

TESTIMONY
FOR
THE CHURCH.

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Proper Education.

It is the nicest work ever assumed by men and women to deal with youthful minds. The greatest care should be taken in the education of youth to vary the manner of instruction so as to call forth the high and noble powers of the mind. Parents, and teachers of schools, are certainly disqualified to educate children properly, if they have not first learned the lesson of self-control, patience, forbearance, gentleness, and love. What an important position for parents, guardians, and teachers! There are very few who realize the most essential wants of the mind, and how to direct the developing intellect, the growing thoughts and feelings of youth.

There is a period for training children, and a time for educating youth. And it is essential that both of these be combined in a great degree in the schools. Children may be trained for the service of sin, or for the service of righteousness. The early education of youth shapes their character in this life, and in their

religious life. Solomon says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." This language is positive. The training which Solomon enjoins is to direct, educate, and develop. In order for parents and teachers to do this work, they must themselves understand "the way the child should go." This embraces more than merely having a knowledge of books. It takes in everything that is good, virtuous, righteous, and holy. It comprehends the practice of temperance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love to God, and to each other. In order to attain this object, the physical, mental, moral, and religious education of children must have attention.

In households, and in schools, the education of children should not be like the training of dumb animals; for children have an intelligent will which should be directed to control all their powers. The dumb animals need to be trained; for they have not reason and intellect. The human mind must be taught self-control. It must be educated to rule the human being, while the animal is controlled by the master. The beast is trained to be submissive to his master. The master is mind, judgment, and will, for his beast. A child may be so trained as to have, like the beast, no will of his own. His individuality may even be submerged in the

one who superintends his training, and the will is to all intents and purposes subject to the will of the teacher.

Children who are thus educated will ever be deficient in moral energy and individual responsibility. They have not been taught to move from reason and principle. Their will was controlled by another, and the mind was not called out, that it might expand and strengthen by exercise. They were not directed and disciplined with respect to their peculiar constitution and capabilities of mind, to put forth their strongest powers when required. Teachers should not stop here, but give especial attention to the cultivation of the weaker faculties that all the powers may be brought into exercise, and carried forward from one degree of strength to another, that the mind may attain due proportions.

There are many families of children who appear to be well-trained, while under the training discipline. But when the system, which has held them to set rules, is broken up, they seem to be incapable of thinking, acting, or deciding, for themselves. These children have been so long under iron rule, not allowed to think and act for themselves in those things in which it was highly proper that they should, that they have no confidence in themselves to

move out upon their own judgment, having an opinion of their own. And when they go out from their parents, to act for themselves, they are easily led by others' judgment in the wrong direction. They have not stability of character. Their minds have not been properly developed and strengthened by being thrown upon their own judgment, as fast and as far as practicable. So long have their minds been absolutely controlled by their parents that they rely wholly upon them. Their parents were mind and judgment for their children.

On the other hand, the youth should not be left to think and act independent of the judgment of their parents and teachers. Children should be taught to respect experienced judgment, and be guided by their parents and teachers. They should be so educated that their minds will be united with the minds of their parents and teachers, and they be so instructed that they can see the propriety of heeding their counsel. And when they shall go forth from the guiding hand of their parents and teachers, their characters will not be like the reed trembling in the wind.

The severe training of youth, without properly directing them to think and act for themselves, as their own capacity and turn of mind would allow, that by this means they might

have growth of thought and feelings of self-respect, and confidence in their own abilities to perform, will ever produce a class that are weak in mental and moral power. And when they stand in the world to act for themselves, they will reveal the fact that they were trained, like the animals, and not educated. Their wills, instead of being guided, were forced into subjection by harsh discipline of parents and teachers.

Parents and teachers who boast of having complete control of the mind and will of the children under their care would cease their boastings, could they trace out the future life of these children who are thus in subjection by force and through fear. These are almost wholly unprepared to engage in the stern responsibilities of life. When these youth are no longer under their parents and teachers, and are compelled to think and act for themselves, they are almost sure to take a wrong course, and yield to the power of temptation. They do not make this life a success. And the same deficiencies are seen in their religious life. Could the instructors of youth have the future result of their mistaken discipline mapped out before them, they would change their plan of action in the education of children and youth. That class of teachers who are gratified that they have almost complete control of the will of their

scholars are not the most successful teachers, although the appearance for the time being may be flattering.

