Christian Nurture

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Title: Christian Nurture.

Creator(s): Bushnell, Horace (1802-1876)

Print Basis: Scribner, Armstrong, & Co. 1876

CCEL Subjects: All;

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CHRISTIAN NURTURE.

BY HORACE BUSHNELL.

" And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be

the peace of thy children."

Isaiah, liv. 18.

NEW YORK:

SCRIBNER, ARMSTRONG & CO.,

1876.

Copyright, 1876,

BY

MARY A. BUSHNELL.&gt;/p&gt;

JOHN F. TROW & SON,

PRINTERS AND BOOKBINDERS,

205-213 East 12th St.,

NEW YORK.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

There has hitherto been no uniform edition of Dr. Bushnell's works.

Appearing at wide distances of time, they have taken such shape as

suited the occasion; and it has for some time seemed very desirable

that they should be brought together in a more permanent and

serviceable form. It was Dr. Bushnell's own wish that this should be

done; and he has largely revised his books in preparation for this end.

It is only to be regretted that it was not reached during his lifetime

and under his supervision; but his failing health compelled him to

relinquish the task, which his death has left to other hands to

complete.

In the present volume we offer to his readers the first of the proposed

uniform edition, in which most of his works will be included. The other

volumes will follow this as rapidly as possible, not in the original

order of their publication, but rather in that cf their relative

importance to the public; and it is hoped that the edition, when

finished, may prove so compact and attractive in form, as to fulfill

the design so long entertained, and satisfy the expectation that has

awaited it.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

PREFACE.

THE subject of this volume is one of the highest, in the order of

consequence, both as respects the welfare of religion and of human

society. No apology therefore is needed, for the giving to the public

of any thing concerning it, which is honestly meant, and thoughtfully

prepared.

I should have preferred, on some accounts, to write a proper treatise

on the subject--which this volume is not. The shape it has taken will

be sufficiently explained, by the facts and considerations, that have

been determining causes, in the process of its construction. Thirteen

years ago I was drawn, by solicitation from others, into the

publication of two discourses, the first two of this volume, under the

title Christian Nurture. Afterwards, these were republished with

another, the fourth of the present volume, and with other articles

variously related, under the same title. These publications have been

out of print for some years; for I have preferred the discontinuance of

publication, till I might be able to present the subject in a more

adequate and complete manner. The present volume is the result.

In preparing it, I could not easily consent to lay aside, or pass into

oblivion, the two discourses above referred to; for, under the fortune

that befel them, they had become a little historical. In this fuller

treatment of the subject therefore, I have allowed them to stand,

requiring the additions made, to take their shape or type. Thirteen new

essays, in the form of discourses, though never used as such, but

written simply for the discussion's sake, are thus added; and the

volume, which virtually covers the ground of a treatise, takes the form

of successive topical discussions, or essays, on so many themes

included in the general subject.

I need offer no apology for retaining the old title, in a volume that

is virtually new; or for reasserting, with more emphasis and

deliberation, after an interval of years, what the years have only

established and made firm in my Christian convictions.

H. B.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CONTENTS.

PART I.--THE DOCTRINE.

I. --What Christian nurture is, 9

II. --What Christian nurture is 33

III. --The ostrich nurture 65

IV. --The organic unity of the family 90

V. --Infant baptism, how developed 123

VI. --Apostolic authority of infant baptism 145

VII. --Church membership of children 162

VIII. --The out-populating power of the Christian stock 195

PART II.--THE MODE

I. --When and where the nurture begins 227

II. --Parental qualifications 252

III. --Physical nurture, to be a means of grace 271

IV. --The treatment that discourages piety 295

V. --Family government 314

VI. --Plays and pastimes, holidays and Sundays 338

VII. --The Christian teaching of children 366

VIII. --Family prayers 385

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

PART I.--THE DOCTRINE.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I.

WHAT CHRISTIAN NURTURE IS.

"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."--Ephesians,

vi. 4.

THERE is then some kind of nurture which is of the Lord, deriving a

quality and a power from Him, and communicating the same. Being

instituted By Him, it will of necessity have a method and a character

peculiar to itself, or rather to Him. It will be the Lord's way of

education, having aims appropriate to Him, and, if realized in its full

intent, terminating in results impossible to be reached by any merely

human method.

What then is the true idea of Christian or divine nurture, as

distinguished from that which is not Christian? What is its aim? What

its method of working? What its powers and instruments? What its

contemplated results? Few questions have greater moment; and it is one

of the pleasant signs of the times, that the subject involved is

beginning to attract new interest, and excite a spirit of inquiry which

heretofore has not prevailed in our churches.

In ordinary cases, the better and more instructive way of handling this

subject, would be to go directly into the practical methods of parental

discipline, and show by what modes of government and instruction we may

hope to realize the best results. But unhappily the public mind is

preoccupied extensively by a view of the whole subject, which I must

regard as a theoretical mistake, and one which will involve, as long as

it continues, practical results systematically injurious. This mistaken

view it is necessary, if possible, to remove. And accordingly what I

have to say will take the form of an argument on the question thus put

ill issue; though I design to gather round the subject, as I proceed,

as much of practical instruction as the mode of the argument will

suffer. Assuming then the question above stated, What is the true idea

of Christian education?--I answer in the following proposition, which

it will be the aim of my argument to establish, viz:

That the child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as

being otherwise.

In other words, the aim, effort, and expectation should be, not, as is

commonly assumed, that the child is to grow up in sin, to be converted

after he comes to a mature age; but that he is to open on the world as

one that is spiritually renewed, not remembering the time when he went

through a technical experience, but seeming rather to have loved what

is good from his earliest years. I do not affirm that every child may,

in fact and without exception, be so trained that he certainly will

grow up a Christian. The qualifications it may be necessary to add will

be given in another place, where they can be stated more intelligibly.

This doctrine is not a novelty, now rashly and for the first time

propounded, as some of you may be tempted to suppose. I shall show you,

before I have done with the argument, that it is as old as the

Christian church, and prevails extensively at the present day in other

parts of the world. Neither let your own experience raise a prejudice

against it. If you have endeavored to realize the very truth I here

affirm, but find that your children do not exhibit the character you

have looked for; if they seem to be intractable to religious

influences, and sometimes to display an apparent aversion to the very

subject of religion itself, you are not of course to conclude that the

doctrine I here maintain is untrue or impracticable. You may be

unreasonable in your expectations of your children.

Possibly, there may be seeds of holy principle in them, which you do

not discover. A child acts out his present feelings, the feelings of

the moment, without qualification or disguise. And how, many times,

would all you appear, if you were to do the same? Will you expect of

them to be better, and more constant and consistent, than yourselves;

or will you rather expect them to be children, human children still,

living a mixed life, trying out the good and evil of the world, and

preparing, as older Christians do, when they have taken a lesson of

sorrow and emptiness, to turn again to the true good?

Perhaps they will go through a rough mental struggle, at some future

day, and seem, to others and to themselves, there to have entered on a

Christian life. And yet it may be true that there was still some root

of right principle established in their childhood, which is here only

quickened and developed, as when Christians of a mature age are revived

in their piety, after a period of spiritual lethargy; for it is

conceivable that regenerate character may exist, long before it is

fully and formally developed.

But suppose there is really no trace or seed of holy principle in your

children, has there been no fault of piety and constancy in your

church? no want of Christian sensibility and love to God? no carnal

spirit visible to them and to all, and imparting its noxious and

poisonous quality to the Christian atmosphere in which they have had

their nurture? For it is not for you alone to realize all that is

included in the idea of Christian education. It belongs to the church

of God, according to the degree of its social power over you and in you

and around your children, to bear a part of the responsibility with

you.

Then, again, have you nothing to blame in yourselves? no lack of

faithfulness? no indiscretion of manner or of temper? no mistake of

duty, which, with a better and more cultivated piety, you would have

been able to avoid? Have you been so nearly even with your privilege

and duty, that you can find no relief but to lay some charge upon God,

or comfort yourselves in the conviction that he has appointed the

failure you deplore? When God marks out a plan of education, or sets up

an aim to direct its efforts, you will see, at once, that he could not

base it on a want of piety in you, or on any imperfections that flow

from a want of piety It must be a plan measured by Himself and the

fullness of his own gracious intentions.

Besides, you must not assume that we, in this age, are the best

Christians that have ever lived, or most likely to produce all the

fruits of piety. An assumption so pleasing to our vanity is more easily

made than verified, but vanity is the weakest as it is the cheapest of

all arguments. We have some good points, in which we compare favorably

with other Christians, and Christians of other times, but our style of

piety is sadly deficient, in many respects, and that to such a degree

that we have little cause for self-congratulation. With all our

activity and boldness of movement, there is a certain hardness and

rudeness, a want of sensibility to things that do not lie in action,

which can not be too much deplored, or too soon rectified. We hold a

piety of conquest rather than of love,--a kind of public piety, that is

strenuous and fiery on great occasions, but wants the beauty of

holiness, wants constancy, singleness of aim, loveliness, purity,

richness, blamelessness, and--if I may add another term not so

immediately religious, but one that carries, by association, a thousand

religious qualities--wants domesticity of character; wants them, I

mean, not as compared with the perfect standard of Christ, but as

compared with other examples of piety that have been given in former

times, and others that are given now.

For some reason, we do not make a Christian atmosphere about us--do not

produce the conviction that we are living unto God. There is a

marvelous want of savor in our piety. It is a flower of autumn, colored

as highly as it need be to the eye, but destitute of fragrance. It is

too much to hope that, with such an instrument, we can fulfill the true

idea of Christian education. Any such hope were even presumptuous. At

the same time, there is no so ready way of removing the deficiencies

just described, as to recall our churches to their duties in domestic

life; those humble, daily, hourly duties, where the spirit we breathe

shall be a perpetual element of power and love, bathing the life of

childhood.

Thus much it was necessary to say, for the removal of prejudices that

are likely to rise up in your minds, and make you inaccessible to the

arguments I may offer. Let all such prejudices be removed, or, if this

be too much, let them, at least, be suspended till you have heard what

I have to advance; for it can not be desired of you to believe any

thing more than what is shown you by adequate proofs. Which also it is

right to ask that you will receive, in a spirit of conviction, such as

becomes our wretched and low attainments, and with a willingness to let

God be exalted, though at the expense of some abasement in ourselves.

In pursuing the argument, I shall--

I. Collect some considerations which occur to us, viewing the subject

on the human side. and then--

II. Show how far and by what methods God has justified, on his part,

the doctrine we maintain.

There is then, as the subject appears to us--

1. No absurdity in supposing that children are to grow up in Christ. On

the other hand, if there is no absurdity, there is a very clear moral

incongruity in setting up a contrary supposition, to be the aim of a

system of Christian education. There could not be a worse or more

baleful implication given to a child, than that he is to reject God and

all holy principle, till he has come to a mature age. What authority

have you from the Scriptures to tell your child, or, by any sign, to

show him, that you do not expect him truly to love and obey God, till

after he has spent whole years in hatred and wrong? What authority to

make him feel that he is the most unprivileged of all human beings,

capable of sin, but incapable of repentance; old enough to resist all

good, but too young to receive any good whatever? It is reasonable to

suppose that you have some express authority for a lesson so manifestly

cruel and hurtful, else you would shudder to give it. I ask you for the

chapter and verse, out of which it is derived. Meantime, wherein would

it be less incongruous for you to teach your child that he is to lie

and steal, and go the whole round of the vices, and then, after he

comes to mature age, reform his conduct by the rules of virtue? Perhaps

you do not give your child to expect that he is to grow up in sin; you

only expect that he will yourself. That is scarcely better: for that

which is your expectation, will assuredly be his; and what is more, any

attempt to maintain a discipline at war with your own secret

expectations, will only make a hollow and worthless figment of that

which should be an open, earnest reality. You will never practically

aim at what you practically despair of, and if you do not practically

aim to unite your child to God, you will aim at something less; that

is, something unchristian, wrong, sinful.

But my child is a sinner, you will say; and how can I expect him to

begin a right life, until God gives him a new heart? This is the common

way of speaking, and I state the objection in its own phraseology, that

it may recognize its,elf. Who then has told you that a child can not

have the new heart of which you speak? Whence do you learn that if you

live the life of Christ, before him and with him, the law of the Spirit

of Life may not be such as to include and quicken him also? And why

should it be thought incredible that there should be some really good

principle awakened in the mind of a child? For this is all that is

implied in a Christian state. The Christian is one who has simply begun

to love what is good for its own sake, and why should it be thought

impossible for a child to have this love begotten in him? Take any

scheme of depravity you please, there is yet nothing in it to forbid

the possibility that a child should be led, in his first moral act, to

cleave unto what is good and right, any more than in the first of his

twentieth year. He is, in that case, only a child converted to good,

leading a mixed life as all Christians do. The good in him goes into

combat with the evil, and holds a qualified sovereignty. And why may

not this internal conflict of goodness cover the whole life from its

dawn, as well as any part of it? And what more appropriate to the

doctrine of spiritual influence itself, than to believe that as the

Spirit of Jehovah fills all the worlds of matter, and holds a presence

of power and government in all objects, so all human souls, the

infantile as well as the adult, have a nurture of the Spirit

appropriate to their age and their wants? What opinion is more

essentially monstrous, in fact, than that which regards the Holy Spirit

as having no agency in the immature souls of children who are growing

up, helpless and unconscious, into the perils of time?

2. It is to be expected that Christian education will radically differ

from that which is not Christian. Now, it is the very character and

mark of all unchristian education, that it brings up the child for

future conversion. No effort is made, save to form a habit of outward

virtue, and, if God please to convert the family to something higher

and better, after they come to the age of maturity, it is well. Is then

Christian education, or the nurture of the Lord, no way different from

this? Or is it rather to be supposed that it will have a higher aim and

a more sacred character?

And, since it is the distinction of Christian parents, that they are

themselves in the nurture of the Lord, since Christ and the Divine

Love, communicated through him, are become the food of their life, what

will they so naturally seek as to have their children partakers with

them, heirs together with them, in the grace of life? I am well aware

of the common impression that Christian education is sufficiently

distinguished by the endeavor of Christian parents to teach their

children the lessons of Scripture history, and the doctrines or dogmas

of Scripture theology. But if they are given to understand, at the same

time, that these lessons can be expected to produce no fruit till they

are come to a mature age--that they are to grow up still in the same

character as other children do, who have no such instruction--what is

this but to enforce the practical rejection of all the lessons taught

them? And which, in truth, is better for them, to grow up in sin under

Scripture light, with a heart hardened by so many religious lessons; or

to grow up in sin, unvexed and unannoyed by the wearisome drill of

lectures that only discourage all practical benefit? Which is better,

to be piously brought up in sin, or to be allowed quietly to vegetate

in it?

These are questions that I know not how to decide; but the doubt in

which they leave us will at least suffice to show that Christian

education has, in this view, no such eminent advantages over that which

is unchristian, as to raise any broad and dignified distinction between

them. We certainly know that much of what is called Christian nurture,

only serves to make the subject of religion odious, and that, as nearly

as we can discover, in exact proportion to the amount of religious

teaching received. And no small share of the difficulty to be overcome

afterwards, in the struggle of conversion, is created in just this way.

On the other hand, you will hear, for example, of cases like the

following: A young man, correctly but not religiously brought up, light

and gay in his manners, and thoughtless hitherto in regard to any thing

of a serious nature, happens accidentally one Sunday, while his friends

are gone to ride, to take down a book on the evidences of Christianity.

His eye, floating over one of the pages, becomes fixed, and he is

surprised to find his feelings flowing out strangely into its holy

truths. He is conscious of no struggle of hostility, but a new joy

dawns in his being. Henceforth, to the end of a long and useful life,

he is a Christian man. The love into which he was surprised continues

to flow, and he is remarkable, in the churches, all his life long, as

one of the most beautiful, healthful, and dignified examples of

Christian piety. Now, a very little miseducation, called Christian,

discouraging the piety it teaches, and making enmity itself a necessary

ingredient in the struggle of conversion, conversion no reality without

a struggle, might have sufficed to close the mind of this man against

every thought of religion to the end of life.

Such facts (for the case above given is a fact and not a fancy) compel

us to suspect the value of much that is called Christian education.

They suggest the possibility also that Christian piety should begin in

other and milder forms of exercise, than those which commonly

distinguish the conversion of adults; that Christ himself, by that

renewing Spirit who can sanctify from the womb, should be practically

infused into the childish mind; in other words, that the house, having

a domestic Spirit of grace dwelling in it, should become the church of

childhood, the table and hearth a holy rite, and life an element of

saving power. Something is wanted that is better than teaching,

something that transcends mere effort and will-work--the loveliness of

a good life, the repose of faith, the confidence of righteous

expectation, the sacred and cheerful liberty of the Spirit--all glowing

about the young soul, as a warm and genial nurture, and forming in it,

by methods that are silent and imperceptible, a spirit of duty and

religious obedience to God. This only is Christian nurture, the nurture

of the Lord.

3. It is a fact that all Christian parents would like to see their

children grow up in piety; and the better Christians they are, the more

earnestly they desire it; and, the more lovely and constant the

Christian spirit they manifest, the more likely it is, in general, that

their children will early display the Christian character. This is

current opinion. But why should a Christian parent, the deeper his

piety and the more closely he is drawn to God, be led to desire, the

more earnestly, what, in God's view, is even absurd or impossible? And,

if it be generally seen that the children of such are more likely to

become Christians early, what forbids the hope that, if they were riper

still in their piety, living a more single and Christ-like life, and

more cultivated in their views of family nurture, they might see their

children grow up always in piety towards God? Or, if they may not

always see it as clearly as they desire, might they not still be able

to implant some holy principle, which shall be the seed of a Christian

character in their children, though not developed fully and visibly

till a later period in life?

4. Assuming the corruption of human nature, when should we think it

wisest to undertake or expect a remedy? When evil is young and pliant

to good, or when it is confirmed by years of sinful habit? And when, in

fact, is the human heart found to be so ductile to the motives of

religion, as in the simple, ingenuous age of childhood? How easy is it

then, as compared with the stubbornness of adult years, to make all

wrong seem odious, all good lovely and desirable. If not discouraged by

some ill-temper which bruises all the gentle sensibilities, or repelled

by some technical view of religious character which puts it beyond his

age, how ready is the child to be taken by good, as it were beforehand,

and yield his ductile nature to the truth and Spirit of God, and to a

fixed prejudice against all that God forbids.

He can not understand, of course, in the earliest stage of childhood,

the philosophy of religion as a renovated experience, and that is not

the form of the first lessons he is to receive. He is not to be told

that he must have a new heart and exercise faith in Christ's atonement.

We are to understand, that a right spirit may be virtually exercised in

children, when, as yet, it is not intellectually received, or as a form

of doctrine. Thus, if they are put upon an effort to be good,

connecting the fact that God desires it and will help them in the

endeavor, that is all which, in a very early age, they can receive, and

that includes every thing--repentance, love, duty, dependence, faith.

Nay, the operative truth necessary to a new life, may possibly be

communicated through and from the parent, being revealed in his looks,

manners, and ways of life, before they are of all age to understand the

teaching of words; for the Christian scheme, the gospel, is really

wrapped up in the life of every Christian parent, and beams out from

him as a living epistle, before it escapes from the lips, or is taught

in words. And the Spirit of truth may as well make this living truth

effectual, as the preaching of the gospel itself.

