaintance on each re-perusal; and they are not passed over without care and attention. In this way a foundation is laid, with the Divine blessing, of sound religious knowledge, and of solid piety. Still, however, there is often but little readiness in producing from memory the very expressions of Scripture. There is a wide departure from the spirit of the directions given to the Israelites:—"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."\* And yet on an ability to produce the very words of Scripture promptly and correctly, from the stores of memory, depends often our right and ready application of this our Divine Rule, both in directing our own course through life, and in giving useful advice to those about us. Have not we all felt the prodigious advantage of an apposite passage of Scripture striking the mind on occasions when temptation has pressed upon us, or when we have doubted

\* Deut. vi. 6—9.

as to the course we ought to pursue? Nor is the advantage less, when we can support our advice to others by the very words of Holy Writ. But the benefits resulting from this knowledge of Scripture are by no means confined to such occasions. They extend to the general frame of the soul, and to its growth in grace; and, in this point of view, are far more important than in any other. What a rich treasury for a supply of holy thoughts, and for the cultivation of holy affections, with the Divine aid, does that man possess, whose mind is well stored with the Word of God! To him "nunquam minus solus quam cum solus"\* will be emphatically applicable. No lonely walk will be dull to him. Even sleepless hours on his bed will seldom pass unpleasantly, but will be marked by a heavenly calm, if not also by filial joy. How often, when thus employed, will he find time slide swiftly away, and be surprised to find the morning break on him much sooner than he expected! But these gratifications, though so pure and substantial, are of small value compared with the gradual transformation of soul which, through the Divine blessing, will accompany them. Perhaps nothing human promotes more powerfully a renewal in the Divine image, especially in persons of active pursuits, than a habit of gently dwelling, in hours of solitude and retirement, on such portions of the Divine Word as best suit existing circumstances and the existing temper of the mind.

\* Never less alone, than when alone.



## This exercise

Luxurientia compescet, nimis aspera sano  
 Levabit cultu, virtute carentia tollet.\*

All that is within will be purified, harmonized, cheered, and elevated; and it is apparent how much a frequent recurrence of such an inward frame must tend to form a new creature.

I may have an undue partiality for this mode of employing the thoughts in religion; but I must say, I greatly prefer it to suffering them to roam at will, and pour themselves forth in extemporaneous effusions. When so let loose, they are apt to be more under the guidance of human passions, and are more likely to run into superstition or enthusiasm. At all events, it can scarcely be hoped that the pictures they present to the soul will be so innoxious, so pure, so dignified, and so edifying, as those which are found in the inspired records of the communications of God to man.

In order to enjoy the full benefit of this species of religious contemplation, our knowledge of scripture must be extensive and accurate. It will not answer the purpose to be master of a few passages; or to be acquainted with many, but only in a loose and imperfect way. The power of selection should be as extensive as the occasions which call for it, and the dispositions of the soul, are various; and

\* Checks the luxuriant shoots of vice, and smooths,  
 By culture sound, the roughness we retain  
 From nature's quarry; and the heart refines  
 From all not virtuous.

when a passage is selected, we ought to be able to make use of it without mistake or difficulty.

Now, how will this knowledge of Scripture be best attained? Beyond all doubt, by learning much by heart during the period of youth. I have heard a gentleman, very eminent for ability and for biblical knowledge, say, that he remembers no part of his Bible so well as verses which he got by heart when a boy, as proofs of the different positions in the Church Catechism. It is in youth that the memory is most retentive; and the stores it then lays up are the least subject to loss or decay from the lapse of time. Like certain flowers gathered at a proper season for preservation, they retain, even to a late period, much of their original freshness; while passages learnt in after-life are apt to fade, and escape altogether out of the mind, if not frequently reinstated by repetition. Besides, by beginning early, there is ample time for laying in a large store of the more important parts of Scripture; and what is learnt will take deeper root, not only in the memory, but in the affections, and become more, if I may so say, a part of ourselves. The impressions thus received will, with God's blessing,

“Grow with our growth, and strengthen with our strength,”

and contribute essentially to the formation, in due time, of the perfect man in Christ.

In order to acquire this knowledge, let children learn a certain portion of Scripture every day, and say it to one of their parents. The number of

verses appointed to be learnt, should not be such as to make this business burthensome. When the passage is repeated, it should not only be explained, (if necessary,) but pains should be taken to lead the young person to enter into its spirit, and to be properly affected by it. Without this, little is attained. It will soon be neglected and nearly forgotten, when the superintending care of the parent no longer keeps it in the memory by fresh repetitions. Such repetitions are very important parts of the system. They should take place at considerable intervals, say every six or nine months with the younger children, who are still, at other times, making daily additions to their stock of Scripture-passages; and every year, or year and a half, with the elder ones, who are no longer making such additions systematically, though a passage which happens to strike them will now and then be added to those they had learnt before. Every repetition should be attended by affectionate and familiar conversations, calculated to lead to such feelings and dispositions as the passages respectively ought to excite. If this is done with tenderness, and with due attention to the age, acquirements, and natural temperament of the children, and with a care to avoid whatever may make the employment irksome or harrassing, a parent will seldom find any of his children attend him on such occasions with reluctance, but will generally see in their countenances and manner marks of interest and satisfaction.

It is possible, that the young and the diffident may sometimes fancy that they shall find some dif-

ficulty in fixing on passages for their children to learn ; and this may be an obstacle in the way of adopting the course I have ventured to recommend. Let them make the attempt, and they will succeed sufficiently well. However, as they may think otherwise, I will put, in the Appendix, a collection of passages from the New Testament, which I have known to be used in a young family with good effect. Great nicety is not requisite in a selection of this kind.

Two cautions, however, may be necessary in making a selection.

Avoid passages which have a very direct bearing on abstruse and much-controverted points.—Children ought not to be puzzled in religion. In this sense, as in others, spiritual milk, and not strong meat, is their proper food. The great aim should be to make, by Divine aid, their heavenly Father, and their Sanctifier, but, above all, their Saviour and his Gospel, the objects of their reverence and of their affections ; and this end will be greatly counteracted by fatiguing and bewildering their understanding. When difficulties occur to themselves, or are so far connected with the subject before them that they cannot be entirely passed over, it appears to me best to avoid entering minutely into them, but to show, that from the infinite distance between God and man, difficulties, and insuperable difficulties, must necessarily be expected, when God vouchsafes, to his creatures any communication respecting his own nature, and his own government. Nor is it less important to avoid contro-

verted, than to avoid abstruse points :—indeed, those which are abstruse are generally controverted. Controversy subjects vital religion in adults to eminent danger, unless they are very advanced and eminent Christians, and even then it is not without its perils : and, in my opinion, it never ought to be undertaken, except in cases of necessity, or pushed beyond that necessity. But in the case of children, with such weak intellects, such shallow knowledge, such lively and ill-regulated imaginations and feelings, and, above all, with religious principles and habits so extremely frail and imperfect, it *must* humanly speaking, be fatal to all that is good.

In general, do not select those addresses to God which are likely to be considered by the child as intended to be used by himself in lifting his thoughts to Heaven. However edifying these may be to persons more advanced in the Christian course, as expressing in the language of Inspiration their devout breathings of soul, they are unfit and unsafe for children. It cannot be supposed, that the language which suited the religious affections of David, will suit those of a child, who is just beginning that spiritual course, in which David had made so extraordinary a progress, as to be “a man after God’s own heart.” And, if David’s language is unfit, it must be unsafe, for a child. Nothing is more important in religion, than modesty, simplicity, and godly sincerity : and it is evident, that addresses to the Deity, or expressions of inward feelings, which go at all beyond what the actual state of our souls would naturally prompt, are not compatible with

those estimable qualities. Nay, I confess, that even in adults, and much more in children, I am better pleased when the outward manifestations of devotion evidently fall somewhat short of the internal impressions. By proceeding in an opposite course, many, I believe, have been led to direct hypocrisy, and many more have become self-deceivers. Where there appears to be, if not a sort of contest who shall use the most fervent expressions, at least an endeavor, while engaged in religious exercises or conversation, to work up the feelings to a high pitch, and to express them in words to the full as warm and glowing, who does not see that we are in danger of endeavoring to appear to others, and in most eminent danger of appearing to ourselves, more spiritual and devout than we really are? Look at the concise modesty of the address of the justified Publican, and at the beautiful simplicity of the Lord's Prayer; and compare them with the exuberant, if not the extravagant, style too often met with in human devotional compositions, and still more in extemporaneous prayers.

## CHAP. V.

*Mechanical Reading :—how obviated— School-Lessons to promote Moral Qualities :—Obedience ; Regularity ; Attention ; Patience ; Alacrity. — Happy Fruits of these Qualities.— Failures to be expected. —How to be borne.*

IT often happens that reading is made too mechanical. If the words are properly pronounced, and attention is paid to the stops, and the parts of the sentence are put together with tolerable propriety, the teacher rests satisfied, though the understanding of the scholar has been little employed. This is very generally the course with village school-masters, and many parents of good education too nearly approach it. Even the mere reading, were this alone the object, as it often is in a village school, can never be good when the mind does not thoroughly enter into the sense ; but that parents, whose views extend much farther, should ever acquiesce in their children's pronouncing sentences somewhat like parrots, and missing a large portion at least of the information and improvement which it was the intention of the author to convey, is really surprising. When this kind of reading is permitted, I believe it is owing in a good measure to their not being aware how imperfectly their little scholars understand what is so plain to themselves.

The evil in question is of far greater importance than may at first appear. The child is led into a habit of reading without thinking, and of resting contented with a very confused notion of what is read. Scarcely any thing can be a greater obstacle to the acquisition of sound and useful knowledge, and of vigorous habits of investigation. If these are not acquired, the mind will generally become a prey to frivolity and intellectual idleness; and it is well if it do not also resign itself to low pursuits, and sensual indulgence. As one antidote, through Divine grace, to these most unchristian and often fatal evils, let a child always be made, as soon as he can read a sentence, to understand what he reads, and to give an account of it afterwards. In order to effect the latter object, when his reading has been more than three or four lines, let him take his book and look it over, and give the account when he finds himself prepared. The parent must not expect this to be given without leading questions to draw it forth; and he will think it an important office to make this part of the business pleasant to his scholar, by smoothing difficulties, making the best of imperfect answers, and interspersing the whole with suitable illustrations and moral remarks, in a tone and manner favorable to the right feelings of his pupil, and likely to exclude wrong ones, or to administer a gentle cure to such as may be rising. So also, whatever is to be got by heart, should always be previously read, explained, illustrated, and (if I may so say) practically applied.

But the parent ought always to bear in mind, that



every lesson is as truly a lesson in the moral qualities to be acquired and strengthened by its being properly learnt, and properly said, as it is in the branch of knowledge to which it relates. Those qualities are of a very high order, and the character in future life depends extremely on the progress made in their acquisition during early youth. I will particularize five of them : *obedience, regularity, attention, patience, and alacrity.* These ought to be in exercise during every lesson ; and a proper regard to them in the pupil during school-hours, will do much, under the Divine blessing, towards making them habitual.

1. *Obedience.*—I well remember being much impressed by a sermon about twenty years ago, when I was a young father, in which the preacher said, that were he to select one word as the most important in education, it should be the word “obey.” My experience since has fully convinced me of the justice of the remark. Without filial obedience, every thing must go wrong : with it, if the parent has right views of his duty, and is consistent in his practice, notwithstanding present appearances may be very unpromising, every thing may not improbably become right. Is not a disobedient child guilty of a manifest and habitual breach of the Fifth Commandment ? And is it not a parent, who suffers this disobedience to continue when he knows he is armed with sufficient power to overcome it, an habitual partaker in his child’s offence against that commandment ? How can those who are thus criminal hope for God’s blessing on any part of

their conduct? and, without that blessing, what can they expect but a progress from bad to worse? Besides, without obedience, there will be no respect for the parent; but he will be the object of disregard, and even of a portion of contempt. He will be treated slightly; his opinion will be criticised; his judgement will be questioned; and the very endeavors he uses to lead his son to better sentiments will probably produce more harm than good. Is it surprising, that under the Divine government, the enforcing of obedience should be so essential a duty of parents, when the whole tenor of Scripture shows us, that obedience is the very groundwork of Chistianity? The natural propensity of man, to shake off the yoke of legitimate authority, is the disposition most adverse to God and his service. By the disobedience of our first parents, sin came into the world; and through the obedience of the Second Adam, are the gates of heaven opened to true believers. The wicked are emphatically styled, "the children of disobedience:" and it is clearly the primary object of the Divine plan of salvation to conquer the rebellious spirit of man and to bring him into a state of humility and submission. Parental authority is one powerful instrument for effecting this change. It is intended to bend the stubborn will, to repress froward humors, and by habituating a child to subjection to earthly parents, to prepare him for Christian obedience to his heavenly Father. In proportion as filial obedience is calculated to smooth the way for true religion, filial disobedience must produce the opposite effect. The

parent who habitually gives way to it, has appalling reason to apprehend that he is educating his child not for heaven, but for hell. His labors for its good may be many and great ; but what produce can he expect from such a soil ? The heart, poisoned by pride and selfishness, will be removed very far indeed from that " honest and good heart " in which the seed produces " thirty, sixty, a hundred fold." I have been induced to dwell the longer on this subject, from having observed many good people fail to require regularly and steadily prompt obedience from their children. This failure proceeds, I think, principally from that affection, and that sauvity of manners, which are the genuine fruits of Christianity : but partly from a perversion of the Christian tenet, that " God alone is the Author of all good," inducing, or rather tempting, them to leave to Him, with too little effort on their part, as his instruments, the cure of those evils against which they find it most irksome to contend. Let them, however, recollect that Jesus Christ, our model, united the most determined and invincible resolution with more than human love ; and personal exertions, almost too great for his mortal frame, with perfect reliance on the Divine Power.

2. *Regularity.*—Whoever has observed its high importance in human concerns, and the natural propensity of man to be changeful and desultory, will enforce its observance in his system of education. Man is formed to attain to far higher powers than those with which he is naturally endowed, and to reach far higher objects than those which appear to

be within his grasp. But these can only be obtained by continued and progressive efforts, which carry him on from step to step, till, from a state little differing from that of the brutes, he arrives at one which exhibits strong marks of his divine original, and no slight prognostics of a high destination. In such a course, regularity is absolutely necessary. Without it, the greatest human exertions will be productive of comparatively little good; and however they may sometimes astonish the beholders, they will rather resemble the extraordinary leaps of a wild animal, than the steady pace of the domesticated horse, which carries the rider to the end of a long journey. And yet how unwilling is man to submit to the rules and restraints indispensable to success in his best pursuits! He is fond of novelty; fond of ease; and loves, if active, rather to riot in the wanton and capricious exercise of his powers; and, if of a quiet disposition, rather to waste them in sloth, than to make a steady and well-directed use of them and reap the rich fruit of their legitimate exertion. To counteract this propensity, and give the habits a right direction, must be one of the objects of education. But this work must be carried on with moderation, and, for a few of the first years of the period under review, the parent must be content to let regularity be interrupted by a variety of little circumstances already noticed, when its observance would be particularly trying to the child; but it ought to be his endeavor to shorten this period as much as he properly can, and at length to re-

duce his system to strict order and method. The hours of business must be regular, and the lessons regular: regularly got, and regularly said. This regularity will be found not more favorable to the acquiring of knowledge, than to the subduing of selfishness, and the wayward humors which attend it, and to the growth of self-command and self-denial, and to the practical elevation of a sense of duty above all the allurements of external objects or vagrant fancies.

3. *Attention.*—It consists in a steady employment of the mind on the business immediately before it. It is surprising in how great a degree the ability of thus chaining down thought to any prescribed object is given by a right education, and of what high importance it is, not only in many of the walks of science, but in the common affairs of life. I once was for several weeks with a foreigner of very fair natural abilities, but never subjected to the discipline of early study, who would often arrive at right conclusions by a kind of jump, of which he could give but little explanation, but was incapable of fixing his mind on a train of reasoning so as to see the dependence of the several parts, each on the other. He took considerable pains to obtain a little mathematical knowledge; but his thoughts were so quick in their movements, and so intractable, that I question whether he could be said fully to understand any one proposition in Euclid. In giving an account of any piece of history which he had been reading, instead of telling you with some regularity what

he had found in his author, he drew you a picture of his own, lively, and often to the purpose, but produced by illustrations and analogies, and a sort of theatrical exhibition, and not by a narration of consecutive facts. Through the general diffusion of regular education in this country among those with whom we associate, I suspect that we are apt to look on this intractability of thought as a mental disease in a greater degree than we ought; and that, among savage nations, it is by no means uncommon, or rather it is perhaps the ordinary state of the human mind. Whether this opinion be well-founded or not, we shall all agree in deprecating such a state of intellect among our children, and be anxious to prevent it. Let, then, parents make a point of using their children, and especially their daughters, whose natural volatility most needs this discipline, not only to give their attention to the business in which they are engaged, but to listen, very early to a *little* reasoning, (at first a very little,) and give a short account of the argument they have heard; the parent taking care that the steps shall follow each other in their right order, and that none of them shall be omitted. By degrees the arguments may become longer. A skilful teacher will select a subject interesting to the pupil, who will consider what passes as conversation, and not as (what in truth it is) a lesson in which the *dulce* \* is most visible, and the *utile* † rather concealed. A habit of occasionally passing a quarter of an hour in this way, and of proceeding on a similar plan, when the children

\* Pleasant.

† Useful.

give an account of what they have been reading, and are asked for opinions respecting it, will do much towards making them reason methodically, which is a great point gained towards reasoning justly, and therefore towards acting rationally, as they pass through life. We often meet with a person who declares that he (or more frequently, I am afraid, she) cannot understand an argument used in conversation, though plain in itself. And why? Scrutinize a little, and you will generally find the true cause to be an indisposition to apply the mind with regular attention to it; an indisposition, in fact, to bear a burthen which has not been rendered light by the introduction of proper habits in early years.

It is almost superfluous to add, that habits of attention, besides laying a foundation for usefulness in future life, contribute essentially to the comfort of the school-room, and to the moral improvement of the scholars. They not only extremely facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, but do much towards making study pleasant, by making it vigorous and productive: they thus draw forth the faculties, prevent the tedium which is apt to prey on children in their school-hours, when their minds are not fully employed; promote self-government; and do away the temptation to those false excuses and pretences, of which idleness seldom fails continually to avail itself.

4. *Patience.*—Scarcely any disposition is more wanted in life than this, and education affords ample means of instilling and fostering it. Man is not only

called to endure many natural evils, and many evils brought upon him by his fellow-creatures: but in his Christian warfare with his own innate depravity, he must continually mortify his strongest inclinations and restrain his fondest wishes. "He that will come after me, must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." "If ye live after the flesh," (that is, according to your own natural desires,) "ye shall die: but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Eternal life is promised to those who seek for it "by *patient* continuance in well doing." And we are told, that if we would be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing," we must let "Patience have her perfect work." Such was "the good fight of faith" required by our Saviour and his Apostles, and such must it be to the end of time. In this case, as in every other, God makes no demand with which he does not enable man to comply. Not only the Holy Spirit is ready to aid him, but under the Divine government he is placed in circumstances calculated to prepare him for obedience to the Divine will. Among these circumstances, education is intended by the Almighty to hold a distinguished place. And the better to render education a powerful instrument for the attainment of this end, God has bound parents, not only by duty, but also by a strong and present interest, operating daily and almost hourly, to inculcate patience. An impatient child, if not the plague of the house, can scarcely fail to be the plague of himself and of his instructor. How happens it, then, that this fault is so frequently suffered to pre-



vail among children? Because the parent is often impatient himself; and this fault will completely frustrate all his efforts to conquer impatience in his child. He is also often self-indulgent; and his interest, however great and apparent, will not induce him to take the trouble requisite to subdue a fault, which incessantly re-appears, and calls for his unremitting attention. Perhaps, too, he persuades himself that wayward fits and cross humors must be tolerated in children, but that they will give way to good sense and maturer principles at a future period.

Vain reason all, and false philosophy!

Such a plea will not stand a moment before the maxim of the wise King of Israel: "Train up a child in the way he should go." From whatever cause the failure of a parent in promoting and enforcing patience in his young charge may arise, let him count the cost. Let him recollect the speedy flight of time, and view the precious months and years of childhood, when his parental power is in full vigor, and the youthful mind pliable and docile, sliding swiftly away never to return. Does he think habits of impatience will not strengthen by indulgence? Or that he shall find it more easy to make a salutary and deep impression on the mind of the academian, aspiring to all the privileges of manhood; or of the sturdy school-boy, who, during three parts of the year, is out of his sight; than on that of a playful child, always with him, and conscious

of entire dependence upon him? But his reliance is on the boy's future good sense and good principles. Miserable reliance!—and indulged at the expense of parental duty. Good sense and good principles *may*, in after life, effect, by God's blessing, a change of temper. But with what reason can a parent trust to a future change, while at present he suffers a child's judgment to be clouded by passion, and his practice to be at variance with good principles? And how, without a very offensive presumption, can he hope that God will in some other way confer an advantage on his child, which he himself has not endeavored to obtain for him by the appointed means of a good education?

