

For the Christian Messenger.

Closing Lecture.—On the Government of the Passions, in the Training of Children.

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I gave an outline of Dr. Clay's first lecture at Sackville in my former letter. I proceed now to the fulfilment of my promise, to give a condensed report of his last. This lecture might have been entitled, "The Training of Children." It is an important question often asked, he remarked. When should the training of children begin? Some would say, after they get old enough to understand what is said to them, and can distinguish between right and wrong. At the age of seven, say some; others would fix upon five, others three, and some would let the child take its own course until it is exactly one year old, and then commence the season of correction. Others, alas! would dispense with the training process altogether, under the vain delusion that when the child is old enough to know what is right he will follow it of his own accord. All this is wrong. The training process should commence with the earliest period of the child's existence. Nay, it does commence then. Be it "in the way in which he should go," or in the way in which he should not go, the child has no sooner started in the career of life than his education—his training has begun. And I firmly believe in the doctrine of the inspired preacher, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Some people quote this passage as though it read, "When he is old he will do just as he pleases." I dislike this trifling with the Word of God. And bear in mind that when you select a case, supposed to be an exception, it is not enough to shew that the parents in the case were good people, or wise people, or educated people. The question simply is,—Was that child trained up correctly? Was he led in the way that he should go? Did the training begin at the proper season? was it judiciously followed up? Was he taught by precept, by example, and by being continually exercised in the performance of what was right, and avoidance of what was wrong, in all those branches of mental, moral, and physical culture, which constitute "the way in which he should go?" Unless you can prove this to have been the case, your example is not in point.

"But, how can we teach a new born babe?" exclaims some one. "The thing is impossible, absurd! The idea of lecturing and beating a little baby!" Yes indeed, and the idea of lecturing and beating as the mode of training any child or any being in the way he should go! Take a colt, for instance. Here is, we'll say, a farmer who owns a fine little foal, out of which he hopes to manufacture, in three years' time or so, a capital draught or saddle horse. He means to break him in at the age of three. Mean while, of course, he is to be allowed to take his own course. But winter comes. Colty has a propensity to drink, which must be indulged. "Boys," says the old gentleman, "put that halter on the colt, and lead him to the brook." The boys obey. The colt is very tractable, playful, and cuts up certain amusing pranks. They take a stick and switch him on the heels. He capers about and tosses up his pretty little round feet, to the infinite amusement of all parties. He soon gets so that when any thing touches his heels he will let fly. Spring comes. The boys are in search of sport. They tie a bush to the colt's tail. He raises his head, snorts, and dashes off over the field "like a thousand of bricks." Father and mother and all hands are called out to witness the sport. "All right!" says the old gentleman, "Go it, boys. I'll take the kicks and the frights out of him when he gets old enough. I'll put him through, when he's big enough to break." The expected day soon comes round. The young horse is put into the waggon. The first thing that touches his heels, slap they go through the dash-board, and the terrified animal, true to the training which has been long going on, dashes down through the field, dropping a piece of the vehicle here and another there, and nearly killing himself with bruises and fright before he can be secured and prepared for another fatal attempt to break him in. They have trained him in the way in which he should not go, and they cannot make him depart from it. Just so with children. Let them alone, as you call it, when they are very young; but, in the meantime, in reality, teach them all sorts of improper tricks and habits, which are so wonderfully pretty in babies, just as kicking and racing is in a colt, with the idea that when they get old enough to understand you you will break them of these improper habits, or that they will forsake them of their own accord, and you will find, to your cost, that infinite wisdom has not erred in the declarations of Holy Writ, but that your wisdom is folly. You can train your babe by your looks, and tones, and by the various processes of feeding, nursing, &c., to which you subject its impressionable little form, long before it can articulate. And scarcely has it learned to toddle ere it has been so attentive to your words that it has learned their meaning and learned to liep them. How soon the babe begins to "take notice." Now fix your eyes upon his, and smile your sweetest smile. Mark how the mind of the mother acts upon the mind of her babe! See! the very muscles of their faces move in unison. The muscles which draw up the corners of your own mouth contract—for this constitutes the essential difference between laughing and crying—in the one case, the corners of the mouth are drawn up, in the other, down—and, lo! as though moved by a galvanic influence, baby's little "corners" are following suit. The little fellow smiles—eye, and he is happy too—but

knows neither why he is happy, nor why he smiles. Mother smiles, and his little face assumes the form of radiant beauty, in obedience to the law of his higher being, by which he is to be controlled and governed, and prepared for the endless ages of his existence. Now try the effects of a frown. Draw down the corners of your mouth, knit your brows and pout out your lips! Ah! the pang has pierced his little heart! The smile has gone! His little brow is ruffled. He grieves, he knows not why; but you have given him a lesson: there has been a training—in that short silent lesson you have controlled and influenced, for good and for evil, the bodily form, the intellect, and the heart of your child. Oh! then, ye mothers! do you wish your children to be beautiful, smile upon them: you train their form and features by a smile. Do you wish them to be habitually cheerful and good-natured? Smile upon them. Let them never witness a frown, never hear a harsh angry tone; their little hearts, the passions and emotions of their souls are formed and moulded by your countenance.