Never is it too early for good to be communicated. Infancy and

childhood are the ages most pliant to good. And who can think it

necessary that the plastic nature of childhood must first be hardened

into stone, and stiffened into enmity towards God and all duty, before

it can become a candidate for Christian character! There could not be a

more unnecessary mistake, and it is as unnatural and pernicious, I

fear, as it is unnecessary.

There are many who assume the radical goodness of human nature, and the

work of Christian education is, in their view, only to educate or educe

the good that is in us. Let no one be disturbed by the suspicion of a

coincidence between what I have here said and such a theory. The

natural pravity of man is plainly asserted in the Scriptures, and, if

it were not, the familiar laws of physiology would require us to

believe, what amounts to the same thing. And if neither Scripture nor

physiology taught us the doctrine, if the child was born as clear of

natural prejudice or damage, as Adam before his sin, spiritual

education, or, what is the same, probation, that which trains a being

for a stable, intelligent virtue hereafter, would still involve an

experiment of evil, therefore a fall and a bondage under the laws of

evil; so that, view the matter as we will, there is no so unreasonable

assumption, none so wide of all just philosophy, as that which proposes

to form a child to virtue, by simply educing or drawing out what is in

him.

The growth of Christian virtue is no vegetable process, no mere onward

development. It involves a struggle with evil, a fall and a rescue. The

soul becomes established in holy virtue, as a free exercise, only as it

is passed round the corner of fall and redemption, ascending thus unto

God through a double experience, in which it ]earns the bitterness of

evil and the worth of good, fighting its way out of one, and achieving

the other as a victory. The child, therefore, may as well begin life

under a law of hereditary damage, as to plunge himself into evil by his

own experiment, which he will as naturally do from the simple impulse

of curiosity, or the instinct of knowledge, as from any noxious quality

in his mold derived by descent. For it is not sin which he derives from

his parents; at least, not sin in any sense which imports blame, but

only some prejudice to the perfect harmony of this mold, some kind of

pravity or obliquity which inclines him to evil. These suggestions are

offered, not as necessary to be received in every particular, but

simply to show that the scheme of education proposed, is not to be

identified with another, which assumes the radical goodness of human

nature, and according to which, if it be true, Christian education is

insignificant.

5. It is implied in all our religious philosophy, that if a child ever

does any thing in a right spirit, ever loves any thing because it is

good and right, it involves the dawn of a new life. This we can not

deny or doubt, without bringing in question our whole scheme of

doctrine. Is it then incredible that some really good feeling should be

called into exercise in a child? In all the discipline of the house,

quickened as it should be by the Spirit of God, is it true that he can

never once be brought to submit to parental authority lovingly and

because it is right? Must we even hold the absurdity of the scripture

counsel--"Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right?"

When we speak thus of a love for what is right and good, we must of

course discriminate between the mere excitement of a natural

sensibility to pleasure in the contemplation of what is good (of which

the worst minds are more or less capable,) and a practicable

subordination of the soul to its power, a practicable embrace of its

law. The child must not only be touched with some gentle emotions

toward what is right, but he must love it with a fixed love, love it

for the sake of its principle, receive it as a vital and formative

power.

Nor is there any age, which offers itself to God's truth and love, and

to that Quickening Spirit whence all good proceeds, with so much of

ductile feeling and susceptibilities so tender. The child is under

parental authority too for the very purpose, it would seem, of having

the otherwise abstract principle of all duty impersonated in his

parents, and thus brought home to his practical embrace; so that,

learning to obey his parents in the Lord, because it is right, he may

thus receive, before he can receive it intellectually, the principle of

all piety and holy obedience. And when he is brought to exercise a

spirit of true and loving submission to the good law of his parents,

what will you see, many times: but a look of childish joy, and a happy

sweetness of manner, and a ready delight in authority, as like to all

the demonstrations of Christian experience, as any thing childish can

be to what is mature?

6. Children have been so trained as never to remember the time when

they began to be religious. Baxter was, at one time, greatly troubled

concerning himself, because he could recollect no time when there was a

gracious change in his character. But he discovered, at length, that

"education is as properly a means of grace as preaching," and thus

found the sweeter comfort in his love to God, that he learned to love

him so early. The European churches, generally, regard Christian piety

more as a habit of life, formed under the training of childhood, and

less as a marked spiritual change in experience. In Germany, for

example, the church includes all the people, and it is remarkable that,

under a scheme so loose, and with so much of pernicious error taught in

the pulpit, there is yet so much of deep religious feeling, so much of

lovely and simple character, and a savor of Christian piety so

generally prevalent in the community. So true is this, that the German

people are every day spoken of as a people religious by nature; no

other way being observed of accounting for the strong religious bent

they manifest. Whereas it is due, beyond any reasonable question, to

the fact that children are placed under a form of treatment which

expects them to be religious, and are not discouraged by the demand of

an experience above their years.

Again, the Moravian Brethren, it is agreed by all, give as ripe and

graceful an exhibition of piety, as any body of Christians living on

the earth, and it is the radical distinction of their system that it

rests its power on Christian education. They make their churches

schools of holy nurture to childhood, and expect their children to grow

up there, as plants in the house of the Lord. Accordingly it is

affirmed that not one in ten of the members of that church, recollects

any time when he began to be religious. Is it then incredible that what

has been can be? Would it not be wiser and more modest, when facts are

against us, to admit that there is certainly some bad error, either in

our life, or in our doctrine, or in both, which it becomes us to amend?

Once more, if we narrowly examine the relation of parent and child, we

shall not fail to discover some thing like a law of organic connection,

as regards character, subsisting between them. Such a connection as

makes it easy to believe, and natural to expect, that the faith of the

one will be propagated in the other. Perhaps I should rather say, such

a connection as induces the conviction that the character of one is

actually included in that of the other, as a seed is formed in the

capsule; and being there matured, by a nutriment derived from the stem,

is gradually separated from it. It is a singular fact, that many

believe substantially the same thing, in regard to evil character, but

have no thought of any such possibility in regard to good. There has

been much speculation, of late, as to whether a child is born in

depravity, or whether the depraved character is superinduced

afterwards. But, like many other great questions, it determines much

less than its commonly supposed; for, according to the most propel'

view of the subject, a child is really not born till he emerges from

the infantile state, and never before that time can he be said to

receive a separate and properly individual nature.

The declarations of Scripture, and the laws of physiology, I have

already intimated, compel the belief that a child's nature is somehow

depravated by descent from parents, who are under the corrupting

effects of sin. But this, taken as a question relating to the mere

punctum temporis, or precise point of birth, is not a question of any

so grave import as is generally supposed; for the child, after birth,

is still within the matrix of the parental life, and will be, more or

less, for many years. And the parental life will be flowing into him

all that time, just as naturally, and by a law as truly organic, as

when the sap of the trunk flows into a limb. We must not govern our

thoughts, in such a matter, by our eyes; and because the physical

separation has taken place, conclude that no organic relation remains.

Even the physical being of the child is dependent still for many

months, in the matter of nutrition, on organic processes not in itself.

Meantime, the mental being and character have scarcely begun to have a

proper individual life. Will, in connection with conscience, is the

basis of personality, or individuality, and these exist as yet only in

their rudimental type, as when the form of a seed is beginning to be

unfolded at the root of a flower.

At first, the child is held as a mere passive lump in the arms, and he

opens into conscious life, under the soul of the parent streaming into

his eyes and ears, through the manners and tones of the nursery. The

kind and degree of passivity are gradually changed as life advances. A

little farther on it is observed that a smile wakens a smile; any kind

of sentiment or passion, playing in the face of the parent, wakens a

responsive sentiment or passion. Irritation irritates, a frown withers,

love expands a look congenial to itself, and why not holy love? Next

the ear is opened to the understanding of words, but what words the

child shall hear, he can not choose, and has as little capacity to

select the sentiments that are poured into his soul. Farther on, the

parents begin to govern him by appeals to will, expressed in commands,

and whatever their requirement may be, he can as little withstand it,

as the violet can cool the scorching sun, or the tattered leaf can tame

the hurricane. Next they appoint his school, choose his books, regulate

his company, decide what form of religion, and what religious opinions

he shall be taught, by taking him to a church of their own selection.

In all this, they infringe upon no right of the child, they only

fulfill an office which belongs to them. Their will and character are

designed to be the matrix of the child's will and character. Meantime,

he approaches more and more closely, and by a gradual process, to the

proper rank and responsibility of an individual creature, during all

which process of separation, he is having their exercises and ways

translated into him. Then, at last, he comes forth to act his part in

such color of evil, and why not of good, as he has derived from them.

The tendency of all our modern speculations is to an extreme

individualism, and we carry our doctrines of free will so far as to

make little or nothing of organic laws; not observing that character

may be, to a great extent, only the free development of exercises

previously wrought in us, or extended to us, when other wills had us

within their sphere. All the Baptist theories of religion are based in

this error. They assume, as a first truth, that no such thing is

possible as an organic connection of character, an assumption which is

plainly refuted by what we see with our eyes, and, as I shall by and by

show, by the declarations of Scripture. We have much to say also, in

common with the Baptists, about the beginning of moral agency, and we

seem to fancy that there is some definite moment when a child becomes a

moral agent, passing out of a condition where he is a moral nullity,

and where no moral agency touches his being. Whereas he is rather to be

regarded, at the first, as lying within the moral agency of the parent,

and passing out, by degrees, through a course of mixed agency, to a

proper independency and self possession. The supposition that he

becomes, at some certain moment, a complete moral agent, which a moment

before he was not, is clumsy, and has no agreement with observation.

The separation is gradual. Ie is never, at any moment after birth, to

be regarded as perfectly beyond the sphere of good and bad exercises;

for the parent exercises himself in the child, playing his emotions and

sentiments, and working a character in him, by virtue of an organic

power.

And this is the very idea of Christian education, that it begins with

nurture or cultivation. And the intention is that the Christian life

and spirit of the parents, which are in and by the Spirit of God, shall

flow into the mind of the child, to blend with his incipient and

half-formed exercises; that they shall thus beget their own good within

him--their thoughts, opinions, faith, and love, which are to become a

little more, and yet a little more, his own separate exercise, but

still the same in character. The contrary assumption, that virtue must

be the product of separate and absolutely independent choice, is pure

assumption. As regards tle measure of personal merit and demerit, it is

doubtless true that every subject of God is to be responsible only for

what is his own. But virtue still is rather a state of being than an

act or series of acts; and, if we look at the causes which induce or

prepare such a state, the will of the person himself may have a part

among these causes more or less important, and it works no absurdity to

suppose that one may be even prepared to such a state, by causes prior

to his own will; so that, when be sets off to act for himself, his

struggle and duty may be rather to sustain and perfect the state begun,

than to produce a new one. Certain it is that we are never, at any age,

so independent as to be wholly out of the reach of organic laws which

affect our character.

All society is organic--the church, the state, the school, the family;

and there is a spirit in each of these organisms, peculiar to itself,

and more or less hostile, more or less favorable to religious

character, and to some extent, at least, sovereign over the individual

man. A very great share of the power in what is called a revival of

religion, is organic power; nor is it any the less divine on that

account. The child is only more within the power of organic laws than

we all are. We possess only a mixed individuality all our life long. A

pure, separate, individual man, living wholly within, and from himself,

is a mere fiction. No such person ever existed, or ever can. I need not

say that this view of an organic connection of character subsisting

between parent and child, lays a basis for notions of Christian

education, far different from those which now prevail, under the cover

of a merely fictitious and mischievous individualism.

Perhaps it may be necessary to add, that, in the strong language I have

used concerning the organic connection of character between the parent

and the child, it is not designed to assert a power in the parent to

renew the child, or that the child can be renewed by any agency of the

Spirit less immediate, than that which renews the parent himself. When

a germ is formed on the stem of any plant, the formative instinct of

the plant may be said in one view to produce it; but the same solar

heat which quickens the plant, must quicken also the germ, and sustain

the internal action of growth, by a common presence in both. So, if

there be an organic power of character in the parent, such as that of

which I have spoken, it is not a complete power in itself, but only

such a power as demands the realizing presence of the Spirit of God,

both in the parent and the child, to give it effect. As Paul said, "I

have begotten you through the gospel," so may we say of the parent,

who, having a living gospel enveloped in his life, brings it into

organic connection with the soul of childhood. But the declaration

excludes the necessity of a divine influence, not more in one case than

in the other.

Such are some of the considerations that offer themselves, viewing our

subject on the human side, or as it appears in the light of human

evidence--all concurring to produce the conviction, that it is the only

true idea of Christian education, that the child is to grow up in the

life of the parent, and be a Christian in principle, from his earliest

years.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

II. WHAT CHRISTIAN NURTURE IS.

"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."--Ephesians,

vi. 4.

WE proceed now to inquire--

II. How far God, in the revelation made of his character and will,

favors the view of Christian nurture vindicated, in a former discourse,

by arguments and evidences of an inferior nature? And--

1. According to all that God has taught us concerning his own

dispositions, he desires on his part, that children should grow up in

piety, as earnestly as the parent can desire it; nay, as much more

earnestly, as he hates sin more intensely, and desires good with less

mixture of qualification. Goodness, or the production of goodness, is

the supreme end of God, and therefore, we know, on first principles,

that he desires to bestow whatsoever spiritual grace is necessary to

the moral renovation of childhood, and will do it, unless some

collateral reasons in his plan, involving the extension of holy virtue,

require him to withhold.

Thus, if nothing were hung upon parental faithfulness and example, if

the child were not used, in some degree or way, as all argument, to

hold the parent to a life of Christian diligence, then the good

principle in the parent might lack the necessary stimulus to bring it

to maturity. Or, if all children alike, in spite of ithe evil and

unchristian example of the house, were to be started into life as

spiritually renewed, one of the strongest motives to holy living would

be taken away from parents, in the fact that their children are safe as

regards a good beginning, without any carefulness in them, or

prayerfulness in their life; and their own virtue might so overgrow

itself with weeds, as never to attain to a sound maturity. Let it be

enough to know, on first principles in the character of God, that he

will so dispense his spiritual agency to you and to your children, as

to produce, considering the freedom of you both, the best measure and

the ripest state of holy virtue. And how far short is this of the

conclusion, that if you live as you ought and may yourselves, God will

so dispense his Spirit that you may see your children grow up in piety?

Observe, too, that he expressly pledges his Holy Spirit to you, as one

of his first gifts, and, what is more, even commands you to be filled

with the Spirit; and considering the organic relation that subsists, by

his own appointment, between you and your children, how far off is he,

in this, from pledging you a mercy that accrues to their benefit? He

appoints you also to be a light to the world, and, by the grace he

pours into your being, prepares you to be; how much more a light to

minds that are fed by simple nurture from your own? And when you

consider how fond he is, if I may so speak, in the blessings he pours

on the good, of gathering their children with them in the same circle

of favor, how many of his promises, in all ages, run--"to you and to

your children," what better assurance can you reasonably ask, to

fortify your confidence in whatever spiritual grace may be necessary to

your utmost success?

2. If there be any such thing as Christian nurture, distinguished from

that which is not Christian, which is generally admitted, and, by the

Scriptures clearly asserted, then is it some kind of nurture which God

appoints. Does it then accord with the known character of God, to

appoint a scheme of education, the only proper result of which shall be

that children are trained up under it in sin? It would not be more

absurd to suppose that God has appointed church education, to produce a

first crop of sin, and then a crop of holiness. God appoints nothing of

which sin, and only sin, is to be the proper and legitimate result,

whether for a longer or a shorter time; least of all, a mode of

training which is to produce sin. Holy virtue is the aim of every plan

God adopts, every means he prescribes, and we have no right to look

only for sin, in that which he has appointed as a means of virtue. We

can not do it understandingly without great impiety.

3. God does expressly lay it upon us to expect that our children will

grow up in piety, under the parental nurture, and assumes the

possibility that such a result may ordinarily be realized. "Train up a

child"--how? for future conversion?--No, but "in the way he should go,

and when he is old he will not depart from it." If it be said that this

relates only to outward habits of virtue and vice, not to spiritual

life, the Old Testament, I reply, does not raise that distinction, as

it is raised in the New. It puts all good together, all evil together,

and regards a child trained up in the way he should go, as going in all

the ways, and fulfilling all the ideas of virtue. The phraseology of

the New Testament carries the same import. "Bring them up in the

nurture and admonition of the Lord," a form of expression, which

indicates the existence of a Divine nurture, that is to encompass the

child and mold him unto God; so that he shall be brought up, as it

were, in Him.

4. A time is foretold, as our churches generally believe, when all

shall know God, even from the least to the greatest; that is, shall

spiritually know him, or so that there shall be no need of exhorting

one another to know him; for intellectual knowledge is not carried by

exhortation. If such a time is ever to come, then, at least, children

are to grow up in Christ. Can it come too soon? And, if we have the

opinion that any such thing is impossible, either we, or those who come

after us, must get rid of it. A principal reason why the great

expectations of the future, that we, in this age, are giving out so

confidently, seem only visionary and idle dreams to many, is that we

are perpetually assuming their impossibility ourselves. Our very theory

of religion is, that men are to grow up in evil, and be dragged into

the church of God by conquest. The world is to lie in halves, and the

kingdom of God is to stretch itself side by side with the kingdom of

darkness, making sallies into it, and taking captive those who are

sufficiently hardened and bronzed in guiltiness to be converted!

Thus we assume even the absurdity of all our expectations in regard to

the possible advancement of human society and the universal prevalence

of Christian virtue. And thus we throw an air of extravagance and

unreason over all we do. Whereas there is a sober and rational

possibility, that human society should be universally pervaded by

Christian virtue. The Christian scheme has a scope of intention, and

instruments and powers adequate to this: it descends upon the world to

claim all souls for its dominion--all men of all climes, all ages from

childhood to the grave. It is, indeed, a plan which supposes the

existence of sin, and sin will be in the world, and in all hearts in

it, as long as the world or human society continues; but the scheme has

a breadth of conception, and has powers and provisions embodied in it,

which, apart from all promises and predictions, certify us of a day

when it will reign in all human hearts, and all that live shall live in

Christ. Let us either renounce any such confidence, or show, by a

thorough consistency in our religious doctrines, that we hold it

deliberately and manfully.

5. We discover in the Scriptures that the organic law, of which I have

spoken, is distinctly recognized, and that character in children is

often regarded as, in some very important sense, derivative from their

parents. It is thus that "sin has passed upon all men." "By the offense

of one, judgment came upon all." Christian faith is also spoken of in a

similar way--"The unfeigned faith, which dwelt first, in thy

grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and, I am persuaded, that in

thee also." Not that, in the bald and naked sense, it had descended

thus through three generations. But the apostle conceives a power, in

the good life of these mothers, that must needs transmit some flavor of

piety. In like manner, God is represented as "keeping covenant and

mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand

generations;" which, if it signifies any thing, amounts to a

declaration that he will spiritually own and bless every succeeding

generation, to the end of the world, if only the preceding will live so

as to be fit vehicles of his blessing; for it is not any covenant, as a

form of mutual contract, which carries the divine favor, but it is the

loving Him rather, and keeping His commandments, by an upright, godly

life, which sets the parents on terms of friendship with God, and

secures the inhabitation of his power.

