

THE WAY WE CAN HOLD OUR BOYS.

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There is a general disposition on the part of all thinking Churchmen to solve the problem of keeping the boys within the fold after they get to that transition period when they are neither boys nor yet young men. It seems to be just at this time that so many slip out of sight and no one knows where they go to. This, perhaps, is especially noticeable where there are surpliced choirs.

When the boy who has sung two or even three times a day every Sunday loses his voice, he is for the time being utterly lost, and while at first he may struggle to an occasional service, his occupation is gone and with it his interest, so he soon becomes a dead letter. In some cases the choir boys are in Sunday-school classes, and then all is well and good, or ought to be; but again, there are many who live far away and are not able to get back in time to attend Sunday School, or who for various other reasons cannot, and it seems to be nobody's duty or pleasure to give these boys who have contributed their all to render the service of God acceptably a helping hand. It is always better, if possible, to begin with them as choir boys than after they begin to drift; and as the St. Andrew's Brotherhood provides for its young men, so should every parish be the possessor of a guild for boys; the boys' guild in every sense, except the management, which should be controlled by wiser heads, if it is to amount to anything.

Provide for the boy everything that will appeal to boy-nature, make it the most delightful of places for him to go to, and be assured he will appreciate your efforts. He won't get tired of it, but he will outgrow it, and then give him something to do, or if he has a fancy for a soldier cap and a musket, have a rifle corps and let him play at soldiering to his heart's content, for, as we all know, there is a peculiar fascination about this not confined to boys only. It is a big subject—one that volumes can be written upon, and it has another side—the personal side. Each boy as he becomes a member of the guild should be visited. With a little tact all the information desired about the boy's baptism, confirmation, character and habits can be obtained, and by keeping a record any amount of personal work can be done, where it is necessary, by the wiser heads who provide and run such an organization.

The amount of good accomplished by such a plan is only limited by the number of willing, enthusiastic heads and hands who will bend their energies to accomplish what cannot but be a lasting benefit to the Church. This is no theory, to be worked out as an experiment, but an actual possibility; in fact, there are a very few such organizations which are doing this work in a quiet, unobtrusive way, and it has been proved a most successful way. It seems to reach not only the younger but the older boys in the transition period, and a rifle corps is one of the most attractive features even to young men.

Scarcely a religious paper or magazine one picks up in these days but has some sort of an article upon what to do for or with boys, as if they were the most perplexing of creatures, instead of being the most satisfactory to work for; for no matter how rough, not to say dirty they are, if one only meets them in their own spirit and remembers they are, above all, boys, one always finds the most hearty co-operation.

MORAL EDUCATION.

(1) The aim of moral education includes three elements. The first is KNOWLEDGE. The child is not properly educated who does not know that it is his duty to seek to promote his own bodily health, strength and skill, so as to make the body an able and facile instrument of the mind. Many children are so brought up that they think it right to subject themselves to unhealthy conditions if they choose, and there are still more who do not know the relation between temperance, health and efficiency. Let every child be taught that bodily excess of every sort is as wicked as lying or stealing. Let him know his duty also in the improvement of his mental powers. How many men there are who feel no responsibility for lack of intellectual vigor. Every child should be taught that what he becomes physically and mentally depends largely upon himself; and furthermore, that it is his bounden duty to make the most of himself.

He should also be taught his duties to his fellow-men. We are in the world with others, and from them we are constantly receiving. Food, clothing, shelter and all other kinds of material appliances for our bodily needs and comfort are the results of human labor. Is it right to receive and not give? Literature, music and art are the products of continuous effort. Shall we take and give not in return? What a dreary world it would be without cheerful conversation. What right, then, has any man to hold himself aloof from his fellows in morose silence! Is it not the duty of every man and of every child to make others happy by his smiles and cheerful speech? Press home the duty of cheerful sociability. Let no child grow up without being made to see the thousand ways in which he receives good from others, and in which he ought to return good for good.