5. *Alacrity*.—A lesson may be got and said with obedience, regularity, attention, patience; and yet in the sight of God be got and said very ill. God "loveth a cheerful giver:" and not less a cheerful scholar. He requires that the heart shall do him homage, and willingly join in the performance of all our duties: and he accepts of nothing as true service done to him, which is done "grudgingly, and of necessity." Hence the supreme importance of leading children, on Christian grounds, to go through their school-business with alacrity. How much this will also smooth the path of the teacher, and by drawing forth energy, and giving life to ingenuity, promote the progress and conduce to the happiness of the scholar, is apparent. So true is it, in this as in every thing, that "godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come." The disposition which we are considering crowns all

those which have been mentioned, at the same time that it is dependent upon them. The queen of school-room graces will shun the spot where harsh and violent means are employed to secure them. The discipline by which they are enforced must be mild, rational, and enlightened; and all the honest arts the parent can devise, must be employed to ward off temptations to evil, to lighten them when unavoidable, and to smooth the path of right conduct.

And now, let parents form to themselves an idea of a young family, in the main obedient, regular, attentive, patient, and cheerful in their school-hours, and contrast it with another of opposite habits and dispositions, and let them say whether the qualifications which have been mentioned will not amply repay any pains which can be taken to promote them, even if the present comfort and reputation of themselves and of their children were alone considered. Let them say, whether, even in this limited view, such fruits are not to be classed with the most valuable a school-room can produce. But, when they further consider, that several of them are strictly of celestial origin, and prepare those who possess them for eternal bliss; how unspeakably will they value them, how unwearied will they be in their cultivation!

I am almost afraid, lest the foregoing view of the happy effects of a proper education, under the blessing of God should lead parents to expect too much from their labors, and to be disheartened when they experience important failures. They will assuredly

meet with much forgetfulness in their children, many instances of negligence, with some capricious fancies, and some cross humors; and, perhaps, in their young family, they may meet with individuals on whom it may be exceedingly difficult to engraft one or other of the five qualities which have been mentioned. But let them not be discouraged. A deep sense of their own frailty and propensity to evil, notwithstanding all the grace of God may have done for them; and a recollection that these same qualities, less corrected perhaps by Divine grace, are inherent in their children; should lead them to expect great obstacles, and rather to wonder at their success, than at their failures. In fact, how could they succeed in any one instance, but for the divine aid? How patiently then, and with what sweetness of temper, should they bear with difficulties and hindrances among their children, praying, and waiting quietly and serenely for the blessing of God, while they steadily and unweariedly continue to employ the means which, on full consideration, appear to them to be the best in their power! It is surprising how such conduct succeeds in the end: children altering unaccountably for the better, and a bright dawn opening on a parent when he thinks that a long and dark night is before him. Under discouraging circumstances, it is of the highest importance that he should possess his soul in patience, and not suffer his affection to be alienated from his child. If he fails in these respects, his ability to conduct him into the right path will assuredly be weakened—perhaps entirely lost. He will naturally apply himself with

most care to rectify what he deems most faulty. But he ought to bear it in mind, that in these points the child will find a change most difficult. It is here, therefore, that the parent must not look for more than a very gradual improvement, interrupted probably by relapses and retrogressions, and must be particularly on his guard against haste and violence. In his other children, or perhaps in some parts of the character of the very child who causes him great uneasiness, he may find much to cheer him. Such cordials, (if I may be allowed the term,) he may freely use, returning thanks for them to the Giver of all good: but let him never forget, that they must not lead him to lose sight of the evil existing in his family, or relax in his endeavors to remove it.

## CHAP. VI.

*Means for the Support of Parental Authority and Influence.—Rewards and Punishments.*

HAVING mentioned the objects to be kept in view in education, it may now be proper to say something on the means which it is the duty of a parent to employ to make his authority respected, and to influence the minds of his children.

Of these means, rewards and punishments first demand our attention. Various theoretic discussions have taken place respecting the propriety of employing them in education. I shall neither examine nor produce any theories on this subject, but found what I advance on the Divine example and the Divine command, which, I apprehend, will be far safer guides than any theory; and guides far better suited to those persons who have the management of children—persons generally much better qualified to follow a plain rule than a philosophical speculation. In the government of this our world, God manifestly employs rewards and punishments. They are held out to influence his creatures, and lead them to the performance of their duty and to their true happiness. The punishments are used reluctantly, and for the purpose of humbling the mind, and leading it to give up forbidden objects and fly to

its God. The rewards are most freely offered to those who will receive them with a right disposition of heart, manifested by right conduct towards the the gracious Donor; and are intended to promote and cherish, as well as to bless, such a disposition. They produce their effect partly by a sense of their value; but more, by exciting, in the bosoms of those on whom they are bestowed, a gratitude for the boon and a love for the Giver. These dispositions will be proportionate to their conviction of their own demerit, and of the Divine goodness; and when they have taken root in the heart, they become the most powerful motives to all Christian virtue: they constrain the man, as it were, to live unto his God, and be a new creature in his service. I should trespass improperly on your indulgence, were I to quote passages to prove points which are clear from the general tenor of Scripture, and will be at once admitted.\*

The parent in training his child to Christian virtue, will do well to study diligently the Divine plan for promoting the same great object among men, and to follow it as closely as the nature of the case will admit. He will find the precepts on education in the Sacred Volume, to teach his offspring—to guide them—to exact obedience from them—to command them—to correct them—but yet to “forbear threatening,” and not discourage them, best illustrated by that plan, with which they are evidently in harmony.

\* 2 Cor. v. 14. See also, Eph. i. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 13, 17; 1 John iv. 18, 19; Rev. i. 5, 6.—vi. 6, 12, 13.

How, then, should punishment be employed? Always reluctantly, and as sparingly as circumstances will allow, and in such a manner, and with such accompaniments, that while it deters from sin, it may bring the mind into a state to be duly influenced by other and better motives.

And how should rewards be employed? With pleasure, and far more freely, as incentives to good; but still with a guard against their giving rise to habits of self-indulgence or prodigality; and with a constant recollection, that their highest use is to lead to the performance of duty from the more elevated motives of gratitude and affection.—It will be necessary to consider the heads of this general outline more particularly.

Punishments should be employed *reluctantly*. Will any one dispute this position? And yet how often are they inflicted in such a way, that there is not only no reluctance apparent, but they appear to afford positive gratification! It would give me pain to describe scenes which I have witnessed, when a child has been under the correction of a passionate or ill-humored parent: nay, even of a parent, in general character, neither passionate nor ill-humored, but out of temper at the time. Certainly, punishment under such circumstances takes a most offensive form, and is often likely to do much more harm than good. Let all of us who are parents (and I apply this sentiment very feelingly to myself,) take the utmost care that our children shall have no cause to think, that it is partly for our “own pleasure” that we correct them, and not entirely (after



the example of God) for their profit, that they "may be partakers of his holiness." I will not dwell on this subject: it is a painful one, whether we contemplate the parent or the child; but it is one which ought to engage the most serious consideration, and excite the earnest prayers of all who wish to do their duty to their children. None, perhaps, stand in more need of close attention to it, than those who are most anxious to omit no part of that duty; since they will feel the faults of their children most keenly, and therefore may be most liable to have their tempers ruffled by them.

Punishment should be employed as *sparingly* as is compatible with the attainment of its ends. It is in itself an evil; and is attended by several bad consequences, which are comparatively of slight importance when it seldom occurs, but become truly formidable on its frequent repetition. These are the effects to be apprehended on the temper of the child, on its affections, and on its principles of action, and consequently on its conduct. Its temper and its affection for its parent are very likely to suffer during the infliction of punishment, or the immediate dread of it; and if such seasons often recur, they will afford a degree of permanence to feelings, which would otherwise be incidental and transient, and counteracted by the general harmony and happy intercourse existing between the parent and child. On their deplorable nature, when they become habitual, I need say nothing: every parent will feel it. The child will also suffer with respect to its principles of action; for, in proportion as it is influenced

in its daily conduct by fear of punishment, it acts from the motives which govern a slave; and these motives will be followed by the dispositions and vices of a slave, (except so far as they are counteracted by other and better motives, and their attendant virtues,) which are selfishness, meanness, deceit, and a propensity to tyranny and cruelty. The danger of these evils, and of those mentioned before, appalling as they are, *must* be encountered, when frequent punishment is *necessary*; but surely every advisable method should be taken to avoid or to lessen that necessity.

This view of punishment strongly shows the propriety of employing it, when unhappily it is indispensable, in such a manner, and with such accompaniments, as may disarm it as much as may be of its mischief, and lead the mind to higher motives. First, then, as blows and stripes brutalize and harden more than other punishments, let them, if practicable, be avoided. They appeal to mere corporal feeling, without that mixture of reflection and moral feeling which most other punishments even of a corporal nature tend to excite. During an imprisonment within a room or a house, a boy will probably be led to think; but, during a whipping, he seldom reflects. The difference is also apparent, when the alternative is between a whipping and some fine or privation.—Another evil attending blows and stripes is, that they not only so occupy the mind by corporal suffering, as to leave little or no room for other motives; but they are apt to discompose the minds both of parent and child, and unfit

the one to urge such motives, and the other to attend to them in a proper manner, and with a prospect of advantage. This is a most important consideration. In proportion as motives of a higher kind can be mixed with those of a lower, they tend extremely to qualify the evil which arises from the latter. Greatly, then, ought modes of punishment to be avoided, which, while they press most severely on our animal nature, afford the least room for the influence of higher principles.—After all, in some cases, nothing will answer the purposes of punishment but blows and stripes. These cases, however, will seldom, if ever, occur, I apprehend, in families where education has been properly conducted. Wherever they do occur, they ought to be treated with great temper and deliberation; and punishment ought to be accompanied by a clear exposition to the culprit of the necessity of its use, in consequence of other means having been found ineffectual, and by a deep and cordial expression of concern, that such a punishment should be necessary;—and the infliction should be solemn, but not such as to excite overwhelming terror, which would obliterate any impression made by the preceding conversation, and aggravate evils without a corresponding benefit. After the punishment, great pains ought to be taken to derive every attainable advantage from it, to remedy any evils it may have produced, and to prevent the necessity of its repetition. With this view, the parent should conduct himself towards his child with openness and affection, and show that he has a pleasure in giving him

rewards for good conduct, in gratifying his innocent wishes, and in consulting his happiness. But this must be done with moderation and simplicity; and care must be taken that the child shall not be led to think that the parent is making his peace with him, or granting him indulgences merely because he has been punished. When the child's mind is tranquilized, and his affections appear to flow in their usual course, the parent should avail himself of good opportunities of convincing the child of his former sin and folly, of the unseemliness of his fault, and the beauty of the opposite virtue, and of the pain occasioned not to the child only, but to the parent himself, by the infliction of the punishment: and this pain should be contrasted with the happiness all would have enjoyed, had the child behaved well. He should do his utmost also to make the child feel the force of higher motives; the pleasure which attends the performance of duty and the approbation of relations: and, above all, the peace which passeth understanding, and the bright sunshine of soul, which flow from the favor of God, as foretastes of the everlasting joys reserved for those who yield themselves to the guidance of his Holy Spirit and are renewed in his image. At the same time, temptations to former faults should be lessened as much as possible, the beginnings of evil should be carefully watched, and immediately checked, and every endeavor should be used to make the progress in good easy and pleasant. It is unnecessary to go into details on other punishments. They ought to be employed in a similar spirit, and with similar pre-

cautions, due regard being had to their nature and probable effects.

I should be much concerned, if what I have said on punishments should lead any parent to omit to employ them when necessary. Every method should be used to prevent or lessen the necessity; but when really wanted, they *must* be inflicted. In such cases, the omission of the punishment is an evil of the first magnitude. Much as I deprecate a severe system in education, I fully agree with an approved author, that one of indulgence is more to be dreaded. If we listen to the Divine command, we shall not spoil the child by sparing the rod. If we copy the Divine example, we shall not be led by any inducements to acquiesce in what is wrong. If we have a predominant hatred of sin and love of holiness, our very feelings will prevent us from doing so. Our principles and inclinations will alike impel us to act with vigor and perseverance in combating evil in our families. No parental fondness, no love of personal ease, will prevail with us to give up the contest. While our conduct exhibits mildness and gentleness, it will as strongly be marked by firmness and decision.

Let not any parent fear the loss of his child's affection from proper strictness in education, when combined with the other parts of the course I am recommending. I am convinced that, on the contrary, the child's love for him will be increased by such strictness making a part of his system. Without it, there will be less esteem, perhaps no esteem, for the parent; and it is unnecessary to show, how

very greatly esteem contributes to real affection; so greatly indeed that I believe an attempt to obtain genuine affection by indulgence will not only fail, but will produce the opposite effect. Indulgence will foster selfishness and sensuality, and with them hardness of heart. A person whom you indulge will often love to be with you, will cling to you, and show great fondness; but cease to indulge, and comparative coldness and indifference will quickly follow. Does not this change prove that *self* was at the bottom of former appearances, and was the chief if not the only object of affection?—Can we wonder at such a result? God's blessing accompanies the performance of duty; his displeasure its omission. With his blessing, all things will work together for good. With his displeasure, what can be expected but disappointment and evil?

I should enlarge somewhat more on this very important subject, though conscious that I have already detained my readers long upon it, had there not appeared, in the *Christian Observer* for January 1813, two letters which throw light on the point before us, as well as on others of high importance in education, and possess the advantage of showing, as it were, general rules reduced to practice. These letters, with a short one explanatory of the occasion on which they were written, are inserted in an Appendix.

Rewards are an engine in the hands of a parent, which he will employ with pleasure,—a pleasure which, while it sweetens his own labors, will increase the affection of his child, by showing what

an interest he takes in his happiness, and will impart double value to the gift he may bestow. To give churlishly or grudgingly would be so monstrous, that nothing need be said to prevent such a practice; but I have not seldom thought that I have seen rewards bestowed on children in a manner somewhat ungracious, and consequently received with far less pleasure than would otherwise have been excited, and, what is more important, with little or no appearance of gratitude to the donor. Surely this mode of giving ought to be carefully avoided. We all know how very greatly our feelings, on receiving a present, depend on the manner in which it is offered to us. Will it be supposed, that the sensibility of children is less alive on such occasions? But there are errors more common and more prejudicial. Rewards are often of such a nature as to nourish sensuality, prodigality, or (especially in girls) vanity; and still more frequently no care is taken to instil into the child, that they are not to be considered principally as means of personal gratification, but rather as means of usefulness and sources of bounty. If we would avoid these evils, it is apparent that the gratification of the palate should not be consulted, and that showy articles of dress and unmeaning toys are not good rewards. Still less is money, (especially much of it,) when it is to be spent just as the child pleases. But whatever is given, children should be early taught that they are trustees under God; and that an employment of what they receive from their parents or others in a way pleasing to him, while it will obtain

his favor will also sweeten all their enjoyments. They will be easily made to feel this, if some pains are taken to select objects of bounty whom they love, or with whom they will readily sympathize; and to point out little purchases, as proper books, or tools, or useful toys, which may lead to their improvement, or exercise their ingenuity, or promote active exertion, at the same time that they afford pleasure. Thus their little property, instead of administering to frivolity and other vicious propensities, may contribute very materially to the invigorating of their bodily and mental powers, the forming of their dispositions, and, above all, to their being early trained in the most important, perhaps, of all habits, that of viewing all they possess as not their own but God's, and that of always associating pleasure with duty, and of considering the former as not only unhallowed in itself, but as wanting its best ingredient, and scarcely to deserve its name, when severed from the latter.

But the highest and noblest use of rewards is to raise the soul to its proper elevation,—to give noble and generous motives their due influence over it, and to emancipate it from a thralldom to those of an inferior kind. The former are, gratitude and love to God, the Giver of all good; and to parents and other benefactors, his vicegerents on earth, in its distribution. The latter are, a love of pleasure and an aversion to pain. In proportion as the first predominate, selfishness is counteracted; and we are led to the contemplation, and love, and imitation of the adorable perfections of the Divine Nature: A



human being, in whom the last are the ruling principle, is shut up, as it were, within the narrow bounds of *self*, and will be engaged in studying the gratification of those mean and grovelling dispositions which he brought into the world. He will remain what he was originally, "earthly, sensual, devilish," "a lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God." How indispensable, then, is it to lead the youthful mind to look beyond the mere possession of a reward, and of the gratifications it can bestow; to direct its view to the love of the immediate donor, and, above all, to the love of Him who put that love into the donor's heart, and conferred upon him all his ability to be bountiful, and created the very thing which the child has received from his bounty! Parental endeavors to give a child such views will naturally be accompanied by an exposition of the Divine holiness and justice, and of the impossibility of the unholy being permanently the objects of Divine love. The wisdom of God will also be described as opening to his view every recess of the human heart; and his power as making it impossible to escape the punishment, or lose the blessings, he appoints. Thus his whole character will be brought before the child; and those attributes which would be most likely to be repulsive, coming, as it were, in the train of love and bounty, will be awful without producing horror; and, by the Divine help, affection and veneration will be excited in harmonious union in his bosom. Oh, the joy of heart to the parent, who sees his child enter upon the blessed path which is to lead him to his God! Let him spare

no pains in conducting him forward in it, in smoothing it to his steps, and in shielding him from seduction to the right or left. He must not hope to effect his object by set lectures, at stated times. They would not improbably disgust rather than benefit; and even if they could be made agreeable and impressive, they would be forgotten in the hour of temptation. His object can only be attained by watching the little incidents of the day, and taking advantage of them for its promotion. This course must be pursued gently, and as pleasantly as possible to the child; but always by means which God will approve, and with a deep sense of the infinite importance of the end in view. There must be no flattery, no deceit, no superficial healing of spiritual wounds; but zeal and honesty must be combined with due allowances for the weakness, tenderness, and volatility of a child, and with patience, benignity, and love.

If the letters in the *Christian Observer*, already mentioned, had not appeared, I should have enlarged rather more on some points connected with this subject than will now be necessary. It may be sufficient to say briefly, Let a parent, in pursuing the course which has been recommended, have recourse to representations, appeals, persuasions, and make the best use he can of hymns and passages of Scripture already learnt by the child. Let him touch the conscience, awaken shame, affection, gratitude. Let him encourage openness and confidence by kindness and sympathy; and keep back the exercise of parental authority as much as he can, showing that he

wishes not to use it, and that, if obliged to do so, he will be influenced solely by a sense of duty. But though it is his daily endeavor to copy the beautiful forbearance of St. Paul towards Philemon, he must guard against laxity and weaknes. He must not fail through tenderness to the child, or from attention to his own ease or convenience, duly to notice the faults he may discover. In this respect he must act on a system, and with undeviating consistency and steadiness. He will watch against the risings of bad tempers, and against mere professions; and counteract such evils by his own good temper, by his own truth and modesty and simplicity, and by turning the eye of his child upon his heart, as well as by more direct, though perhaps not more efficacious, means. When the child has committed a fault, he will allow time for recovery from incidental agitations, and accept no professions of repentance and good intention while the state of the heart appears doubtful: taking care to impress on the child, that the great object he should have in view should be to make his peace with *God*; that the offence has been an offence against *God*, who sees the inmost soul. He will feel the high importance of the work in which he is engaged, and his own weakness and insufficiency; and will put up from time to time secret aspirations to God for his blessing on himself, as well as on his child; and will persevere until there is a satisfactory appearance of mild and ingenuous repentance. Though the child should not be brought by his labors to true Christian conversion, (for in that great work, so peculiarly his

own, God will grant certainty of success to no human agent,) yet they will not fail, I think, to make a salutary impression. A consciousness of right and wrong will be strengthened; fear will become less a principle of action; and conscience will stand more in the place of punishment. His love of his parents, and his deference for them, will increase: good habits will be formed, and a general respect at least for religion will be cherished. He will, in this way, undergo an important change. The system under which he is brought up is "the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" and his parent may humbly hope that it will be "a schoolmaster to bring him to Christ." With many present disappointments, perhaps, as to its effects, he may yet humbly hope that its value will be deeply felt at some future and more happy period, when, under God's providence, the soil is fully prepared for the growth of the good seed. Then may that sown in childhood shoot up with vigor, and bear abundant fruit. But very frequently, I am convinced, God vouchsafes a more speedy and visible blessing. The parent sees the work of genuine regeneration commence and proceed under his eye in early youth. He has the supreme happiness of seeing his child, with true submission of heart, look up to his Saviour, and put himself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In religion, indeed, as in every thing, the child will be a child—ill informed, weak, wavering, and inconsistent: but still there may be satisfactory evidence that he is gradually conquering his native corruptions, and beginning to acquire Christian graces;

that he is renewing in the spirit of his mind, and attaining a portion of the image of God.