Declarations like those in the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel, "the son

shall not bear the iniquity of the father,"--"the soul that sinneth, it

shall die,"--are hastily applied by many, not to show that the child is

to be punished only for his own sin, which is their true import, but,

as if it were the same thing, to disprove the fact of an organic

connection, by which children receive a character from their parents.

Whereas this latter is a truth which we see with our eyes, and one that

is constantly affirmed in the Scriptures, both in respect to bad

character and to good. "God layeth up the iniquity of the wicked for

his children,"--"Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the

children to the third and fourth generation." By which we are to

understand, what is every day exhibited in actual historic proof, that

the wickedness of parents propagates itself in the character and

condition of their children, and that it ordinarily requires three or

four generations to ripen the sad harvest of misery and debasement.

Again, on the other side, "he hath blessed thy children with

thee,"--"For the good of them and their children after them,"--"For the

promise is to you and to your children." The Scriptures have a

perpetual habit, if I may so speak, of associating children with the

character and destiny of their parents. In this respect, they maintain

a marked contrast with the extreme individualism of our modern

philosophy. They do not always regard the individual as an isolated

unit, but they often look upon men as they exist, in families and

races, and under organic laws.

Something has undoubtedly been gained to modern theology, as a human

science, by fixing the attention strongly upon the individual man, as a

moral agent, immediately related to God, and responsible only for his

own actions; at the same time there was a truth, an important truth,

underlying the old doctrine of federal headship and original or imputed

sin, though strangely misconceived, which we seem, in our one-sided

speculations, to have quite lost sight of. And how can we ever attain

to any right conception of organic duties, until we discover the

reality of organic powers and relations? And how can we hope to set

ourselves in harmony with the Scriptures, in regard to family nurture

or household baptism, or any other kindred subject, while our theories

exclude, or overlook precisely that which is the base of their

teachings, and appointments? This brings me to my--

Last argument, which is drawn from infant or household baptism--a rite

which supposes the fact of an organic connection of character between

the parent and the child; a seal of faith in the parent, applied over

to the child, on the ground of a presumption that his faith is wrapped

up in the parent's faith; so that he is ac counted a believer from the

beginning. We must distinguish here between a fact and a presumption of

fact. If you look upon a seed of wheat, it contains, in itself

presumptively, a thousand generations of wheat, though by reason of

some fault in the cultivation, or some speck of diseased matter in

itself, it may, in fact, never repro duce at all. So the Christian

parent has, in his character, a germ, which has power, presumptively,

to produce its like in his children, though by reason of some bad fault

in itself, or possibly some outward hindrance in the Church, or some

providence of death, it may fail to do so. Thus it is that infant

baptism becomes an appropriate rite. It sees the child in the parent,

counts him presumptively a believer and a Christian, and, with the

parent, baptizes him also. Furthermore, you will perceive that it must

be presumed, either that the child will grow up a believer, or that he

will not. The Baptist presumes that he will not, and therefore declares

the right to be inappropriate. God presumes that he will, and therefore

appoints it. The Baptist tells the child that nothing but sin can be

expected of him; God tells him that for his parents' sakes, whose faith

he is to follow, he has written his own name upon him, and expects him

to grow up in all duty and piety.

I have no desire to press the passages in which mention is made of

household baptism beyond their true import. When Paul is said to have

"baptized the household of Stephanas," our Baptist friends reply that

the text proves nothing, in respect to infant baptism, because it can

not be shown that there were any children in the household; and some,

who practice infant baptism, have conceded the sufficiency of the

objection. But the power of this proof-text does not depend, in the

least, on the fact that there were children in the household of

Stephanas, but simply on the form of the language. Indeed, it has

always seemed to me that the argument for infant baptism is rather

strengthened than weakened, by the supposition that there were, in

fact, no infants or children in this household; for a household

generally contains children, and a term so inclusive in its import,

could never come into use, unless it was the practice for baptism to go

by households. Under a practice like that of our Baptist brethren, what

preacher would ever be heard to speak, in this general inclusive way,

of having baptized a household? In the case of the jailor, too, the

same reasoning holds. Here, however, our Baptist brethren go farther,

endeavoring to show positively, from the language used, that there were

no infants or children in the household; for when it is said that the

jailor "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house," it is argued

that, inasmuch as infant children are incapable of believing, there

could have been no infants in the family. Admitting the correctness of

the translation, which some have questioned, the argument seems rather

plausible as a turn of logic, than just and convincing; for, if we

consider the more decisive position held in that age by the heads of

families, and how, in common speech, they were supposed to carry the

religion of the family with them, we shall be convinced that nothing

was more natural than the very language here used. It was taken for

granted, as a matter of common understanding, that, in a change of

religion, the children went with the parents: if they became Jews, that

their children would be Jews; if Christian believers, that their

children would be Christians. Hence all the terms used, in reference to

their religion, took the most inclusive form. If one believed in God,

he believed with all his house: the change he suffered, in the common

understanding of the age, carried the house with him; and it occurred

to no one to question the literal exactness of such like inclusive

terms.

It has been a fashion, with many modern critics, to surrender both

these passages as proofs of infant baptism, and they certainly do not

prove it, in just the way in which many have used them as proof-texts.

But if any one will seek a point of view, whence he may be able to give

a natural and easy interpretation to the language used, or if he will

ask, on the simple doctrine of chances, what chance there was that

these two households should include no children, and moreover what

chance that, in the only three cases of household baptism mentioned in

the Scripture, the households should have been distinguished by this

singularity, he will be as little likely as possible, to concede the

fact that infant baptism is not adequately proved by these passages.

But the true idea of these passages, and also of the rite itself, is

seen most evidently in the history of its establishment by Christ, in

the third chapter of John. The Jewish nation regarded other nations as

unclean. Hence, when a Gentile family wished to become Jewish citizens,

they were baptized in token of cleansing. Then they were said to be

re-born, or regenerated, so as to be accounted true descendants of

Abraham. We use the term naturalize, that is, to make natural born, in

the same sense. But Christ had come to set up a spiritual kingdom, the

kingdom of heaven; and finding all men aliens, and spiritually unclean,

he applies over the rite of baptism, which was familiar to the Jews,

("art thou a Master in Israel, and knowest not these things?") giving

it a higher sense. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he

can not enter the kingdom of heaven." But the Gentile proselyte,

according to the custom here described--here is the point of the

argument--came with his family. They were all baptized together, young

and old, all regenerated or naturalized together; and therefore, in the

new application made of the rite to signify spiritual cleansing and

regeneration, it is understood, of course, that children are to come

with their parents. To have excluded them would have been, to every

Jewish mind, the bight of absurdity. They could not have been excluded,

without express exception, and no exception was made.

Some have questioned whether proselyte baptism existed at this early

age; but of this the third chapter of John is itself conclusive proof;

for how else was baptism familiarly known to the Jews as connected with

regeneration; that is, civil regeneration? There is always a historic

reason for religious rites and for usages of language; and you will

find it impossible to suppose that Christ appointed baptism, and set

the rite in connection with spiritual regeneration, by any mere

accident, or without some historic basis, answering to that which I

have just described. In this manner, all his language, in the interview

with Nicodemus, becomes natural and easy.

It follows that the children of Christian disciples, being baptized

with their parents, as the children of Gentile proselytes were baptized

with theirs, would be taken or presumed by the church to be spiritually

cleansed, in the same manner. Accordingly, just as the children of Jews

were accounted Jews, and not as unclean, when one of the parents was a

Jew, so Paul tells us, that in the church of God, the believing party

sanctifies the unbelieving, "else were your children unclean, but now

are they holy;" showing that the Jewish analogies, in regard to

children, were in fact translated, or passed over to the church, and

adopted there--a translation that naturally followed. from the

reapplication of proselyte baptism.

Then passing into the early history of the church, we hear Justin

Martyr saying: "There are some of us, eighty years old, who were made

disciples to Christ in their childhood;" that is, in the age of the

apostles, and while they were yet living; for it was now less than

eighty years since their death. And in the expression "made disciples,"

taken in connection with the baptismal formula, "Go disciple all

nations, baptizing," &c., we see that he alludes to baptism; for

baptism was the rite that introduced the subject into the Christian

school as a disciple; and what so natural as that the children of

disciples should be disciples with them?

Then again, Ireneus, who lived within one generation of the apostles,

gives us the second mention of this rite which appears in history, when

he says: "Christ came to save all persons through himself; all, I say,

who through him are regenerated unto God: infants and little ones, and

children and youth, and the aged." Which phrase, "regenerated unto

God," applied to parents and little ones, alludes to baptism: showing

that a notion of baptism, as connected with regeneration, coincident

with that which we found in the third chapter of John, was then current

in the church.

I have been thus full upon the rite of baptism, not because that is my

subject, but because the rite involves, in all its grounds and reasons,

the same view of Christian education which I am seeking to establish.

One can not be thoroughly understood and received without the other.

And it is precisely on this account that we have so great difficulty in

sustaining the rite of infant baptism. It ought to be difficult to

sustain any ite, after the sense of it is wholly gone from us. You

perceive, too, in this exposition, that the view of Christian nurture I

am endeavoring to vindicate, is not new, but is older, by far, than the

one now prevalent--as old as the Christian church. It is radically one

with the ancient doctrine of baptism and regeneration, advanced by

Christ, and accepted by the first fathers.

We have much to say of baptismal regeneration as a great error, which

undoubtedly it is, in the form in which it is held; but it is only a

less hurtful error than some of us hold in denying it. The distinction

between our doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and the ancient

Scripture view, is too broad and palpable to be mistaken. According to

the modern church dogma, no faith, in the parents, is necessary to the

effect of the rite. Sponsors, too, are brought in between all parents

and their duty, to assume the very office which belongs only to them.

And, what is worse, the child is said to be actually regenerated by the

act of the priest. According to the more ancient view, or that of the

Scriptures, nothing depends upon the priest or minister, save that he

execute the rite in due form. The regeneration is not actual, but only

presumptive, and every thing depends upon the organic law of character

pertaining between the parent and the child, the church and the child,

thus upon duty and holy living and gracious example. The child is too

young to choose the rite for himself, but the parent, having him as it

were in his own life, is allowed the confidence that his own faith and

character will be reproduced in the child, and grow up in his growth,

and that thus the propriety of the rite as a seal of faith will not be

violated. In giving us this rite, on the grounds stated, God promises,

in fact, on his part, to dispense that spiritual grace which is

necessary to the fulfillment of its import. In this way too is it seen

that the Christian economy has a place for persons of all ages; for it

would be singular if, after all we say of the universality of God's

mercy as a gift to the human race, it could yet not limber itself to

man, so as to adapt a place for the age of childhood, but must leave a

full fourth part of the race, the part least hardened in evil and

tenderest to good, unrecognized and unprovided for--gathering a flock

without lambs, or, I should rather say, gathering a flock away from the

lambs. Such is not the spirit of Him who said, "forbid them not, for of

such is the kingdom of heaven." Therefore we bring them into the school

of Christ and the pale of his mercy with us, there to be trained up in

the holy nurture of the Lord. And then the result is to be tested

afterwards, or at an advanced period of life, by trying their character

in the same way as the character of all Christians is tried; for many

are baptized in adult age, who truly do not believe, as is afterwards

discovered. And yet our Baptist brethren never rebaptize them,

notwithstanding all they say of faith as the necessary condition of

baptism.

But there are two objections to this view of Christian nurture, which,

if they are not removed, may even suffice to break the force of my

argument.

1. A theoretical objection, that it leaves no room for the sovereignty

of God, in appointing the moral character of men and families. Thus it

is declared that "all are not Israel who are of Israel," and that God,

before the children Jacob and Esau had done either good or evil.

professed his love to one, and his rejection of the ether. But the

wonder is, in this case of Rebecca and her children, that such a mother

did not ruin them both. A partial mother, scorning one child, teaching

the other to lie and trick his blind father, and extort from a starving

brother his birthright honor, can not be said to furnish a very good

test of the power of Christian education. But show me the case, where

the whole conduct of the parents has been such as it should be to

produce the best effects, and where the sovereignty of God has

appointed the ruin of the children, whether all, or any one of them.

The sovereignty of God has always a relation to means, and we are not

authorized to think of it, in any case, as separated from means.

2. An objection from observation--asking why it is, if our doctrine be

true, that many persons, remarkable for their piety, have yet been so

unfortunate in their children? Because, I answer, many persons,

remarkable for their piety, are yet very disagreeable persons, arid

that too, by reason of some very marked defect in their religious

character. They display just that spirit, and act in just that manner,

which is likely to make religion odious--the more odious, the more

urgently they commend it. Sometimes they appear well to the world one

remove distant from them, they shine well in their written biography,

but one living in their family will know what others do not; and if

their children turn out badly, will never be at a loss for the reason.

Many persons, too, have such defective views of the manner of teaching

appropriate to early childhood, that they really discourage their

children. "Fathers provoke not your children to anger," says one, "lest

they be discouraged;" implying that there is such a thing as

encouraging, and such a thing as discouraging good principle and piety

in a child. And there are other ways of discouraging children besides

provoking them to an angry and wounded feeling by harsh treatment.

I once took up a book, from a Sabbath-school library, one problem of

which was to teach a child that he wants a new heart. A lovely boy (for

it was a narrative) was called every day to resolve that he would do no

wrong that day, a task which he undertook most cheerfully, at first,

and even with a show of delight. But, before the sun welt down, he was

sure to fall into some ill-temper or be overtaken by some infirmity.

Whereupon, the conclusion was immediately sprung upon him that he

"wanted a new heart." We are even amazed that any teacher of ordinary

intelligence should not once have imagined how she herself, or how the

holiest Christian living, would fare under such kind of regimen; how

she would discover every day, and probably some hours before sunset,

that she too wanted a new heart? And the practical cruelty of the

experiment is yet more to be deplored, than its want of consideration.

Had the problem been how to discourage most effectually every ingenuous

struggle of childhood, no readier or surer method could have been

devised.

Simply to tell a child, as he just begins to make acquaintance with

words, that he "must have a new heart before he can be good," is to

inflict a double discouragement. First, he can not guess what this

technical phraseology means, and thus he takes up the impression that

he can do or think nothing right, till he is able to comprehend what is

above his age--why then should he make the endeavor? Secondly, he is

told that he must have a new heart before he can be good, not that he

may hope to exercise a renewed spirit, in the endeavor to be good--why

then attempt what must be worthless, till something previous befalls

him? Discouraged thus on every side, his tender soul turns hither and

thither, in hopeless despair, and finally he consents to be what he

must--a sinner against God, and that only. Well is it, under such a

process, wearing down his childish soul into soreness and despair of

good, sealing up his nature in silence and cessation as regards all

right endeavors, and compelling him to turn his feelings into other

channels, where he shall find his good in evil--well is it, I say, if

he has not contracted a dislike to the very subject of religion, as

inveterate as the subject is impossible.

Many teach in this way, no doubt, with the best intentions imaginable;

their design is only to be faithful, and sometimes they appear even to

think that the more they discourage their children, the better and more

faithful they are. But the mistake, if not cruelly meant, is certainly

most cruel in the experience; and it is just this mistake, I am

confident, which accounts for a large share of the unhappy failures

made by Christian parents, in the training of their children. Rather

should they begin with a kind of teaching suited to the age of the

child. First of all, they should rather seek to teach. a feeling than a

doctrine; to bathe the child in their own feeling of love to God, and

dependence on him, and contrition for wrong before him, bearing up

their child's heart in their own, not fearing to encourage every good

motion they can call into exercise; to make what is good, happy and

attractive, what is wrong, odious and hateful; then as the

understanding advances, to give it food suited to its capacity, opening

upon it, gradually the more difficult views of Christian doctrine and

experience.

Sometimes Christian parents fail of success in the religious training

of their children, because the church counteracts their effort and

example. The church makes a bad atmosphere about the house, and the

poison comes in at the doors and windows. It is rent by divisions,

burnt up by fanaticism, frozen by the chill of a worldly spirit,

petrified in a rigid and dead orthodoxy. It makes no element of genial

warmth and love about the child, according to the intention of Christ

ill its appointment, but gives to religion, rather, a forbidding

aspect, and thus, instead of assisting the parent, becomes one of the

worst impediments to his success. What kind of element the world makes

about the child is of little consequence; for here there is no pretence

of piety. But when the school of Christ makes itself an element of sin

and death, the child's baptism becomes as great a fiction as the church

itself, and the arrangements of divine mercy fail of their intended

power. There are, in short, too many ways of accounting for the failure

of success, in the family training of those who are remarkable for

their piety, without being led to doubt the correctness of my argument

in these discourses.

To sum up all, we conclude, not that every child can certainly be made

to grow up in Christian piety--nothing is gained by asserting so much,

and perhaps I could not prove it to be true, neither can any one prove

the contrary--I merely show that this is the true idea and aim of

Christian nurture as a nurture of the Lord. It is presumptively true

that such a result can be realized, just as it is presumptively true

that a school will forward the pupils in knowledge, though possibly

sometimes it may fail to do it. And, without such a presumption, no

parent can do his duty and fill his office well, any more than it is

possible to make a good school, in the expectation that the scholars

will learn something five or ten years hence, and not before.

To give this subject its practical effect, let me urge it--

1. Upon the careful attention of those who neglect, or decline,

offering their children in baptism. Some of you are simply indifferent

to this duty, not seeing what good it can do to baptize a child; others

have positive theological objections to it. With the former class I

certainly agree, so far as to admit that baptism, as an operation, can

do no good to your child; but, if it has no importance in what it

operates, it has the greatest importance in what it signifies; and,

what is more to be deplored by you, the withholding it signifies as

much, viz: that you yourselves have no sense of the relation that

subsists between your character and that of your child, and as little

of the mercy that Christ intends for your child, by including him with

you in his fold, to grow up there by your side in the same common

hopes. Had you any just sense of these things, you would look upon the

baptism of your child as a rite of as great importance and spiritual

propriety as your own; for, in neither case, has the form any value

beyond what it signifies. The other class among you suffer the same

defect; for it is my settled conviction that no man ever objected to

infant baptism, who had not at the bottom of his objections, false

views of Christian education--who did not hold a notion of

individualism, in regard to Christian character in childhood, which is

justified, neither by observation nor by Scripture.

It is the prevalence of false views, on this subject, which creates so

great difficulty in sustaining infant baptism in our churches. If

children are to grow up in sin, to be converted when they come to the

age of maturity, if this is tie only aim and expectation of family

nurture, there really is no meaning or dignity whatever in the rite.

They are even baptized into sin, and every propriety of the rite as a

seal of faith is violated. And it is the feeling of this impropriety

which lies at the basis of all your objections. Returning to the old

Scripture doctrine of an organic law, connecting the child morally with

the parents, so that he is, as it were, included in them, to grow up in

their life; perceiving then that he is a kind of rudimental being,

coining up gradually into a separate and complete individuality, having

the parental life extended to him, first, with an almost absolutely

controlling power, then less and less, till he takes, at length, the

helm of his own spirit--every difficulty that you now feel vanishes,

and the rite of infant baptism becomes one of the greatest beauty, and

perfectly coincident with the spirit and the rules of adult baptism.

The very command, "believe and be baptized," of which so much is made,

is exactly met, and with no modifications, save what are necessary to

suit the peculiar state and age of childhood: for the child, being

included as it were in the parental life, is accounted presumptively

one with the parents, and sealed with the seal of their faith.

