

SELECTIONS.

INFANT MORALITY

POINTS FREQUENTLY OVERLOOKED IN THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

Surprising as it seems, I believe it to be true, that not a little positively false morality is taught children by respectable and educated persons—not consciously, of course, but through want of thought as to the impression made upon the child's mind by the words and actions of its elders. It is not only ignorant and irresponsible nurses, but too commonly the child's own mother, who confuses its sense of right and wrong by putting the expedient before it in the place of the right. This happens every time a child is bribed to obey by the promise of some reward. He learns that he is to do right, not because he knows it is such, or because simple obedience is imperative, but because the doing the right thing is to bring him some advantage. Conversely, therefore, if to do it brought some disadvantage, or even if it brought nothing with it to gratify the child's wishes, it would no longer be right. Motives to right-doing are too often urged which, if not actually bad, are certainly not the best; as when children are told that their friends will not love them unless they behave in a certain prescribed manner. The appeal to affection is no doubt legitimate in its place and degree, but the parents' affection ought not to be held up as a prize for right conduct. A father may properly tell his children that he is pleased when they do right and grieved when they do wrong, but a child should never be allowed to believe that, whether pleased or grieved, his father had ceased or could cease to love him.

The root-truth about the matter seems to me to be this: that a child's parents stand to it, while it is young in the place of God himself. All its conceptions of truth and goodness come to it through this channel, and justice, love, faith, and all the virtues dawn upon the child's soul as they are embodied in its parents' speech and action toward itself and its brothers and sisters. When a father or mother does an injustice to one child in favor of another, it is not the one child alone that is harmed, but both. Justice in the abstract children know little of, and to preach about it to them would be of slight use; but every little one understands that when a mother and many a child's heart has swelled with an indignation against injustice that was not wholly nor mostly selfish, but a righteous instinct asserting itself against a villain.

A truthful child is generally strictly veracious and does not comprehend any deviation from the letter of truth; so that it is often necessary, to save it from moral confusion, to explain what may seem to it like untruth. If it become impossible to keep a promise made to a child, the hindering circumstances ought to be mentioned, or at least it should be explained that there are such. Again, the Bible command, Parents, provoke not your children to wrath, is often forgotten, while the corresponding one, Children, obey your parents, is quoted and enforced. A great deal of injustice is often done, moreover, in settling disputes among children, by not allowing for provocation received.

A most obvious practical rule in the training of children is, Always take for granted that they mean to be good. If, to give a dog or a child a bad name, is an excellent recipe for making him deserve it, to let it be a matter of course that he is to behave properly is to go a considerable way toward having him behave so. I have seen mothers actually put it into a child's head to be naughty, when it had never occurred to the little one to be so. In this connection I would utter a protest against a kind of infant literature, usually illustrated, in which greedy Tom and slovenly Jane, cruel Peter and vain Polly, are vividly described in the act of making themselves unpleasant.

Manners and morals are closely connected, though parents attentive to their children's training in the one are strangely negligent with regard to the other.

Example goes a mile where precept goes an inch, with children, and I believe that the irreverence toward their elders which is justly blamed in children of the present age (and perhaps justly also, in especial among Americans) is largely owing to the greater freedom of companionship with their elders nowadays allowed to children. Few people will restrain themselves in speech on account of the presence of the little ones, and these, consequently, hear an immense deal of personal comment and criticism which they ought not to hear, if they are to keep that respect for their elders in general which surely it is desirable they should retain, so long as it is possible. To the same cause is due the sophistication of children, so noticeable and, to my

mind, so deplorable. A boy need not be a baby because he does not know at ten what his grandfather did not know till he was twenty. The modest simplicity and the fresh and tender bloom of girlhood—no, it has not all disappeared yet! I believe that a child who, without being coddled and "babied," yet is kept a child so long as, according to its years, it is called one, has a physical advantage over the child too early initiated into the knowledge of manhood or womanhood. Parents do not realize the physical wear and tear that accompany premature development of the brain; and the undue tax upon the nervous and vital forces, when a child engages in the occupations and amusements of a grown person, leaves it, in maturer years, low in physical resources, just when it has most call upon them.—*Atlantic Monthly.*

THE KENTUCKY WORK.

One year ago the Kentucky Convention began what was practically a new departure in our mission work—nothing less than determining a certain amount to be raised, and (here is the innovation) naming to each church a definite amount which it was requested to raise. In other words, the Board was instructed to make an apportionment of \$10,000 among the churches that could be reasonably expected to contribute. There was some little complaint that the Convention had exceeded its legitimate power; that it bore the appearance, at least, of *assessing* the churches. But it has been generally received, as it was intended, merely as a cordial invitation to join in the good work of raising the \$10,000 fund, and as affording a definite aim in each case to which to work.