It may be proper to add, on the subject of rewards, that, in addition to the value they derive from other considerations, they possess high importance in cases in which punishment must be often employed, as antidotes to the evils which attend it. Without them, (as in many public schools,) punishment has a great tendency to exasperate and harden; and that to such a degree as even to lead the culprit to glory in suffering, without shrinking at the time, and without being at all affected either before or after. In proportion to the horror with which a Christian parent contemplates such obduracy, will he be anxious to prevent every approach to it: and it is obvious how much the right employment of rewards will assist him in his endeavors, by showing his affection, softening the heart of the child, and placing it under the influence of a better motive than fear. I know a numerous family, in which there is seldom a greater punishment inflicted, than the withholding of a reward. When this is not sufficient, some deduction is generally made from a little property in the parent's hands, consisting of an accumulation of rewards. In that family it is usual, after every lesson, to give some number, proportioned to its merit, to be added to the numerical sum possessed by the child from former rewards. The addition is performed by the child, who may incur a known loss of one or two, if the calculation should be wrong. These numbers are considered as worth a certain sum, say 1s. per hundred; and the child

receives for them at the established rate, upon application, for any purpose which the parent approves. The remaining numbers, not exchanged for money, continue the property of the child.—This little detail may appear unnecessary; but education consists of details, and its success depends much on their proper selection and management. A system of this sort comprises many advantages; for, besides being a regular plan for conferring rewards, it makes the child early acquainted with property and its uses, and provides for his property being the reward of his merit; and it also places the whole so immediately under the eye and control of the parent, as to enable him both to prevent its abuse and to give any suggestions as to its employment. It possesses a further advantage of some consequence; that of rendering children adroit in adding and subtracting by the head, without this being made a regular object of study.

I cannot dismiss the consideration of rewards and punishments, without cautioning parents, on the one hand, against the mischief of permitting servants, except in very particular cases, to employ them to any considerable extent; and on the other, against suffering those faults and merits of children which manifest themselves in the nursery to escape due notice.—Having already made some remarks on the general character of servants with reference to education, it will be unnecessary now to enlarge on that point. The management of punishments is far too delicate to be entrusted to such hands. When a child is very violent, he must indeed be put under

immediate restraint by any one who happens to be present: but servants should not be allowed to do more in this way than the exigency of the case demands; and recourse should immediately be had to the parents, or, in their absence, to those who supply their place. With respect to rewards, servants would probably be lavish, and indiscriminate, and capricious in their use, neither guarding against the evils to be feared, nor forming any tolerable estimate of the higher and more durable advantages to be derived from them. *Something* must be allowed in a nursery in the way both of punishment and reward: but it ought to be confined within very narrow limits. The parents, particularly the mother, should keep a vigilant eye over the course of things there, and interfere in person in all cases of importance.

From several of the preceding observations, it will be inferred, that very much may be done in inducing a child to perform his duty without having recourse to rewards and punishments. Appeals to his sense of right and wrong, to his gratitude and his love, to his dread of the displeasure and desire of the favor of his parents, and far more of his Sanctifier, his Saviour, and his Heavenly Father:—such appeals, pressed with tenderness, but with warmth, and accommodated to the age, knowledge, and disposition of the child, will be found of great efficacy at a very early age, and will become more potent instruments of good in proportion as a child advances in knowledge, in right feeling, and in sound habits, and, above all, as he obtains more and more of the Divine blessing. A parent ought,

from the very commencement of education, to look principally to these means of exciting his child "to eschew evil, and to do good;" and should consider rewards and punishments as inferior and subordinate. How will he rejoice to observe the increasing influence of these higher and nobler motives, and his child making a progress towards that holy state in which they become decidedly the paramount principles of action—the undisputed lords of all other principles!—But I must not suffer myself to dwell a second time on this animating subject.



## CHAP. VII.

*Example.—Emulation.—Effect of personal Character of Parents.—Deceit.*

THERE is one additional stimulus to be used with children: it is that of *example*.—We all know how powerfully this is recommended as a source of good by our holy religion. Jesus, our Saviour “was given us as an example, that we should follow his steps.” What Christian, who contemplates that blessed Example with holy affection, and who feels a warm gratitude for the unutterable condescension of his Divine Master, in affording to him this help in his spiritual course, will not exert himself to give his children all the benefit he can, from the example, not only of Christ, but of those who, however inferior, are yet his true servants! He will extend his view further, and, from the mass of characters of a lower description, he will select examples to be placed before his children. Here, indeed, he will proceed with much caution, and employ much discrimination. But as he will observe, even among persons of this class, many who are eminent for some amiable disposition, or useful habit, or praiseworthy attainment, so he will not fail to draw the attention of his pupil to them; and, in pointing out to him what may be effected by the force of very inferior motives, he will impress on his mind what

ought to be the efficacy of those which flow from the religion of Christ. He will also hold out, but with more reluctance and reserve, not only those who are, in the most emphatical sense, vicious characters, but also those who have grossly neglected means of improvement, and those whose conduct, whether through error or thoughtlessness, is absurd or mischievous, as warnings to deter from like courses. There are many and great advantages in conveying instruction in this way. What is holy, estimable, and amiable, or the reverse, will be better understood, and especially by children, when exhibited in action, than when described in the abstract. It will also be far more likely, according to its real quality, to engage the affections, or create disgust and abhorrence, when so exhibited; for it is a general, though by no means a universal truth, that, to an unsophisticated mind, virtue in active life will be lovely, and vice hateful. A parent will take care at first, to select instances for his child's observation, in which these appear clearly in their appropriate colors; and afterwards, when his estimate of things becomes pretty just, and his taste tolerably correct, the parent will venture, by degrees, to call his attention to other instances, in which good and bad qualities or habits are so intermixed as to lead a careless observer to wrong conclusions, affording to his pupil the benefit of his own experience in developing and separating the component parts of such characters, and in assigning to each due praise or blame. Such representations will obtain a more easy admission into the youthful

mind, if accompanied by proofs of the tendency of virtue to promote happiness, and vice misery. This tendency must be shown, not in any abstract way, but by pointing out effects of this kind in the individual instances which come under review. If, on such occasions, tenderness and delicacy and discrimination are combined with warmth and feeling, the child will listen with much interest, and the parent may hope for God's blessing, and for excellent fruits from this very pleasant branch of education.

In this course, however, there are serious evils to be avoided.

Praise and blame must be dealt out with *moderation*, and often with *diffidence*.—No human being can be entitled to more than moderate praise; and no man who aspires to love his neighbor as himself, will think himself warranted in unlimited or unguarded censure, or will feel a disposition to employ it. To be prone to extremes in forming a judgment of others, is always foolish, and often highly presumptuous and offensive. Woe be to the parent who leads his child into this error! Next to the child himself, he may be the greatest sufferer from so doing.

He must also be careful not to foster in the child a fastidious or captious, or even a critical, spirit. Let him never fail to inculcate, that the first and great business of every individual is to do his own duty; and that, although there are many reasons for endeavoring to form a true estimate of the character and conduct of others, yet this estimate must

always be formed with modesty and charity, and with a recollection that we are not their judges;—to their own Master they must stand or fall. If, indeed, children should be unhappily exposed to much intercourse with those whose tempers or habits are blameable, and likely to mislead them, no motive of this nature will justify a parent in neglecting to guard them against the evils to be apprehended. He must hold up the persons in question as warnings before the eyes of his family.

Further: he must hold out examples to his child in such a way as not to excite *emulation*.—To imitate an example is one thing; to rival any person, and endeavor to obtain a superiority over him, is another. It is very true, as is maintained by the defenders of emulation, that it is impossible to make progress towards excellence without outstripping others. But surely there is a great difference between the attainment of a superiority over others being a mere consequence of exertions arising from other motives, and a zeal to attain this object being itself a motive for exertion. Every one must see, that the effects produced on the mind in the two cases will be extremely dissimilar. Emulation is a desire of surpassing others, for the sake of superiority, and is a very powerful motive to exertion. As such, it is employed in most public schools; but in none, I believe, ancient or modern, has it been so fully and systematically brought into action, as in the schools of Dr. Bell and Mr. Lancaster. Whatever may be the merits of the schools of either of these gentlemen in other respects, (a question on

which it is unnecessary to enter,) in this they appear to me to commit such an offence against Christian morals, that no merits could atone for it. I cannot but think emulation an unhallowed principle of action;—as scarcely, if at all, to be disjoined from jealousy and envy, from pride and contention;—incompatible with loving our neighbor as ourselves;—and a principle of such potency as to be likely to engross the mind, and turn it habitually and violently from the motives which it should be the great business of education to cherish and render predominant; namely, a sense of duty, and gratitude and love to God. Instead of enlarging on this subject, I beg leave to refer the reader to Mr. Gisborne's remarks upon it, in his "Duties of Women." If emulation is an unhallowed motive, it cannot innocently be employed, whatever good effects may be expected from it. We must not do evil that good may come. But if any Christian should deem it not absolutely unhallowed, few will deny, I think, that it is questionable and dangerous. Even then, in this more favorable view of emulation, ought it to be used, except it can be shown to be necessary for the infusion of vigor into the youthful mind, and for securing a respectable progress in literature? I can say, from experience, that it is not necessary for the attainment of those ends. In a numerous family, with which I am well acquainted, emulation has been carefully and successfully excluded, and yet the acquirements of the different children have been very satisfactory. I can bear the same testimony with respect to a large Sunday School, with which

I have been connected for many years.—I have often heard of *virtuous* emulation; but can emulation ever be so characterised in a Christian sense? Whether it may in that loose sense of virtue which those adopt who take the worldly principle of honor for their rule, I will not stop to inquire.

But it is not sufficient not to excite and employ emulation on plan and system, as a stimulus in education: great care ought to be taken to exclude it. And great care will be necessary; for it will be continually ready to show itself; and if not checked, it will soon attain strength, strike its roots deep in the heart, and produce bitter fruits, which, in the eyes of a Christian, will be ill compensated by the extraordinary vigor and energy it will give to scholastic studies. When examples are held out for *imitation*, (a very different thing, be it always remembered, from *emulation*,) or as warnings, the child must be made sensible that its state, in the sight of God, is rendered neither better nor worse by the virtues or the faults of others, except as far as they may have influenced, or may have failed to influence, its own conduct;—that it ought to love its neighbor as itself, and to rejoice in every advance made by another in what is good, and to lament over all his faults and defects, without one selfish thought being suffered to check the joy or the concern:—that it ought therefore to wish all its companions all success in their common studies with the same sincerity with which it wishes for its own success, and to be affected by their faults and failures in the same manner it would by its own. It should be made sensible,

in proportion as it may give way to feelings the reverse of these, that its "eye will be evil because others are good;" and it will act in opposition to the injunction, "Mind not every one his own things, but every one also the things of others;" and to a whole host of scriptural precepts and examples. These things must be inculcated, not by lectures in general terms, but by applying such views to all the little incidents which call for them as they successively arise. The child must also be made sensible how much better it is for himself that his companions should be eminent for laudable attainments, and good qualities; for that, in proportion to their excellence in these respects, they will be useful and estimable companions, and ought to be objects of his affection. All little boasts of having done better than this or that brother or sister, and every disposition to disappointment when they succeed best, should be checked, and the lesson of "*rejoicing with them that do rejoice, and of weeping with them that weep,*" must be very diligently inculcated.

Lastly, a parent must take special care always to give *the example of Jesus Christ a most decided practical pre-eminence* above all others.—It is this to which the child's attention must be continually turned: it is this which he must be taught equally to love and to revere; it is this alone on which he should learn to rely, with unvarying confidence, as always pure and perfect. In addition to the more direct and immediate benefits he will derive from thus flying to the example of his Saviour for guidance in his Christian path, he will, by the Divine blessing, be

powerfully led to love Him, whose blessed image is so frequently before his eyes. He will obtain that near acquaintance with his perfections,—that frequent intercourse, as it were, with Himself,—which will call forth increasing admiration, and reverence, and regard. Thus will commence a transformation into a similitude of that excellence which has found a way to his heart: and, “beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,” he will be “changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

But all endeavors to make right impressions on the mind of a child will very generally be found ineffectual, if the character of the parent does not correspond with his instructions, and inspire his child with esteem and affection. It is surprising how God honors his own image among men. Faint as it is, even in the best, still its proximity gives it effect, and it exercises a portion of his own sovereign power over the hearts of his creatures. This has been found to be the case in a remarkable manner among savage and idolatrous nations, when holy men have lived for a length of time among them as Missionaries. Every one must be struck with the effect produced by living examples of the Christian graces, on reading the accounts of the Moravian Missions; and still more, perhaps, when in the history of India he finds what a wonderful ascendancy the holy Swartz obtained over the Hindus of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest. But it is unnecessary to look so far from home, to be convinced of this truth. We every day see it exemplified



among ourselves in the respect and affection which good men generally acquire, when their light has long shone before the same neighbourhood. If the beauties of the Christian character thus recommend themselves to persons of mature age, whose evil habits are often so confirmed, and whose tastes are so vitiated, it will not be matter of wonder that they should have peculiar charms for the minds of children. Let a parent exhibit this character with consistency and prudence, and he will seldom fail to be loved and revered by his children. And when this is the case, what authority will belong to his example! what weight to all his admonitions! what ready attention will be paid to his very wishes! The difficulties of education will be wonderfully smoothed. Ill-humor, distate to particular studies, impatience under restraints, eye-service and deceit, a disposition to look on a parent as a hard master, not to mention other evils, will be in a very great degree avoided. If it may be allowable to use the Prophet's language, "crooked places will be made straight, and rough places plain." But in proportion as a parent fails to resemble in character that Divine Being who appoints him, as it were, his vicegerent in his family, this picture will fail to be realized; and in the worst cases it will be reversed. Let, then, every parent look well to himself.—Having touched on this most important subject, when treating of education at an earlier age, I will not enlarge on it now. I cannot, however, omit to mention an incident, which (thanks to God!) made a very salutary impression on me many years ago. On enter-

ing the school-room of a Moravian Family, I saw, amidst some appropriate inscriptions on the wall, intended as momentos to the children, the following one put up by the teacher for her own use: "Never correct in anger." Much might be expected in a young family where the governess was so conscious of the importance of strict watchfulness over herself, as to record, in the face of her scholars, her own condemnation, if she should ever suffer herself to be led to exercise her authority in one of its most delicate and important functions, when disqualified by a want of temper from exercising it properly. Such self-attention could not be confined to a single point, but, having entered the system, would pervade its different parts. My expectations were not disappointed. A more estimable teacher, and better taught, better principled, more affectionate, more orderly, and more happy scholars, I think I never saw. The excellent instructress would find, in her own personal improvement, and in the gratification she could not fail to derive from the state of her scholars, and from their respect and love, a tenfold recompense for all her resolute self-scrutiny and self-denial. Let us follow her steps, and we may all humbly hope for a like reward.

It is my object to propose, for the consideration of parents, the general principles in education which appear to me to form the right foundation for such details in practice, as the endless variety in the dispositions of children may require. With one exception, therefore, I shall not enter on a consideration of specific faults. This exception is *deceit*.—I

select this vice, not because it is pre-eminent in enormity, but because it cherishes all other vices, by opposing itself to the means employed for their removal. By the secrecy in which it delights, and the veil which it casts over the character, it prevents evils from being clearly discovered; and by assuming a fair appearance of repentance when they are detected; and sometimes even when they secretly exist in great malignity, by making a specious show of the opposite virtues, it baffles the endeavors of relations to remove them, and completely shuts out genuine repentance and reformation. While other vices predominate in the soul, there are often recurrences of deep remorse and earnest prayer, and of very considerable exertions to conquer them;—but deceit usually stifles mental pangs, lulls the soul into a fatal apathy, and employs all those energies in riveting its chains, which ought to be exerted for its deliverance. Other vices are, generally, neither present at all times, nor regular in their return: but deceit is always at work, and scarcely allows of an interval, in which the soul is so far relieved from its immediate influence as to be in a state to recover from its thralldom. No wonder, then, that this vice should possess an awful pre-eminence in vitiating the character, and hardening the heart! In our blessed Saviour's severe condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees, where he accuses them of almost every species of crime, their hypocrisy is placed in the very fore-front of their offences, and insisted upon again and again; 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!' How, anxious,

then, should a parent be to guard every avenue to such a crime, by checking the first dawnings of art and deceit, whatever appearance they may assume, and by encouraging truth, ingenuousness, and simplicity of character in every possible way. The child ought to be armed against temptations to deceit, by being forewarned on what occasions they will present themselves, and instructed by what means they are to be resisted. He should also be strongly reminded, when such occasions actually occur, of the existing danger; and such a course should be pursued by the parent as to facilitate his escape.

Thus, when a fault has been committed or a little difference with a playfellow has occurred, and an explanation is required by the parent, great care should be taken to remind the child of the duty of truth and ingenuousness, and to check that eagerness and haste, in the relation of circumstances which will be likely to lead him to give a false color to them. The danger of his palliating some things, and exaggerating others, should be pointed out; and while he is kindly warned how grievously his fault (if he should have committed one) would be aggravated by such conduct, the loveliness of truth and candor in the eyes both of God and man, and especially under trying circumstances, should be set before him, and he should receive every proper encouragement to adhere to them. When he has done his duty in this respect, whatever may have been amiss in his preceding conduct should be noticed

in as lenient a manner as is compatible with a full maintenance of the distinction between right and wrong, and a due sense of the importance of the particular case. He should be made to feel how tenderly he is treated on account of his candor, and how very different his treatment would have been had he acted otherwise. But, above all, he should be made sensible of the terrible load of Divine wrath which must press upon every child who endeavors to hide or excuse a fault by lies, prevarication, or concealment: of the impossibility of pardon without repentance, and of the impossibility of cordial repentance when the mouth will not "make confession unto salvation." Then should be described in mild and sober, but warm colors, (warm from the lively, parental and Christian impressions whence they proceed,) the infinite blessing of an approving conscience, and of that peace which passeth all understanding, arising from a sense of sin forgiven, and of Divine favor restored, contrasted with the corroding sense of unpardoned guilt, and of being subject to the frown of an offended God. If the child has been well-educated, his feelings will readily respond to the notes you strike, and you will see in his countenance and air a cordial assent to the scriptural representation, that "the ways of religion are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;" and that the wicked has no peace, but "is like the troubled sea, which cannot rest."—When a lie has been detected, it should be treated as one

of the greatest crimes, and every endeavor should be used to fix its guilt on the conscience, and lead the culprit to deep and genuine repentance. Even much lighter instances of falsehood should meet with very serious attention. Pains should be taken to point out their connexion with lies, and their derivation from the same principle, and, consequently, their hatefulness in the sight of God. The conduct which ought to have been pursued by the child should be particularized, and its beauty and happy consequences dwelt upon and contrasted with the deformity of the fault which he has committed, and the guilt, and remorse, and parental distrust, and Divine displeasure which he has incurred.—Deceit often takes deep root in a child from such jokes and tricks being allowed as afford it encouragement. Jokes and tricks are not only generally connected with art, but very frequently derive their supposed merit from that very circumstance. Surely this is playing with edged tools! The child, who is allowed to sharpen its wits in overreaching his companions in joke, will soon acquire a taste for that employment of his faculties, and simplicity and plain dealing will appear insipid to him. From deceiving in jest, he will soon proceed to deceive in earnest; and the pleasure which he has been in the habit of deriving from success in the one course will be felt, and perhaps in a higher degree, from success in the other. Is it not by much the safer course to discountenance, and even forbid, the exercise of

ingenuity in the way that has been mentioned? God, in his wisdom and goodness, has supplied an abundance of innocent means of exhilarating the mind, and drawing forth its powers, and many of them are of the most useful kind. Such will present themselves to every parent, and leave those without excuse who permit dangerous habits among their children, for the sake of improving their faculties, and promoting their happiness. I would not say, as the poet does of a bold peasantry, that simplicity and integrity of mind,

When once destroyed, for ever will be lost ;

but I believe, that of all good dispositions these are restored with the greatest difficulty when art and cunning, and deceit, have had possession of the soul. It sometimes happens, that the harsh means used by a parent to eradicate a fault lead the child to deceit. The temptation to deny his guilt, and escape the very severe punishment he expects, is almost irresistible.. Sometimes also the methods taken to extort confession when a fault is strongly suspected, lead to a false confession, when the child is really innocent. With what horror have I seen a lady recollect a scene of this kind in which she was engaged when a child!\*

One of the most pregnant sources of deceit in children is the art to which those who manage

\* There is an interesting anecdote on this subject in the Christian Observer, vol. ii. p. 665.

them have recourse. If a parent is disengenuous; if he employs false pretences to attain his ends; if he affects dispositions which he does not feel; or in any other way violates truth and sincerity in his conduct towards his child, or even in his conduct towards other persons in the presence of his child; he may be assured that great evil will follow. It is surprising how quick children are in discovering the dispositions and motives of those about them, in detecting any inconsistency between their practice and their professions. This acuteness and sensibility, however, while they make a bad example in a parent extremely dangerous, give proportionate weight and efficacy to a good one. Let him uniformly adhere to simplicity and godly sincerity; let him yield to no inducement to violate those fundamental and beautiful branches of the Christian character, by any appearances of present expediency, either in the management of his child or in any other part of his conduct; and employing at the same time other fit means to promote the spiritual welfare of his offspring, he may look forward with confidence to a happy result. His example will be a daily lecture of the most impressive kind. But no soundness of doctrine, no industry in teaching, no ability in persuasion, will be sufficient to afford him a rational hope of success, if his own example is opposed to his instructions, and the child has reason to suspect that he is acting a part.