And it would certainly be very singular if Christ Jesus, in a scheme of

mercy for the world, had found no place for infants and little

children: more singular still, if he had given them the place of

adults; and worse than singular, if he had appointed them to years of

sin as the necessary preparation for his mercy. But if you see him

counting them one with you, bringing them tenderly into his fold with

you, there to grow up in him, you will not doubt that he has given them

a place exactly and beautifully suited to them. And is it for you to

withhold them from that place? Is it worthy of your tenderness, as a

Christian parent, to leave them outside of the fold, when the gate is

open, only taking care to go in yourself? I will not accuse you of

intended wrong, but I am quite sure your thoughts are not as God's

thoughts, and I ask you to study this question again, and more deeply.

You are giving your children, as they grow up, impressions that will

assuredly be very injurious to them, and robbing them of impressions

that would have great power and value to their minds. What can be

worse, what can make them aliens, more sensibly, from Christ's

sympathies, what can more effectually discourage and chill them to all

thoughts of a good life, than to make them feel that Christ has no

place for them till their sins are ripe, and they are capable of a

grace that is now above their years? What more persuasive, than to know

that he has taken them into his school already, to grow up round him as

disciples? And if God should call you to himself, what will draw upon

their hearts more tenderly than to remember that the father and mother

whose name they revere, brought them believingly in with themselves, to

be owned in that general assembly of the just which occupies both

worlds, and become partakers with them there, in the grace which is now

their song?

You rob yourselves too of an influence which is necessary to a right

fulfillment of your duty. Their character, you say, is their own; let

them believe for themselves and be baptized when they will. You have

never the same genial feeling that you would, if you regarded them as

morally linked to your character and drawing from you the mold of their

being. You are not kept in the same state of carefulness and spiritual

tenderness. No matter if you are cold to them, at times, and do not

always live Christ in the house, they are growing up to be converted,

and almost any thing is good enough for conversion! Christ himself,

too, has no such relation to you, in your family, as to make your piety

a domestic spirit. He has not gathered your children round you, as a

flock of young disciples, pouring all his tenderness into your family

ties, to make them vehicles of mercy and blessing. Once more I ask you

to consider whether God is not better to you than you yourselves have

thought, and whether, in withholding your children from God, you are

not like to fall as far short of your duty, as you do of the privilege

offered you.

2. What motives are laid upon all Christian parents, by the doctrine I

have established, to make the first article of family discipline a

constant and careful discipline of themselves. I would not undervalue a

strong and decided government in families. No family can be rightly

trained without it. But there is a kind of virtue, my brethren, which

is not in the rod--the virtue, I mean, of a truly good and sanctified

life. And a reign of brute force is much more easily maintained, than a

reign whose power is righteousness and love. There are, too, I must

warn you, many who talk much of the rod as the orthodox symbol of

parental duty, but who might really as well be heathens as Christians;

who only storm about their house with heathenish ferocity, who lecture,

and threaten, and castigate, and bruise, and call this family

government. They even dare to speak of this as the nurture of the Lord.

So much easier is it to be violent than to be holy, that they

substitute force for goodness and grace, and are wholly unconscious of

the imposture. It is frightful to think how they batter and bruise the

delicate, tender souls of their children, extinguishing in them what

they ought to cultivate, crushing that sensibility which is the hope of

their being, and all in the sacred name of Christ Jesus. By no such

summary process can you dispatch your duties to your children. You are

not to be a savage to them, but a father and a Christian. Your real aim

and study must be to infuse into them a new life, and, to this end, the

Life of God must perpetually reign in you. Gathered round you as a

family, they are all to be so many motives, strong as the love you bear

them, to make you Christ-like in your spirit. It must be seen and felt

with them that religion is a first thing with you. And it must be

first, not in words and talk, but visibly first in your love--that

which fixes your aims, feeds your enjoyments, sanctifies your

pleasures, supports your trials, satisfies your wants, contents your

ambition, beautifies and blesses your character. No mock piety, no

sanctimony of phrase, or longitude of face on Sundays will suffice. You

must live in the light of God, and hold such a spirit in exercise as

you wish to see translated into your children. You must take them into

your feeling, as a loving and joyous element, and beget, if by the

grace of God you may, the spirit of your own heart in theirs.

This is Christian education, the nurture of the Lord. Ah, how dismal is

the contrast of a half-worldly, carnal piety; proposing money as the

good thing of life: stimulating, ambition for place and show; provoking

ill-nature by petulance and falsehood; praying, to save the rule of

family worship; having now and then a religious fit, and, when it is

on, weeping and exhorting the family to undo all that the life has

taught them to do; and then, when the passions have burnt out their

fire, dropping down again to sleep in the embers, only hoping still

that the family will sometime be converted! When shall we discover that

families ought to be ruined by such training as this? When shall we

turn ourselves wholly to God, and looking on our children as one with

us and drawing their character from us, make them arguments to duty and

constancy-duty and constancy not as a burden, but, since they are

enforced by motives so dear, our pleasure and delight? For these ties

and duties exist not for the religious good of our children only, but

quite as much for our own. And God, who understands us well, has

appointed them to keep us in a perpetual frame of love; for so ready is

our bad nature to kindle with our good, and burn with it, that what we

call our piety, is, otherwise, in constant danger of degenerating into

a fiery, censorious, unmerciful and intolerant spirit.

Hence it is that monks have been so prone to persecution. Not dwelling

with children as the objects of affection, having their hearts softened

by no family love, their life identified with no objects that excite

gentleness, their nature hardens into a Christian abstraction, and

blood and doctrine go together. Therefore God hath set Israel in

families, that the argument to duty may come upon the gentle side of

your nature, and fall, as a baptism, on the head of your natural

affections. Your character is to be a parent character, infolding

lovingly the spirits of your children, as birds are gathered in the

nest, there to be sheltered and fed, and got ready for the flight.

Every hour is to be an hour of duty, every look and smile, every

reproof and care, an effusion of Christian love. For it is the very

beauty of the work you have to do that you are to cherish and encourage

good, and live a better life into the spirits of your children.

3. It is to be deeply considered, in connection with this view of

family nurture, whether it does not meet many of the deficiencies we

deplore in the Christian character of our times, and the present state

of our churches. We have been expecting to thrive too much by conquest,

and too little by growth. I desire to speak with all caution of what

are very unfortunately called revivals of religion; for, apart from the

name, which is modern, and from certain crudities and excesses that go

with it--which name, crudities, and excesses are wholly adventitious as

regards the substantial merits of such scenes--apart from these, I say,

there is abundant reason to believe that God's spiritual economy

includes varieties of exercise, answering, in all important respects,

to these visitations of mercy, so much coveted in our churches. They

are needed. A perfectly uniform demonstration in religion is not

possible or desirable. Nothing is thus uniform but death. Our exercise

varies every year and day from childhood onward. Society is going

through new modes of exercise in the same manner, excited by new

subjects, running into new types of feeling, and struggling with new

combinations of thought. Quite as necessary is it that all holy

principle should have a varied exercise--now in one duty, now in

another; now in public aims and efforts, now in bosom struggles; now in

social methods, now in those which are solitary and private; now in

high emotion, now in deliberative thought and study. Accordingly the

Christian church began with a scene of extraordinary social

demonstration, and the like, in one form or another, may be traced in

every period of its history since that day.

But the difficulty is with us that we idolize such scenes, and make

them the whole of our religion. We assume that nothing good is doing,

or can be done at any other time. And what is even worse, we often look

upon these scenes, and desire them, rather as scenes of victory, than

of piety. They are the harvest-times of conversion, and conversion is

too nearly every thing with us. In particular we see no way to gather

in disciples, save by means of certain marked experiences, developed in

such scenes, in adult years. Our very children can possibly come to no

good, save in this way. Instrumentalities are invented to compass our

object, that are only mechanical, and the hope of mere present effect

is supposed to justify them. Present effect, in the view of many,

justifies any thing and every thing. We strain every nerve of motion,

exhaust every capacity of endurance, and push on till nature sinks in

exhaustion. We preach too much, and live Christ too little. We do many

things which, in a cooler mood, are seen to hurt the dignity of

religion, and which somewhat shame and sicken ourselves. Hence the

present state of religion in our country. We have worked a vein till it

has run out. The churches are exhausted. [1] There is little to attract

them, when they look upon the renewal of scenes through which many of

them have passed. They look about them, with a sigh, to ask if possibly

there is no better way, and some are ready to find that better way, in

a change of their religion. Nothing different from this ought to have

been expected. No nation can long thrive by a spirit of conquest; no

more can a church. There must be an internal growth, that is made by

holy industry, in the common walks of life and duty.

Let us turn now, not away from revivals of religion, certainly not away

from the conviction that God will bring upon the churches tides of

spiritual exercise, and vary his divine culture by times and seasons

suited to their advancement; but let us turn to inquire whether there

is not a fund of increase in the very bosom of the church itself. Let

us try if we may not train up our children in the way that they should

go. Simply this, if we can do it, will make the church multiply her

numbers many fold more rapidly than now, with the advantage that many

more will be gained from without than now. For she will cease to hold a

mere piety of occasions, a piety whose chief use is to get up

occasions; she will follow a gentler and more constant method, as her

duty is more constant, and blends with the very life of her natural

affections. Her piety will be of a more even and genial quality, and

will be more respected. She will not strive and cry, but she will live.

The school of John the Baptist will be succeeded by the school of

Christ, as a dew comes after a fire. Families will not be a temptation

to you, half the time hurrying you on to get money, and prepare a show,

and the other half, a motive to repentance and shame, and profitless

exhortation; but all the time, an argument for Christian love and holy

living.

Then also the piety of the coming age will be deeper, and more akin to

habit than ours, because it began earlier. It will have more of an air

of naturalness, and will be less a work of will. A generation will come

forward, who will have been educated to all good undertakings and

enterprises--ardent without fanaticisinm, powerful without machinery.

Not born, so generally, in a storm, and brought to Christ by an abrupt

transition, the latter portion of life will not have an unequal war to

maintain with the beginning, but life will be more nearly one, and in

harmony with itself. Is not this a result to be desired? Could we tell

our American churches, at this moment, what they want, should we not

tell them this? Neither, if God, as many fear, is about to bring upon

his church a day of wrath and stormy conflict, let any one suspect that

such a kind of piety will want vigor and nerve to withstand the fiery

assaults anticipated. See what turn the mind of out apostle took when

he was arming his disciples for the great conflict of their age.

Children, obey your parents--Fathers, provoke not your

children--Servants, be obedient to your masters--Masters, forbear

threatening--Finally, to include all, put on the whole armor of God. As

if the first thought, in arming the church for great trials and stout

victories, was to fill common life and the relations of the house with

a Christian spirit. There is no truer truth, or more sublime. Religion

never thoroughly penetrates life, till it becomes domestic. Like that

patriotic fire which makes a nation invincible, it never burns with

inextinguishable devotion till it burns at the hearth.

4. Parents who are not religious in their character. have reason, in

our subject, seriously to consider what effect they are producing, and

likely to produce, in their children. Probably you do not wish them to

be irreligious; few parents have the hardihood or indiscretion to

desire that the fear of God, the salutary restraints of religion,

should be removed from their children. Possibly you exert yourselves,

in a degree, to give them religious counsel and instruction. But, alas!

how difficult is it for you to convince them, by words, of the value of

what you practically reject yourselves. Have I not shown you that they

are set in organic connection with you, to draw their spirit, and

principles and character from yours? What then are they daily deriving

from you, but that which you yourselves reveal, in your prayerless

house, and at your thankless table? Is it a spirit of duty and

Christian love, a faith that has its home and rest in other worlds, or

is it the carnal spirit of gain, indifference to God, deadness to

Christ, love of the world, pride, ambition, all that is earthly,

nothing that is heavenly?

Do not imagine that you have done corrupting them when they are born.

Their character is yet to be born, and, in you, is to have its

parentage. Your spirit is to pass into them, by a law of transition

that is natural, and well nigh irresistible. And then you are to meet

them in a future life, and see how much of blessing or of sorrow they

will impute to you--to share their unknown future, and look upon

yourselves as father and mother to their destiny. Such thoughts, I

know, are difficult for you to meet; difficult because they open real

scenes, which you are, one day, to look upon. Loving these your

children, as most assuredly you do, can you think that you are

fulfilling the office that your love requires? Go home to your

Christless house, look upon them all as they gather round you, and ask

it of your love faithfully to say, whether it is well between you? And

if no other argument can draw you to God, let these dear living

arguments come into your soul, and prevail there.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[1] This was written, I believe, in the year, A.D., 1846.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

III

THE OSTRICH NURTURE.

"The daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the

wilderness."--Lam. iv. 3.

I CITE this comparison for the sake of the comparison itself, and not

to make an example of the mothers of Israel represented in it. They are

not to be blamed, if, in the terrors of the siege and the wild

feverings of starvation, the voice of nature has been stifled in their

bosom. Indeed, it is the wonder of the prophet himself that, while the

coarse sea-monsters draw out the breast and faithfully nurse their

young, the human mother, so much tenderer and more loving, can be so

maddened by distress as to become like the ostrich, and forget the

cries of her children.

The ostrich, it will be observed, is nature's type of all unmotherhood.

She hatches her young without incubation, depositing her eggs in the

sand to be quickened by the solar heat. Her office as a mother-bird is

there ended. When the young are hatched, they are to go forth untended,

or unmothered, save by the general motherhood of nature itself. Hence

the ostrich is called sometimes the "wicked," and sometimes the

"stupid" bird. Job describes her with a feeling of natural

dislike--"Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmneth them in the

dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild

beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though

they were not hers, her labor is in vain without care, [in our version,

"without fear."] Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath

he imparted unto her understanding." In other words, she is both

heartless and senseless; too heartless to care for her young, and too

senseless to maintain a motherhood as genial even as that of the sand.

Now there is no human mother, unless it be in some terrible stress of

siege and starvation, when the mind itself is unsettled by the wild

instigation of suffering, who will cease from the bodily care and

feeding of her children. And yet there are many forms of nurture for

the mind and character of children, that are so far resembled to the

ostrich nurture, as to be fitly represented under that type. Practices

are adopted, opinions accepted, theories of church life and conversion

taught, that make a true Christian parentage virtually impossible, and

leave the child, in fact, to a kind of nurture in the sands.

What I propose, accordingly, at the present time, is to characterize

these modes of ostrich nurture, miscalled Christian, showing what they

are, and the real, though doubtless undesigned, cruelty of them.

As a curious illustration of the looseness and the un settled feeling

of the times, in regard to this great subject, it is just now beginning

to be asserted by some, that the true principle of training for

children is exactly that of the ostrich, viz: no training at all; the

best government, no government. All endeavors tc fashion them by the

parental standards, or to induct them into the belief of their parents,

is alleged to be a real oppression put upon their natural liberty. It

is nothing less, it is said, than an effort to fill them with

prejudices, and put them under the sway of prejudices, all their lives

long. Why not let the child have his own way, think his own thoughts,

generate his own principles, and so be developed in the freedom and

beauty of the flowers? Or, if he should sometimes fall into bad tempers

and disgraceful or uncomely practices, as flowers do not, let him learn

how to correct himself, and be righted by his own discoveries. Having

thus no artificial conscience formed to hamper his natural freedom, no

religious scruples and superstitions inculcated to be a detention, or

limitation, upon his impulses, he will grow up as a genuine character,

stunted by no cant or affectation; a large-minded, liberal, original,

and beautiful soul.

This kind of nurture supposes, evidently, a faith in human nature that

is total and complete. As the mother ostrich might be supposed to

reason, that her eggs are ostrich's eggs, and must therefore produce

genuine ostriches and nothing else, so it assumes that human children

will grow up, left to themselves, into the most genuine, highest style

of human character. Whereas, it is the misery of human children that,

as free beings, answerable for their choices and their character, and

already touched with evil, they require some training, over and above

the mere indulgence of their natural instincts. They can not be left to

merely blossom into character; or, if they are, it will most assuredly

be any sort of character but that which parental love would desire.

What they most especially want is, what no ostrich or mere animal

nurture can give; to be preoccupied with holy principles and laws; to

have prejudices instilled that are holy prejudices; and so to be

tempered beforehand by moderating and guiding influences, such as their

perilous freedom and hereditary damage require.

The question here at issue does not really need to be discussed, but it

will greatly instruct and impress those parents who allow their minds

to fluctuate in such looseness as quite unsettles the feeling of their

obligation, just to notice the immense distinction between the

relationship of human parents to their offspring, and that of the

animals to theirs. It is not given to the animals, they will perceive,

as to men, to pass any results matured by their own experience, to

their posterity. They prepare no inventions, create no institutions for

their offspring; produce no sciences, write no histories, preserve no

records, accumulate no property or wealth that is to be transmitted;

even their thoughts they can perpetuate in no literary treasures.

Hence, there is no progress among them, over and above that small

physiological improvement that may pass by the laws of natural

propagation. So far they are all ostriches. All they can de is to

follow their instincts, and leave their posterity to follow them over

again, in the same manner, beginning at the same point. But with men,

as creatures of reason, it is far otherwise. They are creators, all,

for them that are to come after. What they can discover, build,

produce, acquire, learn, think, enjoy, they are to transmit; giving it

to them that come after to begin at the point where they cease, and

have the full advantage of their opinions, works, and character. One of

their first duties, therefore, is to educate and train their offspring,

transmitting to them what they have known, believed, and proved by

their experience. If they sometimes transmit their low thoughts, and

narrow opinions, and mistaken principles, and so far give their

children a great disadvantage, that is but a necessary evil which is

incidental manifestly to a system otherwise beneficent, and for that

they are of course responsible. If nothing were to pass but mere

instincts, the disadvantage would be far greater, and the whole scale

of existence lower. How unnatural and monstrous, therefore, is that

scheme of nurture which requires it of parents to pass nothing, or as

little as possible, to their children. If they have learned wisdom,

they are not to inculcate that wisdom, lest it should create a

prejudice! If they have found their conscience and the principles of

virtue, to be their truest friends aid the best guardians of their

life, they are not to hamper their children by subjecting them to the

same! If they have found the principal joys that freshen life, in God

and the faith of his Son, they are still to let their children find

their own sources of strength and joy for themselves, and not to train

them, or indoctrinate them in such ways of blessing, lest perchance

they be not sufficiently original and free in their development! Why,

if they were to discover mines and hide the discovery forever, or

acquire immense treasures of property appointing them by their will to

be sunk in the sea, leaving their children in utter destitution, they

would not be as false to their office of parentage! God has given it to

them, as rational creatures, to transmit all possible benefits to their

offspring. And what shall they more carefully transmit than what is

valuable above every thing else, their principles and their piety?

We find, then, a most solid ground for the obligations of Christian

nurture. It is one of the grand distinctions of humanity that it has

such a power to pass, and is set in such a duty of passing, its gifts,

principles, and virtues, on to the ages that come after. Happily, few

will need to be convinced of this; and yet there awe a great many, we

shall find, who manage, even under what they regard as truly Christian

pretexts, to maintain schemes of nurture so nearly unparental and

unnatural, as to have a much closer affinity with the ostrich nurture

than they suspect themselves.

We have many, for example, who have taken up notions of liberty, or

free moral agency, in religion, that separate them effectually from the

true sense of their power and privilege in regard to their children.