Let me caution you against a very common fault. Never allow your babe to repeat an act, and especially never seem to commend it—which is wrong, and which, if persisted in, will bring either him or you, or both, into trouble—like teaching the little colt to kick, because it looks so funny. Let me illustrate what I mean,— "O, John! come here, and see baby!" exclaims the young mother, to her young and fond husband, and now proud and happy father. What a sight! was there ever such a prodigy! "Baby has found out that he has hands; he has seized mamas' locks and cap border, and is tugging away for dear life. He must practice a little on pa's whiskers. He must be induced to do it again to-morrow, when Aunt Betsy comes in; and so on from day to day with his increasing strength and dexterity, never dreaming that it is not right, until all the romance and fun of the thing has vanished. The poor-mother some day is seized by the little tyrant, and finds it no easy job, even by dint of screaming, and slapping, and frowning unmercifully, to free herself from his grasp. And she finds it about as easy to break him of the trick, as it was to teach the colt we spoke of, of the trick of kicking, to which he had been trained with so much relish and fun. No! learn to govern yourself. However pretty such things may appear, as developing the physical and mental powers of your child, check them in the bud. Make it a standing, inviolable rule, never to teach, nor to allow a child, however young, to do an improper action.

Again, make it a point to teach the child to respect and honor its parents, and God. I place the parents first, because respect for the parent is to be taught first. And the father is to be king in the family. There he is to be supreme. It must be a fixed law that there, like the king of England, he can do no wrong. Let nothing ever escape the lips of the mother, or elder members of the family that shall leave it possible for the little child to infer that father can make a mistake. Nor less necessary is it in reality for him to believe his mother to be perfect. I need not say that if a father would teach his children to respect and honor him, he must see to it that he deserves this respect. Let him avoid everything wicked and base—and let love to his children and a desire for their well-being, be an additional motive for him to watch over himself—let him avoid every act, look, and gesture that would lessen his children's respect for him. Let both parents mind how they treat each other. Little ones are sometimes taught and encouraged to spit at the older children, and at their parents. It seems so cunning for the little thing to pucker up its tiny mouth and make an effort to spit—all hands laugh. Would you allow an older child to do this? Certainly not. Then never permit it in the youngest infant. That is not "training him in the way he should go."

And the mother must never interfere with the father's authority, and he must carefully sustain that of the mother. What sad deviations do we often find in respect to this,—and how fatal are the results! Here's a case. Tom comes in, hanging his head, snivelling and blowing his nose. What's the matter? says the mother. Matter enough! snarls Tom. "Well, what is it? some of the old man's capers, I'll be bound," rejoins the mother. "The old fellow says I shant go to see the launching, and says I shall go to school, and I declare I wont go, not stir a step, and I will go to the launching, and so there. There's Bill Davis, and Bob Smith, and Joe Brown, and all the other boys are going, and I declare it is too bad"; and "Tom boo-hoos out most lustily. "There now, shut up," says the foolish, mistaken, cruel mother. Wash up your face and slip off, and don't let the old man see you." "Where are you going?" shouts the father. "To the launching: mother says I may." And he leaves them to settle it between them. You can easily divine the scene which follows, and the deep and lasting injury done to all parties.

A story told lately in an American paper, you may have seen, but it will illustrate the point. A certain Judge, who relates the story, was passing a farm house. He saw a large boy about turning a drove of cattle into a certain field. His father was shouting to him to turn them into the upper field. Bill paid no attention to the direction. The upper field was some hundreds of rods father off than the lower, and the youth chose to take the handiest pasture. "Don't you hear your father," says the Judge to him. "To be sure I do," was the reply, "but you don't think I am going to mind him? Mother don't mind him, and I don't, and we have got the dog so now that he don't." Sad state of domestic affairs, when neither mother nor child, nor dog, obeys the father!

