

## Pastor and People.

COMFORTED BY THE WORDS OF CHRIST.

Speak low to me, my Saviour, low and sweet  
From out the hallelujahs sweet and low,  
Lest I should fear and fall, and miss Thee so,  
Who art not missed by any that entreat.  
Speak to me as to Mary at Thy feet;  
And if no precious gums my hands bestow,  
Let my tears drop like amber while I go  
In reach of Thy divinest voice complete  
In humanest affection—thus, in sooth,  
To lose the sense of losing. As a child,  
Whose song-bird seeks the wood for evermore,  
Is sung to in its stead by mother's mouth,  
Till, sinking on her breast, love reconciled  
He sleeps the faster that he wept before.

E. B. Browning.

### "THE LAW OF THY MOTHER."

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

"The law of thy mother"—this is Solomon's phrase, and it stands in close connection with another—"the instruction of the father." This is the whole verse. "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." What difference is there between the instruction of the father, and the law of the mother? Both instruct the child. Educative forces proceed from both upon the mind and heart of the child; but while the father instructs, his instructions may, or may not, become a law; while the mother's instructions do. And for this reason—the mother commands the heart. She stands nearer the child; she enfolds it in her deepest and tenderest affection; she is with it in ministries that never cease; she is ever dropping into the mind seed-thoughts, that sink into the soil of the soul, when it is most receptive and rich in natural force. She pre-occupies the mind with the forces and facts she has in store. It is with her treasure of fancy and faith and thought and life, that she charges the young immortal, and sends him forth into the world's wide field of battle. She has the almost divine power of placing what she wills in the heart, and so, through that—making her influence, the "law" of the child's life. What a power is this! a more than regal power, to furnish the heart with impulses and motive energy, and so to rule the life. Herein we conceive lies the difference between the "instruction" of the father, and the "law" of the mother. The instructions of the father are for the cold, unimpassioned intellect, while the teaching of the mother takes hold upon the warm, throbbing, mighty heart, "out of which are the issues of life." The mother touching the central springs controls every part of the life. Is not this a fact worth remembering? We have a proverb to this effect: "An ounce o' mother-wit is worth a pound o' clergy." That is, the mother does more for the man than learning does. The mother's influence does more than the college to make the man. The nature she imparts and the impulse she gives through her loving, thoughtful, painstaking mothering is that, that forms the diamond which education and culture only afterward polish and perfect. What great man has not been indebted to his mother for powers and inspiration, without which his life would have been valueless and empty? What successful man is there who cannot connect his success with some maternal instructions or encouragements given at a time when they seemed hardly to be heeded. They sank, however, into a soil suited to their growth, and by and by, they developed and put forth their power producing a good, manly character, and securing a noble and prosperous business career.

William Chambers, the well-known publisher of Edinburgh, who, with his brother Robert, set out in life with as little as it is possible to have, and yet by diligence, perseverance, honesty and integrity did well, and became rich and honoured, tells us how that in the early days of their struggle he and his brother were wont to visit their parents at the Salt Pans near Musselburgh every Saturday night, staying over the Sunday, and that on leaving in the early morning of Monday, they carried away with them "all kinds of admonitory hints from my mother; the burden of her recommendation being to avoid low companions, to mind whom I was come of, and "aye to haud forrit." The wise woman sought to strengthen in them self-respect, and to push on. In her words we have the key to all the success the Chambers' brothers enjoyed. And they merited it all. Their lives are written in the books they published, in the business they built up, in the works they did for dear old St. Giles and the city of Edinburgh. They erected their own enduring monument. This was the outcome of a mother's prudence and worldly sagacity. Higher principles come into play, under the same law. Dr. A. J. Gordon, of Boston, speaking of a young man who united with his people on profession of faith in Jesus Christ, says, "That was a plain and noble testimony that the young man is reported to have given to the examining committee of our Church. 'Under whose preaching were you converted?' they asked. 'Under nobody's preaching,' was the reply; 'I was converted under my mother's practising.'" Ah, the mother's life is the life of the child. It invests it, acts upon it, fashions it, transforms it. Through eye and ear and every sense it sweeps in upon it. To it, there are no opposing barriers, all the child's nature lies open to be occupied.

We are surprised that so many excellent biographies have either no report to give, or a very meager and altogether unsatisfactory one, of the mother's influence in the formation of the character of the child. She is, without doubt, the prim-

ary, and the most potent force. Her's is a positive and direct force.