Assuming the unquestionable first truth that religious virtue, or

piety, is a matter strictly personal, the free will offering of

obedience and duty to God, they sub side into the impression that they

are of course absolved from any close responsibility for that which

lies so en tirely in the choices of their children themselves. They may

not take their absolution by any formal inference, and may not even be

aware that they have taken it at all; but the distinction between

manhood and childhood is so far hidden, or slurred over, under their

supposed principle of responsibility grounded in free agency, that

their self-indulgence is accommodated, by the pretext, more easily than

they know. Sometimes the inference will be half uttered in their

feeling; as when they ask, only not aloud--"after all, must not our

children answer for themselves?" So they submit resignedly, to the

supposed necessity, and do it with so much less of compunction, because

they consciously have so tender a feeling for their children, and are

so much pained by the sense of their religious perils. But the

submission they fall into, in this pious way, amounts, in fact, to a

real absolution, not seldom, from all the finest, tenderest, most

faithful, most unworldly cares of their parental office. They subside

thus into a habit of remissness and religious negligence, and their way

of nurture becomes unparental even as that of the ostriches.

Their blame in such defections from duty is greater than they know. For

God has probably instituted the reproductive order of existence,

including the parental and filial relation, with a special design to

mitigate the perils of free agency. One generation is to be ripe in

knowledge and character, and the next is to be put in charge of the

former, in the tenderest, most flexible, most dependent state possible,

to be by them inducted into the choices where their safety lies.

Furthermore, they are bound to fidelity in their charge, by the fact,

that, as they have given existence to the subjects of it, so they have

also communicated the poison of their own fallen state, to increase the

perils of existence. In this manner, God has put it upon them to be the

more strenuous in their charge, because of these perils, and expects,

by means of their fidelity, to reduce the otherwise disastrous results

of free agency to the smallest possible measure. Their responsibility

in the parental office is not diminished, but increased even a hundred

fold, by the personal liberty and strict individuality of their

children. It would be far less cruel to be negligent of their bodily

wants; for the body will maintain its growth, and will even manage to

increase in robustness, when it is poorly clad and fed upon the

coarsest fare. But the mind, or soul, born to greater perils than want

or the weather, even the tremendous perils of untaught liberty, and

principles unfixed, waits, at the point of its magnificent infancy, to

be led into the choices, tastes, affinities, and habits, that are to be

the character of its eternity. Tenderness every where else, and

remissness here, is only the mockery of kindness. Let the first want be

first, and the highest nature have the promptest care; and if any thing

is left to the nurtire of the sands, let it be the body, where the

crime of the desertion will be less and will certainly not be hid.

Many true Christians, again, fall of, unwittingly, from the humanly

parental modes of nurture, in taking up notions of conversion that are

mechanical, and proper only to the adult age. They make a merit of

great persistency and firmness, in asserting the universal necessity of

a new spiritual birth; not perceiving under what varieties of form that

change may be wrought. The soul must be exercised, they think, in one

given way, viz: by a struggle with sin, a conscious self-renunciation,

and a true turning to Christ for mercy, followed by the joy and peace

of a new life in the Spirit. A child, in other words, can be born of

God only in the same way as an adult can be. There is no quickening

grace, or new creation of the Spirit, proper to him as a child. If he

dies in infancy, God may, it is true, find some way, possibly, to save

him, but if he stays among the living, he can not be a Christian till

he is older. He is therefore left, in this most tender and beautiful

and pliant age, in a condition most of all unprivileged, and most sadly

unhopeful. The necessity of a great spiritual change is upon him, and

yet he is wholly incapable of the change! What other being has the good

Lord and Father of the world left in a condition as pitiful as this of

a human child? Even the most wicked and hardened of men has, at least,

the gate of conversion left open. And yet there are many Christian

parents, living an outwardly decent and fair life, who consent, without

difficulty, and with a kind of consciously orthodox merit, to this very

unnatural and truly hard lot of childhood, and fall into easy

conformity with it. Their practically accepted notion of Christian

nurture, in which they mean to bc piously faithful is, that they are to

bring up their children outside of all possible acceptance with God,

till such time as their conversion may be looked for in a church-wise

form. And their whole scheme of treatment corresponds. They

indoctrinate them soundly in respect to their need of a new heart; tell

them what conversion is, and how it comes to pass with grown people;

pray that God will arrest them when they are old enough to be converted

according to the manner; drill them, meantime, into all the

constraints, separated from all the hopes and liberties of religion;

turning all their little misdoings and bad tempers into evidences of

their need of regeneration, and assuring them that all such signs must

be upon them till after they have passed the change. Their nurture is a

nurture, thus, of despair; and the bread of life itself, held before

them as a fruit to be looked upon, but not tasted, till they are old

enough to have it as grown people do, finally becomes repulsive, just

because they have been so long repelled and fenced away from it. And so

religion itself, pressed down upon them till they are fatally sored by

its impossible claims, becomes their fixed aversion. How plain is it

that such kind of nurture is unnatural and, though it be not so

intended, unchristian. It makes even the loving gospel of Jesus a most

galling chain upon the neck of childhood!--this and nothing more. For

so long a time, and that the most ductile and hopeful, as regards all

new implantings of good, it really proposes nothing but to have the

depravated nature grow, and the plague of sin deepen its bad infection.

Meantime, it will be strange, if the parents themselves do not fall

away from all that is necessary to their Christian power, when the

conversion of their children is postponed, in this manner, by the

merely adult possibilities of their gospel. Why should they live so as

to gain their children, when their children are not to be gained? Were

they really to live so as to make their house an element of grace, the

atmosphere of their life an element, to all that breathe it, of

unworldly feeling and all godly aspiration, their mechanical doctrine

of conversion would scarcely suffice to keep away the saving mercies of

God from their children. Their children would still be converted even

before the permissible time, and burst up through the poor detentions

of their bad doctrine, to cover it with blessed confusion. But alas! it

requires but a very little of genuine, living godliness in the house,

to bring up children for a future conversion! This kind of ostrich

nurture can be cheaply maintained, and with a very small expenditure of

piety. To keep the drill on foot, as a mere legal indoctrination; to

phrase a hope or desire of conversion, in the family prayers; to be

exact, stern, stiff in all church practices, requires no faith; or,

living by faith, no sanctification of the life. A busy, worldly,

hard-natured father, a vain, irritable, captious, fashion-loving

mother, a house orthodoxly bad and earthly in all the reigning

practices, is yet a good enough school to prepare the necessity of a

future conversion for the children! How different the kind of life that

is necessary to bring them up in conversion and beget them anew in the

spirit of a loving obedience to God, at a point even prior to all

definite recollection. This is Christian nurture, because it nurtures

Christians, and because it makes an element of Christian grace in the

house. It invites, it nourishes hope, it breathes in love, it forms the

new life as a holy, though beautiful prejudice in the soul, before its

opening and full flowering of intelligence arrives. "Suffer little

children to come unto me and forbid them not" translates the very

economy of the house, and has, in that economy, its living

verification. And the promise, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven,"

wears no look of violence; for the kingdom of heaven is there. The

children grow up in it, as being configured to it. The family prayers

have a sound of gladness, and they sing the family hymn with glad

voices. The worldliness of the glittering bad world without is set off

and made fascinating by no doom of repression within. A firm

administration is loved because, like God's, it is felt to be the

defense of liberty. Truth, purity, firmness, love to Jesus, all that

belongs to a formal conversion and more, is centralized thus in the

soul, as a kind of ingrown habit. The children are all converted by the

converting element of grace they live in. And so it is proved that

there is a conversion for children, proper and possible to their age.

They are not excluded, walled away from Christ by a mechanical

enforcement of modes proper only and possible to adults. The house

itself is a converting ordinance.

Again there is another and different way in which parents, meaning to

be Christian, fall into the ostrich nurture without being at all aware

of it. They believe in what are called revivals of religion, and have a

great opinion of them as being, in a very special sense, the converting

times of the gospel. They bring up their children, therefore, not for

conversion exactly, but, what is less dogmatic and formal, for the

converting times. And this they think is even more evangelical and

spiritual because it is more practical; though, in fact, much looser

and connected, commonly, with even greater defections from parental

duty and fidelity. To bring up a family for revivals of religion

requires, alas! about the smallest possible amount of consistency and

Christian assiduity. No matter what opinion may be held of such times,

or of their inherent value and propriety as pertaining to the genuine

economy of the gospel, any one can see that Christian parents may very

easily roll off a great part of their responsibilities, and comfort

themselves in utter vanity and worldliness of life, by just holding it

as a principal hope for their children, that they are to be finally

taken up and rescued from sin, by revivals of religion. As it costs

much to be steadily and uniformly spiritual, how agreeable the hope

that gales of the Spirit will come to make amends for their conscious

defections. If they do not maintain the unworldly and heavenly spirit,

so as to make it the element of life in their house, God will some time

have his day of power in the community, and they piously hope that

their children will then be converted to Christ. So they fall into a

key of expectation that permits, for the present, modes of life and

conduct, which they can not quite approve. They go after the world with

an eagerness which they expect by and by to check, or possibly, for the

time, to repent of. The family prayers grow cold and formal, and are

often intermitted. The tempers are earthly, coarse, violent. Discipline

is ministered in anger, not in love. The children are lectured,

scolded, scorched by fiery words. The plans are all for money, show,

position, not for the more sacred and higher interests of character.

The conversation is uncharitable, harsh, malignant, an effusion of

spleen, a tirade, a taking down of supposed worth and character by low

imputations and carping criticisms. In this kind of element the

children are to have their growth and nurture, but the parents piously

hope that there will some time be a revival of religion, and that so

God will mercifully make up what they conceive to be only the natural

infirmity of their lives. Finally the hoped for day arrives, and there

begins to be a remarkable and strange piety in the house. The father

chokes almost in his prayer, showing that he really prays with a

meaning! The mother, conscious that things have not been going rightly

with the children, and seeing many frightful signs of their certain

ruin at hand, warns them, even weeping, of the impending dangers by

which she is so greatly distressed on their account; adding also bitter

confessions of fault in herself. The children stare of course, not

knowing what strange thing has come! They can not be unaffected;

perhaps they seem to be converted, perhaps not. In many cases it makes

little difference which; for if all this new piety in the house is to

burn out in a few days, and the old regimen of worldliness and sin to

return, it will be wonderful if they are not converted back again to be

only just as neglectful, in the matter of Christian living, as they

were brought up to be. Any scheme of nurture that brings up children

thus for revivals of religion, is a virtual abuse and cruelty. And it

is none the less cruel that some pious-looking pretexts are cunningly

blended with it. Instead of that steady, formative, new-creating power

that ought to be exerted by holiness in the house, it looks to

campaigns of force that really dispense with holiness, and it results

that all the best ends of Christian nurture are practically lost.

Again, there is another form of the unchristian nurture, over opposite

to these just named, which is quite as wide of the true character. I

speak of that lower and merely ethical nurture, which undertakes, with

great assiduity it may be, to form and whittle the age of childhood

into character, by a merely pruning and humanly culturing process. It

is a kind of nurture that stops short of religion; and atones for the

conscious defect, by a drill more or less careful in the moralities.

The reason of this defect commonly is that the parents are too far

decayed in piety and too much under the world, to put forth any really

religious endeavor; but it is to their children as if no such interest

of religion had existence. They are corrected on this side and on that,

by human standards and methods, taught to consider what is respectable,

or what people will think of them, how to win the honors of character

among men, lectured on the wisdom of conduct, and the resulting

happiness of a right behavior, but the fact of their relation to God,

and the standards and motives furnished by religion are wholly passed

by, or omitted. The cruelty of this sort of nurture is that, however

delicate and careful it may be of that which lies in mere social

character and standing, it exactly copies the ostrich nurture in all

that relates to the higher and properly religious life. The world-ward

nature is cared for, but the religious, that which opens God-ward, that

which aspires after God, and, occupied by his inspiring impulse, mounts

into all good character, as being even liberty itself; that which

consummates and crowns the real greatness and future eternity of souls,

is virtually ignored, left to the wild, dry motherhood of the sands.

Children trained in this mere ethical nurture, are inducted into no way

of faith or dependence on God. They are taught to look for no spiritual

transformation. The virtue they practice is to be prayerless virtue.

They grow up thus on the roots of their natural pride and selfishness,

bred into the habit of testing their goodness by their appearances, and

their merit by their works. That they should be molded in this manner

to a Christian life would be wonderful. Their pareiits may be nominally

Christian, but they have, in fact, agreed to omit religion in the

training of their children; and it would be strange if they should

compliment their only nominally Christian parentage, by unfolding a

really Christian life. It will be well if they have any genuine respect

for religion, or even sense of what it is. Trained to have no religious

conscience, and to practice a virtue unblessed by the nobler impulsions

of religious inspiration, it will be strange if they maintain evon

correctness of life; and more so if their heart, undeveloped by

religion, does not canker itself away in the sordid vices of meanness,

or burn itself out, as regards all worthy and great feelings, in the

general hatred of God and his truth. There may be many decencies, or

even delicacies, in this kind of nurture; and yet, in the complete

oversight or neglect of the religious nature, it becomes profoundly and

even cruelly unnatural.

There is yet another and widely prevalent misconception of childhood

which, to a certain extent, involves Christianity itself in the same

unnatural methods that are adopted by men. I speak here more especially

of the assumed fact that Christ allows no place in the church for such

as are only children. Is not the church to be composed of such as

really believe? And what kind of faith can children have who are not

yet arrived at the age of intelligence? Hence there is supposed to be a

kind of necessity that children, up to that period of advancement and

personal maturity when they are able to choose and believe for

themselves, and become the subjects of a genuine Christian experience,

should be excluded from the Christian church. It signifies nothing that

the seal of faith was anciently applied to children only eight days

old, as being presumptively in the faith of their parents, and included

with them in the bonds of their covenant. As little does it signify

that Christ says "let them come, forbid them not; for of such is the

kingdom of heaven." Still they can not believe--are not old enough to

believe--how then can they come into the church, or in any conceivable

way be included in it? Is not the church of God assumed to be made up

of them that believe? What then is left for children but to stay

without till they are old enough to be intelligently converted, and

entered into a new life by their own deliberate choice? Hence the

Baptist brethren conceive it to be a matter perfectly final, as regards

the question of baptism, that infants can not believe, and can not

therefore have any fit plan among believers in the church. Does not the

Scripture say--"Believe and be baptized?" And how is confession to be

made with the mouth, except when the heart believeth unto

righteousness?

The result of such arguments and inferences is, that children have no

place given them in the church, however modified, to suit the

conditions of their age. Theil parents are called by Christ to live

within and they themselves are left without. There is no church nurture

for them proper to their tender years; they can not be in the church

till they are sufficiently grown to believe. And so it is settled that

there is no church mercy for them. The church turns her back and leaves

them, separated even from their parents, to try their fortunes, like

the wild ostriches, in the desert sands without.

It would seem that the hardness and the monstrous unnaturalness of such

conceptions must revolt the mind of almost any thoughtful person. If

the grace of our salvation took the ingenuous children away from their

sinning, unbelieving parents, and gathered them into the heavenly fold

by themselves, we should have less reason to be shocked by the

severity. But instead of this, calling home the penitent fathers and

mothers and carefully folding them in the church of God's protection,

Jesus their shepherd shuts away the lambs, we are told, and forbids

them to come in! The cruelty of such an opinion, or doctrine, is

evident, and the cruel effects it must have, in making even childhood

feel itself to be an alien from God's mercies, are even more so. It has

no conception that there can be a Saviour and salvation for all ages

and stages of life; Christ is the Saviour of adults only! No! Christ is

a Saviour bounded by no such narrow and meager theories--a Saviour for

infants, and children, and youth, as truly as for the adult age;

gathering them all into his fold together, there to be kept and

nourished together, by gifts appropriate to their years; even as he

himself has shown us so convincingly, by passing through all ages and

stages of life himself, and giving us, in that manner, to see that he

partakes the want and joins himself to the fallen state of each. Having

been a child himself, who can imagine, even for one moment, that he has

no place in his fold for the fit reception of childhood? Dreadful

insult, both to him and to childhood, and the greater insult, that the

gospel even of heaven's love is narrowed to this, by a supposed

necessity of evangelism! What a position is given thus to children,

growing up to look on an adult church, instructed into the opinion that

what they look upon--Christ, ordinances, covenant vows--is only for

adult people!

I ought perhaps to add, in bringing this argument to a close, that the

harsh imputations I may seem to some of you to have indulged, must not

be hastily disallowed. Almost all parents are tender, consciously

tender of their children. What will not most of you do, to clothe and

feed, and educate, and, in all respects, make duo provision for your

children? Sacrifices here are nothing. Health, rest, ease, comfort, you

gladly renounce for their sake, and some of you would not spare the

sacrifice even of your soul to serve them. Are you then to be justly

charged with a mode of nurture so unnatural as to be fitly resembled to

that of the ostriches? Of what are you more deeply conscious than of

your willingness even to die for your children? All your tenderest

movings are toward them; all that you plan, or think; or do, is for

them. Yes, doubtless, it is even so, as regards their nurture and

comfort in this world--all your tenderest cares and studies center

here. Of this there is no question, and far be it from me to suggest a

doubt of you here.

No, this defection from nature, of which I have been speaking, relates

to a different matter--in quite another field. Doing you full honor as

a careful provider, a most faithful and loving guardian, a

disinterested, self-sacrificing contriver and laborer for your

children's good; the question is whether you do not after all put them

off with a mere ostrich nurture in the matter of the soul? whether you

do not let in some one or more of these very misconceptions I have

named, tc control all your modes of conduct and discipline to ward

them? Do you never throw off your own Christian responsibilities for

them by allowing, as a pretext, the fact of their liberty and personal

responsibility for themselves? Are you never let down in the sense of

your most sacred obligations, by simply allowing yourself to think it

enough, that your children are brought up for conversion? Do none of

you subside even to, lower point, and bring up your children only for

revivals of religion? Are there none of you that make it your whole

care to form your children by the mere ethical standards, and finish

them in the graces of a mere human culture? Have none of you theories

of salvation and of Christ's way respecting it, such as leave no place

for children in the church, however qualified to meet their age? Little

now does it signify that you love your children, or do even slave both

body and mind to get a footing of society and comfort for them in this

life--even beavers and bears will do as much as that. In giving

existence to your child you have set him forth into perils that include

his immortality, and you have therefore no right to handle him

neglectfully in this great concern. On the contrary, you are to accept

his immortality, and in a seriously Christian sense. take it on

yourself, as being in Christ's name responsible for it; responsible,

that is, for making your house itself such an element of piety, love,

faith, unworldly and beautiful living, that your children shall grow up

in it, as in the nurture of the Lord. Take no credit to yourselves for

any thing which falls short of this. You may be very tender in what

falls short, but it is no Christian tenderness. You can not live in a

worldly house, you can not make yourself a family drudge to serve a

mere family ambition, can not piously hope that God will somehow

convert your children after they have got by you and become adults,

without being justly chargeable with giving their souls a mere nurture

of the sands, in which the genuine Christian grace has no part

whatever. And be not surprised if these children when they meet you

before the Judge of your and their life, have a more severe witness to

give against you than if you had merely neglected their bodies.

