

In order to be successful in the administration of discipline, two things must be understood; the child and the method of Nature. Every shortcoming in the child should be traced to its beginnings. Why is the child untruthful? Who teaches the child to dissimulate? Nature? There is a difference between the moral and the physical nature of man. We can treat the finger or the eye without very much affecting the entire body. There can be local physical treatment, but no local moral treatment. All moral weakness is organic. Moral education, therefore, must not be limited or local; it must be comprehensive. It must begin with the heart, out of which are the issues of life. What does it mean to punish? It means to direct disobedience to its natural result—pain. The purpose of punishment is to associate in the mind of the child sin with suffering. It is to intensify the hatred of wrong and to provoke repentance. Our aim should not be merely to make the child do right, but to make it love to do right. He who punishes must assume all the dignity and impartiality of an instrument of justice. He must act not from passion but from principle.

The abuse of punishment is more dangerous than the greatest indulgence. At the present day we have outgrown the harsh methods of the past. Corporal punishment is almost entirely excluded from our schools. The arguments in favor of it were ingenious but not convincing. The hurt occasioned by corporal punishment is not to the body but to the mind. It is after all the mind that is struck. But this is not all. In appealing to the mind, we treat the child as a rational creature. This is a claim of the child which we cannot ignore. Corporal punishment is one-sided. Besides, corporal punishment, as Herbert Spencer has shown, is associated with man in the childhood of the

world. It is the savage, who has not patience to reason or explain, who strikes. Corporal punishment can seldom be administered without passion. When we show excitement we give signs of weakness. Then the young boy or girl becomes conscious of a power over us. This is a temptation to youth. The danger of corporal punishment, therefore, is that we can seldom administer it without losing our head. On the other hand, we cannot appeal to the reason without becoming ourselves more reasonable. The punishment must never tempt the child to doubt the dignity of its own nature. All the virtues are born of honor.

Besides corporal punishment, there are other punishments which are not justifiable. To shut up a child in a dark room is to spur its imagination into wild fancies. Darkness is a bad companion. It will contract and terrify the child. Denying children the necessary amount of sleep or food, exposing them to the inclemency of the weather, withholding from them for too long a time the tokens of affection, treating them as strangers, or as enemies, or ignoring them altogether—these are measures which do more harm than good. Punishment should be of such a nature that, if necessary, the parents can share it with the children. The child must know that it cannot suffer alone, physically, much less morally. Its suffering brings suffering to others. This is the lesson which will develop the social element in the child. In the second place, we must correct the faults of the child by its virtues; that is to say, the strong qualities of the mind must spur the weak faculties into play. If a child is physically strong but morally weak, let the parent hold up to view the two sides of its nature, until the physically strong child shall be ashamed of its moral cowardice. Let the child look into the mirror and see first