God never designed that one human mind should be under the complete control of another human mind. And those who make efforts to have the individuality of their pupils submerged in themselves, and they be mind, will, and conscience, for their pupils, assume fearful responsibilities. These scholars may, upon certain occasions, appear like well-drilled soldiers. But when the restraint is removed, there will be seen a want of independent action from firm principle existing in them. But those who make it their object to so educate their pupils that they may see and feel that the power lies in themselves to make men and women of firm principle, qualified for any position in life, are the most useful and permanently successful teachers. Their work may not show to the very best advantage to careless observers, and their labors may not be valued as highly as the teacher who holds the will and mind of his scholars by absolute authority; but the future lives of the pupils will show the fruits of the better plan of education.

There is danger of both parents and teachers commanding and dictating too much, while they fail to come sufficiently into social relation with

their children, or their scholars. They often hold themselves too much reserved, and exercise their authority in a cold, unsympathizing manner, which cannot win the hearts of their children and pupils. If they would gather the children close to them, and show that they love them, and manifest an interest in all their efforts, and even in their sports, and sometimes be even a child among children, they would make the children very happy, would gain their love, and win their confidence. And the children would sooner respect and love the authority of their parents and teachers.

The principles and habits of the teacher should be considered of greater importance than even his literary qualifications. If the teacher is a sincere Christian, he will feel the necessity of having an equal interest in the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual education of his scholars. In order to exert the right influence, he should have perfect control over himself, and his own heart should be richly imbued with love for his pupils, which will be seen in his looks, words, and acts. He should have firmness of character, then can he mold the minds of his pupils, as well as to instruct them in the sciences. The early education of youth generally shapes their character for life. Those who deal with the young should be very careful to call out the

qualities of the mind, that they may better know how to direct their powers, and that they may be exercised to the very best account.

The system of education generations back has been destructive to health and even life itself. Five hours each day many young children have passed in school rooms not properly ventilated, nor sufficiently large for the healthful accommodation of the scholars. The air of such rooms soon becomes poison to the lungs that inhale it. Little children, whose limbs and muscles are not strong, and their brains undeveloped, have been kept confined in-doors to their injury. Many have but a slight hold on life to begin with. Confinement in school from day to day makes them nervous and diseased. Their bodies are dwarfed because of the exhausted condition of the nervous system. And if the lamp of life goes out, the parents and teachers do not consider that they had any direct influence in quenching the vital spark. When standing by the graves of their children, the afflicted parents look upon their bereavement as a special dispensation of Providence. By inexcusable ignorance, their own course had destroyed the life of their children. Then to charge their death to Providence is blasphemy. God wanted the little ones to live and be disciplined, that they might have beautiful characters, to glorify

him in this world, and praise him in the better world. In order to be in accordance with fashion and custom, many parents have sacrificed the health and life of their children.

Parents and teachers, in taking the responsibilities of training these children, do not feel their accountability before God to become acquainted with the physical organism, that they may treat the bodies of children and pupils in a manner to preserve life and health. Thousands of children die because of the ignorance of parents and teachers. Mothers will spend hours over needless work upon their own dress and that of their children, to fit them for display, who plead that they cannot find time to read up, and obtain information necessary to take care of the health of their children. They think it less trouble to trust their bodies to the doctors.

To become acquainted with the wonderful organism, the stomach, liver, bowels, heart, bones, muscles, and pores of the skin, and to understand the dependence of one organ upon another, for the healthful action of all, is a study that most mothers have no interest in. The influence of the body upon the mind, and the mind upon the body, she knows nothing of. The mind, which allies finite to the infinite, she does not seem to understand. Every organ of the body was made to be servant to the mind.

The mind is the capital of the body. Children are allowed flesh-meats, spices, butter, cheese, pork, rich pastry, and condiments generally. They are allowed to eat irregularly, and to eat between meals, of unhealthful food, which do their work of deranging the stomach, and exciting the nerves to unnatural action, and enfeeble the intellect. Parents do not realize that they are sowing the seeds which will bring forth disease and death.

Many children have been ruined for life by urging the intellect, and neglecting to strengthen the physical. Many have died in their childhood because of the course pursued by injudicious parents, and teachers of the schools, in forcing their young intellect, by flattery or fear, when they are too young to see the inside of a school room. Their minds have been taxed with lessons, when they should not have been called out, but kept back until the physical constitution was strong enough to endure mental effort. Small children should be left free as lambs to run out of doors, to be free and happy, and be allowed the most favorable opportunities to lay the foundation for sound constitutions. Parents should be their only teachers, until they have reached eight or ten years of age. They should open before their children God's great

book of nature as fast as their minds can comprehend it.