## CHAP. VIII.

*Attention to Children when not at their Lessons.—Amusements.—Behaviour of Children to each other.—Quarrels.—A Domineering or a Teasing Spirit.—Selfishness and Jealousy.—Conduct of the two Sexes to each other.—Domestic Effects in well and ill educated Families contrasted.—Acquaintance.—Familiarity with Servants.*

I HAVE intimated the necessity of a vigilant attention to children, during the time when they are not engaged by their lessons; and I must now dwell a little on this important branch of my subject.

If the primary object in education be to put things in the most favorable state for the formation of a new creature, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, in opposition to the strong bent of Nature, how can it be hoped that this will be effected, if, during great part, and in early childhood by far the greatest part, of every day, Nature is suffered to take her course with only partial and irregular counteraction from the parent; and if the new principle and spirit to be infused and cherished meet with as partial and irregular support? We all know, that in the moral as in the natural world, powerful and sys-

tematic tendencies will not fail to produce a large share of their appropriate effects, unless opposed by what is also powerful and systematic. Thus in the planetary system, the constant force of gravity is only balanced by the centrifugal force, equally constant; and in our political system, the tendency of each of the branches which form the legislature to increase its own power, would not be kept in check, if the other two bodies were not continually ready to resist incroachments, either by the exercise of their constitutional powers, or (as is generally the case in practice) by their influence. Is then the natural tendency of man to evil the only uniform tendency which does not require constant counteraction? And is it in his earliest years, before settled habits of virtue are formed, and before systematic caution and recollection to guard against deflections from the right path are acquired, that we can safely dispense with such counteraction? The prudent Christian father will judge far otherwise. His parental watchfulness will be as unremitting as circumstances will allow, and the care and earnestness with which it will be employed will be in some measure proportionate to the supreme importance of the object to be attained. I will proceed to point out some leading points, which will require attention when the child is out of the school-room.

First then with respect to *amusements*.—Of these God has made a most liberal provision, and I need not show that they are absolutely necessary for children. The parent ought to take care

that they are not only harmless. but as useful as possible : and very useful they may be rendered, if he give his attention to this point with just views of human nature and of vital religion. By being forward to promote his child's pleasures, he will increase his affection, and gain his confidence, and sweeten the restraints and labors of the school-room :—by guiding him in the selection of them, he will show him practically what a natural propensity children have to sinful gratification, but what a sting such gratifications leave behind them ; and also what an abundance of innocent pleasures our all-bountiful God has placed within our reach. He will make him sensible how frequently, while amusing himself, he may promote the happiness of others, and cherish just principles and good dispositions in his own bosom : and that pleasures which produce such fruits will generally be the sweetest in immediate enjoyment, and still sweeter in retrospect. He will also communicate much useful knowledge, while his child thinks only of his own amusement ; and he will discover many a fault and many a promising disposition, which would scarcely have shown themselves amidst the restraints of the school-room. He will often find himself able to correct the one without any grave process for that purpose ; and he will take advantage of the other at a season when the openness of the heart and the flow of the affections give him the best opportunity of connecting it with Christian principle, and of giving it a holy direction. Above all, he will make him sensible how

conducive good principles are to pleasure ; that not only he is the happy *man*, but

He is the happy *boy*, whose life ev'n now,  
Shows somewhat of that happier life to come:—

that the ways of religion are “ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” This will be done by leading him to compare the

Solid and heartfelt delight

which he has enjoyed in amusements sanctioned by the Divine approbation, with the anxiety and the fears which must attend guilty pleasures, and the remorse which must follow them. He will thus begin to learn from his own experience, that

True piety is cheerful as the day ;

and that the misgivings and forebodings of a troubled conscience must poison every enjoyment. And this truth early fixed, and strongly felt at the time of life when the sensibility is all alive, will do much, by God's blessings, towards securing him from the power of temptations not only in childhood, but at subsequent periods, when many of them will attack him with greater force.—Let it not be thought, that the age of the parent will unfit him for promoting the pleasures of his child in his play-hours. On the contrary, if, instead of forcing amusements upon the child, he suffers him to follow, in a great measure, the bent of his inclinations, and merely prevents

every thing wrong, while he now and then lends his aid to remove little obstacles and to forward his child's objects, he will find himself a very acceptable companion. He will admire the Divine wisdom and benevolence, which, while it makes youth the joy of age, thus enables age, not only to guide the inexperience, but to sweeten the pleasures of youth.

But a parent must not expect to be a pleasing and useful companion to his child, without making some sacrifices. As in the material, so in the moral and intellectual worlds, there is no region in which those who will not submit to the toil of culture can expect a harvest. He must often forego his own wishes, to meet those of his child. During a walk, for instance, he must be content to break the thread of his own thoughts to give explanations which cannot but appear to him trifling, and to hear remarks which convey to him no information. At one time, he may be requested to look at a pebble when he was ruminating on the re-establishment of the independence of Europe; and at another, he may be called to cut a twig from a tree when looking at a fine passage in Milton. If, however, he form a right estimate of education, he will bear such interruptions with complacency; and reflect, that the pebble and the twig, viewed in connection with their concomitant circumstances, may probably be, at that time, more important objects of his attention than European Politics or our great Epic Poet. And when, at the close of the day, he reviews its events, with how much greater pleasure will he look back on such little instances of self-denial, and on the

advantage he may hope that his boy has received from them, than he could on his speculations respecting the happy results of the late war, or on the pleasure which he derived from the noble flights of Milton.—Not that a parent is to give up all his time to his children. This surrender would be incompatible with the discharge of his other duties. But he will do well, I think, in allotting to their society, and without allowing the intervention of such company as would prevent him from giving to them his attention, a portion of the time which he sets apart for recreation.

In superintending the amusements of children, it is important to give them a taste for those which are not expensive and are easily obtained, and which are calculated to draw forth ingenuity, and to exercise bodily and mental powers. Such as are expensive—as have little but novelty to recommend them—as have any connection with mischief or deceit, or are likely to give pain to any companion, or even to any of the brute creation—ought to be carefully avoided.—It is obvious, that games of violent competition are very likely to lead to evil; and indeed, all competition is dangerous in a greater or a less degree, and calls for vigilant attention on the part of a parent, especially where the competition is direct and palpable, and the temper of the child is sanguine and ardent. It should be a rule in a game of competition, that as soon as a child shows any unfairness or wrong temper, or plays in a way likely to excite bad tempers in others, he is no longer to be considered as fit for such a sport, and must

leave it to those who have more generous integrity, gentleness, and self-command. If he can himself be made sensible of his weakness, and brought into a disposition voluntarily to relinquish an amusement which in his case involves a breach of duty, this will be far better than the exercise of parental authority: but if his passions are too far engaged to admit of this victory of reason and principle, the parent must interfere with such decision as to stop the progress of mischief. Sedentary games of chance or skill, as drafts, are certainly dangerous, when in frequent use, and I think that they are better avoided altogether. They are objectionable, partly because they are sedentary, and therefore ill-suited to an age when lively exercise is so natural and so conducive to health and vigor; partly, because their very essence is competition; but chiefly, because they may give a taste for cards, and perhaps for gaming. Little gardens distributed amongst the children of a family, and to be managed entirely by themselves, are admirable sources of amusement. A few small tools and implements of carpentry, in a father's custody, to be lent occasionally to his children, answer an excellent purpose; and particularly if he is qualified to assist a little, when difficulties occur in the use of them.

But whatever are the favorite amusements, which will vary with the age, sex, and natural turn of mind, *moderation* in them is of the highest importance. Children ought to learn early that life and all our faculties are given to us rather for business than for pleasure; that they are talents to be employed in

our Lord's service, and must not be wasted in idleness or frivolous pursuits. Amusement must be represented as no longer innocent, when encroaching on the time which ought to be employed in serious occupations, to which it must always be considered as subordinate. It must be represented as truly sweet, (such is the wise and gracious connection which God has appointed between pleasure and duty,) only when confined within due bounds; and as producing satiety—as engrossing the mind, and alienating it from God—as generating bad passions—and as leading to shame and remorse, and to eternal ruin, when it occupies the chief place in the heart. Thus persons who have given themselves up to wickedness, are described in Scripture as “lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;” and the rich man in the parable is said to be tormented in hell, because in this life his great object was to indulge in pleasure. This is a point, in which young people are very apt to transgress.

There is one amusement which I have reserved for separate consideration; because, while it affords high gratification, it is also, under proper management, a most important source of improvement,—but if subject to no regulations, it is pregnant with the greatest evils. I speak of private reading. Of late years, a great variety of little books extremely well calculated to amuse children, and at the same time to make virtue lovely and vice hateful, have been sent into the world. These should be carefully selected from the great mass of indifferent and mischievous publications; and one or another of them



will generally take the fancy of a child, as soon as he can read with tolerable ease. When he once begins to amuse himself in this way, a great point is gained. Time will never hang heavy on his hands: he will make rapid progress in reading: much knowledge will be gained; his faculties will be drawn forth; his taste will receive a right direction; and good principles will take firmer hold of his mind. Care must be taken, however, that he does not read too much, or too rapidly. He may become a devourer of little books, and read every thing, and remember little. To counteract this tendency, and at the same time to assist in giving him right impressions from his reading, it will be useful to induce him, by a few leading questions, proposed with kindness and in a familiar manner, to relate the stories which have interested him. This practice, if not pressed too far, or suffered to wear the air of a lesson, will generally be an agreeable amusement; and it will afford a parent great opportunities of discovering the turn of the child's mind, and of giving it a right direction. It will also be necessary to guard against bad effects from the short abstracts of histories, which, by acquainting him with the leading facts, diminish, at a future period, the interest of the histories themselves, and indispose him for going through their details. In order to avoid this evil, I am inclined to think, that such abstracts should be sparingly used.

From the subjects of amusement, I must pass to one nearly allied to it; and say a little on the way in which children of the same family should conduct

themselves, each towards the other.—At the very early period of life now under consideration, play will occupy a large portion of the time not employed in the school-room; and much happiness or vexation, advantage or injury, must be derived from the dispositions which accompany it. When the spirits are high and the passions warm, and when the objects in view are interesting, children will always be in danger of giving way to selfishness, and of falling into little quarrels; and if the evil is suffered to proceed, contradictions, criminations, misrepresentations, falsehoods, hard names, threats, and perhaps blows will follow. If such scenes are often repeated, domestic love and harmony will give place to mutual dislike and alienation; to tyranny in the elder, and to an abject or a bitter spirit in the younger, who, in their turn will often be disposed to repay themselves for their sufferings by domineering over those below them. If tyranny produces slavery, it also produces tyranny. What a scene does a family present, when under the influence of such passions, and addicted to such habits! What obstacles are opposed to meekness and gentleness, candor and forbearance: to the charity which “thinketh no evil;” which “suffereth long and is kind;” which “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things:” to the love of man, and therefore, to that which cannot exist without it, the love of God! “He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”—I dwell the more on this point, because many, who would be shocked by quarrels among

their friends, see them take place among children with very little concern. Do not contentions spring in both cases from the same root? And is not the fruit which they produce, however different in form and appearance, essentially of the same species? Surely then, the utmost pains should be taken to prevent and to heal differences, and to promote harmony in a young family. It is by no means sufficient to silence a dispute by the voice of authority, and to keep down all outward expressions of disagreement. The evil may yet remain in the heart, and rankle there in all its malignity. Persevering pains must be taken to eradicate it. A Christian parent on such occasions will show his child from what tempers quarrels arise, and make him sensible, by God's blessing, of the hatefulness of such tempers, and of their contrariety to the character of his God and Saviour. He will pourtray, in simple but glowing colors, the beauty of the opposite tempers, their tendency to conciliate affection and esteem in this world, and to promote that renewal in the Divine image which is indispensable to a union with Christ in the next. He will give additional force to these general topics by bringing into view all the claims to forbearance and to love which belong to the child with whom the quarrel has arisen; and the grief and the bad consequences which attend such family differences, and the happiness and the numerous advantages of mutual kindness. Nor will he rest satisfied, till he sees all the remains of ill-will give way, and the child brought into a frame of mind candidly and cordially to make every re-

quisite acknowledgment to his play-fellow, and to desire a complete reconciliation. While the parent is bringing matters to this issue, he will be particularly careful to show, that although he is impartial, and can see in a true light the faults of both sides; yet it becomes the child to think only of his own guilt, and to be anxious for forgiveness from God and man, and for the restoration of cordial harmony.

In the observations which have been made on quarrels, a domineering spirit has been slightly mentioned as connected with them. But this spirit requires farther attention. It is the natural fruit of the two leading evils in our nature, selfishness and pride; and therefore a parent must not be surprised to see it among his children. The elder will expect a compliance with their wishes and humors on the part of the younger; the boys will exact obedience from the girls of nearly the same age; and they will all be disposed to assert a superiority over some of the servants. I have seen a young urchin, in the nursery, play the tyrant with a high hand over his maid: and sometimes, little creatures, who should be practising submission and deference towards their elder relations, presume on the fondness of one or another of them—an aunt perhaps, or even a mother—and behave in a manner as injurious to themselves, as it is revolting to all who witness the unnatural scene.—I need not enlarge on this subject to make a Christian parent sensible of its importance. He will recollect, that humility and submission are the very foundations of religion, and of

the whole range of religious tempers; that there cannot be a greater solecism than a self-willed or a tyrannical Christian: that he who would be high in the kingdom of the lowly Saviour, must be "least of all, and servant of all;" that the most impetuous and high-minded by nature of all the Apostles, when matured in his Christian course, said with unusual emphasis, "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." He will therefore by no means view this point with indifference: he will not leave things to find their own level, as the phrase is, in his young family: much less will he be dazzled by the appearance of spirit in a boy of activity and vigor, who aspires to be the master of all about him. He will earnestly inculcate mutual kindness and forbearance and condescension; which all should be forward in exercising, but backward in requiring:—he will inculcate, that true fortitude and greatness of mind show themselves in nothing more clearly than in not being overcome of evil, but in overcoming evil with good: he will dwell on the beauty of a character which obtains such victories—on the evil prevented and the happiness diffused by them—on their value in the sight of God—and on their important influence in promoting some faint resemblance of Him who, with all his meekness and lowliness, was a perfect pattern of holy fortitude, and at length died for his enemies. These topics will furnish abundant matter for impressing the young mind; and if that of the parent is in true harmony with them, they will be seldom used in vain. There will, however, be frequent recurrences

of the fault in question, where the temper is sanguine and eager, and still more where there is a tendency to jealousy or passion. In such cases, a parent will find it of the highest importance to watch his own temper; for equanimity and tenderness in the use of his authority, joined to constant firmness, will do much towards repressing a domineering spirit in his children. These qualities will put to the blush the impatience, and violence and thirst of power, which may appear among his little ones, and lead them by sympathy to a better spirit: while the display of tempers at all similar to theirs, however it might terrify the culprits into instant submission, would leave a fire covered with ashes, but unsubdued, and ready to break forth again with undiminished force.

Sometimes, a nursery is infected by a spirit of teasing in some of its inmates: a spirit which is often combined with much cunning, and delights in drawing a playfellow of a more unguarded nature into imprudences and excesses, and then in laying all the blame upon him. This mean habit must be strictly watched. It is the bane of every thing kind and generous, and leads to systematic deceit and falsehood. Hasty quarrels leave little of bad leaven behind them, compared with this cold blooded and odious practice.

Selfishness and jealousy generally appear very early in children, and are amongst the most unamiable of all the bad dispositions inherited from our First Parents. Every mother can testify what reluctance children show by nature, to giving or

lending their own playthings; how eagerly they grasp at those which belong to others; how earnestly they contend for the first occupancy of such as are a sort of common property; how ardently they long for any thing when another child is playing with it; and how indifferent to it they often become as soon as he has relinquished it. And with respect to jealousy, the original bias is quite as striking. Even infants show it, when the women that have the charge of them bestow caresses on other children; and in subsequent years, though the feeling is known to be wrong, and its outward expression is in a measure restrained, yet from time to time evident symptoms of it appear.

It is needless to say, that such feelings should be repressed: they are not only evidently incompatible with the law of love, but are condemned even by the lax code of worldly morality. Let every parent be indefatigable in his endeavors to correct them: and let him constantly bear in mind, that merely to check outward appearances, will by no means be sufficient; that the child who is subject to such tempers is conscious of their baseness, and naturally desirous of concealing them; and that the object in view can be attained only by the eradication of the evil itself from the heart, and by the implantation of those Christian virtues which are opposed to it. This must be the work of the Holy Spirit, whose humble instrument the parent may be in cleansing and preparing the soil, and in sowing the good seed.

The proper conduct of the two sexes, each towards the other, is of high importance, even at this

early age. Boys are apt to feel their strength and hardihood, and not to treat girls as they ought; and sometimes, I fear, girls presuming on their exemption from that kind of treatment which impertinence experiences among boys, give to their tongues liberties which are subversive of family concord. In addition to the immediate evils flowing from this state of things, a foundation is laid for still greater in future life. In the whole range of associations between persons of different sexes, the consequent advantages extremely depend on the maintenance of fixed and habitual sentiments of mutual respect. Such sentiments are essential to delicacy and tenderness in men, and to willing deference and submission in women, and to cordial affection in nearer relations of life on both sides. How desirable, then, is it, that the foundations of right feelings and right conduct should be laid in early life: and how well employed is the attention by which this object is effected! It would be necessary, were the subsequent stages of education brought under review, to treat this subject with more particularity.

And can we pass on to other topics without reflecting for a few moments on the delightful spectacle of a young family living together in harmony that is seldom interrupted by contentions, overbearing conduct, rivalries, jealousies, or suspicions: a family in which contentment, love, generosity, mutual forbearance, and a spirit of mutual accommodation, founded on Christian principles, are the prominent dispositions, and in which the performance of daily duties, and the promotion and par-



icipation of the general happiness, appear to be the leading occupation? Struck with the beauty of such a scene, one who was familiar with family discord exclaimed, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" In such a family, adversity will seldom inflict a deep or lasting wound. Many sweet drops will find their way into the bitter cup: and in no long time tears will be succeeded by smiles, and a recollection of the trial may be attended, perhaps, with not more pain than pleasure.

If we were to look round for the opposite picture, should we not find it presenting so many deep shades of depravity and wretchedness as to make us shudder at the view? I will not give myself and my readers the pain of contemplating the scene more closely. Were we to do so, we should be all ready to exclaim with Isaiah, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked!" and with St. James, "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

All the benefits of a useful education may be lost by acquaintance with children of bad habits. Such is the natural propensity to evil; so great is the vivacity, the curiosity, the love of novelty, and the want of caution at a tender age: so lively is the sympathy, so active the spirit of imitation; that even occasional intercourse with dangerous companions will seldom fail to be highly injurious to children. Surely it is the part of wisdom to keep them as much as possible from moral contagion, till they have acquired some strength to resist it.

If the weakness of man is such, that our Saviour, in giving a short Prayer for universal use in his church, saw fit to insert in it the petition, "Lead us not into temptation," how much must it be the duty of a Christian parent to preserve the little creatures committed to his care, whose good principles and habits are as yet unfix'd and infirm, from a species of temptation most seductive and dangerous? They must at length go forth into an evil world: but they ought to be prepared against its allurements by education, and introduced to them by degrees. At this early age, the tender plant should be preserved with care from the frosts, and storms, and droughts, which it will be better able to encounter at a future period, if guarded and sheltered while its stem is weak, and its roots are few and superficial. But besides the present danger from undesirable companions, a foundation is often laid for bad connections in future life. The little play-fellows become attached, and wish to keep up their acquaintance in succeeding years: and unless the desire to discontinue the intimacy be mutual, either of them will find it difficult to break off the connection, however alive to the snares and dangers which attend it. The importance of this consideration is great; for a man's steps through life usually depend not a little upon the nature of his early friendships. Nor is it from children only that danger is to be apprehended, but also from visitors of a more advanced age. Instead of strengthening the hands of the parent, they are too apt to flatter and humor the little ones; to entertain them with foolish stories; or to teach

them to be impertinent, and to take improper liberties. More mischief is sometimes done in this way, in a few days, than the parent can undo in as many weeks. A single instance of bad example is dangerous. How destructive, then, must be its frequent repetition; and how important must it be to guard the sacred work of education from such interruptions, and to make great sacrifices to effect this object! Parents are too apt to make their own taste and convenience the great, if not the only, rule in the selection of their acquaintance. Now, ought not the safety and welfare of their children to enter at least equally into their consideration? Here, probably, is the most vulnerable point, and here ought provident caution and measures of defence to be most carefully employed. Parents frequently leave their home and their circle of acquaintance for a considerable time, in order to afford to their children an opportunity of acquiring accomplishments. Shall there be less interference with old habits, less change of situation, or of acquaintance, when the object is to shield them from the allurements of sin, and to give them a taste for the paths of true religion and virtue? Are we not called upon to apply the spirit of the precept, to cut off the offending right hand and to pluck out the offending right eye, to the case before us, and resolutely, though with all mildness and courtesy, to avoid in our social intercourse whatever may be dangerous to our children? It is true, that the question is one of comparison. *Some* risks to the young family must be incurred, if we would not do extreme vio-

lence to private friendship, to the ties of relationship, or to the duties of hospitality. But those who feel the importance of preserving their tender charge from the contagion of evil, will allow great weight in forming a decision to the circumstances which belong to that side of the question. With respect to forming new connections, there is seldom much difficulty; but with regard to old associations, we shall often be called to introduce changes as to the frequency and duration of visits, and sometimes as to their continuance;—changes which may appear unkind to others, and will be extremely unpleasant to ourselves. Let it, however, be our earnest prayer and endeavor to do all in the spirit of Christian affection; and this will greatly facilitate our object. I remember many years ago being struck by a little incident in a parish, where the incumbent, a man of most extraordinary Christian benignity, when in company with a clerical friend, rebuked in very plain terms one of his parishioners for gross misbehaviour on a recent occasion. The reproof was so severe as to astonish his friend, who declared, that if he had addressed one of his own flock in similar language, he should have expected an irreconcilable breach. The clergyman of the parish answered him, with a gentle pat on the shoulder, and with a smile of Christian wisdom, “O, my friend, when there is love in the heart, you may say any thing.” And in like manner, I believe, when there is true and warm love in our hearts, and our measures are prompted by a calm and sincere sense of duty, we may do almost any thing without giving great of-

fence; at least, without giving offence deep and lasting.