John Williams, the missionary to Polynesia, was blest by a pious mother, whose custom was "to conduct her children every morning and evening to her chamber for instruction and prayer." That this had its effect upon the heart, is evident from the prayers and hymns he wrote, and the religious habits he formed, and the seriousness he was subject to, till he became a companion of Godless young men. This relapse he recovered from—the law of the mother reasserting itself—and became one of the most heroic and devoted missionaries.

It was the mother of Thomas Cooper, who kept before him the desirableness of a good education, and a good character and life. She was ready to break her heart when he apprenticed himself to a shoemaker. But that was God's plan for furthering his work with him, and opening ways to reading and study and culture. Thomas Cooper by dint of diligence and heroic application to study, in the early morning, throughout the day memorizing paradigms of Latin and Greek verbs, and desirable facts, and at night repeating what he had secured and conversing with others, gave himself a liberal education. With what glee he tells us of his mastering Cæsar: "By the time I had reached the third book, 'De Bello Gallico,' I found myself able to read page after page with scarcely more than a glance, now and then at the dictionary. I remember well my first triumphant feeling of this kind. I sat on Pingle Hill: it was about five in the morning, the sun shone brightly, and as I lifted my eyes from the classic page of the great conqueror of the Gauls and the Helirians, and they fell on the mouldering pile, called the 'Old Hall'—part of which had been a stronghold of John of Gaunt, and of one of the barons of the reign of Stephen—I said to myself, 'I have made a greater conquest, without the aid of a living teacher, than the proudest warrior ever made—for I have conquered and entered into the possession of a new mind.' And that seems to me the truest expression, when you find you can read a language you could not read before."

James Hogg's mother was "a perfect repository of old ballads," Dr. James Russell, of Yarrow, tells us, and it was this store put into the Ettrick shepherd's mind in the free and easy converse of the home that made him, in due time, famous as a poet. "His mother, Margaret Laidlaw," Dr. Russell says, "was distinguished by her strong natural talent, true Scotch humour, and abundant border lore, in the shape of ballads and songs and traditional stories. Her songs lulled his infancy; her ballads amused his boyhood; her stories were often, but never too often, told in his hearing; and these drunk in at this early period, formed the groundwork of his intellectual being, deeply impressing his memory and inspiring his minstrelsy." When Moses had been taught and trained by his mother he was clad in armour of proof against all the bewitching and alluring snares of Pharaoh's palace. He could be trusted there, to remain true. So was it with Daniel, Shadrak, Meshak and Abednego in the court of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. So was it with Joseph in Potiphar's house. The law of the mother held them fast like an anchor grappling the rock.

Of all the gifts that God bestows, a good mother is one of the greatest. A mother that fears God is God's grandest minister. She lays up in store in the heart, and the memory and the imagination, against the time to come, thoughts, feelings, facts, principles, truths—that come forth upon occasion, like an armed band to protect the life and defend the character, of the youth and the man against the assault of any enemy. He whom his mother girds for battle is hard to overcome.

### A FUNERAL AT MOUNT LEBANON.

The Rev. G. B. Howie, of Brussels, thus describes his father's funeral at Shwevia, Mount Lebanon. The incident which forms the ground work for the Sunday school lesson for April 13th occurred on the northern slope of a hill in the plain of Yesreel, while the scene about to be described took place in Shwevia, a village on the western slopes of Mount Lebanon. The object of this description is to show first, how nearly exactly customs continue in the East from age to age, and second to throw some little light on the text and to show how exceedingly probable it is that the original author of the account of the story at Nain wrote from personal knowledge.

In the year 1867 the late Tannoos-el-Howie, of Shwevia, took sick and when it became known that the end was approaching, friends and neighbours continued watching over him closely and the moment he expired several pairs of men noised the fact throughout the village of about 3,000 inhabitants, by means of the familiar funeral shout or chant, and consequently streams of human beings started from different parts of the village and shortly afterwards from neighbouring villages also and all of them converged in the house of the deceased and very soon the several spacious rooms were literally crowded even to the outermost doors. All were standing, most of them, especially the women, were crying and lamenting and staring in the direction of the corpse. Shortly afterwards "the young men" brought the bier from the church to the house of the dead, but great was their difficulty in gaining entrance to the spot where the body lay, for it did appear as if the crowd paid no need to them, although the former must have known that what those young men were bent on doing was indispensable and had to be done and yet the efforts of the latter seemed to increase the volume of noise. How vividly does a scene like this call to mind the

incident in Mark v. 38, 39, "Seeth the tumult and them that wept greatly. . . why make ye this ado?"