The mother should have less love for the artificial in her house, and in the preparation of her dress for display, and find time to cultivate, in herself and in her children, a love for the beautiful buds and opening flowers, and call the attention of her children to their different colors and variety of forms. She can make her children acquainted with God, who made all the beautiful things which attract and delight them. She can lead their young minds up to their Creator, and awaken in their young hearts a love for their Heavenly Father, who has manifested so great love for them. Parents can associate God with all his created works. Among the opening flowers and nature's beautiful scenery in the open air should be the only school room for children from eight to ten years of age. And the treasures of nature should be their only text book. These lessons, imprinted upon the minds of young children, among the pleasant, attractive scenes of nature, will not be soon forgotten.

In order for children and youth to have health, cheerfulness, vivacity, and well-developed muscle and brain, they should be much in the open air, and have well-regulated employment and amusement. Children and youth who are

kept at school and confined to books, cannot have sound physical constitutions. The exercise of the brain in study, without corresponding physical exercise, has a tendency to attract the blood to the brain, and the circulation of the blood through the system becomes unbalanced. The brain has too much blood, and the extremities too little. There should be rules, regulating their studies to certain hours, and then a portion of their time should be spent in physical labor. And if their habits of eating, dressing, and sleeping, were in accordance with physical law, they could obtain an education without sacrificing physical and mental health.

The book of Genesis gives quite a definite account of social and individual life, and yet we have no record of an infant being born blind, deaf, crippled, deformed, or imbecile. There is not an instance upon record of a natural death in infancy, childhood, or early manhood. There is no account of men and women dying of disease. Obituary notices in the book of Genesis run thus: "And all the days of Adam were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died." "And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died." Concerning others, the record states: "He lived to a good old age, and he died." It was so rare for a son to die before the father that such an occurrence was considered worthy of record: "And Haran

died before his father Terah." Haran was a father of children before his death.

God endowed man with so great vital force that he has withstood the accumulation of disease, brought upon the race in consequence of perverted habits, and he has continued for six thousand years. This fact of itself is enough to evidence to us the strength and electrical energy God' gave to man at his creation. It took more than two thousand years of crime, and indulgence of base passions, to bring bodily disease upon the race to any great extent. If Adam, at his creation, had not been endowed with twenty times as much vital force as men now have, the race, with present habits of living in violation of natural law, would have become extinct. At the period of the first advent of Christ, so rapidly had the race degenerated that an accumulation of disease pressed upon that generation, bringing in a tide of woe, and weight of misery inexpressible. The wretched condition of the world at the present time was presented before me. Since Adam's fall, the race has been degenerating. Some of the reasons for the present deplorable conditions of men and women, formed in the image of God, was shown me. The sense of how much must be done to arrest, even in a degree, the physical, mental, and moral decay caused my heart to be sick and faint.

God did not create the race in its present feeble condition. This state of things is not the work of Providence, but the work of

man, brought about by wrong habits and abuses, by violating the laws God has made to govern his existence. Through the temptation of appetite, Adam and Eve first fell from their high, holy, and happy estate. Through the same temptation have the race become enfeebled. They have permitted appetite and passion to take the throne, and to bring into subjection reason and intellect.

So long has the violation of physical law, and human suffering as the consequence, prevailed that men and women look upon the present state of sickness, suffering, debility, and premature death, as the appointed lot of humanity. Man came from the hand of his Creator, perfect and beautiful in form, and so filled with vital force that it was more than a thousand years before the corrupt appetite and passions, and general violation of physical law, was sensibly felt upon the race. More recent generations have been feeling the pressure of infirmity and disease still more rapidly and heavily with every generation. The vital forces have been greatly weakened by indulgence of appetite and lustful passion.

The patriarchs from Adam to Noah, with but few exceptions, lived nearly a thousand years. Since the days of Noah, the length of life has been tapering. Those suffering with disease were brought to Christ for him to heal, from every town, city, and village; for they were afflicted with all manner of diseases. And disease has been steadily on

the increase through successive generations since that period. Because of the continued violation of the laws of life, mortality has increased to a fearful extent. The years of man have been shortened, so that the present generation pass off to the grave, even before the generations that lived the first few thousand years after the creation came upon the stage of action.

Disease has been transmitted from parents to children, from generation to generation. Infants in their cradle are miserably afflicted because of the sins of their parents, which have lessened their vital force. Their wrong habits of eating and dressing, and their general dissipation, are transmitted, as an inheritance to their children. Many are born insane, deformed, blind, deaf, and a very large class deficient in intellect. The strange absence of principle which characterizes this generation, in disregarding the laws of life and health, is astonishing. Ignorance prevails upon this subject, while light is shining all around them. With the majority, their principal anxiety is, What shall I eat? what shall I drink? and wherewithal shall I be clothed? Notwithstanding all that is said and written in regard to how we should treat our bodies, appetite is the great law which governs men and women generally.