After what has been said respecting servants, little needs to be added to guard parents against suffering a child to make them his companions. He should always treat them with kindness, but should be led not to amuse himself with their society in his play-hours. This remark applies with particular force to the men-servants, who will generally be much more dangerous to children than the maids. But, with very few exceptions, both the one and the other, if treated by the children as favorites, will be apt to flatter and humor them, and teach them to be guilty of little deceits, and to be fond of self-indulgence. Vulgarity of manners and of language, though the most obvious, is perhaps the least of the evils to be apprehended from such companions.

## CHAP. IX.

*Hardihood.—Moderate Habits.—Artificial Hardships.—Moderation favorable to Elevation of Character.—Rules.—Preparation for Prayer.—Self-Examination.—Prayer.—How long boys should be kept under domestic Education.—Preparation for Schools.—Governesses.*

IN a system such as I have recommended, marked by the absence of harshness and violence on the part of the parents and of contests and collisions among the children, there may appear to be some danger of a want of the hardihood requisite in the troubles and disappointments that will be met with in life. But though the circumstances which in general tend most powerfully to promote this quality are excluded by our plan of education, yet, under the guidance of a parent who turns his attention to this point, those which remain will be sufficient for the attainment of our object. Even in the best-regulated families, troubles will arise among the children. The loss of a play-thing, a personal accident, a lesson ill learned; above all, a hope disappointed;—all these, and numberless other circumstances of constant recurrence, will checquer their happiness, and accustom them to difficulties and

trials, which it will be the parent's endeavor to convert into lessons of patient endurance, if not of cheerful resignation.

But there is another course, perfectly compatible with that just mentioned, of high importance for arming the young mind against the difficulties and troubles of life: this is, to accustom children to moderation, and to teach them from the first to do as much as may be for themselves, instead of depending on others for their conveniences and comforts. Moderate habits have been celebrated as sources of happiness by Mr. Paley, and with the felicity with which he handles most topics unconnected with his erroneous principle (as I deem it) of generous expediency. It is, therefore, perfectly unnecessary for me to enlarge on the value of such habits.\* It is apparent, how contented with a little those are prepared to be, whose habits lead them to look for little; and how large a portion of the trials of those who are used to flattery, luxury, and self-indulgence, will pass over their heads. The want of delicate food and a soft bed will not be felt by a child who has been used to plain fare and a mattress; and rising early in the winter will be no hardship to one who has been always accustomed to it. The habit also of shifting for themselves (to use a homely but expressive phrase) will not only stimulate the activity of children, and call forth their ingenuity, and make them more pleased with little acquisitions, as fruits of their own skill and exertions, but it will

\* Vide Moral Philosophy, chapter on Human Happiness.

powerfully tend to preserve them from sources of discontent. There is no bound to the unreasonable wishes of those who are taught to think it the business of others to obtain for them what they wish. They will often appear to wish almost solely for the sake of giving trouble. But whether they really do so or not, the unfortunate person who is expected to satisfy this immeasurable capacity of wishing, will be extremely likely to be of that opinion, and execute the unpleasant task with no little dissatisfaction, if not with ill-humor. These dispositions will be caught by the children, and add greatly to the discontent excited by their preposterous and unsatisfied wants. This, I conceive, is one leading cause of the unhappiness of the children, and the unfeeling conduct of the female attendants, so often observable when children of rank walk out in the parks in London. How different is the situation of children who are taught to depend upon themselves as much as possible for their comforts and pleasures! Their wishes will be moderate and reasonable; for they will be bounded by their sense of their own ability to supply them, of which they will form a far better estimate than of the ability of others. What they do obtain will be highly grateful to them; and when they fail to obtain any thing, they will impute the failure to themselves; and this circumstance will serve to stifle complaint, or afford the parent an opportunity of showing its absurdity. The propriety of the system here recommended will be readily acknowledged by children. They will easily understand that we ought to interfere as little as may be



with the happiness of others by causing them trouble; and that indifference to the ease and comfort of those about us argues a want of feeling which must be hateful to our kind and compassionate Saviour.

Natural methods of promoting moderation, patience, and a due measure of hardihood, will be found amply sufficient, without having recourse to unnatural and artificial austerities and sufferings. These I should exceedingly disapprove, though I fear they are sometimes found in the plans of education adopted by good parents. Surely they are calculated to sour the temper of the child, and weaken filial affection. What God sends, we all learn to bear more cheerfully than what is wrought upon us (as we are apt to think) by the mere will of man. Besides, when God is clearly the author of the event, its rigors are tempered and softened in various ways. In judgment he remembers mercy. But when it proceeds more from man, even though man does nothing without the Divine permission, it bears marks of his short-sightedness and violence. Compare the sufferings inflicted by the Inquisition, with those which proceed from natural distempers. Well might David, when allowed a choice of evils, say, "Let me fall now into the hand of the Lord, for very great are his mercies; but let me not fall into the hand of man."

The habits which have been mentioned, besides preparing children to meet the difficulties and bear the evils of life, will give the mind a certain elevation. Self-indulgence leads to frivolity; enervates the soul; pampers the lower, and chills and de-

presses the higher, part of our nature. Our blessed Saviour said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." He well knew how incompatible self-indulgence is with the recovery of divine image in the soul. How can liberality, magnanimity, cheerful contentment under evils, and moderation and spirituality of mind in the midst of unforeseen prosperity, be expected from the self-indulgent man? His aims will be low, his conduct marked by meanness? and he will cling to this earth, the only source of his pleasures. If we wish this picture to be reversed, we must omit no means of instilling, by the Divine blessing, an opposite spirit into our offspring.

Rules are necessary in every young family, and, perhaps, for no purpose more particularly than for the promotion of self-denial and moderation. They should be simple and definite, and not needlessly numerous; for there never ought to be room for question, when one is broken, whether it could be easily understood and remembered. But rules should always be considered as so connected with the principles from which they flow, that they must be interpreted rather largely, and regarded as extending to every thing *manifestly* of the same kind with that which is expressed by their letter. All cunning methods of evading them, and all special pleading as to their meaning must be decidedly suppressed. A child must be early taught to look to those general principles and motives, which are the guides of the advanced Christian; and by no means to consider every thing allowable which is not for-

bidden by a specific rule, and nothing as a duty which a rule does not prescribe. In laying down rules, the parent will accommodate them to age and sex, and in a measure also to individual character. He must take care that they shall not only be reasonable, but that, if it be possible, they shall be seen and felt to be so by those who are to obey them. It is obvious, therefore, that they should not be formed hastily, and much less when a fault has just been committed by a child, and the mind of the parent may be less serene than is usual. When established, they should not be lightly changed. But it is better to change or annul a rule, than to wink at the breach of it;—a mode of proceeding which must produce the worst effects on the principles and habits of the child, and must undermine the authority of the parent.

My readers will expect that I should say something on the subject of prayer; but, important as that subject is, I am desirous first of adverting to a subject perhaps still more important,—the preparation for prayer. I imagine that coldness of heart and wandering of thought in prayer proceed more from a want of due preparation than from any wrong system in prayer itself. If this is the case with persons of mature age, it is likely to be much more so with children, whose minds are so lively and volatile, and whose self-command and habits of piety are so weak and imperfect. Consider what it is to make a child pass immediately from its play to its prayers, with scarcely the interval of a moment to quiet its mind, and with no endeavor on the

part of the parent to bring its soul into a frame fit for addressing its Almighty Maker and Redeemer. And yet this case, I fear, or one very like to it, is not uncommon. Surely this practice must be offensive to the Lord of heaven and earth, and lead the child to look on prayer, not as an exercise of pious affections, but as little more than the decent repetition of a good form of words. At times, when the mind is in a more favorable state for prayer, it is often scarcely, if at all, raised to God, because the attention has not been called to the nature of the duty to be performed. A few words from a parent, before the child falls on his knees, would frequently give, under God's blessing, the spirit of prayer to a service which may appear likely otherwise to be little better than a mere ceremony. How deserving, then, is this point of a parent's attention! Our Liturgy sets before him an excellent example, in the address preceding the Confession; the object of which is to prepare the congregation for the service which follows.

But another most important preparation for prayer remains to be mentioned. This is, self-examination; —an exercise of the soul indispensable, I think, to every Christian, and requiring to be begun at a very early period. Of course, its circumstances must depend on the age of the child, but its substance ought by no means to be omitted. A very young child (one of two or three years old) cannot be expected to examine himself; but the parent must remind him of one or two faults, or one or two victories over pressing temptation on very recent occasions, and

lead him to right feelings respecting them. By degrees, if this call to recollection is regularly practised once or twice a-day, the exercise, though *extremely* short at first, will become a little longer, and the child's feelings will be drawn into the habit, first, of being more easily led into the right course, and, after a while, of taking it of their own accord. Next, the child will begin himself to recollect what his conduct has been in some few leading points, and that with less and less help from the parent: and so he will proceed, till at length he will extend his view to more points, and require no assistance. In all the stages of this process, great caution should be employed not to fatigue or harrass: and it will be better to advance too gradually than too rapidly: to do too little, rather than too much. It is also extremely important, that this incipient religious exercise should be made to wear as gentle and amiable an aspect as is compatible with the holy dispositions which should accompany it. As it is one which, after a time, the child is to carry on in silence, and solely by his own reflections, if he becomes at all disgusted with it, it will either be neglected entirely or performed surperficially and without advantage. Let the tenderness and patience, no less than the persevering assiduity, of the parent be in any tolerable degree proportioned to the high importance of the habit which he wishes to see established, and there is the fairest prospect of success. The object should be, to lead the child to think over the principal events of the preceding day; to recollect his faults with contrition, and his blessings with thank-

fulness: and then, to consider a little the day which is commencing, and with a disposition to behave well through it—to avoid past faults, and to be grateful for expected mercies. Every care should be taken to infuse cordiality and piety into this course; and to guard it against every shade of insincerity, by turning the eye of the child from the parent to God, and from outward appearance to the heart. Every thing should be accommodated to the mind and habits of a child, and made to wear an easy and a simple dress. Even the name is of consequence: and if the long term, “self-examination,” can be made to give way to one more intelligible, there will be an advantage in the change. The time preferred by me for this exercise is just before the morning private prayers of each child. Even after the child is able to examine himself without assistance, the watchful eye of a parent will be wanted to see that he in the main keeps his thoughts rightly employed, and does not fall into a habit of letting them wander to things of a different nature from those which ought to engage the mind. A parent may, from time to time, inform himself, or rather *herself*, how far the child has been engaged in the appointed duty, by asking him what has been the subject of his thoughts. Here, however, great delicacy is requisite, and the inquiry must be sparingly repeated, lest it should lead to falsehood and hypocrisy. If the thoughts appear to wander, the exercise, though always very short at the age under consideration, must generally be shortened, and a right direction must be given to it, by suggesting,

before the child begins to think, the general subjects (two or three only) on which they should be employed. When there happens to have been any thing very remarkable in the child's conduct, it is always advisable to point its attention to the fact for two or three succeeding days.

The great advantage of the practice which I am recommending, not only as a preparation for prayer, but on other accounts, is apparent. As a preparation for prayer, it must produce, with the Divine blessing, the most salutary effect in spiritualizing the mind, and turning the thoughts to faults, and wants, and weaknesses; and also to motives for gratitude and praise. In other respects, it must produce, in a measure, the benefits which are the fruits of holy self-examination in adults. It must promote self-knowledge, watchfulness, and a tender conscience. Thus, we may humbly hope, that God will render it an important barrier against the inroads of evil, and a guardian of all that is good. On what vantage-ground does a parent stand, when, on observing a fault, the child can be reminded how much at variance it is with his resolutions and his prayers, after recollecting, in a former self-examination, a similar fault; and what pain the present transgression will cause him when he reflects upon it at the next season for reviewing the incidents of the day, and saying his prayers! Instances of good conduct will give rise also to very useful observations resting on the same foundation. Children are so volatile, so eager in their pursuits, so forgetful of good lessons, and so disinclined to self-denial, that it

is of the highest importance to introduce as early as possible a habit of religious thought and recollection at stated times. Is not, then, self-examination particularly desirable for children; and ought parents to think any pains ill-bestowed which may promote it? And I fully believe, from experience, that, if their endeavors are well-directed and persevering, and, above all, conducted in a right spirit, they will not be used in vain.

The prayers for young children should be very short, and extremely simple. As soon as an infant can lisp, its mother will let it kneel in her lap, and repeat after her a *very* few words, addressed to God, after it has seen its little brothers and sisters at their prayers. It will like to follow their example. By degrees it will require less and less assistance in offering up its little prayer, and that prayer will be, in a very small degree, extended. The mother's leading object will be, to initiate her tender charge in feelings of reverence and piety while so employed. These feelings may be instilled, while the ideas conveyed to the infant by the words it pronounces are yet very indistinct and imperfect; but the impression on its heart will be the blessed work of its Sanctifier, and be acceptable to its God and Saviour. After some time, recourse may be had to more regular forms of prayer. Those for children, by Dr. Watts, are very good, and different prayers are furnished to suit different ages. It is highly desirable that the child should pronounce his prayers aloud, in the presence of a parent, whenever that mode can be made convenient: and, at other times, of some



proper person; and attention and a devout spirit should be diligently cultivated, and every thing which may disturb the thoughts should be carefully kept at a distance. The state of the mind, when engaged in prayer, will chiefly depend on its general habits, and on previous preparation; but the securing of regularity, external decency, and propriety in the act itself, is a point of no small moment. Let a parent reflect on the infinite importance of communion with God at every age, and the incalculable influence which right impressions, and the commencement of right habits on this point, from the earliest period may have on future life, and he will be far from thinking the care which has been recommended greater than the object demands. From what evil will he guard his little ones, if not from the evil of trifling with their God? And what habit will he be anxious to give them, if not the habit of humble dependence and devout adoration in addressing that Being who is the Author of all their blessings, and in whose hands is their future lot for all eternity?

I cannot close my remarks, without a few words as to the length of time during which it is desirable that boys should continue under their father's roof. This is a question of expediency; and its decision must depend much on circumstances. The health of the child, the health, leisure, and ability of the parents, and various other considerations, will have their weight in determining it. In general, however, I am disposed to think, that it is best to prolong domestic education until a boy is nine or ten years

old, and that it is seldom desirable to continue it much longer. Till that period, a moderate share of knowledge and ability will enable parents to educate their son, and the mother will be likely to have a due ascendancy over him. But at the age which I have mentioned, in order to keep pace with other boys, he ought to begin to employ a large proportion of his school-hours in studying Latin; and his father will seldom have leisure to superintend that study regularly and sufficiently; and, what is more important, his mother will generally find that he has become too large and robust to be easily managed in the father's absence, and that the welfare of the boy, if not her own comfort, requires that he should be placed in other hands. Scarcely any thing can be so mischievous to a boy, as to be master of an individual, whom, in the regular course of his education, he is bound to obey; but the evil is extremely aggravated when that individual is a parent. When this shameful and unnatural scene is presented, how totally reversed are those provisions which the Divine Being has made for the progress of children in knowledge, and in right dispositions, and for the usefulness and the comfort of parents! We know in what abomination a rebellious son was held under the Jewish law; and certainly he is not less offensive to correct judgment and right feeling under the Christian system.

In such a case, the parents are seldom blameless, especially if it occurs when the boy is young. The father should exert himself with vigor to support the mother's authority; and she ought to consider it a

Christian duty to support her own, and avoid those weaknesses, from whatever amiable sources they may spring, which tend to undermine it. There is a silent dignity about a woman who does not yield to them; and a son uncorrupted by bad companions can seldom resist its influence, and conduct himself towards such a mother with disrespect.

In families where a considerable share of the school business devolves on a governess, it is unfit that, when a boy is above her management, he should continue to be her scholar; and, if a better arrangement cannot be made for his education, he must go to school.

Little needs be said on the advantage of keeping a boy at home, while he can be duly educated and properly managed. This course is highly desirable for the purpose of strengthening his principles, and forming his habits. I have already said something on the high importance of laying a sound and broad foundation in these great points, during the continuance of domestic education. A parent who feels on this subject as he ought will be anxious to obtain as many of the first years of life as may be for the perfecting, establishing, strengthening, settling that foundation. He will bear in mind the original indisposition of man to holiness, his levity,—his lively impressions from present objects, his neglect of future consequences, and his dislike of a persevering opposition to the natural bent of his own feelings. He will also bear in mind the force of the temptations which abound in that world (and every school is a branch of it) into which his son must soon be

sent ; and he will be far more inclined to regret that the period most favorable for paternal instruction is necessarily so limited, than he will be disposed to abridge it.

Towards the close of that period, a boy must be prepared for the new course of things which awaits him at school, and be cautioned in a more particular manner against some of its leading temptations. It would be necessary to enter into details on these points, if the next period in education, that which is passed by boys at school, were under consideration. Suffice it here to say, that in his lessons he must be taught to look for less assistance, and to accommodate himself to his task, rather than expect it to be accommodated to him. He must also learn to submit to general rules, even when they bear hard upon him ; and to expect very few exceptions in his favor. Kindness to those who are less than himself, and patience and good humor under provocations and ill-treatment, must be earnestly inculcated. But, above all, he must be warned against falsehood and deceit, those flagrant vices of schools ; and increased diligence must be used to strengthen him against temptations of every kind. At the same time, the bonds of filial affection and filial confidence must be strengthened, if it be possible, as barriers against evil, or as conductors, under God, to the right path again, when he has strayed from it.

No distinction has been made in the foregoing remarks between the education of boys and that of girls. During the greater part of the period under consideration, the modes pursued with the different

sexes should be, I think, very similar. In the last year or two, the boys and the girls will begin to separate both in their studies and in their amusements. It is not necessary to be more particular on this subject. In all that regards by far the most important part of education, the training of them, by God's help, for Himself and a blessed eternity, the system will be the same for both.

In many, and especially in large families, education cannot be properly conducted without a governess. In the choice of one, good principles, good sense, good temper, sobriety and firmness of mind, and competent knowledge, are the first requisites; ornamental qualifications hold a second place. Unfortunately, the generality of young women, who offer themselves for that situation, are much better furnished with showy accomplishments than with more solid acquirements; and, for this and other reasons, parents must not raise their expectations high when they take a governess. Much, however, of the disappointment which they too often experience on that occasion, may be owing to themselves. If they do not make fair and charitable allowances for her defects, and conduct themselves towards her in a manner respectful, kind, and friendly, and thus entitle themselves to her regard and confidence; and if they do not make a right use of their influence, by leading her gently and gradually into such methods of education as they approve; they must not wonder if they find great evils in the school-room. How can they expect a very important and delicate trust to be well exe-

cuted, when they do not show proper attentions to their agent, nor put her into the way of adopting the course which will meet their wishes? How can they hope that she, a stranger, will proceed with fidelity, tenderness, and zeal, in spite of the difficulties which she will experience among her pupils, when they, the parents, do not exert themselves to lessen those difficulties, and to smooth her course? How can they hope, that their children will find in her a portion of parental affection and solicitude, when she has found in themselves little support and friendship, though standing in so much need of them? Let parents take a different course, and they may see a very different result. They may then find how active are the exertions of affection, how large the returns made by gratitude, and how great is the docility and how warm the sympathy of a young woman, thrown on their care, and beyond her hopes, finding in them, as it were, second parents.—However, I would caution those who employ a governess, in the midst of their kindness to remember what place she holds in their family, and to what situation in life she must return when she leaves it. They are bound to avoid any line of conduct which may place her above her station. To act otherwise would be disqualifying her for the duties of the school-room, and doing her a serious injury. They ought to consider eminently good conduct on her part as laying them under an obligation never to be forgotten.

## APPENDIX.

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### No. I.

[EXTRACTED FROM THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER FOR JANUARY, 1813.]