Probably enough there may be some of you that, without being Christians

yourselves, are yet careful to teach your children all the saving

truths of religion, and who thus may take it as undue severity to be

charged with only giving your children this unnatural, ostrich nurture

of which I have spoken. But how poor a teacher of Christ is any one who

is not in the light of Christ, and does not know the inward power 9f

his truth, as a gospel of life to the soul. You press your child, in

this manner, with duties you do not practice, and promises you do not

embrace; and if you do not succeed, it only means that you can not

impose on him to that high extent. A mother teach by words only? No!

but more, a great deal more, by the atmosphere of love and patience she

breathes. Besides, how easy is it for her to make every thing she

teaches legal and repulsive, just because she has no liberty or joy in

it herself. What is wanted therefore is not merely to give a child the

law, telling him this is duty, this is right, this God requires, this

he will punish; but a much greater want is to have the spirit of all

duty lived and breathed around him; to see, and feel, and breathe,

himself, the living atmosphere of grace. Therefore it is vain, let all

parents so understand, to imagine that you can really fulfill the true

fatherhood and motherhood, unless you are true Christians yourselves. I

am sorry to discourage you in any good attempts. Rightly taken, what I

say will not discourage you, but will only prompt you by all that is

dearest to you on earth, to become truly qualified for your office. By

these dear pledges God has given you, to call you to himself, I beseech

you turn yourselves to the true life of religion. Have it first in

yourselves, then teach it as you live it; teach it by living it; for

you can do it in no other manner. Be Christians yourselves, and then it

will not be difficult for you to do your true duties to your children.

Until then it is really impossible.

I have only to add in the conclusion of this subject--just what is made

plain by it--that there is really no great wonder, in the fact often

spoken of as a subject of wonder, that Christian parents are so

frequently disappointed in their children. Why is it that such correct

and apparently Christian people see their children grow up unaffected

by religion, or even hostile to its sacred claims, falling possibly

into a character of vice and complete moral abandonment? The answer is,

alas! too easy. I will not say that, in every case, the result accuses

them of crime; it may be the effect sometimes of their mistaken, or

faulty conceptions of parental duty. But no one, it seems to me, can

once distinguish these bad faults of nurture, and note the very wide

prevalence they have in the Christian homes, without even expecting

worse and more fatal results of mischief than actually appear.

Sometimes it seems to be imagined that nothing but some dark hindrance

of divine sovereignty can account for such results. The less we have to

say in that strain the wiser we shall be, and as much less irreverent

to God. No, there is reason enough for all such miscarriages without

charging them to God. I could not express myself as the truth requires,

my brethren, if I did not say, that when I observe the wide-spread

delusions of nominally Christian parents, their false aims, their

worldly pretexts, their habitual separation from any living faith in

God, in the ends, plans, practices, and spirit of their administration,

I rather wonder that results a great deal worse do not appear. It would

even be a fit subject of wonder, if children trained in this manner,

should not turn out badly. If indeed they are so much as converted

afterwards, saying nothing of their growing up in a sanctified

character, it is well--more than could be rightly expected.

No, my friends, these mistaken modes of nurture ought not to make

Christians; they must even falsify their own nature to do it. Let us be

just to God, and lay our griefs no longer to his charge. If we can not

come into his way in the training of our families, let us not complain

that we do not succeed in ways of our own. After all, there is no cheap

way of making Christians of our children. Nothing but to practically

live for it makes it sure. To be Christians ourselves--ah! there is the

difficulty. How can an unchristian, or only non-christian spirit

reigning in the house, quicken the spirit of life and holiness in the

hearts subjected to its sway? Even if our false modes of nurture are

mistakes, who can expect that mistakes will be as good as verities? O,

thou, blessed Son of God, advocate and friend of the little ones, rid

us of our falsities, and set us in thy own true spirit, that we may

fitly discharge these most sacred and tenderest duties!

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

IV.

THE ORGANIC UNITY OF THE FAMILY.

"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the

women knead dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour

out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to

anger."--Jeremiah vii. 18.

IN this lively picture, you have the illustration of a great and

momentous truth--the Organic Unity of the Family. If it be an

idolatrous family, worshipers of the moon, for example, such is the

organic relation of the members, that they are all involved together,

and the idol worship is the common act of the house. The children

gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, the women prepare the cakes

for an offering, and the queen of heaven receives it, as one that is

the joint product of the whole family. The worship is family worship;

the god of one is the god of all; the spirit of one, the spirit of all.

And so it is with all family transactions and feelings. They implicate

ordinarily the whole circle of the house; young and old, male and

female, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters. Acting thus together,

they take a common character, accept the same delusions, practice the

same sins, and ought, I believe, to be sanctified by a common grace.

This most serious truth is one that is exceedingly remote from the

present age, and from no part of the Christian world more remote than

from us. All our modern notions and speculations have taken a bent

toward individualism. In the state, we have been engaged to bring out

the civil rights of the individual, asserting his proper liberties as a

person, and vindicating his conscience, as a subject of God, from the

constraints of force. In matters of religion, we have burst the bonds

of church authority, and erected the individual mind into a tribunal of

judgment within itself; we have asserted free will as the ground of all

proper responsibility, and framed our theories of religion so as to

justify the incommunicable nature of persons as distinct units. While

thus engaged, we have well nigh lost, as was to be expected, the idea

of organic powers and relations. The state, the church, the family,

have ceased to be regarded as such, according to their proper idea, and

become mere collections of units. A national life, a church life, a

family life, is no longer conceived, or perhaps conceivable, by many.

Instead of being wrought in together and penetrated, to some extent, by

historic laws and forces common to all the members, we only seem to lie

as seeds piled together, without any terms of connection, save the

accident of proximity, or the fact that we all belong to the heap. And

thus the three great forms of organic existence, which God has

appointed for the race, are in fact lost out of mental recognition. The

conception is so far gone that, when the fact of such an organic

relation is asserted, our enlightened public will stare at the strange

conceit, and wonder what can be meant by a paradox so absurd.

My design, at the present time, is to restore, if possible, the

conception of one of these organic forms, viz: the family. For though

we have gained immense advantages, in a civil, ecclesiastical, and

religious point of view, by our modern development of individualism, we

have yet run ourselves into many hurtful misapprehensions on all these

subjects, which, if they are not rectified, will assuredly bring

disastrous consequences. And nowhere consequences more disastrous than

in the family, where they are already apparent, though not fully

matured; for the very change of view, by which we have cleared

individual responsibility, in our discussions of free will, original

sin, and kindred subjects, has operated, in another direction, to

diminish responsibility, where most especially it needs to be felt;

that is, in Christian families.

What then do we mean by the organic unity of the family? It will be

understood, of course, that we do not speak of a physical or vascular

connection; for, after birth, there is no such connection existing, any

more than there is between persons of different families. In so far,

however, as a connection of parentage, or derivation has affected the

character, that fact must be included, though it can not be regarded as

a chief element in the unity asserted. Perhaps I shall be understood

with the greatest facility, if I say that the family is such a body,

that a power over character is exerted therein, which can not properly

be called influence. We commonly use the term influence to denote a

persuasive power, or a governmental power, exerted purposely, and with

a conscious design to effect some result in the subject. In maintaining

the organic unity of the family, I mean to assert, that a power is

exerted by parents over children, not only when they teach, encourage,

persuade, and govern, but without any purposed control whatever. The

bond is so intimate that they do it unconsciously and

undesignedly--they must do it. Their character, feelings, spirit, and

principles, must propagate themselves, whether they will or not.

However, as influence, in the sense just given, can not be received by

childhood prior to the age of reason and deliberative choice, the

control of parents, purposely exerted, must be regarded, during that

early period, as an absolute force, not as influence. All such acts of

control therefore must, in metaphysical propriety, and as far as the

child is concerned, be classed under the general denomination of

organic causes. And thus whatever power over character is exerted in

families one side of consent, in the children, and even before they

have come to the age of rational choice, must be taken as organic

power, in the same way as if the effect accrued under the law of simple

contagion. So too when the child performs acts of will, under parental

direction, that involve results of character, without knowing or

considering that they do, these must be classed in the same manner.

In general, then, we find the organic unity of the family, in every

exertion of power over character, which is not exerted and received as

influence; that is, with a design to address the choice on one side,

and a sense of responsible choice on the other. Or, to use language

more popular, we conceive the manners, personal views, prejudices,

practical motives, and spirit of the house, as an atmosphere which

passes into all1 and pervades all, as naturally as the air they

breathe. This, however, not in any such absolute or complete sense as

to leave no room for individual distinctions. Sometimes the two parents

will have a very different spirit themselves, though the grace of God

is pledged to make the better, if it be truly right, and hindered by no

gross inconsistencies, victorious. Sometimes the child, passing into

the sphere of other causes, as in the school, the church, neighboring

families, or general society, will emerge and take a character

partially distinct--partially, I say; never wholly. The odor of the

house will always be in his garments, and the internal difficulties

with which he has to struggle, will spring of the family seeds planted

in his nature.

Having carefully stated thus what I mean by the organic unity of the

family, I next proceed to inquire whether any such unity exists? And

here it is worth noticing--

1. That there is nothing in this view which conflicts with the proper

individuality of persons and their separate responsibility. We have

gained immense advantages, in modern times, as regards society,

government, and character, by liberating and exalting the individual

man. Far be it from me to underrate these advantages, or to bring them

into jeopardy. But a child manifestly can not be a proper individual,

before he is one. Nothing can be gained by assuming that he is; and, if

it is not true, much is sure to be lost. Besides, we are never, at any

age, so completely individual as to be clear of organic connections

that affect our character. To a certain extent and for certain

purposes, we are individuals, acting each from his own will. Then to a

certain extent and for certain other purposes, we are parts or members

of a common body, as truly as the limbs of a tree. We have an open side

in our nature, where a common feeling enters, where we adhere, and

through which we are actuated by a common will. There we are many--here

we are one.

It is remarkable too how often, without knowing it, and, as it were

instinctively, we assume the fact, and act upon it. We do it, for

example, as between nations, where it is not so much the moral life as

the national that constructs the supposed unity. One nation, for

instance. has injured or oppressed another--sought to crush, or

actually crushed another by invasion. A century or more afterwards, the

wrong is remembered, and the injured nation takes the field, still

burning for redress. The history of Carthage and Rome gives us an

example. But, suppose it had been said--"This is very absurd in you

Carthaginians. The Romans, who did you the injury, are all dead, and

those who now bear the name are their children's children. They have

done you no injury any more than the people of Britain or India.

Neither is it the walls, or streets, or temples of Rome that have

injured you. The Roman territory is mere land, and this has not injured

you. Why then go to war with the Romans? How absurd to think of

redressing your old injuries by a war with men who have done you no

harm!" Now it was by just this kind of sophistry that Mr. Jefferson

proved that a public debt is obligatory for only one generation, and

possibly the Carthaginians might have been speculatively stumbled by

such reasonings. Still, they could not have been quite satisfied, I

think, of their validity. Against all speculation, they would still

have felt that the proposed war was somehow reconcilable with reason.

The question is not whether, on Christian principles, they were right,

but whether, on natural principles, they were absurd. This probably no

reader of the history has ever felt. For, whether it squares with our

speculative notions or not, we do all tacitly assume the organic unity

of nations. The past we behold, living in the present, and all together

we regard as one, inhabited by the common life. How much more true is

this (though in a different way) in families, where the common life is

so nearly absolute over the members; where they are all inclosed within

the four walls of their dwellings, partakers in a common blood, in

common interests, wants, feelings, and principles.

2. We discover the organic unity of families, in the fact that one

generation is the natural offspring of an other. And so much is there

in this, that the children almost always betray their origin in their

looks and features. The stamp of a common nature is on them, revealed

in the stature, complexion, gait, form, and dispositions. Sometimes we

seem to see remarkable exceptions. But, in such cases, we should

commonly find, if we could bring up to view the ancestors of remoter

generations, that the filmily bond is still perpetuated, only by a

wider reach of connection. There are said to be two maiden sisters, the

last of a distinguished family, now living in England, who, having no

resemblance to any near ancestor, have yet a very striking resemblance

to the portrait, still hanging in the family mansion, of an ancestor

seven generations back. Indeed, I have myself distinguished, by their

looks, the relationship of two persons, connected by a common

derivation eight generations back, and who more closely resembled each

other in their persons, than either, his nearest kindred. So that, in

cases where there seems to be no transmission of resemblances, there is

yet a probable transmission, only one that is covert and more

comprehensive. Now, strong external resemblances may coexist with

marked external differences, and therefore do not prove a coincidence

of character. And yet it can not be denied that, as far as they go,

they argue a transmission of capacities and dispositions, which enter

into character, as remote causes or occasions. Nor does it make any

difference, as regards the matter in question, whether souls or

spiritual natures come into being through propagation, or not. If they

are created, as some fancy, by the immediate inbreathing of God, still

they are measured by the house they are to live in, and the outward man

is, in all cases, a fit organ for the person within. The dispositions,

tempers, capacities--the natural, and, to a great extent, the moral

character, have the outward frame, as a fit organ of use and

expression. It will even be observed too that, in cases where there is

a remarkable change of character, it will be signified, in due time, by

a change of manner, aspect, and action.

Besides, it is well understood that qualities received by training, and

not in themselves natural, do also pass by transmission. It is said,

for example, that the dog used in hunting was originally trained by

great care and effort, and that now almost no training is necessary;

for the artificial quality has become, to a great extent, natural in

the stock. We have also a most ominous example of this fact in the

human species. I speak of the Jewish race. The singular devotion of

this race to money and traffic is even a proverb. But their ancestors,

of the ancient times, were not thus distinguished. They were a simple,

agricultural people, remarkable for nothing but their religious

opinions, and, in a late period of the commonwealth, for their

fanatical heroism and obstinacy. Whence the change? History gives the

mournful answer, showing them to view, for long ages, as a hated and

down-trodden people, allowed no rights in the soil, shut up within some

narrow and foul precinct in the cities, compelled to subsist by some

meager traffic, denied every possession but money, and suffered to keep

in security not even that, save as they could hide it in secret places,

and cloak the suspicion of wealth under a sordid exterior. They have

thus been educated to be misers by the extortions and the hatred of

Christendom; till finally an artificial nature, so to speak, has been

formed in the race, and we take it even as the instinct of a Jew, to

get money by small traffic and sharp bargains. So there is little room

to doubt that every sort of character and employment passes an effect

and works some predisposition in those who come after.

Could we enter into the mental habits of those children, who are spoken

of in my text, and trace out all the threads of their inward character

and disposition, we should doubtless find some color of idolatry in the

fiber of their very being. They are not such as they would be, if their

parents, of this and remote generations, had been worshipers of the

true God. Their talents, dispositions, propensities are different. The

idol god is in their faces and their bones, and his stamp is on their

spirit. Not in such a sense that the sin of idolatry is in them--that

is inconceivable; for no proper sin can pass by transmission--but that

they have a vicious, or prejudicial infection from it, a damage

accruing from their historical connection and that of their progenitors

with it.

Nor, with these familiar laws of physiology before us, is it reasonable

to doubt that, where there is a long line of godly fathers and mothers,

kept up in regular succession for many generations, a religious

temperament may at length be produced, that is more in the power of

conscience, less wayward as regards principles of integrity, and more

pliant to the Christian motives. More could be said with confidence, if

the godly character were less ambiguous and more thoroughly sanctified.

3. We shall find that there is a law of connection, after birth, under

which power over character is exerted, without any design to do it. For

a considerable time after birth, the child has no capacity of will and

choice developed, and therefore is not a subject of influence, in the

common sense of that term. He is not as yet a complete individual; he

has only powers and capacities that prepare him to be, when they are

unfolded. They are in him only as wings and a capacity to fly are in

the egg. Meantime, he is open to impressions from every thing he sees.

His character is forming, under a principle, not of choice, but of

nurture. The spirit of the house is breathed into his nature, day by

day. The anger and gentleness, the fretfulness and patience--the

appetites, passions, and manners--all the variant moods of feeling

exhibited round him, pass into him as impressions, and become seeds of

character in him; not because the parents will, but because it must be

so, whether they will or not. They propagate their own evil in the

child, not by design, but under a law of moral infection. Before the

children begin to gather wood for the sacrifice, the spirit of the idol

and his faith has been communicated. The airs and feelings and conduct

of idolatry have filled their nature with impressions, which are back

of all choice and memory. Go out to them then, as they are gathering

faggots for the idol sacrifice, ask them what questions they have had

about the service of the god? what doubts? whether any unsatisfied

debate or perplexing struggle has visited their minds? and you will

probably awaken their first thoughts on the subject by the inquiry

itself. All because they have grown up in the idol worship, from a

point back of memory. They received it through their impressions,

before they were able to receive it from choice. And so it is with all

the moral transactions of the house. The spirit of the house is in the

members by nurture, not by teaching, not by any attempt to communicate

the same, but because it is the air the children breathe.

Now, it is in the twofold manner set forth, under this and the previous

head of my discourse, that our race have fallen, as a race, into moral

corruption and apostasy. In these two methods also, they have been

subjected, as an organic unity, to evil; so that when they come to the

age of proper individuality, the damage received has prepared them to

set forth, on a course of blamable and guilty transgression. The

question of original or imputed sin has been much debated in modern

times, and the effort has been to vindicate the personal responsibility

of each individual, as a moral agent. Nor is any thing more clear, on

first principles, than that no man is responsible for any sin but his

own. The sin of no person can be transmitted as a sin, or charged to

the account of another. But it does not therefore follow, that there

are no moral connections between individuals, by which one becomes a

corrupter of others. If we are units, so also are we a race, and the

race is one--one family, one organic whole; such that the fall of the

head involves the fall of all the members. Under the old doctrines of

original sin, federal headship, and the like, cast away by many,

ridiculed by not a few, there yet lies a great and momentous truth,

announced by reason as clearly as by Scripture--that in Adam all die;

that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; that death hath

passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Not that this original

scheme of unity is any disadvantage. I firmly believe and think I could

show the contrary even. Enough that so the Scriptures speak, and that

so we see, by inspection itself. There can be no greater credulity,

than for any man to expect that a sinful and death-struck being, one

who has fallen out of the harmony of his mold by sin, should yet

communicate no trace of evil from himself, no diseased or damaged

quality, no moral discolor, to the gene. rations that derive their

existence from him. To make that possible, every law of physiology must

be adjourned, and, what is more, all that we see with our eyes, in the

eventful era of impressions, must be denied.

I am well aware that those who have advocated, in former times, the

church dogma of original sin, as well as those who adhere to it now,

speak only of a taint derived by natural or physical propagation, and

do not include the taint derived afterwards, under the law of family

infection. It certainly can be no heresy to include the latter; and,

since it is manifest that both fall within the same general category of

organic connection, it is equally manifest that both ought to be

included, and, in all systematic reasonings, must be. If, during the

age of impressions in the child, and previous to the development of

will, a power is exerted over character--exerted necessarily, both as

regards the sinful parent and the child, and that as truly as if it

fell within the laws of propagation itself-it can not be right to

attribute the moral taint wholly, or even principally, to propagation.

Until the child comes to his will, we must regard him still as held

within the matrix of the parental life; and then, when he is ripe for

responsible choice, as born for action--a proper and complete person.

Taking this comprehensive view of the organic unity of successive

generations of men, the truth we assert of human depravation is not a

half-truth exaggerated, (which many will not regard as any truth at

all,) but it is a broad, well-authenticated doctrine, which no

intelligent observer of facts and principles can deny. It shows the

past descending on the present, the present on the future, by an

inevitable law, and yet gives every parent the hope of mitigating the

sad legacy of mischief he entails upon his children, by whatever

improvements of character and conduct he is able to make--a hope which

Christian promise so far clears to his view, as even to allow him the

presumption that his child may be set forth into responsible action, as

a Christian person.