The result has been laid before our readers. The money was raised, and \$400 more, and all the collateral work of the Board stimulated in proportion. Undoubtedly, it has been the most successful year's work in the history of the Convention, and has led to higher aims and enlarged plans for the year to come.

As to the working of the plan in detail, we are afforded some very useful light in the report of the proceedings of the Convention, received at this office through the politeness of Bro. B. F. Clay, the State Evangelist.

1. The total number of churches figuring in the report is 236.
2. Of this number twenty-five were not apportioned at all. That is, they appear to have joined in voluntarily, so far as we can gather from the report. The total contributed by them was \$255.54—an average of a trifle more than \$10 each.
3. Of churches contributing more than requested, there were forty-nine. The aggregate apportionment was \$3,228—an average of about \$66. Their contributions amounted to \$4,163.01—an average of about \$85 each.
4. Of those contributing exactly the amount asked, there were twenty-nine. Their aggregate apportionment was \$1,301—an average of about \$45.
5. Of churches paying, but less than the amount called for, there were eighty-five. Their aggregate apportionment was \$4,916—an average of \$57.83. They paid \$4,683.71—an average of \$55.10.
6. Of churches to which sums were apportioned, and nothing paid, there were forty-eight. The sum apportioned was \$555—an average of \$11.56.

From these figures it appears that the forty-nine churches paying more than requested gave a surplus amounting to nearly double the deficiency of the forty-eight that paid nothing.

Furthermore, the twenty-five churches volunteering paid more than the deficiency of the eighty-five churches that fell short.

This result cannot but be regarded as highly gratifying, and fully justifies the confidence with which the Board have gone to work this year to raise at least \$2,000 more. Indeed, this advance must be regarded as extremely moderate, when we consider that this year's work has established that confidence in the work and the system, on which all such work depends. We do not hesitate to predict that, without unforeseen catastrophes, they will far surpass their expectations.

But while the apparent results are thus gratifying, we question if the substantial advantages gained are not far greater. We have not the means of comparing this report with those of former years, but in the nature of the case the work of enlisting the churches in missionary work must have been greater than ever before. We venture that never before in our history in Kentucky have so many churches joined in the work. If this be the case, then, in addition to the amount raised this year, the Board have laid a basis for future operations that is of the first importance, and in the end will far surpass the results that appear in this report.—*Christian Standard.*

SELF-DEFENSE.

How queer it is that those who learn to fight as means of self-defense generally have more need for it than those who let it alone altogether. Here is another system of self-defense, which, though centuries old, is still an unknown art to many:

"Do you think it would be wrong for me to learn the noble art of self-defense?" a religiously-inclined youth inquired of his pastor.

"Certainly not," answered the minister; "I learnt it in youth myself, and I have found it of great value during my life."

"Indeed, sir! did you learn the old English system, or Sullivan's system?"

"Neither. I learned Solomon's system."

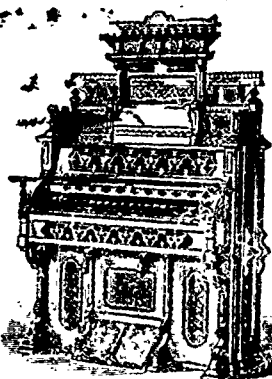
"Solomon's system?"

"Yes; you will find it laid down in the first verse of the fiftieth chapter of Proverbs: 'A soft answer turneth away wrath.' It is the best system of self-defense of which I know."

Let us beware of the religion that is all heart, as we would the religion that is all head.—*G. W. Cable.*



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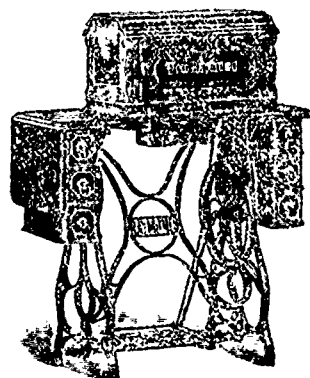
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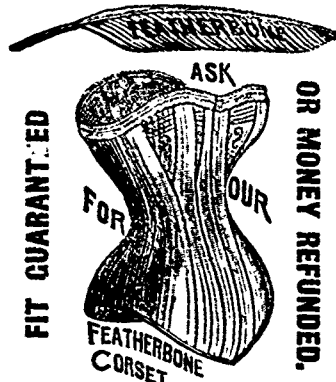
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