WE are the parents of several young children, and are anxious for their salvation. Not long since, one of our little boys went to visit a very kind friend, who has been remarkably successful in the pious education of his family. We were desirous to have our friend's opinion of our son. His leading observation was, that the child did not show a *cordial concern* for his faults. Feeling the justice of this sentiment, and our own inexperience, we requested him to tell us at length how, under God's grace, this concern might be best excited; which drew from him the first of the following letters. We still expressed doubts on the subject of correction by the rod, whether it should ever be used at all, or whether it should ever be used where some contrition has been already produced by affectionate and serious conversation. This procured us the benefit of the second letter. Having found these letters of considerable use in the religious education of our children, and having obtained permission from our truly Christian friend to make them public, we beg to send them to you, in the hope that you will judge them well worthy of insertion in the Christian Observer.

“ My dear Sir,

“The subject on which you request my sentiments is one of the most important in education. Without a *cordial concern* for a fault, no sound foundation is laid for its cure. Even if the parent looked no farther than to worldly principles, to mere prudence and fair character, this would be true. It is eminently and obviously true, when the reference is to religion, and to God who searches the heart. Without this *cordial concern* there can be no repentance, and without repentance there can be neither forgiveness nor the Divine blessing; and therefore all must be unsound, even if outward reformation be obtained. I ought to apologize for repeating truths so familiar to you, as applied to adults, if not also as applied to children, to whom they are equally applicable. It is their very high and fundamental importance, and their not meeting with due attention in education, even from very many religious parents, which induces me to state them. I too frequently see parents make the reformation of their children's faults a matter in which religion is scarcely, if at all, referred to; and little or no appeal is directed to the heart and conscience. Thus morality comes to be considered as consisting entirely (or nearly so) in mere outward observances: God, Christ, and the Holy Ghost, are little brought into view in the course of the child's daily conduct; and he gets into the habit of being satisfied with himself, if he does nothing contrary to rule, though his motives may not have been holy, and his heart may have been in a very indifferent state. You could describe to me, better than I to you, the evils of such a state, and the hardness of conscience, and other future miseries threatened by it.

“The system here has been, carefully to counteract these evils, both present and future, by doing our best to lead our children to have God in all their thoughts, and to habitual daily repentance and tenderness of conscience before him;—in short, to that frame of mind, making proper allowance for their age, which is required in all of us by our Heavenly Father. To this end we always endeavor, in correcting a fault in a child, to have a right religious view of it, and to give the child, partly by precept and illustration, and partly by sympathy (for ‘*si vis me flere*



dolendum est primum ipsi tibi,\* is eminently applicable in this case,) a right feeling respecting it, as an offence against his Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. It is too common, as you know, to cut short the notice of a fault. It is strongly blamed—perhaps the child undergoes some punishment—perhaps he is threatened with severe punishment if he repeats the fault; or perhaps he is required to say, that he is sorry, and will not repeat it. The parent is peremptory, the child is frightened, and all is over in a very short time, without any useful impression on the child, except that he is less disposed to commit the outward act which has drawn upon him these animadversions. Mrs. ——— and I, on the contrary, endeavor to make every fault of our children to be felt by them as an offence against God, and a sin to be repented of, and upon repentance to be pardoned through our Saviour. We therefore carefully guard against the child's thinking that his fault is reproved as a personal offence against ourselves. We talk to him solemnly, but tenderly; feeling and expressing much concern that he has offended God; contrasting his conduct with the love of God; painting the pleasure with which his holiness would be received in heaven, particularly by Christ, and the pain which his sin has occasioned. In short, we talk with him, *mutatis mutandis*,† as with a friend with whom we tenderly sympathise, while we feel that we have a right to command. We temper the terrors of the Lord with representations of his love and mercy; and we persevere in this course, till the child's mind appears humble and softened, and brought into such a penitent frame as God looks upon with favor. The whole often ends in a short affectionate prayer of half a minute, or a minute, for pardon and grace, dictated by ourselves, as far as the child's own thoughts will not of themselves supply it. This process is never hurried over, nor is it ever brought to a conclusion before the end appears to be attained; as nothing can be more important, so nothing is suffered to supersede or interrupt it. It is taken up *very* early, and is always accommodated in its different parts to the years and knowledge of the child. It appears formidable on paper;

\* If you wish me to be affected, you must first be affected yourself.

† Varying where variation is necessary.

but it is surprising how short, and even pleasant it is, in all common cases, through its being commenced so early and habitually practised. It has almost banished punishment from our house, and has brought with it various other good consequences. I need not say, that considerable discrimination and discretion must be exercised by the parent. Religion must be made to wear an amiable and endearing, as well as an awful, countenance. The bruised reed must not be broken; the feelings must not be excited beyond what nature will bear; and if a storm of feeling arises, it must be allayed without any improper indulgence, destructive of the effect to be produced. You will see, that sagacity and self-command are wanted on the part of the parent, for which he cannot hope, if he do not maintain an unruffled mind.

“There are some necessary concomitants of this system, which, were they not so, would be recommended by their own intrinsic importance. Holy things must always be approached in a holy way. The Bible must never be read with levity or indifference. Hymns, and the Catechism, must never be *jabbered* over, nor repeated with that hard tone and manner which bespeaks an unconsciousness of their sacred nature. Religion must practically be made the main-spring of life; and she must not only be so, but appear to be so, without departing from her native modesty, and without losing dignity by the frequency of her introduction, or by the kindness with which she is invested. You will be aware that difficulties, and very great ones, must be encountered, where, instead of habits of proper feeling and repentance on committing faults having been formed from infancy, other habits have been formed. These difficulties are in their kind the same which you clergymen experience in bringing adults to repentance. In their degree they will be greater or less according to circumstances.—I had a child here for several months, some time ago, whom I could never bring to quite a satisfactory state of mind on his committing faults; owing, as I believe, to the errors of his previous education. With our own children we have never experienced very formidable difficulties, God be praised! His is the work; but he makes great use of the instrumentality of parents, and gives, as I believe, an especial blessing to a well-directed early education.

“I remain, &c.”

“ My dear Sir,

“ As ours is quite a Sunday subject, I will employ a little of to-day in giving you my thoughts upon it.

“ With respect to punishments, our practice has been very generally to omit the employment of them altogether, when the child was brought to real repentance ; but at any rate to confine their use on such occasions to strong cases, and then to employ restraints, and not corporal correction. But we have endeavored to recal the child’s mind to faults, from time to time, in a solemn but tender manner, that they might not slip out of his remembrance ; and especially at prayer-time, and other seasons when it appeared likely to be done with most effect.

“ We have been led to this course, partly by feeling ; but it has accorded with our principles, as I will endeavor to explain.

“ The great and leading use of punishments (in the case of children at least) seems to be, to humble the mind at the time of a fault, and prepare it for repentance ; or, when inflicted after a fault, to impress the fault more on the memory, that repentance for it may be more abiding : and, in both cases, to deter from a repetition of the crime, through fear of a repetition of the suffering. Now though it has these uses, it has also evils attending it. The parent’s temper is apt to be ruffled in inflicting it, and the child’s to be soured and hardened in receiving it ; and the fear of it is apt to lead to concealment and deceit in a child, and also apt to turn his eyes too much from God to man, and from the spiritual to the temporal consequences of crimes. ‘ Perfect love casteth out fear ;’ and one would wish to lead a child towards that state as fast as may be, and to foster and cherish the love of Christ, as the great constraining principle in his bosom. Endeavors to this end will be not a little counteracted by a system which draws his mind habitually, on the commission of faults, to human punishments.

“ Viewing things in this light, we look on punishment as never to be employed in Christian education, when it can be avoided ; and we think we have found, that, under the system I described in my last letter, for promoting true repentance in a child, it may be avoided with advantage in almost all cases, when, under that

system, by the blessing of God, the mind is become ingenuous and the conscience tender. In cases of obstinacy, whether it takes the form of violence or sullenness—if candor and kindness, and solemn but calm representations, and a countenance and manner in the parent the very reverse of that of the child, will not in some moderate time produce the desired effect on the child's mind (which they commonly will, after the system in question has been followed for some time in a family)—punishment must be employed: 'Debellare superbos.\*' But even in this case it should be sparing and moderate, and inflicted gradually, so as to give time to the child to recover itself from its fit of perverseness; and when its temper is altered, and bends to the yoke, and gives place to contrition and docility, the punishment should cease. It is to the full as necessary, in a system under a God of love, the leading principles of which therefore should be love and mercy, to bear in mind the former part of the poet's line, 'Parcere subjectis,†' as the latter part which I before quoted. Then is the time for winning the child, by holy kindness, tempered by that mild solemnity which the occasion will inspire, to openness and candor, and a deep, but not an agonizing, impression of the evil of sin, and of the love of Christ and his readiness to forgive. Consider how very ill a continuation of punishment would harmonise with the promotion of those filial aspirations to God and the Redeemer. How would it operate in our own case? And how much more likely would it be to operate ill in that of a child, who, from his tender years, is so much more liable to have his mind and feelings engrossed by any thing which, like punishment, makes a strong impression on his outward senses?

"I have mentioned the effect which the expectation of punishment is likely to have on a child's communications with his parent. It may be worth while to enlarge a little on that point. I am sure we agree in placing the highest value on an affectionate and confidential openness in children towards their parents. It is not only highly gratifying to the parents, and the natural expression, and pledge, and nurse of filial esteem and love; but it

\* To humble the proud.

† To spare the submissive

is most closely allied to the promotion of all that is honest and ingenuous in the child, and with the checking and subduing of all that is wrong, not only in his habits, but in his disposition. I need not go into detail on these points. All that I could say will present itself to your mind and feelings. I will merely draw your attention to two opposite pictures, which your own imagination will present to you in sufficiently vivid colors: the one, of a child who feels his parents to be his bosom friends—his wise but tender and sympathising guides through the snares and delusions of life; who, from feeling, as well as from a sense of duty, flies to them to disburthen his mind, both in his joy and in his sorrow; who, in his intercourse with them, endeavors to follow in that Christian path in which they lead the way, to be of one heart and mind with them—and to ‘keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,’ as with all his fellow-Christians, so emphatically with his first, best, and dearest friends, his parents. Contrast this sketch with what is too often the scene even in religious families;—distrust on the part of the parent; reserve, and perhaps alienation, on the part of the child, who, instead of sympathising (in the large sense of the word) with his parents, hankers after companions of a very different sort, and enjoys himself most when farthest from parental observation. I have drawn these outlines strongly; but I am sure you must have observed different shades of these characters among your neighbors, as you have passed through life.

“To return to the main subject, from which I have rather diverged:—After having described the course I should take in a case of obstinacy or passion at first, and repentance afterwards, you are prepared to hear, that, in a case which began with candor and repentance, I would by no means punish, except in the way of some restriction, which should be recommended rather by prudence as a precaution, than be of the nature of a punishment; or perhaps, by exacting some moderate sacrifice (such as staying in the house for some hours) for the purpose of preventing the mind’s too soon exchanging salutary impressions for youthful levity. But whatever I might do in this way, I would take especial care to avoid every thing austere and forbidding in my

countenance and manner, though these would necessarily be marked by serious but tender and affectionate pity and concern. I think I find that this course of proceeding answers the purpose of preventing the affair from sliding too soon out of a child's mind, while it secures his affection, disposes him to confide in me as a friend and confidant, and adds, to his fear of having offended God, a farther uneasiness, from having brought much trouble upon me and himself. Though I have spoken of myself, I have my wife full as much in my eye while I give this description. Occasions are often occurring, in which the little children come to her with full hearts to tell her of some misbehaviour or wrong temper. They come without fear, but with a load of concern and regret, which they evidently hope to lighten by obtaining her sympathy and condolence. You may be sure she always encourages this course of proceeding; and I am convinced that under God's blessing, it answers the very best purposes. I need not say, that, in the way in which she treats such cases, it is her aim always to give the feelings of the Christian a complete ascendancy over those of the mother; and I think she succeeds well. But, after all, will children dread the commission of faults, and guard against them, unless they stand in awe of some immediate punishment? I think they will, and on the same ground on which men and women do, *provided* our whole system, or some other founded on similar principles, is adopted early, and steadily pursued. It is thought absurd for adults to subject themselves to penances for their sins; and why should it not be right to subject children to as little of this sort as may be, and to endeavor as early as may be to bring them to a system analogous to that which we Protestants think the right one for grown-up people? Their minds are capable of being wrought upon by the same means which God has appointed for men in general; and these means cannot be too early employed, and cannot too soon acquire that preponderance in a system of education, which may make them supersede the use of the rod; a weapon necessary, in a degree, for managing brute animals, and man also, as far as his nature resembles theirs; but it is the great business of Christian education to exalt his nature—to cherish that new nature implanted by

grace in his soul, and as speedily as possible to subject him to a discipline suited to the state of heart we wish to encourage.

“Do not suppose, though we endeavor to banish punishment as much as may be, that our system is one of indulgence. It is a main part of it to establish habits of resolute, though cheerful, self-denial in all points in which duty calls for sacrifices. We always hold up the principle of acting on grounds of right and wrong, and not on those of inclination, except in points purely indifferent, which are brought within a narrow compass. Nothing is ever granted to mere entreaty; and we have none of that begging and whining which shows generally a laxity of principle, and always a defective system of education, wherever it is practised.

“In this way we endeavor to promote, in our own children that ‘hardness’ which all the soldiers of Christ must learn to endure. But, then, this plan is sweetened by as much affection, affability, cheerfulness, and desire to make our children happy *within* the bounds of duty, as we can pour into it, consistently with the great truth, which is often inculcated, that neither man nor child must live for pleasure, but that his object and employment must be *work*—the work which God has given him to do; and a considerable part of which (especially in the case of a child) is to prepare for doing better work in future years.

“As to the passages of Scripture which you mention, I own they do not alter my view of this case. It is most true, that ‘the rod must not be spared’ in the cases in which it ought to be used; but then comes the question I have been discussing in this letter: What are those cases? Indeed, the frequency and general complexion of the passages to which you refer would lead one to suppose, that Solomon conceived that cases of this kind would be very common: and, in short, that corporal punishment would be a leading feature in a right education. But it is to be remembered under what dispensation he lived—under one which was comparatively low—one in which there was much of beggarly element; much that was permitted because of the hardness of the hearts of those who lived under it. Should we not expect, that under such a dispensation, and for the use of such a people as the Jews, many

things would be enjoined not well accommodated to our times ; and, in particular, that the approved system of education would partake less of what is (in a spiritual sense) refined and elevated, than ought to enter into "the nurture and admonition of the Lord," under the blaze of the Gospel light most graciously vouchsafed to us ? This general view might be illustrated and corroborated by many things in the New Testament.

"May God bless us in all we do for our children ! The concluding lines of Cowper's Task may well be applied, in their spirit, to this subject of education.

"But all is in His hand whose praise I seek,  
 In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,  
 If He regard not, though divine the theme.  
 'Tis not in artful méasures, in the chime  
 And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,  
 To charm His ear, whose eye is on the heart ;  
 Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,  
 Whose approbation prosper even mine !"

"I remain, dear Sir,

"Your's very truly, &c."



## No. II.

## LIST OF TEXTS REFERRED TO AT PAGE 94.

- MATT. iii. 7—12; iv. 4, 7, 10, 11; v. 2—12, 21—24, 29, 30, 38—48; vi.; vii. 1—5, 7—29; ix. 11—13, 37, 38; x. 26—33, 37—42; xi. 20—26, 28—30; xii. 34—37, 43—50; xiii. 4—12, 18—23; xiv. 22—33; xv. 21—28; xvi. 24—28; xvii. 1—8; xviii. 1—6, 10—14, 21—35; xix. 13—15; 23—30; xx. 25—28; xxi. 28—31; xxii. 2—14, 34—40; xxiii. 8—12, 37—39; xxiv. 42—51; xxv; xxvi. 36—46; xxviii. 16—20.
- Mark ii. 21, 22; vi. 45—52; vii. 20—23; viii. 33—38; ix. 43—50; xi. 24—26; xii. 41—44.
- Luke i. 32, 33, 68—80; ii. 10—14, 29—35; iii. 10—14; iv. 16—“mouth” in 22; vii. 36—50; ix. 28—36; x. 21—24, 38, from “and”—42; xii. 16—21, 32, 34; 47, 48; xiii. 24—29; xv. 11—32; xvi. 10—13, 15, 19—31; xvii. 1, 2, 17, 18; xviii. 9—14; xix. 41—44; xx. 46, 47; xxii. 31, 32, 56—62; xxiii. 27, 28, 34, 39—43, 46—48.
- John i. 1—14, 47; iii. 1—3, 5, 6, 14—21; iv. 10, 13; 14, 23, 24; v. 19—29, 44; ix. 39—41; x. 11—18; xi. 28—36; xii. 42, 43; xiii. 12—17, 34, 35; xiv. 1—3, 27; xv.; xix. 26—27; xxi. 15—17.
- Acts i. 11, from “ye;” ii. 41—47; iv. 19, 20; vii. 54—60; ix. 3—6; x. 1, 2, 34, 35; xi. 22, from “and”—24; xiv. 15—17; xvi. 25—34; xvii. 22 from “ye”—31; xx. 17—38; xxvi. 24—29; xxviii. 26, 27.
- Rom. i. 16; ii. 28, 29; vi. 1—14; xi. 33—36; xii.; xv. 1—6, 13; xvi. 25—27.
- 1 Cor. i. 17—31; ii. 1—5, 12—14; iii. 18—20; x. 12, 13, 31—33; xi. 1.; xiii. 1—7.
- 2 Cor. iv. 16—18; v.; x. 4, 5; xii. 7—10.
- Gal. v. 19—26; vi. 1—5, 7—9, 14—16.
- Eph. i. 15, 23; ii. 1—10; iii. 14—21; iv. 1—6, 17—32; v. 1—12; vi. 10—“spirit” in 18.
- Phil. i. 9—11; ii. 1—18; iii. 7—16; iv. 4—9, 11—13.
- Colos. i. 9—23; iii. 1—17.
- 1 Thess. ii. 1—12; iii. 7—13; iv. 1, to “sanctification” in 3 with girls, and to 8 with boys.
- 1 Tim. vi. 6—16.
- 2 Tim. i. 7—12; ii. 11—13, 24—26; iii. 14—17; iv. 6—8.
- Tit. ii. 3—5, 11—15; iii. 1—8.
- Heb. i.; ii.; iv. 12—16; xii.; 1—14; xiii. 20, 21.
- Jam. i. 2—8, 13, 14, 26, 27, iii. 17; iv. 1—4, 6—8, 10, 13—16; v. 10, 11, 16.
- 1 Pet. i.; ii. 1—3, 18—25; iii. 1—4, 7—6; v. 5—11.
- 2 Pet. i. 5—8.
- 1 John i. 3—10; ii. 1—6, 9—11, 15—17; iii. 1—3, 14—18, 23, 24; iv. 7—11, 16—21; v. 3—5, 14, 15.
- Jude, 20, 21, 24, 25.
- Rev. i. 4—8; ii. 2—“churches” in 11; iii. 1—11, 14, 22; v. 9, from “for” 14; vi. 12—17; vii. 9—17; xi. 15—18; xv. 1—4; xix. 5—16; xx. 11—15; xxi. 3—8, 27; xxii. 12—17.

## No. III.

[EXTRACTED FROM THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER FOR MAY, 1817.]

MY DEAR R——.

I TOLD you I meditated a letter of some importance. Your years of education are over—you have entered into life as your own master—and it is now my intention to bring under your view the considerations which bear upon the choice of such a plan and course of action in setting out in life, as may be most conducive to your own welfare, and that of your connexions, both here and hereafter. Mistakes in this point are not only attended by present danger, but are productive of future difficulties, and threaten wide-spreading mischief.

First, then, the great object—that object compared with which all others so shrink into insignificance, that in Scripture it is emphatically called “the one thing needful”—is to be a Christian, and to lead a life befitting a Christian. The latter of these duties was contemplated by the Apostle, in his call on all who bore the Christian name to consider what manner of persons they ought to be in all holy conversation (meaning, by that term, our conduct in social life,) and godliness. The two obligations are most intimately connected. The former is the natural fruit of the latter; and the latter cannot be maintained without the former. But there are degrees in most things; and both points, therefore, may be often substantially attained where there is a mixture of much imperfection. To sit down, however, satisfied with imperfection is incompatible with the very essence of Christianity; which requires us constantly to aim at the highest standard, and to make it our unremitting endeavor to be perfect, even as our Father which

is in heaven is perfect. If we thus act with the devout spirit, humility, earnestness, simplicity, and sincerity of true followers of our blessed Saviour, he will mercifully pardon our defects, and lead us on towards higher attainments; neither of which have we any scriptural right to expect while our aim and desire are bounded by any thing short of Christian perfection.