In offering these thoughts, it will be seen that I have not digressed

from my subject, but have extended the proof of my doctrine rather,

discovering within its scope, the fall of man itself. As a farther

proof of the organic unity of the family, I allege--

4. The fact that, in all organic bodies known to us--states, churches,

sects, armies--there is a common spirit, by which they are pervaded and

distinguished from each other. And we use this word spirit, in such

cases, to denote a power interfused, a comprehensive Will actuating the

members, regarding also the common body itself, as a larger and more

inclusive individual. How different, for example, is the spirit of

France from the spirit of England; the spirit of both, from that of the

United States; and that, from the spirit of the Spartan or Athenian

republic. This national spirit, too, is, as it were, a common power in

each, by which the subordinate individual members are assimilated, and

made to have a kind of organic character. And so much is there in this,

that an Englishman can not make to himself a French character, or any

one of us an English character. We can not act the character one of

another; for so distant are the feelings, prejudices, and temperaments

of each, that they can not even be accurately conceived and reproduced,

unless we are actually enveloped in them as an atmosphere.

In the same manner, there is a peculiar spirit in every church Whether

you take the larger divisions, the Jewish, the Greek, the Roman, the

Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Congregational, or

descend to the particular churches of a given city, you will find

something characteristic in each--a common power, which gives a common

stamp to the members peculiar to themselves. Or, if you visit a Quaker

settlement, where a few men and women are gathered into a kind of

church family, you will discover that the members are pervaded, all, by

a peculiar spirit, as distinct from the world around them as if they

were a new discovered people. And these Quaker settlements; may be

taken as a kind of intermediate link between the church-state and the

family.

Passing then to families, you are not surprised to discover the same

thing. This is specially evident where the family is isolated, and does

not mingle extensively with the world. You can scarcely open the door,

and take a seat in their house, least of all can you go to their table,

or spend a night in their hospitality, without being impressed by the

fact. And this family spirit will sometimes be exceedingly opposite to

the spirit of goodness. Here it is money, money, written on every face;

here it is good living; here show; here scandal and detraction.

Sometimes the sense of religion and of spiritual things will seem to be

nearly lost, or obliterated. Sometimes a positive hatred of God and all

good men and principles will constitute the staple of family feeling.

Sometimes a dull and sullen contempt of such things will hold the place

of open animosity.

It is very true that the family spirit does not always perfectly master

and assimilate all the members You will find a Christian son or

daughter, here and there, in spite of the ruling spirit of the house.

This, however, because families are to some extent intermingled; in

which it comes to pass that children often fall under the power of

another spirit, that masters the spirit reigning at home. The children

go into other families, where they are visited by other feelings. They

go into the church of God, where the church spirit breathes another

atmosphere. In the school, they are penetrated by the school spirit. In

the shop, or in the transactions of trade, the same is true. Were it

not for this, the family spirit might almost uniformly rule the

character of the members. Who ever expects that an idolatrous religion,

in the house, will not uniformly produce idolaters? So the Mohammedan

spirit makes only Mohammedans. In like manner, a thievish house

perpetuates a race of thieves. Consider also the ductility and the

perfect passivity of childhood. Early childhood resists nothing. What

is given it receives, making no selection. To expect therefore that a

child will form to himself a spirit opposite to the spirit of the

family, without once feeling the power of a counteractive spirit, would

be credulous in the highest degree. Doubtless he has a conscience,

which is the law of God, in his breast, and he has a will free to

choose what his conscience requires. But his passions are unfolded

before his discretion, his prejudices bent before he assumes the

function of self-government. He breathes the atmosphere of the house.

He sees the world through his parents' eyes. Their objects become his.

Their life and spirit mold him. If they are carnal, coarse, passionate,

profane, sensual, devilish, his little plastic nature takes the poison

of course. Their very motions, manners, and voices, will be

distinguishable in him. He lives and moves and has his being in them.

I do not say, of course, that he will exactly resemble them in

character. Were he to receive a contagious disease, he would,

doubtless, be differently handled under it, from the person who gave

the infection. I only say, that the moral disease of the family he

assuredly will take, and that, probably, without even a question, or a

cautious feeling started. If some other spirit, from other families, or

the church, or the world, do not reach him, the organic spirit of the

house will infallibly shape and subordinate his character.

5. We are led to the same conclusions, by considering what may be

called the organic working of a family. The child begins, at length, to

develop his character, in and through his voluntary power. But he is

still under the authority of the parent, and has only a partial control

of himself, in the development of which, he is gradually approaching a

complete personality. Now, there is a perpetual working in the family,

by which the wills, both of the parents and the children, are held in

exercise, and which, without any design to affect character on one

side, or conscious consent on the other, is yet fashioning results of

a, moral quality, as it were by the joint industry of the house. And

these results are to be taken, according to our definition, as included

in the organic unity of the family. I except, of course, all the

voluntary actings that are designed to influence the child, and are

yielded to by him, as consciously right or wrong.

The truth here brought to view is graphically set forth in my text.

Whatever working there is in the house, all work together. If the

fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the cakes, the children

will gather the wood, and the idol worship will set the whole circle of

the house in action. The child being under the law of the parents, they

will keep him at work to execute their plans, or their sins, as the

case may be; and, as they will seldom think of what they do, or

require, so he will seldom have any scruple concerning it. The property

gained belongs to the family. They have a common interest, and every

prejudice or animosity felt by the parents, the children are sure to

feel even more intensely. They are all locked together, in one

cause--in common cares, hopes, offices, and duties; for their honor and

dishonor, their sustenance, their ambition, all their objects are

common. So they are trained of necessity to a kind of general working,

or co6peration, and, like stones, rolled together in some brook or

eddy, they wear each other into common shapes. If the family subsist by

plunder, then the infant is swaddled as a thief, the child wears a

thief's garments, and feeds the growth of his body on stolen meat; and,

in due time, he will have the trade upon him, without ever knowing that

he has taken it lip, or when he took it up. If the father is

intemperate, the children must go on errands to procure his supplies,

lose the shame that might be their safety, be immersed in the fumes of

liquor in going and coming, and why not rewarded by an occasional taste

of what is so essential to the enjoyment of life? If the family subsist

in idleness and beggary, then the children will be trained to lie

skillfully, and maintain their false pretences with a plausible

effrontery--all this, you will observe, not as a sin, but as a trade.

Nor does what I am saying hold, only in cases of extreme viciousness

and depravity. Whatever fire the fathers kindle, the children are

always found gathering the wood--always helping as accessaries and

apprentices. If the father reads a newspaper, or a sporting gazette, on

Sunday, the family must help him find it. If he writes a letter of

business on Sunday, he will send his child to the office with the

letter. If the mother is a scandal-monger, she will make her children

spies and eaves-droppers. If she directs her servant to say, at the

door, that she is not at home, she will sometimes be overheard by her

child. If she is ambitious that her children should excel in the

display of finery and fashion, they must wear the show and grow up in

the spirit of it. If her house is a den of disorder and filth, they

must be at home in it. Fretfulness and ill-temper in the parents are

provocations, and therefore somewhat more efficacious than

commandments, to the same. The proper result will be a congenial

assemblage, in the house, of petulance and ill-nature. The niggardly

parsimony that quarrels with a child, when asking for a book needful

for his proficiency at school, is teaching him that money is worth more

than knowledge. If the parents are late risers, the children must not

disturb the house, but stay quiet and take a lesson that is not to

assist their energy and promptness in the future business of life. If

they go to church only half of the day, they will not send their

children the other half. If they never read the Bible, they will never

teach it. If they laugh at religion, they will put a face upon it,

which will make their children justify the contempt they express. This

enumeration might be indefinitely extended. Enough that we see, in the

working of the house, how all the members work together. The children

fall into their places naturally, as it were, and unconsciously, to do

and to suffer exactly what the general scheme of the house requires.

Without any design to that effect, all the actings of business,

pleasure, and sin, propagate themselves throughout the circle, as the

weights of a clock maintain the workings of the wheels. Where there is

no effort to teach wrong, or thought of it, the house is yet a school

of wrong, and the life of the house is only a practical drill in evil.

Having sufficiently established, as I think, by these illustrations,

the organic unity of families, it remains to add some practical

thoughts of a more specific nature. And--

1. It becomes a question of great moment, as connected with the

doctrine established, whether it is the design of the Christian scheme

to take possession of the organic laws of the family, and wield them as

instruments, in any sense, of a regenerative purpose? Arind here we are

met by the broad principle, that Christianity endeavors to make every

object, favor, and relation, an instrument of righteousness, according

to its original design. What intelligent person ever supposed that the

original constitution, by which one generation derives its existence

and receives the bent of its character from another, was designed of

God to be the vehicle only of depravity? It might as well be supposed

that men themselves were made to be containers of depravity. The only

supposition that honors God is, that the organic unity, of which I

speak, was ordained originally for the nurture of holy virtue in the

beginning of each soul's history; and that Christianity, or redemption,

must of necessity take possession of the abused vehicle, and sanctify

it for its own merciful uses. That an engine of so great power should

be passed by, when every other law and object in the universe is

appropriated and wielded as an instrument of grace, and that in a

movement for the redemption of the race, is inconceivable. The

conclusion thus reached does not carry us, indeed, to the certain

inference that the organic unity of the family will avail to set forth

every child of Christian parents, in a Christian life. But if we

consider the tremendous power it has, as an instrument of evil, how far

short of such an opinion does it leave us, when computing the reach of

its power as an instrument of grace?

Passing next to the Scriptures, we find such reasonings justified, as

explicitly as we can desire. I am not disposed to press the language of

Scripture, which is popular, to extreme conclusions. But I observe that

Christ is called a second Adam and a last Adam: language, to say the

least, that suits the idea of a proposed union with the race, under its

organic laws--as if, entering into the Christian family, his design

were to fill it with a family spirit, which shall controvert and master

the old evil spirit. The declaration corresponds, that, as by one man's

disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall

many be made righteous--language that measures the grace by the

mischief, and shows it flowing in a parallel, but fuller stream. It may

not be easy to settle, beyond dispute, the relation of the old covenant

to the new; but there can be no question that the church, under

Abraham. was measured, in some sense, by the organic unity of the

family of Abraham. The covenant was a family covenant, in which God

engaged to be the God of the seed, as of the father. And the seal of

the covenant was a seal of faith, applied to the whole house, as if the

continuity of faith were somehow to be, or somehow might be maintained,

in a line that is parallel with the continuity of sin, in the family.

Nor was the result to depend on mere natural generation, however

sanctified, but on the organic causes also, that are involved in family

nurture, after birth. For we are expressly informed, (Gen. xviii. 19,)

that God rested his covenant, or engagement, on the conduct of

Abraham--"for I know him, that he will command his children and his

household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do

justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which

he hath spoken of him." And thus we see that the old church, beyond any

possible question, was to have its grounds of perpetuity, in and by the

same terms of organic unity, which sin has made the vehicle of

depravity. Descending then to the New Testament, Jesus the world's

Redeemer is declared to have suffered, "that the blessing of Abraham

might come on the Gentiles," and the Gentiles are said to be "graffed

in." The new "seed," viz., "Christ," are said to be "the seed of

Abraham," and "heirs of the promise" made to him. The old rite of

proselyte baptism, which made the families receiving it Jewish citizens

and children of Abraham, was applied over directly to the Christian

uses, and the rite went by "households;" even as the New Testament

promise also was--"to you and to your children." Even the old Jewish

law, that one Jewish parent made a Jewish child, is brought into the

church, and one believing parent "sanctifies" the child. In all of

which, it seems to be clearly held that grace shall travel by the same

conveyance with sin; that the organic unity, which I have spoken of

chiefly as an instrument of corruption, is to be occupied and

sanctified by Christ, and become an instrument also of mercy and life.

And thence it follows that the seal of faith, applied to households, is

to be no absurdity; for it is the privilege and duty of every Christian

parent that his children shall come forth into responsible action, as a

regenerated stock. The organic unity is to be a power of life. God

engages, on his part, that it may be, and calls the Christian parent to

promise, on his part, that it shall be. Thus the church has a

constitutive element from the family in it still, as it had in the days

of Abraham. The church life--that is, the Holy Spirit--collects

families into a common organism, and then, by sanctifying the laws of

organic unity in families, extends its quickening power to the

generation following, so as to include the future, and make it one with

the past. And so the church, in all ages, becomes a body under Christ

the head, as the race is a body under Adam the head--a living body,

quickened by him who hath life in himself, fitly joined together and

compacted by that which every joint supplieth.

2. The theological importance of our doctrine of organic unity, when

brought up to this point, is exhibited in many ways, and especially in

the fact that it gives the only true solution of the Christian church

and of baptism as related to membership. I hardly dare attempt to speak

of the "sacramental grace," supposed to attend the rite of baptism,

under the priestly forms of Christianity; for I have never been able to

give any consistent and dignified meaning to the language, in which it

is set forth. That there is a grace attendant, falling on all the

parties concerned, is quite evident, if they are doing their duty; for

no person, whether laic or priest, can do, or intend what is right,

without some spiritual benefit. But the child is said to be

"regenerate, spiritually united to Christ, a new creature in Christ

Jesus," under the official grace of baptism. Then this language, so

full of import, is defined, after all, to mean only that the child is

in the church, where the grace of God surrounds him--translated (not

internally, but externally) from the sphere of nature into a new

sphere, where all the aids of grace, available for his salvation, are

furnished. Sometimes it is added that his sins are remitted, though no

man is likely to believe that he has any sins to remit; or, if the

meaning be that the corrupted quality, physiologically inherent in his

nature, is washed away, he will show in due time that it is not; and no

one, in fact, believes that it is. Then if it be asked, whether the new

sphere of grace will assuredly work a gracious character? "no," is the

answer. "If the child is not faithful, or hinders the grace, he will

lose it"--that is, he will not stay regenerate. And then as the child,

in every case, is sure, in some bad sense, not to be faithful, he is

equally sure to lose the grace, and be landed in a second state that is

worse than the first. And thus it turns out, after all, as far as I can

see, that the grace magnified in the beginning, by words of so high an

import, is a thing of no value--it is nothing. It is, in fact, one of

our most decided objections to this scheme of sacramental grace,

(paradoxical as it may seem,) that, really and truly, there is not

enough of import in it to save the meaning of the rite. The grace is

words only, and an air of imposture is all that remains, after the

words are explained. The rite is fertile only in maintaining a

superstition. Practically speaking, it only exalts a prerogative. By a

motion of his hand, the priest breaks in, to interrupt and displace all

the laws of character in life--communicating an abrupt, ictic grace, as

much wider of all dignity and reason, than any which the new light

theology has asserted, as the regenerative power is more subject to a

human dispensation. A superstitious homage collects about his person.

The child looks on him as one who opens heaven by a ceremony! The

ungodly parent hurries to him, to get the regenerative grace for his

dying child. The bereaved parent mourns inconsolably, and even curses

himself, that he neglected to obtain the grace for his child, now

departed. The priest, in the eye, displaces the memory of duty and

godliness in the heart. A thousand superstitions, degrading to religion

and painful to look upon, hang around this view of baptism. Not to

produce them, the doctrine must yield up its own nature.

In all this, I speak constructively, as reasoning from the doctrine

asserted, and as I am able to understand it. Constructive results are

never more than partially verified by historic facts; for great truths,

blended with the error, qualify and mitigate its effects.

Now the true conception is, that baptism is applied to the child, on

the ground of its organic unity with the parents; imparting and

pledging a grace to sanctify that unity, and make it good in the field

of religion. By the supposition, however, the child still remains

within the known laws of character in the house, to receive. under

these, whatever good may reach him; not snatched away by an abrupt,

fantastical, and therefore incredible grace. He is taken to be

regenerate, not historically speaking, but presumptively, on the ground

of his known connection with the parent character, and the divine or

church life, which is the life of that character. Perhaps I shall be

understood more easily, if I say that the child is potentially

regenerate, being regarded as existing in connection with powers and

causes that contain the fact, before time and separate from time. For

when the fact appears historically, under the law of time, it is not

more truly real, in a certain sense, than it was before. And then the

grace conferred, being conferred by no casual act, but resting in the

established laws of character, in the church and the house, is not lost

by unfaithfulness, but remains and lingers still, though abused and

weakened, to encourage new struggles.

Thus it will be seen that the doctrine of organic unity I have been

asserting, proves its theologic value, as a ready solvent for the

rather perplexing difficulties of this difficult subject. Only one

difficulty remains, viz, that so few can believe the doctrine.

3. It is evident that the voluntary intention of parents, in regard to

their children, is no measure, either of their merit or their sin. Few

parents are so base, or so lost to natural affection, as really to

intend the injury of their children. However irreligious, or immoral,

they more commonly desire a worthy and correct character for their

children, often even a Christian character. But, in the great and

momentous truth now set forth, you perceive it is not what you intend

for your children, so much as what you are, that is to have its effect.

They are connected, by an organic unity, not with your instructions,

but with your life. And your life is mole powerful than your

instructions can be. They might be jealous of intended corruption, and

withstand it: but the spirit of the house, which is your spirit, the

whole working of the house, which is actuated by you, is what no

exercise of will, even if they had more of it than they have, could

well resist. Therefore, what you are, they will almost necessarily be;

and then, as you are responsible for what you are, you must also be

responsible for the ruin brought on them. And, if you desired better

things for them, as you probably say, the more guilty are you that,

knowing and desiring better things, you thwarted your desires by your

own evil life.

So there are Christians who intend and do many things for their

children, and thus acquit themselves of all blame in regard to their

character. Here, alas! is the perpetual error of Christian parents, so

called, that they endeavor to make up, by direct efforts, for the

mischiefs of a loose and neglectful life. They convince themselves that

teaching, lecturing, watch, discipline, things done with a purpose, are

the sum of duty. As if mere affectations and will-works could cheat the

laws of life and character ordained by God! Your character is a stream,

a river, flowing down upon your children hour by hour. What you do here

and there to carry an opposing influence is, at best, only a ripple

that you make on the surface of the stream. It reveals the sweep of the

current; nothing more. If you expect your children to go with the

ripple, instead of the stream, you will be disappointed. I beseech you

then as you love your children, to admit other and worthier thoughts,

thoughts more safe for them and certainly for you. Understand that it

is the family spirit, the organic life of the house, the silent power

of a domestic godliness, working, as it does, unconsciously and with

sovereign effect--this it is which forms your children to God. And, if

this be wanting, all that you may do beside, will be as likely to annoy

and harden as to bless.

4. It seems to be a proper inference from the doctrine I have

exhibited, that Christian parents ought to speak freely to their

children, at times, of their own faults and infirmities. If they are

faithful, if they live as Christians, if the spirit of Christ bears

rule in the house, they will yet have faults, and they ought to make no

secret of the fact. The impression should be made, that they themselves

are struggling with infirmities; that they are humbled under a sense of

these infirmities; that there is much in them for God to pardon, much

for their children to overlook, or even to forgive; and that God alone

can assist them to lead themselves and their family up to a better

world. Instead of lecturing their children, always, on their

peccadilloes and sins, it would be better, sometimes, to give a lecture

on their own. This, if rightly done, would attract the friendly

sympathy of their children, guard them against the injurious

impressions they make when they trip themselves, and unite the whole

family in a common struggle heavenward. There is no other way to

correct the mixture of evil you will blend with the family spirit, but

to deplore it, and make it an acknowledged truth, that you, too, are

only a child in goodness. But if you take a throne of papal

infallibility in your family, and endeavor to fight out, with the rod,

what you fail in by your misconduct, you may make your children fear

you and hate you, but you will not win them to Christ. Alas! there are

too many Christian families that are only little popedoms. The rule

itself is tyranny--infallibility assumed, then maintained, by the holy

inquisition of terror and penal chastisement! God will not smile on

such a kind of discipline.

