

EVERY DAY MISTAKES IN CHILD-TRAINING.

It is a mistake to expect that our children will grow to be better than, or different from, ourselves. "Be what you would have your child become," is a motto as true as it is old. There seems to be an idea abroad in the minds of young parents, that their children, (in one way or another, they don't quite know how), will become better than they are. If we truly love our children, few of us will be satisfied to have them grow only as good as we are. We would wish them to be better, more patient, more gentle, more loving, more kind. A mother recently asked me, "Why is it my child is so impatient?" "What shall I do with her?" I said, "be what you would have your child become." "Do not count on her being better than you are; your child is impatient because her mother is impatient." Then looking into that mother's face I asked "am I right?" The bowed head and the thoughtful face soon shewed the truth. The next morning that mother who was driving me to the railway station said "my husband and I have for a long time been wondering what was making our daughter so impatient; last night I told him what you said and we saw for the first time that we must be what we would have our child become." Children are born imitators, they copy all they see. If the mother laughs the child laughs. If the mother cries the child cries. If the mother is impatient, or discontented the child will be the same. If the mother is cross the child will be cross. Usually it is, mothers are nervous, children are cross. This imitative characteristic given by God is of priceless value if we are willing to set before the little ones the right example of fearful consequence if we do not. Children copy quickest those whom they love best. They want to be in sympathy with those whom they love. If grown people become like those whom they admire certainly children during the formative periods of life do the same. Hence the great influence of mother over child. "Like mother, like child." The child is imitative because of its ignorance. When it comes into the world it knows nothing. As it looks about it sees you and me; it watches us closely and how soon it copies us. It tests our actions by its own. It satisfies itself that it can do as we do, and then acts as we act. The child learns much more through the eye than through the ear. We may tell it to be patient, but when it sees in our face the impatient thought, the discontented spirit, it copies it. It absorbs our nature; the ear is almost heedless, while the eye drinks in and reproduces at the earliest opportunity the spirit it so plainly sees. If we are what we ought to be our children will so become. He who hopes to make his child better than himself makes one of the most common mistakes in child-training. If you would make your child more like Christ than you are, get more like Him yourself day by day. Keep the child in as pure an environment as is possible. Throw around it in the home only the pure, and the beautiful, and the good; then even though it may see a lower degree of moral living at school, and at play, yet because of the home love, the mother love, the influences of the home will be the ones that will stamp themselves upon the child. "He that would command must first learn to obey," the old proverb says. He that would command a child and be a true father to him must first learn to obey the Father above. The more we become like him the higher can we lift our child. "Do as I do," is the right motto. "Do as I say," is the more common one. It is usually not more parental control that is needed in our homes, it is more self-control on the part of both parents and children. He who would control his child must first learn to control himself. He who controls himself soon teaches his child self control; thus giving him an inheritance more precious than gold. By being like our Saviour we can lead our child to him. By living like our Saviour we can create in our child the desire to be like him too. In the measure we are Christ-like, our child will be. If we would have "sons grown up in their youth, and daughters polished after the fashion of a palace," let us use these two priceless characteristics of childhood, imitation and love. Let us not be satisfied with hoping and wishing and thus deceiving ourselves that our children will be better than we are, but let us set before them lives that we would like to see them live,—the Christ-like life. Let us lift up their young loving hearts from ourselves—the parent known to the parent unknown, the one we want them to know—our Father.