You will, I fear, think this exordium long, but I must make it still longer: for, in order to see what "conversation" becomes a Christian, we must call to mind what is his "calling;"—how exalted, how far removed from the low and mean standard of those who are Christians in name only, or who, if Christians indeed, are of so equivocal a character, that at best they build only with hay, straw, stubble; and if saved at all, must be saved "so as by fire." A Christian is called "out of the world" to have fellowship with God; while the world, notwithstanding all specious appearances, is represented as under the power of Satan. The change thus wrought in him is described as a change "from darkness to light;" and the strongest images are every where used in Scripture to set forth *his* happiness, and the misery and criminality of those who have not, like him, escaped from the snares and the pollutions which abound among the great body of mankind. *He* is spoken of as "an heir of heaven," and as sitting even now "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." *They*, on the contrary, are represented as under the Divine wrath; and, while living "according to the course of this world," are said to live under the immediate influence of "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 2.)

We cannot, then, be surprised that a just and holy God should make so wide a difference between these two classes, when we reflect that, however they may often agree in inferior points, yet in their leading and paramount principles, and in the great features of their character, they are directly opposed to each other. They are opposed in no less a degree than as his servants and his enemies. This view of things is strikingly exhibited in Mr. Wilberforce's work on *Vital Christianity*—a work which is more familiar to you than to me, and for which I know your just partiality. One passage to which I particularly allude, is that

respecting "good hearted young men," and "innocent young women."

The very great difference between the two classes which I have mentioned is not the only thing to be noticed; but also the great danger lest that class which has escaped from the general wickedness and peril should be drawn again into the vortex by its intercourse with the other. The temptations presented by the world are described in Scripture as most alluring; and our own hearts as most prone to yield to them; while the devil and his angels are represented as full of wiles, and as exerting them all to give to those temptations the victory over us.

Let us consider these points more distinctly.

The world is engaged, as far at least as common prudence will permit, in indulging the propensities and appetites natural to man; and its familiar maxims, and expressions of taste and feeling, bear the stamp of this its course. Now, the great effort of Christians is to emancipate themselves from the dominion of those appetites and propensities; to "keep the body under, and bring it into subjection;" and "to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." Surely, therefore, such persons should avoid those who pursue the opposite course, as far, at least, as is consistent with the business and the charities of life. If they do not, they will almost infallibly wander from God; all that is good in them will fade: and instead of "abhorring that which is evil, and cleaving to that which is good"—instead of delighting in spirituality of character and holiness of conversation—instead of dreading and shunning the reverse, and feeling a dissatisfying void wherever, though decorum is sustained, these holy and heavenly qualities are wanting—they will find the distinction between good and evil less and less strongly marked in their affections, and, through the influence of their affections, by degrees, less strongly marked in their judgments; till both affection and judgment, but especially the former, will be in imminent danger of passing over from God's side to the side of the enemy. Then will creep upon them the degeneracy of the church of Ephesus, in leaving its "first love;" of Laodicea, in being "lukewarm;" and finally of Sardis, whose Christian attainments were all "ready to die," and which

had a name that it lived while it was dead. Thus, instead of being rendered, by the powerful influence of Christian society and example operating in aid of the other means of grace, "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," there is reason to fear that, by too free communication with the world, and by an attendant and consequent love of the world, they may find in the fearful day of account that they have been gradually prepared for the society and inheritance of the wicked.

You will perceive that I do not present you with this picture, in order to convince you that we ought not to commit ourselves to the full stream of the world, in its society, its habits, and amusements. You, my dear R., are yourself perfectly ready to say in *that sense*, "Be not conformed to this world." My object is rather to impress on your mind how *little* we should join in its course; how *far* we should stand aloof from it. The question is, doubtless, one of degree; but it nevertheless may be a question of the highest importance: for in many cases, of which this is one, all depends upon degree. With men of the world we must of course join in business: we also owe to them all courtesy and kindness: we must, therefore, have with them some measure of social intercourse. These circumstances, aided by the propensity of our own natures, and the artifices of Satan, will infallibly draw us on to too large a measure of it, if we are not very strictly on our guard. We shall be in great danger of improper compliances, and in still greater of losing a portion of the genuine Christian spirit, and of gradually imbibing a spirit opposed to it. And then what must follow? Do we hope that in such case we shall advance in the divine life? Do we even hope that we can maintain the ground already acquired? How can we expect to advance up the arduous ascent, when we are setting our faces the other way, by undue intercourse with those who are either in the vale below or are descending towards it? And yet to stand still in the divine life is impossible. Unless we advance, we must go back. Some fair appearances may still be kept up, and our indulgent friends may still retain their hopes: but all is likely soon to become hollow and unsound, and we shall be apt to lose the very life and soul of true religion. I will not dilate farther on any of these

topics : but they seem to me to furnish irresistible arguments for fighting manfully against the seductions of the world ; for prescribing to ourselves a course of conduct, so opposed to *its* course, as with God's help to preserve us from those seductions : and for maintaining in all our intercourse with society a holy jealousy of worldly influence, and a holy distrust of ourselves.

The circumstance which most tends to lull well disposed persons into practical forgetfulness of these truths, or at least into a very inadequate attention to them, is the agreement of religious and of decent worldly characters in so many inferior points, that the vast difference between them in essentials may not at first strike the view. Both are obliging, attentive to truth and honesty, and to their domestic, social, and public duties : both abstain from gross vice, and acknowledge the obligations of morality. But on a close inspection, it will appear that the one class serve God, mainly, sincerely, and unreservedly, and make his will their practical standard of duty : and that the other act on different principles—such as those of honor, worldly estimation, deference to the opinions and example of relations—to all which, religion, even if it have any sensible influence, is made subordinate. And although the religious man will be found very far superior to the worldly class, in resisting temptations to deviate from the right course, as well as in the serenity and elevation of his soul under trials ; yet the best of the latter class exhibit so much that is amiable in conduct, especially when we endeavor, as we ought, to view them with candor, that we shall be in the greatest danger, if we be not on our guard, of losing sight of the immense distance between them and the true Christian. And yet, let it never be forgotten, in the sight of God the one class *lives*, and the other *is dead* while it appears to live : and we shall die too, if we become conformed to it.

Our temptation to overlook this mighty interval between these two classes is often much increased by the defects and imperfections, in many points, of the true Christians we associate with, when compared with the worldly characters to whom we have access. The comparatively small number of the former frequently affords us very little room for selection ; while, among the latter,

we have a very extensive choice, and may suit our taste by fixing on those who are possessed of qualities which we naturally admire. And while we thus gratify ourselves by selecting pleasing associates, we shall be very apt to give them credit for much more of good, and much less of evil, than they really possess; and consequently to multiply and magnify to our imaginations the defects of our less fascinating religious acquaintance.

Then hope comes in to assist the delusion. We cannot think that persons so pleasing will not improve, and in the end, perhaps in a short time, add true religion to their other attainments. We even flatter ourselves that this most desirable event will be promoted by our own attentions; and in this way almost persuade ourselves that it is our duty to give them a large share of our society, and perhaps of our friendship; nay, possibly, we smooth, by our acquiescence, their unhallowed path, and connive at their faultiness, the better to win them over to religion. The result of such a course, or of any course analogous to it, is far more likely to be prejudicial to the Christian than beneficial to the other party. The firmness of Christian principle is weakened, its elevation is sunk, its purity soiled, its brightness dimmed, and its influence in the soul lessened, perhaps lost, before the unhappy adventurer—who is thus trying (for, however shocking, so it is!) what fellowship there can be betwixt Christ and Belial—is aware of his situation. Associations formed on such principles will admit of a variety of shades and gradations in describing their progress; but the practical result, I fear, is likely to be, for the most part, of the same dark complexion.

After all, when we have a propensity to indulge in worldly society, does not the evil lie deeper than in an error of judgment, as to what is the best Christian course? May it not be traced to the absence of a sound Christian taste; to the want of a due approval of "the things which are excellent?" If we are in any adequate measure sensible not only of the value, but of the beauty of holiness; if we enter deeply into the loveliness of the character of our blessed Redeemer; if we are in a disposition to have listened, like the converts at Corinth, with interest and delight to the discourses of the humble Paul, rather than to the polished

harangues of the philosophers, and to have taken the Tent-maker and his friends for our companions, instead of those admired sages ; then surely we shall not suffer refined manners, mental ability, talents for conversation, and other similar endowments, to outweigh in our esteem and affections those qualities of our religious friends which have the praise, not of man, but of God, and possess an intrinsic loveliness, as well as a sterling excellence, far outweighing all that the world can boast. To be alive to this loveliness, and to respond to it in the tenor of our affections, was made by our Saviour a distinguishing mark of his disciples. (John xiii. 34, 35 ; xv. 12, 17 ; 1 John iii. 14.) And corresponding habits of intercourse and union are insisted upon very frequently in the New Testament. (John xvii. 20, 23 ; Acts iv. 32, &c.) Lucian, at a later period, bears testimony to this character in true believers : " See how these Christians love one another." If, then, we discover in ourselves a want of this characteristic, nay, if even we discover (and this discovery we may all make in a considerable degree) that it falls short of the life and energy with which it shone forth in the first disciples of Christ ; let us be earnest in our prayers and diligent in our endeavors to attain it, and to cherish in ourselves so important an evidence of our religious character.

I have stated, that a wish to win others to religion is sometimes urged as a motive for improper compliances with the world. This motive is in itself so amiable and excellent ; it is so often brought forward as an extenuation by those who err in this particular respect ; and is so much held out by the world itself as an inducement for religious persons to relax in strictness, and to join, more than is consistent, in worldly society and amusements, that it requires a particular and distinct consideration.

Christians ought to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. His doctrine, like himself, is " altogether lovely ;" and grievously deficient must that disciple be in the spirit of his Lord, if not also in his views of Christian duty, who disfigures the Gospel by gloomy austerity, or by a want of cordial kindness and courtesy towards those from whom, by the unmerited grace of God, he has been made to differ. But as an Englishman must never forget, when surrounded by foreigners with whose nation



his own is at war, that he is an Englishman; as a good subject must never forget his principles and character when thrown among those who are adverse to the constitution of his country; and as, in both these cases, kindness and courtesy must be accompanied by much caution and prudent reserve, and by a studied care not to join in any thing wrong, not to omit any duty to his country, not even to subject himself to the suspicion of so doing; so likewise must the Christian conduct himself in the midst of the world. He professes to be a stranger and sojourner in it; he professes to stand aloof from its principles, its habits, its spirit; he has renounced the usurper that rules in it, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Surely then he must dread its influence, and shun all approaches to familiarity with it: and while he endeavors to "abound in love and in good words" towards all men, he must not fail to guard against lowering the pure and elevated standard of true religion in their eyes; against injury to his own principles and spirit, or even the subjecting them to suspicion; and also against giving any countenance to principles and a spirit opposed to those which he is bound by every tie of Christian allegiance, and Christian gratitude, to cultivate. Even therefore if he *could* make the Gospel of his Saviour amiable in the eyes of others, at the expense of any of these objects, he would be bound not to attempt to do so. By detracting from its character, and from his own, he might possibly render it more palatable to those who cannot "abide its purity," or relish that which should adorn the lives of all who embrace it. But though it would be thus less revolting to their natural appetites and passions, it would also be less an object of their esteem and admiration. It would lose, I think, more than it would gain in their eyes, and they would perhaps be farther from embracing it than when it wore a less accommodating aspect. But even if they *were* thus induced to embrace it, they would neither embrace the true and unadulterated Gospel, nor would they in all probability proceed in their new course with genuine repentance and lively faith. *Their* Saviour would not be the object of their affection as "holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners." They would not hear from his lips, with

the full and cordial approbation of true disciples, "Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii. 15, 16.) *Their* Saviour would be shorn of those beams of transcendent brightness which belong to Jesus Christ; and *their* Gospel would not only in very many particulars, but in its general spirit, be "another Gospel;" not reflecting, like the true, the unsullied glories of Christ, but affording only a faint, obscure, and imperfect shadow of Him who is the image of the invisible God. *Such* was not the Saviour who came to "purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." *Such* was not the Gospel given to turn men "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;" nor can scriptural conversion be expected, however smooth and flattering outward appearances, through a Saviour and a Gospel so mutilated and disfigured.

I have hitherto touched only incidentally on the effect of an undue intercourse with the world, on the family and immediate connexions of the person who falls into this error, and on its effect also on those who live around him. It will therefore be necessary to consider these points more distinctly.

*First*—As to his relations and friends.

Here the mischief must be great and rapid; ten, twenty, thirty persons may be very soon injured by his inconsistent conduct; and among these there may be many far less prepared than himself for meeting the threatened danger, far less fenced and guarded against its worst evils, and far less furnished with principles and habits which may lead after a fall to a recovery. Some may be very young and inexperienced, others particularly pliant and unreflecting, easily captivated by certain showy qualities, or averse to self-denial, or very open to flattery and self-delusion. Though his own bark should ride steadily, and preserve a straight course (no likely event) amidst the shifting winds and currents to which he ventures to consign it, what will become of theirs? And will he thus run the risk of destroying his "weak brother for whom Christ died," in a case in which to escape fatal evils is so difficult? Rather let him imitate the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who declared, that he would abstain for ever from a practice innocent in itself, (and

who shall pronounce that worldly conformity is so?) rather than make his brother to offend: (See Rom. xiv. and 1 Cor. viii.)

But particularly, my dear R., would I call the attention of any person undecided in his mind, or hesitating in his conduct, on the point under consideration, to the effect of his example on his children. How great will be their danger, if the habits of their parents on this point being lax, they are led from their infancy to dally with temptation by mixing too freely with the world, instead of being carefully taught, by example as well as by precept, that Christ's disciples are "not of the world," for that "he has chosen them out of the world!" So prone are the young to gratify their wishes, and so seducing are the pleasures which the world offers to them, that, humanly speaking, I see no prospect of their resisting the temptation to swim with the stream, if they are not early and long trained by the habits of their family, to stand in awe of so doing. As they advance a little in life, the young women will have to withstand the vivid sense of pleasure, and the strong desire not to be slighted or ridiculed on account of their particularity, and comparative seclusion; and the young men will be assailed by still stronger temptations at school, and afterwards on a still farther entrance into life. Happy will it be, (especially in the case of the latter,) if parental principles and the parental system so far maintain their ground in the youthful bosom, that though the tender shoots of religion may yield to the blasts and blights to which they are exposed, the root, at least, may be kept alive by the Spirit of God, in mercy to parents whom he loves, and send forth a fresh and more vigorous scion in after life! But let no parents look for this blessing, and presume to hope that their "labor will not be in vain in the Lord," unless in training up their offspring they are "sober and vigilant," and "always abounding," not only in their instructions, but in their example also, and their family institutions, "in the work of the Lord."

There are also other relations not to be overlooked: I mean such as, from their age and confirmed Christian habits, may probably not be misled by the example of a young relation; but who will be subjected to deep anxiety, and great pain, by his misconduct in the point under consideration. Among these *parents*

stand pre-eminent. Think what parents must feel when they see their long course of instruction ineffectual; their example unavailing; their family habits abandoned, abandoned in a point so important, and so near their hearts; their feelings sacrificed to a youthful love of pleasure, or to the fancy, perhaps even the deliberate judgment, of one who ought, in wisdom and kindness, as well as in duty, to accommodate himself to their wishes. Could a young person lose much substantial good, even in his own judgment, by thus accommodating himself to the wishes of those who have his benefit at heart, in the restrictions which they feel it necessary to lay upon his intercourse with a deceitful world? Or if *his* pleasure is to be balanced against *their* pain, is he sure that he gains more than he takes from them?

This appeal would be just, even in the case of an only child. How much stronger then, when there are brothers and sisters, in whose education, and confirmation in good principles and habits, parents will find their hands weakened by the indiscretion or obstinacy of one member of the family! When they contemplate the future, and especially the event of their being removed from their family by death, their fears of mischievous consequences will probably far exceed the evils they at present experience. Under such circumstances, how difficult the line of parental duty! To hold up one of their children as a warning to the rest, is a most painful measure, and one from which they will abstain as much as possible: but to avoid it altogether is not always possible or safe, consistently with their parental obligations. However guardedly and tenderly they perform this duty, it may lead to consequences which they would most anxiously wish to avoid, and the very danger of which will affect them most sensibly. Surely when all these domestic considerations are united, they cannot be resisted by any young person without a degree of hardihood not very compatible with that gentleness, that spirit of accommodation and of deference to elders, and especially to parents, and that anxious endeavor to maintain harmony and unity with fellow-Christians and relations, which the Gospel every where inculcates.

If the foregoing considerations ought to induce a child to follow the parental system, even when more than ordinarily rigid, and in

some points perhaps liable to the imputation of going too far, what must be thought of a departure from that system, when it is marked by a spirit of accommodation as far as duty will permit ; when it is neither offensive nor obtrusive ; when it endeavors to avoid extremes, and, taken as a whole, is moderate, and sanctioned, though perhaps with some exceptions, by the general practice of the decided followers of Christ ? So strong are the temptations which assail youth in its pursuit of personal gratifications, or in its eagerness to shun singularity, and the ridicule attached to it—so great, in some instances, is its thoughtlessness as to consequences, and in others its love of a fancied independence—that such cases, it will readily be allowed, may exist : but at the same time no parent will like to dwell upon them.

These things must be said for parents ; for (whether rightly or not) parents will often have too much delicacy and generosity to say them, at least to say them plainly and freely, for themselves : but the subject will not on that account press the less forcibly on their minds, and sadden their hearts. I do not like to enlarge on this topic, or to set forth the long train of benefits, with their attendant cares and labors, conferred on the one side, and the corresponding obligations contracted on the other. But could my voice be heard through the land, I should wish solemnly to leave these considerations to the dispassionate reflection of the young ; and to call upon them to count the cost paid by others, and above all by a parent, for their departure from the principles inculcated in their education, and from the established habits of their families.

*Secondly*—As to the general effect on others.

I fear that an undue intercourse of religious with worldly characters is calculated to blind the eyes of the latter, as to their distance from God, and to lead them to think that cordial and vital religion is a thing more of profession than reality, and to view it therefore with disrespect. Now, whatever tends to bring Christianity down from her high eminence, must tend to degrade her in the eyes of men, and to despoil her of her rightful authority, while it tends also to degrade her votaries, and particularly those who thus deprive her of her honors.

What I have said, and shall have occasion still to say in this

letter, prevents my enlarging on this topic beyond a single observation. If the blessed Jesus himself was vilified as "gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners," because he mixed freely with the world, though he mixed with it only to lead it to God, and to perform the sacred duties for the sake of which he came upon earth; what is likely to be said of those who mix with it too freely without his perfect innocence, without his native dignity or Divine wisdom, and without his object full in their view, and forming the life and soul of their practice? I believe no Christian of much experience will find any difficulty in answering this inquiry.

As this question, with respect to intercourse with the world, has been said to be a question of degree, you will ask, perhaps, for some guidance on that point. It is apparent, that within due bounds, the proper degree of intercourse will depend much on the personal character of the party, on the state of his family, and on the circumstances in which he is placed; and his best guide will be the Holy Spirit, operating through a watchful and enlightened conscience. But still something may be said on this subject, which may serve to point out certain rocks and shelves to be avoided in the Christian voyage, and to ascertain the limits within which the course of the vessel should, in all ordinary cases, be confined.

First, then, he must take care that his society shall consist chiefly of religious characters.

A man's companions will generally be chosen according to the prevailing bent of his own opinions and dispositions, and will therefore be no incorrect index of the state of his soul. But if circumstances should throw him into a circle of persons differing materially from himself—such in the human mind is the power of sympathy, the propensity to imitation, and the desire to conciliate the good will of others, an object best effected by becoming like them—that he will probably soon begin to imbibe something of the taste and spirit of his new companions. It is vain for any one to hope that his good principles and dispositions, and his moral taste, will continue unsullied, if he associate much with persons of an opposite character. In hazarding the experiment he is

trifling with one of the most powerful engines of good or of evil, according as it is used, which God has given to man ; and he can no more control its operation, than he could change the course of summer and winter. Its force, though capable of being in a measure eluded and mitigated, cannot by any means be destroyed ; and if applied in the wrong direction, it will not fail to impress on his soul baneful, and, not improbably, fatal marks of its potency. We should at once allow this statement in political, and in merely moral points. What would be thought of any man, professedly loyal, who was much, and willingly, in the society of persons notoriously otherwise ? What of a professedly sober or honest man who associated with the intemperate and dishonest ? And what is there in religion to exempt the professedly religious man from suspicion as to his real principles, from the charge of inconsistency and folly, and from a progressive deterioration by means of his companions, if he mixes, more than the business of life and Christian kindness render necessary, with persons of an opposite character ? On the contrary, he will even be more liable to suspicion, and he will also be in greater danger than the persons which have been mentioned, because, his conscience being more enlightened than theirs, he acts in opposition to higher principles and more powerful checks. He professes to live in the love and fear of his God and Saviour, and to devote himself unreservedly to their service. He is aware that he cannot do this without the aid of the Holy Spirit, to “work in him both to will and to do, according to God’s good pleasure.” And how then can he hope to be a temple of that Divine Agent—to have that Spirit dwelling in his heart—if he does not act on the rules, and pursue the course best calculated to keep himself “unspotted from the world.”

