

## \* Special Papers. \*

## WELL DOING—ITS OWN REWARD.

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THERE is one question that touches the general subject of punishment and reward which I have reserved for the end of my discourse, because it is in some sense the most important and vital of all the questions we are considering. It throws a bright light or a deep shadow on the whole theory of life, according to the point of view we take. There is a deeply rooted notion in the breasts of men that the pleasures of the senses are to be regarded as reward for the performance of duty. The parent says to his child: "You have been good to-day; you have studied your lessons; your deportment has been satisfactory; therefore, I will reward you by giving you sweetmeats, or I will take you on an excursion into the country." Now stop for a moment to consider what connection there can possibly be between the performance of duty and the physical pleasure enjoyed in eating sweetmeats. Is not the connection a purely arbitrary one? Does it not depend upon the notion that there is no intrinsic satisfaction in a moral act? Now the idea which the new religion is bringing into the foreground is that moral action has an intrinsic value of its own, that the reward of doing good is contained in the doing of it.

There are many persons who willingly acknowledge that virtue is its own reward, and yet in practice they follow the traditional methods which are based on an entirely different view. We must learn to see that it is radically wrong to make enjoyments, pleasures of any kind, the reward of virtue; we must have the courage to make application of our theories to the education of our children, if we would develop in them the germs of the new, the nobler, the freer manhood and womanhood. I admit that a child is not yet sufficiently developed morally to love virtue for its own sake, and that its virtuous inclinations need to be supported and assisted; but we can give it this assistance by showing it the marks of our approbation or disapprobation. We can disgrace a child; that ought to be the heaviest penalty. And we can show it signs of favor. But simply because a child for a long time leads an animal life, simply because it is the most easily taken on the side of its animal instincts, we need not evince our favor by pampering its appetites. Yet this is what the parents in general do. They stoop to take advantage of the means by which the child is most easily influenced. But it should be our aim to raise the child above the mere desire for physical gratification, to prevent it from attaching too much importance to such pleasures. The conduct of many parents tends deliberately and artificially to foster that lower nature in the child which it should be their constant aim to repress. They try to control their children as they control horses, by the mouth. A child should be trained to take pleasure in intellectual labors, in study for study's sake, and to do its task for the sake of the satisfaction of conscience which accompanies the doing of one's duty. As this

is difficult in the case of very young children, they should be trained to do their duty for the sake of the approbation of their parents. An approving look, a kiss from father or mother, should be the highest reward which a child can expect, and a sign of disapprobation the punishment which it most dreads. We should beware how we teach a child to suppose that a cake, or money, or pleasure is the reward of having done its duty. It is possible to begin perverting the moral nature very early in this way. We ought not to be surprised at the misshapen and twisted morality which we see in the world around us. Most parents, by their method of bestowing extraneous rewards, make haste to pervert the character of their children in earliest infancy, giving it a wrong direction from the start.

But it may be asked, is there not some truth after all in St. Paul's saying: "He that will not work, neither shall he eat?" And do we not all think that there is something wrong when we see a person enjoying life who will perform none of its duties? And does it not appear that in a certain sense virtue entitles one to pleasure, and that the absence of virtue ought to preclude one from pleasure? In order to answer this question, let us cast a brief glance at the organization of human nature as a whole.

Human beings are endowed with a variety of faculties, moral, intellectual, and physical; and a different type of pleasure or satisfaction arises from the exercise of each one of these faculties. Pleasure in general may be defined as that feeling which results from the successful exercise of any of our faculties. Take, for instance, the physical nature; a skilful rider takes pleasure in the exercise of horsemanship, an athlete in the lifting of weights, an expert dancer in the rhythmical movements of the dance. Or take the intellectual and artistic nature. The more completely the artist commands the faculty of expression, the more pleasure does he derive from the art; the more complex and difficult the problem which the scholar resolves, the more does he feel his mental power grow within him, and the more does he find delight in study. The same is true of the moral nature. The more a man succeeds in harmonizing his inner life and bringing the principles of social harmony to triumph in the world about him, the more satisfaction does he derive from the exercise of virtue. Now it is a perfectly patent fact that we cannot pay for the exercise of any one faculty by the pleasure which is derived from the exercise of any other, but that each faculty is legitimately paid only in its own coin. Suppose you should go up to the horseman who has just returned from an exhilarating ride and say to him: "You have exercised your physical faculties to an unusual degree for several hours; but what reward do you expect for doing so? He would probably look at you in blank amazement with a doubt as to your sanity. The exercise of any faculty is its own reward. What we call pleasure is only the result of the activity of one of our faculties. If you ask the man who exercises his intellectual faculties what reward he expects to get for so doing, he will answer you, if he is expert in the use of his intellect: "Nothing but the exercise of the

mind." Pleasure is born in the efficient activity of our faculties. If you ask a man who is expert in the use of his moral nature, who is intent on creating harmony within and without him, what the reward is which he expects for his labors, he will answer you in the same way: "The exercise of the faculty is its own reward." Satisfaction necessarily results from the successful activity of any one of our functions. I have said that if you ask a mental or moral expert these questions they will return the answers I have indicated. I said expert—and there's the rub. The reason why average persons do not believe that the exercise of the mental or moral faculties is their own reward, is because they are not expert, because they have not penetrated far enough into knowledge and virtue to obtain the satisfactions of them. But the same is true of the tyro in dancing. An awkward, clumsy dancer, who cannot keep step and does not yield himself to the music, derives no pleasure from dancing. He must go on practising until he becomes an expert. In the same way a horseman who has not yet acquired a firm seat in the saddle or come into effective rapport with his horse, will hardly derive much pleasure from horseback exercise. Let him then go on trying until he becomes an expert; but in the meantime, while he is making his bungling efforts, I do not see why we should reward him with a cake. So, too, the novice in intellectual matters will not derive much pleasure from his pursuit until he has acquired a certain mastery over the elements of knowledge. Let him then go on working and drudging until he becomes an expert and he will obtain his reward. Likewise the moral novice will not find delight in the pursuit of his task until he has laid a firm hold on the principles which are essential to the ordering of life, and is able to apply them with ease and certainty. Let him then go on struggling, go on aspiring, until he becomes a moral expert, and he will have his satisfaction; but in the interval it would seem incongruous, would it not, to reward him for his efforts with money, or with pleasures to be derived from the exercise of a totally different faculty.

I have said that each faculty is sovereign in its own sphere, that each provides its proper satisfactions within itself and does not borrow them from the domain of any of the others. It is important, however, to add that there is a profound difference in rank between our different faculties, that some are higher than the others, that the moral and intellectual faculties are at the top of the scale. Bear this in mind, and you will be able to understand the truth contained in the words: "He that will not work, neither shall he eat." You will comprehend why we inwardly rebel when we see the indolent and the weak living in luxury and affluence. It is not that pleasure of the senses is the proper reward of virtue, or that physical pain is the proper punishment of the lack of virtue, but that the higher faculties should occupy the first place, and the lower faculties should not be exercised to the neglect and at the expense of the higher, that the legitimate rank and order of our faculties should not be subverted. And from this point of view I might deny