"Ah, but change the scene. The mother is busily washing. The son comes in blubbering, and complaining that his father wont let him go to

the launching. The mother hears his disrespect-ful expressions. "What is that you say, my son," says she. "Old fellow? did you say? whom do you mean?" "I said—I want—Father says I must go to school"—stammers the boy. The mother lays aside her work. She has more important business than washing on hand now. Her child is sliding over a precipice, and she must save him. With solemn and earnest tones she reproves him. She reminds him of his father's kindness and care. He becomes subdued promises never to repeat the offence, takes his satchel and starts for school. And will not his respect for his father be increased by what has happened? Indeed it will. He will feel, I'll be bound, like pulling off his cap and making his best bow as he passes him that morning on his way to school.

O teach your children betimes that there is a God in Heaven. Teach them that the Bible is his Word. Teach them to pray. Teach them about Jesus Christ and Salvation. Bring them to him for his blessing. Seek wisdom and grace from him to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Next teach them to respect the older members of the family. You know not how soon the father may be removed by death, and then the charge must devolve upon the oldest son. It will then be of the utmost importance that the younger brothers of the family shall have been trained to respect him. And though that calamity may never occur, yet it is of the utmost importance that your children, as they grow up, and are soon to become heads of households themselves, should be accustomed betimes to the proper exercise of authority. And order and proper subordination throughout, demand that the younger obey the elder, and not that the whole household should be subjected, as often takes place, to the whims and caprices of a wayward little child.

Next teach them to respect the domestics. Teach them to say, "If you please," to the humblest servant, or servant girl in your family. Here the lecturer gave a graphic account of what he once witnessed in the house of a respectable and wealthy family. A little boy of about six years, comes down stairs in the morning bringing his clothes in his hand, and calls out lustily "Mary! Mary! come and dress me. Mary hears after a while and promises to attend to him soon. But he can brook no delay. She is sternly commanded to attend his little lordship forthwith. After a while she succeeds in attaching his habiliments to his little corporation, and he demands his breakfast. The breakfast happens to be over, and Mary piled up the dishes, preparatory to the washing process. He orders all the dishes to be returned to the position they occupied when his parents left the table. Mary tells him in her good natured Irish brogue, that she shall do no such thing. Thereupon the mother and mistress, makes her appearance, and solemnly admonishes Mary that when her little master orders her to do any thing she is to do it. The dishes are all taken from the "sink", restored to their pristine condition, his little lordship takes his place with great dignity, grumbles about the sugar bowl, and the electras, and finishes his repast. Mr. Clay felt it his duty to read the lady a lecture on the proper method of training children. Some little argumentation followed. "Were her children to stoop so low as to show respect to an Irish girl! Would not she get above herself altogether unless she were kept in her place?" He insisted that so long as she behaved herself, and did her duty in her station, she was deserving of respect. But what would be the effect upon the boy? He brought up several cases for her special edification of murder committed by sea-captains, for which they had been hanged, resulting from the same principles of tyranny she had been fostering in her child. The day might come when he would encounter some sturdy fellow, with a will of iron, whom it would be impossible to intimidate or bend. Collision might be the result, and murder, imprisonment, and an ignominious death, be the fruits of her injudicious training. He was happy to say that the lady yielded to reason: assented to the justness of the position he took, and shaped her course accordingly.

He next touched upon the importance of training our children early to the practice of benevolence. In order to practise benevolence, they must possess property. They must be taught to give of what is their own. The father manages to put them in possession of a few shillings. He then sells a hen to Mary for sixpence, and a small lamb to William for half a dollar. Her hen in due time brings forth a brood of chickens, and the lamb has grown up into almost a sheep. "Come my son," says the father some evening, "what will you take for your lamb? I want to buy it?" The little fellow feels quite big. "I'll take a shilling," he says, "A shilling!" replies the father; "you gave half a dollar for it, and it is worth three dollars now. You must learn better than that how to make a bargain." Willy gets a lesson in the art of traffic—buying and selling and getting gain. "I'll pay you two dollars now," says the father, "and give you a note of hand for the remainder." "A note of hand!" says the little fellow, what is that?" Here follows another lesson. The bargain is closed: the boy feeling quite rich and manly, takes the money and the note, which he is duly instructed to lay up and keep for future use.

A few days after, a poor man comes along with a brief. He has lost his horse, and is soliciting help to buy another. Father puts down something, so does mother, speaking words of comfort to the poor man; and then they call in William. "Come my son, here's a poor man who has lost his horse. What are you going to give him towards getting another?" "Why I have no money," says William. "No money? didn't I pay you two dollars just the other day for your lamb?" "Oh yes, I had forgotten that." Mark, he does not say, I gave you two

dollars. That would never do. Make a present of a coat to a poor man, that he may go to meeting, and then ask him in a few days after, "Where is that coat I gave you? and I for one had rather go to meeting in my shirt sleeves, than to wear an "I-gave-you" coat." "Come now, what can you give?" urges the father. "Well, a shilling!" "Only a shilling my son, and you have three dollars, and this poor man, with a large family, has lost his horse! Give him half a dollar." Willy's eyes sparkle assent; a thrill of joy goes through his little heart, as he witnesses the smile of his parents and hears the blessing of the poor man; and a lesson of benevolence has been taught him, to be followed up, and by which his heart and hand are to be trained to the luxury of doing good.