2. He must abstain from intimacy with those whom he does not believe to be true Christians. Civility and kindness may be well preserved without intimacy. The latter, from taste as well from prudence, should be carefully avoided, where we have not reason to think there is sound religious principle. From taste—because if we value our high calling as we ought, we shall naturally feel a sort of repugnance to an intimacy with those who are “alienated in their minds” from that God and that Saviour whom

we delight to serve: from prudence—because intimacy removes many of the guards and reserves which to a considerable degree regulate conversation and conduct in general society, and thus prevent bad principles and dispositions from exhibiting themselves to the view of others. Besides, if intimacy is avoided, that familiarity of intercourse between the younger members of two families, which would be dangerous, may be prevented, without the necessity of embarrassing explanations. On the opposite supposition, the whole case will be reversed, and the most lamentable consequences may be expected to follow.

3. Let a participation with the world in its assemblages for purposes of pleasure be avoided. There are many pleasures which the Christian enjoys in common with men of a different character. There are others of which he cannot partake at all without a manifest dereliction of Christian duty. The latter, of course, must be altogether shunned: the former must be enjoyed in such a manner as not to render that which is safe and allowable in itself, unsafe and unfit from its attendant circumstances. Now the spirit of the world never breaks forth with less restraint than in its professed amusements. Not only do these very much remove customary guards and restrictions, but by being framed for the indulgence of worldly appetites, and dispositions merely natural, they draw these propensities forth into a more prominent display than usual. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, appear in decorous, perhaps, but very intelligible shapes, and in connection also with so much that is good humored and amiable, as to assume the most seducing appearance. Happy they who, having once entered the magic circle, escape its fascinations! Happy, if they do not become, in a measure, reconciled to the low and unhallowed principles of the gay crowd with which they associate! Of those who think that they pass through this fire unhurt, certainly the greater part flatter and delude themselves. At all events, the Christian ought not to incur the danger. Nothing is more imperceptibly imbibed than a worldly spirit, and nothing is more fatal than such a spirit to the very life and existence of true religion. It requires all the efforts and all the watchfulness of the Christian, even under favorable circumstances, to escape its infection. What then must be his danger, when he places himself in the very atmosphere where it abounds!—Is he not then flagrantly violating the precept implied in the petition which he so often addresses to his God, “Lead us not into temptation?” Instead of “fleeing youthful lusts,” is he not throwing himself into the very region where they are prevalent? And if these questions cannot be satisfactorily answered, as they certainly cannot, let him solemnly ask himself still another, Whether he is not “giving place to the devil.”

4. “The course of the Christian ought to be such as to shew clearly to what class of persons he belongs. He owes this full



disclosure to God and to man, and of men to none more than to himself. If his conduct is equivocal, he either does not display the standard of his holy warfare, or he displays it only to dishonor it. In the first case, how can he hope to be acknowledged by Christ as his soldier? In the second, how can he hope for the meed of a good and faithful soldier? His light either does not shine before men, or at best it does not shine with such clearness and purity as to lead them to glorify his heavenly Father. By holding a course which leaves it a matter of any doubt whether he follows Christ or the world, he violates his duty to man as well as to God; for he is required not only to work out his own salvation, but to promote by every means in his power the salvation of all around him. But how can he hope in any measure to succeed in the latter object unless his conduct bear the clear stamp of the elevated principles of the Gospel, and therefore the stamp of their contrariety to the principles of the world? And how can he exhibit that stamp, if he slide into a similarity to the conduct of the world, in points in which Christians in general think that a decided and manifest distinction is requisite? The effect of this dubious system of conduct upon men of the world is very obvious. They will imagine, either that the profession of strict Christian principle is unsound, having more of pretence than of reality in it, or that Christian principle is a far lower thing, and approaches far nearer to the principles of the world at large, than is in fact the case. On either supposition, their conversion to God will be not forwarded but impeded. How eager will the "god of this world" be to avail himself of such means of blinding men's eyes, and of keeping them from coming to the true light which alone can lead them to salvation!

But after all, he who adopts so dubious a course, and who seems so backward to choose whom he will serve, most injures himself. His consistency will be denied; and it must follow that either his sincerity will be doubted, or his good sense questioned: he will be thought by some to have renounced and condemned vital and true religion, and by others, to have disproved its efficacy or existence. Even if he ultimately escape the imminent danger to which he exposes himself of spiritual shipwreck, never can he hope to enjoy that elevation of soul, that solid peace and joy in believing, or that extensive influence as a servant of God, which are reserved for those who, "through honor and dishonor, through evil report and good report," proceed straight forward in their Christian course, and are studious only to discover how much they can do for their great Lord, and how they can best "walk worthy of their high calling." Contemplate for a moment the prodigious difference in the eyes of men between the two following characters:—the one professing religion, but departing from the general strictness of its most esteemed professors; nominally classing himself with those who, as "a chosen generation, a holy nation,

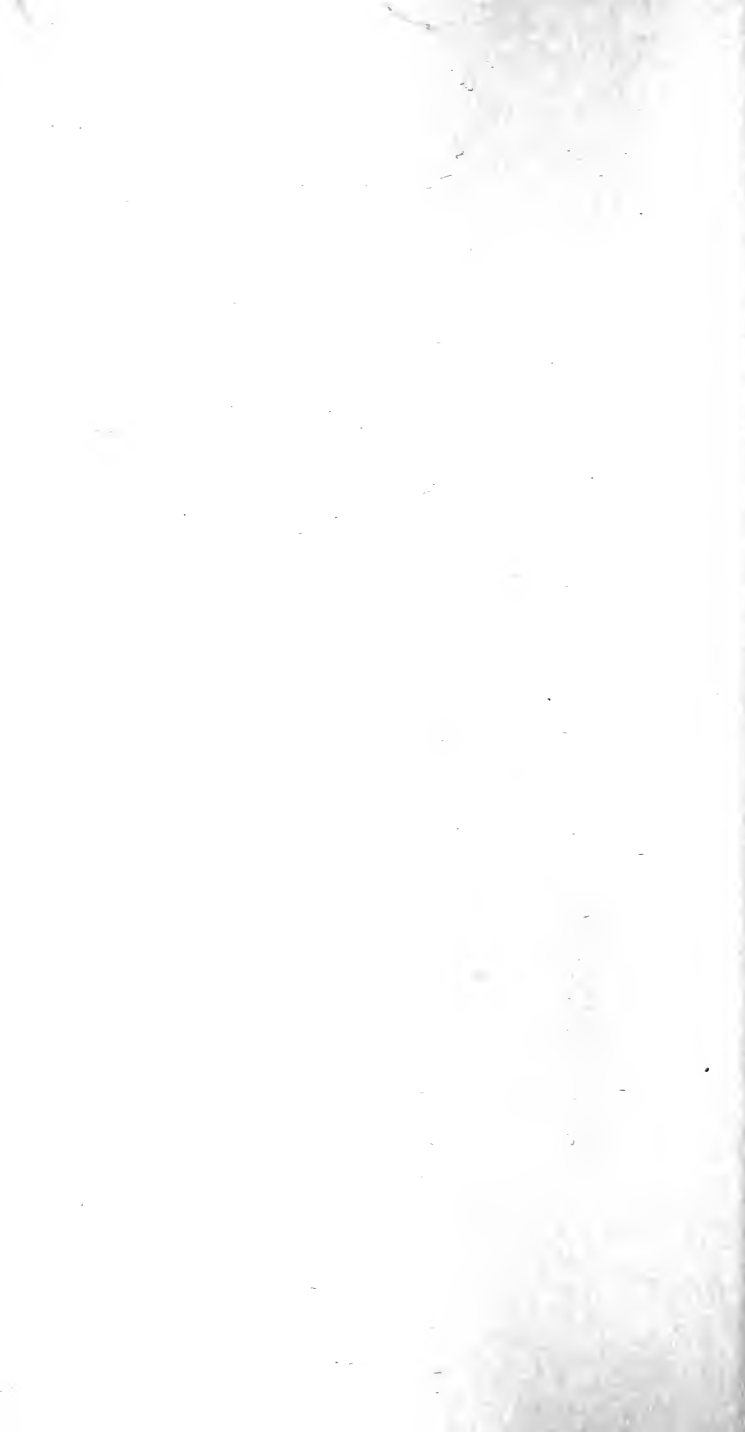
a royal priesthood, a peculiar people," are daily laboring, by God's power working in them, to obtain a victory over the world; and yet in practice seeming not afraid or disinclined to associate pretty freely with that world, and to join in its plans of unhallowed pleasure,—calling himself "a stranger and pilgrim upon earth," yet appearing to live among its inhabitants rather as in his own than as in a strange country;—the other reversing this picture in all its parts, and, while he abounds in candor, and kindness, and beneficence towards all around him, conducting himself among the busy or the idle crowd, as one who views their pursuits in a very different light from that in which they themselves view them; as one who has higher aims, whose ruling affections have different objects, who orders his life and conversation as even now called to sit down, "holy and unblameable, and unreprouvable, in heavenly places with Christ Jesus," and to partake hereafter of all the blessings of his eternal and glorious kingdom. Is it not plain what a wide difference must appear in these characters, especially to those who have an opportunity of viewing them closely? Can it be doubted which will best reflect the adorable image of his Saviour, which will most adorn his own high and holy profession, and which will impress mankind with the greatest respect and esteem both for his own character and his religious principles?

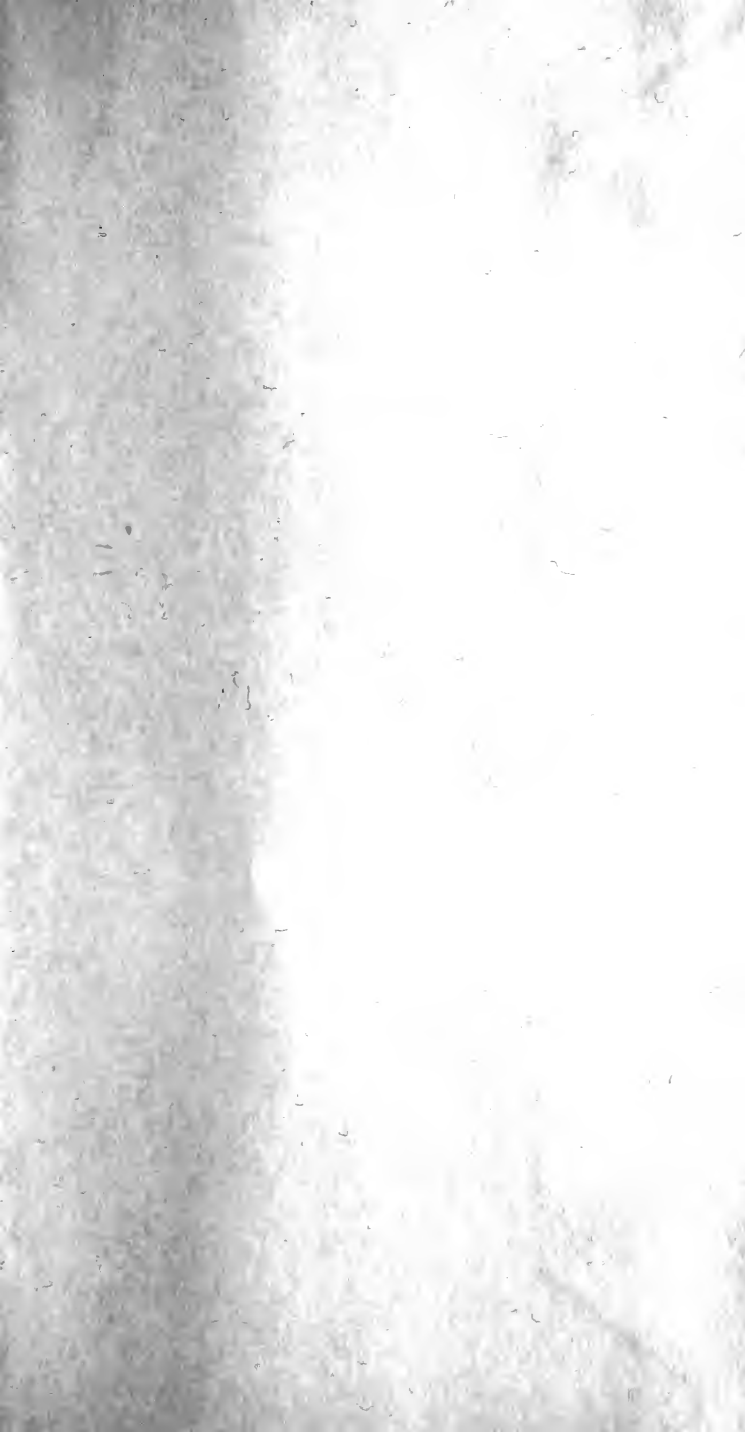
And now, my dear R., it is time that I should close this long letter. You know that it has been dictated by a sense of duty, and by love for you; and I hope it is not stained by any disposition to severe criticism, or by a wish to deprive youth of its innocent and Christian pleasures. If I have pointed out dangers to which you do not think yourself exposed, and said things which you imagine I need not to have said to *you*, forgive me a wrong which has arisen from a recollection of *my own* youth, and from the warmest parental sympathy and anxiety for your temporal and eternal welfare. If my years have led me to be too cautious and too open to alarm, remember that yours may tempt you to be too unguarded and sanguine. Above all, reflect that on a point of such infinite importance, it is incomparably safer to err on the side of caution and circumspection, than on that of carelessness and temerity. I really believe that the love and fear of God are in your heart. May that blessed Spirit who has implanted them there, cause them to increase and abound and bring forth fruit to perfection! But when you read of the enemy secretly sowing tares among the wheat; and of a Demas who departed from the Apostle, because "he loved this present world;" you cannot be much surprised at the solicitude of your father, or think his admonition altogether out of place.

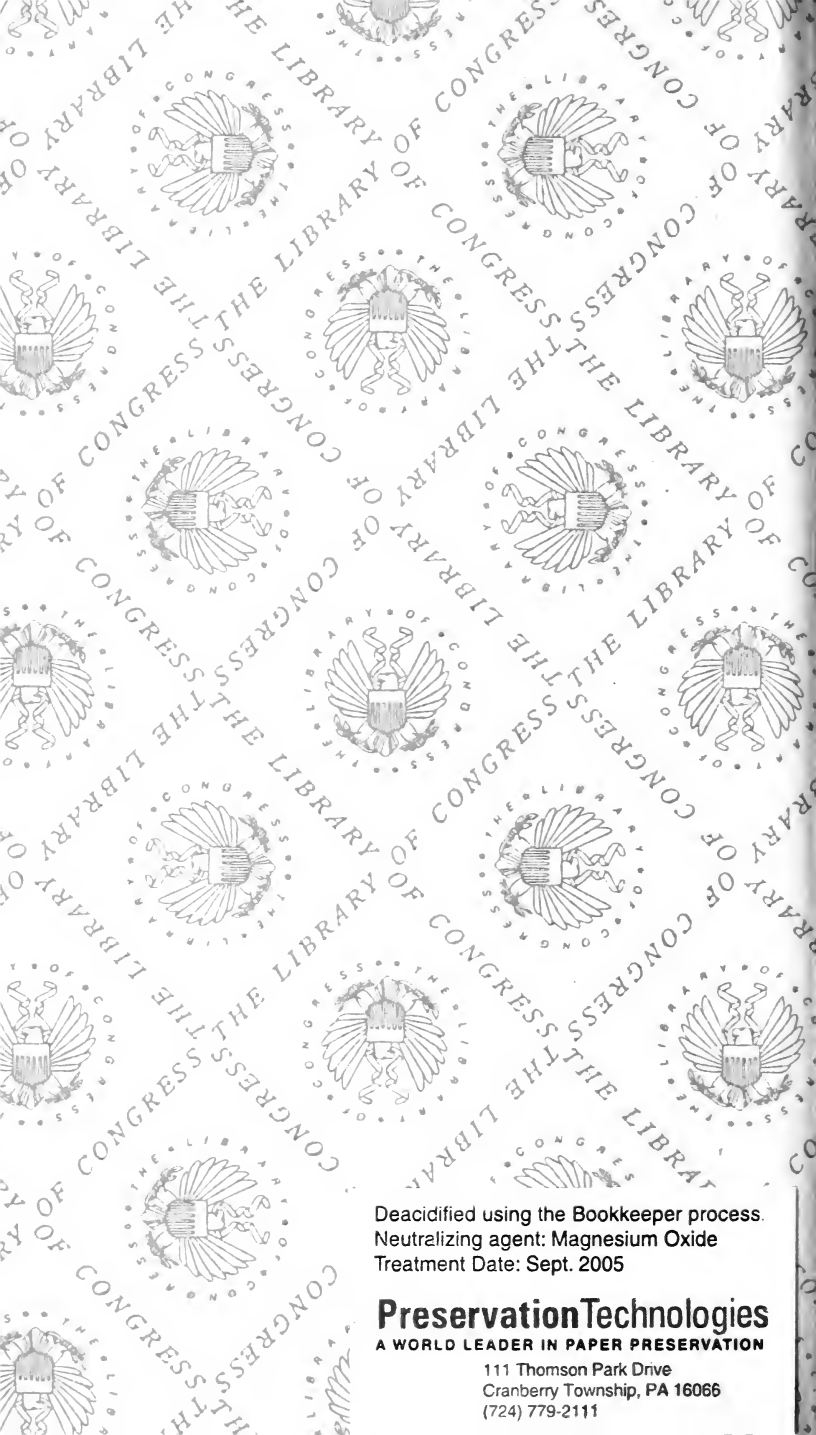
Yours most affectionately,

R. S.





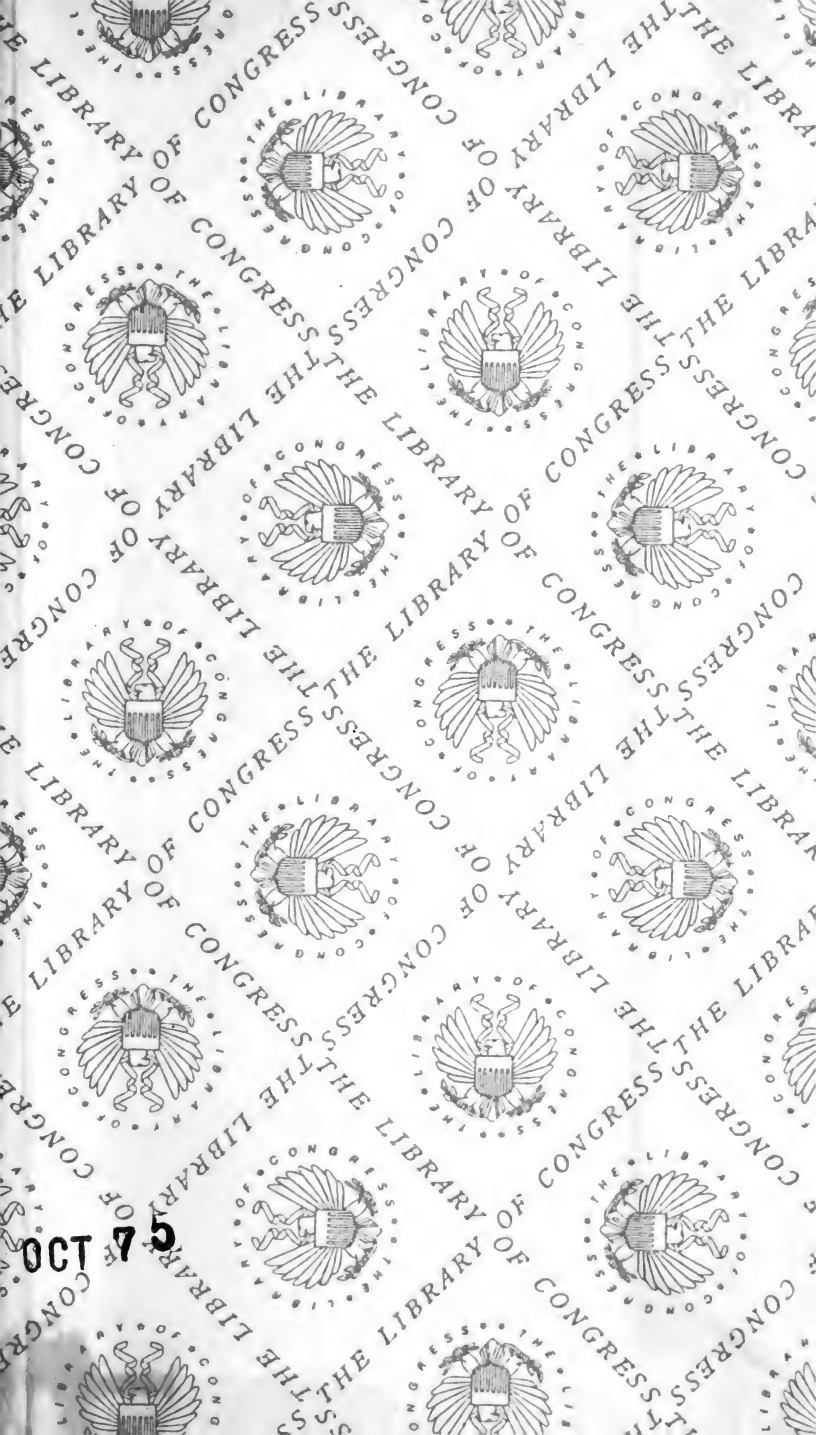




Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: Sept. 2005

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