Go beyond this and show him his duty to God in return for blessings bestowed. Throw around his conceptions of duty to his fellows the sanction of a belief in a common origin and a common destiny. Let faith in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man make him feel more keenly his duty to all the world.

The second element in the aim of moral education is POWER. Temptations to do the wrong often arise. The child should have the moral power to resist. It is one thing to know the wrong and another to be able to avoid it. Opportunities to do the right often arise; but it needs power of will to hold one's self continuously to the performance of the right. This power should be developed from early childhood, so that, when the occasion comes, that will can hold persistently to the right course even to the very end.

But a third element is needed. This is the habit of *right of determination and action*. It is closely related to the second element, and indeed implies it, but the two are not identical. Adherence to the right may cost an effort. This should not ordinarily be the case. The habit of right conduct should be so fully established that action in accordance with the right will be little less than automatic. A man who has a hard struggle to refrain from theft, whenever an opportunity occurs, is not well educated morally. He is not to be trusted.

(2) We are next to consider the process of moral education as it takes place in the mind of the child. What must he do in order to attain the results just sketched? We shall be helped on this point by calling to mind two or three of

the fundamental laws which govern the action of the mind.

And first let us note the fact that the mind is made to know primarily by the presence of the things to be known. The moral quality of an action depends upon the effect intended by the doer. Hence the effect of an action must be known in order that the action may be known as right or wrong. For example, a child may be innocently engaged in noisy play, but when the mother declares that the noise makes her head ache, the child at once recognizes the action as wrong. The mere knowledge of an act done or intended is not enough to reveal its moral quality, to this must be added a knowledge of its effect. We should make a clear distinction between what is wrong in itself and what is merely prohibited.

Another principle of universal application in education is, that power is developed by the action of the individual in whom the power is developed. Muscular power is developed by the action of the muscles. Intellectual power results from intellectual action, and moral power from moral action. Power to resist the wrong does not result from a knowledge of wrong, but from the resistance of wrong. Speech, action and example are all useless, so far as their effect in developing power is concerned, unless they arouse the child to action. If all parents and teachers fully realized the force of this law, and had a clear conception of the true end of moral education, how much less would they govern the children, and how much more would they strive to induce the children to govern themselves. It is the self-determined, the self-directed action of the child that makes him strong, and not the effort of the tender-hearted parent or the strong-minded teacher.

Another general principle of education is this: the repetition of an action produces a tendency to act in a similar manner again. If the repetitions of an action have been so numerous as to produce a very strong tendency to act in the same way, this tendency is called a habit. Habits are formed by the repetition of similar actions. Habits sometimes become so strong that it is impossible for us to break away from them—we are held by them. We acquire the habit of making the letters of the alphabet according to a particular form, and the habit becomes so strong that we cannot successfully disguise our own handwriting. In like manner we form habits of observation, memory, imagination and reasoning. The same is true of the formation of habits of moral action. The man who always tells the truth soon reaches that state of mind in which there is no temptation to lie. Truth-telling has become a habit. Yielding to the right motive may become habitual through repetition. Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, is only an application of this general principle.

(3) If children are left to themselves they are not likely to learn all their duties or to practise that self-restraint and self-direction necessary for the development of moral power and the establishment of correct habits of moral action. They need direction in moral education no less than in intellectual. Who should constitute the educators in morals? The schools are often held responsible for this work; but this is without justice. The moral character of children is partly, often largely, formed before they attend school at all; and for this the *parents* are responsible. The first lessons in love, affection, sympathy, patience, obedience and mutual helpfulness are learned in the *home*, and these moral lessons are continued at home till long after the end of school life.

Then, too, the members of the special *society* in which the child lives exert a strong influence upon his moral character. Society is largely responsible for the child's ideas of honesty, truthfulness, industry, regard for the rights of others, and all other forms of social virtue; and it is exceedingly difficult for the school to raise these