The Lecturer then proceeded to detail some moving incidents with which he had met, illustrating the true idea of benevolence. It is not the paying down of so many dollars; but it is what the Bible truly describes it as being, "visiting the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world"—And he told how a poor child in New York got him to call and see her little baby brother; how he found the emaciated mother the wife of a drunkard, with her skeleton child, dying of starvation. How he made the case known to a wealthy christian gentleman—how the gentleman called immediately, paid the rent, sent coal and flour, and groceries, and then went home and told his wife about the poor creature; how their little daughter, Sophia, was summoned and sent to the pantry to fill her basket, and then sent to the house of the poor woman with a charge to help sweep the floor, or hold the baby, or do something else for the poor woman, which would be sure to enlarge the little girl's organ of benevolence, and to swell the poor woman's bump of gratitude; and how the sick child was cared for—a rich lady being induced to nurse it, in conjunction with her own, until it was restored to health and vigor. "This," said the Lecturer "is what I mean by benevolence."

He also enforced the necessity of teaching children to respect their teachers—the School-teacher—the Sabbath School teacher, the minister. Never "criticise" the sermon, nor speak disparagingly of the minister, before them, nor listen to their "tales out of school." See to it that the Teacher be a person deserving of respect, and then dignify his office. He had seen a poor girl, a female teacher treated with great insolence by a father, for punishing his child, he seizing her by the nose, and wringing it unmercifully, "and it took just about all the religion I had to keep me from knocking him down." The girl had probably done wrong. But this did not justify the outrage and the storm of abuse poured forth upon her head in the presence of the child. The child was immediately sent to school again notwithstanding all that had happened. But, said he, what could she be expected to learn, and what respect could she be expected to show to the teacher after that.

And he put in a "bar" in behalf of the doctor. By no means make a bug-bear of the doctor, to frighten your children, either for amusement or as a punishment. It was bad enough for the Physician to treat children in cases of real illness. But he had known a child to scream as if it would go into fits, and to be thrown into such a state of excitement, by the entrance of the doctor, as must seriously damage its delicate organization, when in a state of perfect health. What would be the effect were it might be seriously ill? Oh no! teach your children to love the doctor—That he is their friend—that he can cure them when they are sick, and show them how to keep from getting sick.

By the time the Dr. had reached this point it was past ten o'clock. Some of us were beginning to pull out our chronometers, and were wondering if he were not going to wind up, when he roused every body's attention, and especially that of the young people, by announcing that he had come to the last particular viz:—How to govern that never-to-be-mentioned passion love—with when and whom to marry."

Nobody left. The watches flew back to their places, and all eyes and ears were open.

People often spoke of Love he said as though it were an emotion which came over young people, when they have got well on into their teens, and of which they knew nothing before. But this is an error. Love is born with them—this is not all; the baby boy has implanted in his little heart the love of woman, and the little girl, the love of man. During the first years of their lives, and long afterwards, unless by recklessness on the part of their parents, the little boy's love is expended upon his mother, and the little girl's upon her father. Oh how little Jane does love papa—she runs to him when he comes in, places her little arms around his neck, presses her little cheek to his, loves to comb his hair, and feel his whiskers and look at him. Ah but sometimes a sad catastrophe ensues—the father comes home vexed. Bill Smith, the scamp, has run off without paying his note, the cattle have broken down the fence, and the pigs have been in the field among the potatoes. Little Jane never dreaming of ill, runs as usual to meet him, and he thrusts her away with harsh and angry words. Alas! alas! he has snapped the delicate thread. Her little heart is broken. She is afraid. Tears, bitter tears, come to her relief—but oh, how cruel! how ruinous! and he went on to trace all her subsequent misery; her unfortunate marriage with that unworthy scamp, who treated her so cruelly, to that rash paternal act. And then he painted the sunny side—the coqueting affectionate daughter, leaning on her father's arm, introducing the episode of "Dandy Bill," and the collection for the "Miamas Mission," already referred to—and further related how she consulted her father in reference to the unwelcome attentions of the same "dandy" and how "father" managed to put him hors de combat; how he looked out an industrious, hard-working mechanic,