Towards evening the body, borne on the bier, carried by eight men, who were changed at intervals, was taken coffinless for burial. The scene at the departure of the cortege was truly heart-rending. The most noticeable figure, who appeared the very image and manifestation of grief was Priestess Michel el-Howie mother of the deceased. As she lamented and wrung her hands she could be heard in spite of the tumult: "Oh that I had died for thee, my son, my son. I pray you, men, let me go to the grave with him." Several of the cautious elders imposed upon themselves the task of preventing the mother from following the bier, and yet it was, that before the bearers were half way to the place of burial, she was at their feet, her appearance and words were calculated to evoke pity even from the least pitiful of men, and if the widow at the gate of Nain were anything like the mother in question here, no wonder that He had compassion on her, stopped the bier and removed at once the cause of her agony and distress by restoring life and delivering her son unto her.

### MOTHERS AND CHILDREN.

What part of the household deserves more careful thought and attention than the children? Truly, childhood may well be likened to a beautiful spring morning, to the glistening of dewdrops on the grass, the chirruping of songsters in the forest, a scent of blossoms in the air and sunshine over all; and how strange and cold and dark the world would be without the sunny eyes and joyous voice of the young!

Do we realize the responsibility that is upon us when God lends us one of these dear little ones? Are we anxious to train them up for His service, or for a place in the most fashionable society?

I am sure if we always go to that source where for the asking we shall receive the needed wisdom—liberally and without any upbraiding—we shall be enabled to speak the right words and sow the right seed very early in life.

Let us try to make them happy. It is the little things we do that have a far more lasting influence than the many greater deeds.

The little opportunities that come to us day by day, and that are fleeing so rapidly away, must be seized upon to reach the deepest recesses of the child's nature if we would cultivate refinement and delicacy of feeling and tender thoughtfulness, and make those natures wide and deep and broad.

Many children are stunted and dwarfed for want of these little attentions; and the deeper feelings of love, gratitude, respect and reverence lie dead or unawakened, and they grow up cold and indifferent—worse even than that—stony-hearted unbelievers.

Above all, send the children to bed happy. Never let them sleep with a threatened punishment in anticipation. Settle all such things before dark, that the child may go to rest with a sense of forgiveness and peace in its heart. They will not be children long; let them be as free from care and pain as possible these few short years. Send them to rest with a smile and a good-night kiss as your last act.

Yes, tuck them in bed with a gentle good-night,  
The mantle of shadows is veiling the light,  
And may be—God knows—on this little face  
May fall deeper shadows in life's weary race.

Drop sweet benedictions on each little head,  
And fold them in prayer as they nestle in bed;  
A guard of bright angels around them invite;  
The spirit may slip from the morning to-night.

### ST. PATRICK'S THEOLOGY.

Our Roman Catholic friends are considerably stirred up over the claim made by Dr. Harsha in a recent sermon that St. Patrick was "as near a Presbyterian as anything else." If they will read history dispassionately they will find that Dr. Harsha's claim can be triumphantly maintained. Nearly all the dogmas which to-day distinguish the Papal Church from the Presbyterian have been promulgated since St. Patrick's times. The worship of the Virgin Mary, of the saints, the infallibility of the Pope of Rome, transubstantiation, and the rest, were evidently unknown to St. Patrick. The staple of his preaching was just that heard to-day from Presbyterian, and other Protestant pulpits. He taught the heathen Celts as he tells us in his Confession, that there is only one God, and that they were to call Him Father. "We told them next of His only begotten son, Jesus Christ, who had become man, had conquered death and ascended into heaven, where He sat far above all principalities and He would hereafter come to judge both the quick and the dead, and reward every man according to his deeds. Those who believed in Him would rise again in the glory of the true Sun, that is the glory of Jesus Christ, being by redemption sons of God and joint-heirs of the Christ, of whom, and by whom, and to whom are all things, for the true Sun, Jesus Christ, will never wane nor set, nor any perish who do His will, but they shall live forever. Even as He liveth forever with God the Father Almighty, and the Holy Spirit, world without end."—See "St. Patrick's Confessio, O'Connor Scrip-Hibern." Volume 1 pp. 106, 117.

There is not a word here about purgatory or extreme unction or auricular confession, or any other dogma now deemed by the Papal Church so essential to salvation. Indeed the good saint's teachings sound very much like an extract from the Presbyterian Confession of Faith.—*The Central West.*