The moral powers are beclouded, because men and women will not live in obedience to the laws of health, and make this great

subject a personal duty. Parents bequeath to their offspring their own perverted habits, and loathsome diseases corrupt the blood, and enervate the brain. The majority of men and women remain in ignorance of the laws of their being, and indulge appetite and passion at the expense of intellect and morals, and seem willing to remain in ignorance of the result of their violation of nature's laws. They indulge the depraved appetite in the use of slow poisons, which corrupt the blood, and undermine the nervous forces, and in consequence bring upon themselves sickness and death. Their friends call the result of their own course the dispensation of Providence. In this they insult Heaven. They rebelled against the laws of nature, and suffered the punishment of her abused laws. Suffering and mortality now prevail everywhere, especially among the children. How great is the contrast between this generation, and those who lived during the first two thousand years!

I inquired if this tide of woe could not be prevented, and something done to save the youth of this generation from the ruin which threatens them. I was shown one great cause of the existing deplorable state of things is, that parents do not feel under obligation to bring up their children to conform to physical law. Mothers love their children with an idolatrous love, and they indulge their appetite when they know that it will injure the health of the children, and thereby bring upon them disease and unhap-

piness. This cruel kindness is carried out to a great extent in the present generation. The desires of children are gratified at the expense of health and happy tempers, because it is easier for the mother, for the time being, to gratify than to withhold that which her children clamor for.

Thus mothers are sowing the seed that will spring up and bear fruit. The children are not educated to deny their appetites, and restrict their desires. And they become selfish, exacting, disobedient, unthankful, and unholy. Mothers who are doing this work of sowing will reap with bitterness the seed they have sown. They have sinned against Heaven and against their children, and God will hold them accountable.

Had the system of education generations back been conducted upon altogether a different plan, the youth of this generation would not now be so depraved and worthless. The managers and teachers of schools should have been those who understood physiology, and who had an interest, not only to educate youth in the sciences, but to teach them how to preserve health, in order to use their knowledge to the best account after they had obtained it. There should have been in connection with the schools establishments for various branches of labor, that the students might have employment, and necessary exercise out of school hours.

The students' employment and amusements should have been regulated in reference to physical law, and adapted to preserve

to them the healthy tone of all the powers of the body and mind. Then their education in practical business could have been obtained, while their literary progress was being secured. Students at school should have had their moral sensibilities aroused to see and feel that society had claims upon them, and that they should so live in obedience to natural law that they could, by their existence and influence, by precept and example, be an advantage and blessing to society. It should be impressed upon youth that all have an influence that is constantly telling upon society, to improve and elevate, or to lower and debase. The first study of youth should be to know themselves and how to keep their bodies in health.

Many parents have kept their children at school nearly the year round. These children have gone through the routine of study mechanically, and they have not retained that which they learned. Many of these constant students seem almost destitute of intellectual life. The monotony of continual study wearies the mind, and they have but little interest in their lessons, and to many the application to books becomes painful. They had not an inward love of thought, and ambition to acquire knowledge. They did not encourage in themselves reflection, and investigation of objects and things.

Children are in great need of proper education, in order that their lives should be of use in the world. But any effort that exalts

intellectual culture above moral training is misdirected. Instructing, cultivating, polishing, and refining youth and children should be the main burden with both parents and teachers. Close reasoners and logical thinkers are few ; for the reason that false influences have checked the development of the intellect. The supposition of parents and teachers that continual study would strengthen the intellect has proved erroneous ; for it has had in many cases the opposite effect.

In the early education of children, many parents and teachers fail to understand that the greatest attention needs to be given to the physical constitution, that a healthy condition of body and brain can be secured. It has been the custom to encourage children to attend school when they are mere babies, needing a mother's care. Children of a delicate age are frequently crowded into ill-ventilated school rooms, to sit upon poorly constructed benches, and the young and tender frames have, through sitting in wrong positions, become deformed.

The disposition and habits of youth will be very likely to be manifested in the matured man. You may bend a young tree to almost any form that you may choose, and let it remain and grow as you have bent it, and it will be a deformed tree, and will ever tell of the injury and abuse received at your hand. You may, after years of growth, try to straighten the tree, but all your efforts will prove unavailing. It will ever be a