5. It is evident what rule should regulate the society and external

intercourse of children. It is a very great mercy, as I have said, that

the children of a bad or irreligious family are sometimes permitted to

be inmates elsewhere; to go into virtuous and Christian families, where

a better spirit reigns. There they see, perhaps, the genuine

demonstrations of order, of purity, and of good affections; they hear

the voice of prayer, they come where the spirit of heaven breathes. It

is a new world, and they are filled with new impressions. So, if a

child may go to a school where order, right principle, virtuous

manners, and the love of knowledge reign, and find a respite there from

the shiftlessness, vice, and brutality at home, how great is the

privilege. In this view, a good school is almost the only mercy that

can be extended to the hapless sons and daughters of vice. Their

good--most dismal thought!--is to be delivered from their home; to

escape the spirit of hell that encompasses their helpless age, and

fee], though it be but a few hours a day, the power of another spirit!

But I was speaking of the rule to be observed in the society of

children. Let every Christian beware how he makes his children inmates

in an irreligious family. It will do, sometimes, to allow the children

of an irreligious family to be inmates, temporarily, in your own. You

may do it for their advantage; and if you can en list the hearts of

your children in the merciful intentions you cherish, it may even be a

good exercise for them. But it is a very different thing to place your

children within the atmosphere of another house. Send them not where

the spirit of evil reigns. Understand how plastic their nature is, how

easily it receives the contagion of another spirit. You yourselves may

have intercourse with ungodly persons; it may be your duty to seek it

for their benefit; but you may well be cautious how far you subject

your children, especially in early years, to the intercourse of

irreligious families

And what shall I say to parents, who are themselves irreligious?

Perhaps you make it your boast that you give your children their

liberty; that you mean to allow them to be just as religious as they

please. And is that enough, do you think, to discharge your duties to

them? Is it enough to breathe the spirit of evil and sin into them and

around them every hour, to give them no Christian counsel, to train

them up in a prayerless house, drill them into conformity with all your

worldly ways, and then say that you allow them full liberty to be

Christians? Having them under your law, determining yourselves that

organic spirit, which is to be the element, the very breath of their

moral existence, will you then boast that you mean to allow them to be

as virtuous as they please? Ah, if there be any argument, which might

compel you to be Christians yourselves, it is these arguments of

affection that God has given you. But if you will not be Christians

yourselves, then, at least, show your children some degree of mercy, by

delivering them, as much as possible, from yourselves! Send them, as

often as you may, where a better spirit reigns. Make them inmates with

Christian families, as you have opportunity. Let them go where they

will hear a prayer and see a Christian Sabbath. Send them, or take them

with you, to the church of God, and the Sabbath-school. Give them a

respite often from the family spirit and the organic law of the house.

If you yourselves will not fashion them for the skies, let others, more

faithful than you, and more merciful, do it for you.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

V.

INFANT BAPTISM, HOW DEVELOPED.

"For she promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are

afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."--Acts, ii. 39.

IT is a matter of wonder, with many professed disciples of Jesus in our

time, that if the baptism of children and their qualified introduction

into the church is any genuine part of the Christian economy, there is

so little authority for it, by express mention in the New Testament

writings. And yet, over opposite to this, it is quite as fair a subject

of wonder that in Peter's first sermon, on the day of Pentecost, when

addressing only the adult sinners of the assembly, in terms appropriate

to their age, he should yet have given out, as it were unconsciously, a

declaration that can signify nothing but the engagement of Christ, in

his new and more spiritual economy, to identify children with their

parents, even as they had been identified in the coarser provisions of

the Old. "To you and to your children," says the apostle, and here,

covertly as it were to himself, are hid infant baptism, infant church

relations, potentially present but as yet undeveloped, even in what may

be fitly called the seed sermon of the Christian church. This was no

time to be thinking of infants, or children, as related to church

polity; probably there is not one present in the great assembly. It

will be soon enough to settle the church position of children, when the

question rises practically afterwards. These converted pilgrims,

Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and strangers of all names, may not even so

much as think of the question till they reach their homes again. But

the language, we can see, is Jewish; language of promise, or covenant,

only with a Christian addition--"And to them that are afar off, even as

many as the Lord our God shall call"--and Peter, as we know, did not

really come into the meaning of this language himself till years after,

when the great sheet let down from heaven three times, and the actual

ministering to a Gentile convert, showed him whither, and how far off,

the call of the Lord might be going, in these times, to run. Let it not

surprise us then, that the facts of infant baptism, and of infant

church relations, covered, as they are, by Peter's language in this

first sermon, are still not yet developed, even to himself--any more

than the fact of Christ's call to the Gentiles.

And when our Baptist brethren reiterate the formula, "believe and be

baptized," "believe and be baptized," which they assume to be

absolutely conclusive and final on the question of infant baptism

because infants can not believe, they have only to make due allowance

for the fact that Christianity must needs make its chief address, at

the outset, to adult persons, and their argument vanishes. Christianity

will of course address itself to the subjects addressed; and, telling

them what they must do to be saved, it will not of course tell them, at

the same breath, every thing else that is fit to be known. In this

manner its language was naturally shaped, for a considerable time, so

as to meet only the conditions of adult minds. When at length it shall

begin lo be inquired, what is the condition of immature, or infant

minds? it will be soon enough to say something appropriate to them.

Besides, the formula has another side--"He that believeth not shall be

damned." Does it therefore follow, because it is so continually given

to adults as the fixed law of salvation--he that believeth shall be

saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned--that infants dying in

infancy, and too young to believe, must therefore be inevitably damned?

No, it will be answered, even by our Baptist brethren themselves; for

the language referred to was evidently designed only for adult persons,

and is of course to be qualified so as to meet the demands of reason,

when we come to the case of child hood. And why not also the language

"believe and be baptized?" Say not that the child is not old enough to

believe, and therefore can not be baptized. If he is not old enough to

believe, how can he better be saved? Is it a greater, and higher, and

more difficult thing to be admitted to baptism, than to be admitted to

eternal glory?

Now I can most readily admit that the subject of infant baptism is not

as definitely mentioned and formally prescribed in the New Testament,

as we might, without any great extravagance, expect. For many will

never notice how great a thing it is for Christianity to pass from the

first stage of mere propagation, to the stage of a fixed institution.

What worlds of modification, correction, new arrangement, are necessary

to the transition, they have never observed. They see the real figure

of Christianity in the day of Pentecost, having never a conception, it

may be, that this figure is most intensely occasional and casual, and

the whole scene one that has scarcely a vestige of Christian

institution in it.

What I propose, then, is to go over some of the incidents of this

Pentecostal scene and show you how it will drop out one point after

another, as Christianity becomes a fixed institution; which

institutional character, again, will, by a necessary law, bring in

other elements whereby to shape itself and complete its organization.

First of all, we are delighted here at the picture given of a new form

of society, and a thing so beautiful, so wonderfully hopeful and

peculiar, we are ready to think must be the very essence of the new

institution itself. "And all that believed were together and had all

things common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to

all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing with one accord in

the temple and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat

with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor

with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as

should be saved." What a picture, taken as a mere external description!

Saying nothing of internal experiences, it goes to the simple outward

demonstrations, and by these it paints the spring-time, or first

blossoming of the Christian love The beauty of the scene consists in

the fact, that the disciples hardly know, as yet, what their love

signifies. Assembled as pilgrims, from all parts of the world, the

Christian love has fallen upon then, and they find, what is altogether

new and strange,. that rich and poor, honorable and base, despite of

all distinctions, they love one another as brethren! Not knowing what

to make of it, or, apparently, whether they are hereafter to have any

thing to do but to love one another, they give themselves wholly up to

love, as children to a play--come what will, they are all agreed in

this, that they want only fellowship with each other, fellowship in

doctrine, fellowship in praise, fellowship in bread,--and why not also

in goods?

How sad, that a scene so amiable and lovely could not continue, and

that all Christian disciples, to the end of the world, could not fall

into the same delightful picture in their conduct! Just as sad, I

answer, as it is that children can not always be children; for these

are the children of love, acting out the simple instinct of love, and

wholly ignorant, as yet, of the cares, labors, and confused struggles,

in which their Christian spirit is to have its trial. Doubtless we are

to regret, as a loss, whatever departure we may have suffered from the

spirit of these first disciples; for the spirit of Christian life is

one and the same, in all diversities of form and conduct. But it is

plain to any one, who will exercise the least consideration, that it

was just as impossible to perpetuate these first demonstrations, as it

is to preserve the infantile airs of children after childhood is

passed, carrying them still on through the sturdy toils and cares of a

mature age. The moment we leave these first scenes, following the

pilgrims off to their homes, see them entering into the duties of home,

see the Christian churches getting body and form in so many places and

becoming incorporated as fixed elements of human society, we shall

discover that almost all the modes and hospitalities of the Pentecostal

society are inevitably discontinued.

But we must go deeper into the history and show, by distinct

specification, how intensely casual much that belongs to the scene of

the Pentecost was even designed to be, and how many things are to be

added to give the new gospel a permanently instituted life. We begin

with the things casual that were designed to cease.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit was here to be inaugurated, as a Divine

Force, entered systematically into the world, to work subjectively in

men all the characters of love and beauty that are shown objectively in

the life of Jesus. He is to be, in other words, a perpetual indwelling

Christ in men's hearts. In times more ancient, good men had been wont

to pray for spiritual help in a manner correspondent, but now the

kingdom of Help, that kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy

in the Holy Ghost, is to be set up as a Christly dispensation. But, at

the beginning, there must be something done before the senses, to waken

sensuous impressions. Otherwise, whatever power the Spirit might exert

in the recesses of the human soul, it would probably occur to no one to

refer the effects wrought to a Divine Agency. Hence the wondrous

character of the scene, which here bursts upon the world--a sound from

heaven, a rushing, mighty wind sweeping through the hall, lambent tips

of fire resting on the heads of the assembly, wondrous utterances or

tongues.

Now, the physical incidents of this scene had nothing to do with its

substantial import, save as they were added to suggest the idea of a

Divine Agency. They hold the same mechanical relation, as a vehicle, to

the Spirit, that the human nature of Jesus held to the Divine Word.

They are the body, the sensible show of the Spirit, the smoke by which

the fire was revealed. So of the tongues. They were the sign of a power

that was playing the action of the inner man, and making audible, as it

were, the activity within, of a Divine Influence. All these, like the

miraculous gifts so conspicuous in the subsequent history, were

manifestations of the Spirit, given to profit withal; but being only

accidents or exponents, were, of course, to be discontinued, when the

doctrine of a spiritual influence from God was sufficiently

developed--discontinued and never restored, unless perhaps in cases

where the sense of the Spirit is so nearly lost as to require a kind of

new development. Accordingly as these fall off, the spiritual influence

inaugurated by such tokens, may be expected, for much the same reasons,

to move upon the world in a less imposing method; to remit, in some

degree, the extraordinary, and, as life is itself ordinary, become, to

the human spirit, what the air is to the body--a Perpetual Element of

inbreathing love; to dwell in the families, to follow the individual,

and whisper holy thoughts in solitary places and silent hours. He is to

fill the world, and be a Spirit of Life and love, present to all human

hearts. He will produce the same exercises, produced in the first

disciples, in the scene of the Pentecost. Sometimes, too, he will

glorify himself in scenes of social effect and power. But the grand

reality revealed is an Abiding Spirit--not a Scene Spirit, but an

Abiding Spirit--accordantly with Christ's own promise--"He shall give

you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." When the

sound, therefore, which then shook the air is hushed to be heard no

more; when the rushing, mighty wind that typified so powerfully the

breath of the arriving Spirit of God has dropped into calm; when the

fire-tips have ceased to burn on the heads of all assemblies, and all

the Pentecostal signs are over; then is there seen to be left as a

result, the fixed conviction of a Jesus unlocalized, a Spirit of Jesus

pres. ent in all places, working in all hearts, present, in conscious

manifestation, to all discerning souls, as the life of their life. How

very casual, in this view, is the scene of the Pentecost. And that is

very soon discovered. One year afterwards, not even the persons present

in that scene look upon it as being, in any sense, a properly

institutional element of Christianity. The Spirit inaugurated is

institutional, the life of all hol) institutions, but nothing in the

forms of the scene is regarded as having a perpetual character.

Again, it will be found that the preaching of the day of Pentecost,

powerful as the sermon of Peter appears to have been upon the assembly

at that time, was not such, either in style or substance, as could be

continued after the first day or two of the gospel proclamation, and

was in fact superseded, in a very short time, by the sturdier methods

of argument and instruction. We see this in all the epistles, and as

truly in those of Peter as of Paul. The infant churches had scarcely

begun to be institutions, before this change was apparent.

And yet we have many, in our own time, who do not appear to see this,

even though the manner of Peter's sermon is so completely gone by, that

one can hardly imagine how it had any power at all. "See," they say,

"how simple it was, how easy of apprehension--nothing but a recitation

of facts--and then what power it had!" As if the telling, over and

over, of old news, announcing again facts that have been known to every

reader of the New Testament from his childhood up, as familiarly as he

knows his right hand, could have the same value and be means to ends

for producing the same effects! Most of us have a better understanding

of the subject, perceiving, as clearly as possible, that while Peter's

sermon was good for the occasion, it was good for almost no occasion

since. It was one of the first things, of which there can not, by the

supposition, be many. A camp meeting, or a band of pilgrims gathered

for a single week, a thousand miles from home, may well enough desire

such kind of preaching as will serve the zest of the occasion. But it

is no design of Christianity to get by the need of intelligence, and

fashion a sanctity that has no fellowship with dignity. A regularly

instituted Christian congregation, who are to live and grow up on the

same spot, from age to age, it has long ago been discovered, must be

compelled to gird up the loins of their mind. They must reject the mere

gospel drinks and betake themselves to meat. Their life, it will be

found, depends, not on scenes and machineries, not on storms and

paroxysms; but on a capacity rather to receive instruction, to be

exercised in high argument, to bear with patience the discovery how

little they know; and on a good healthful appetite for Christian food.

To be able to burn in a fire decides nothing. They must know how to

supply the fuel of devotion out of their own exercise in God's truth.

They must love a ministry of doctrine, or intellectual teaching.

Neither is it doctrine, as many fancy, when they complain of a want of

doctrinal preaching, to get a few stale dogmas impounded in the head,

or stuck in the brain, as dead flies in ointment: all the rich

treasures of thought, and high motive, and solemn contemplation,

garnered up in God's word, must be brought out, seen, understood, and

fall upon the soul, as manna from the skies. Like manna, too, it must

be the supply of to-day only. A new shower must be gathered for

to-morrow, and the mind of the people must be kept in active and

progressive motion.

Such a kind of preaching will feed the intelligence of the hearers, and

raise up pillars in the churches. And here is the great distinction

between the preaching proper to the scene of the Pentecost, and that of

an established Christian congregation. It is the difference between

Peter, giving news to the pilgrims, and Paul offering some "things hard

to be understood," to churches of organized disciples. Such preaching

is required, in an established congregation, as will exert an educating

power. And yet it will, in that way, be a converting power, as

efficacious as any other, if only it is expected to be. When the

community is more deeply moved by spiritual things, it will, of course,

vary its tone and its subjects to suit the occasion, perhaps multiply

its efforts; but never as being in a hurry, lest the grace of the

occasion may be capriciously withdrawn, never over-preaching, or

preaching out, as if nothing were to be done by thought in the hearers,

but all by the power of a commotion round them; for it is not the same

thing to fall out of dignity and self-possession as to get rid of sin,

neither is a fever or a whirlwind any proper instrument of

sanctification. Mournful proofs have we to the contrary. Better is it

to reserve a power for the ordinary, even when we are in the

extraordinary. It is not wisdom to overwork the harvest, so that we

have no strength left for the bread. Rather let the preacher believe in

the Abiding Spirit, and count upon a kind of perpetual harvest. Let him

think to gain many to Christ imperceptibly, by keeping alive the

interest of God's truth, and letting it distill upon the hearers as a

dew, and through them on the rising families. Whatever he gains in this

way will assuredly remain; for it is not the birth of an occasion, but

of quiet conviction. It partakes the nature of habit. It is the fruit

of a godly training. Seldom, therefore. will it fall away, or

disappoint expectation.

There is yet another class of incidents, or demonstrations, in the

scene of the Pentecost, which are referable to the fact that these

first converts are not at home, and all these must, of course, be

modified, or discontinued by their simple return. They are pilgrims at

the feasts; Parthians, Medes, Elamites--Jewish emigrants, who have

returned from every most distant clime of the world, to enjoy the great

festivals of their religion.

Their property, their business, and, more commonly, their families, are

left behind. Many of them are poor persons, wholly unable to support

the expense even of a short stay at Jerusalem. The others can not, of

course, leave them to suffer. So they divide their resources with the

poor; and some, who belong at Jerusalem, are moved by the overflowing

love of Christ in their hearts, to part with their whole property, that

they may relieve the necessities of the brotherhood. Only a few days or

weeks are thus spent together. Probably, within three months, they are,

every man, at home in his own house, providing for his own family, out

of the increase of his own industry and property. During their short

stay at Jerusalem, they had nothing to do but to exercise their

religion. Accordingly they gave themselves wholly up to it. Now the

religious occasion is past; the extraordinary is over, and the ordinary

has returned. By this time, they have learned, probably, and received

it even as a Christian maxim, that one who does not provide for his

own, denies the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Again, these first disciples had not yet been called to blend their

piety with the common cares and duties of life. Quite likely, they did

not, for some time, consider whether they should hereafter have any

thing more to do with these gross and earthly callings. But we, at

least, have learned what they must also have learned very soon, that

though we can not live by bread alone, it is yet difficult to live

without bread. We have learned that the very church of God itself is

perpetuated, in part, by industry and production, that it can not live

by expenditure, that we have something therefore to do, besides

breaking bread from house to house; six days to labor, a spectacle of

thrift to present to mankind, as a proof that Christian virtue has its

blessings. We must shine as good citizens, neighbors, parents, friends.

Life is no mere camp-meeting scene; but the greatest of all Christian

attainments, we find, is precisely that which the first disciples had

not yet thought of, the learning how to blend the spiritual and

economical or industrial together; to live in the world, and not be of

it; to labor in earthly things, and maintain a conversation in heaven;

to unite thrift with charity, and separate gain from greediness; to use

property, and not worship it; to prepare comfort, without pursuing

pleasure. For it is, by just this kind of trial, that all spiritual

strength is gotten, and the Christian life becomes a light to men.

Having glanced, in this manner, at some of the types and conditions of

the scene of Pentecost that were, and were inevitably to be,

discontinued, let us notice briefly, some of the matters that must also

as inevitably be added in the process by which Christianity becomes an

institution.

Thus, first of all, as Christ and his evangelists had given the new

facts to the world, so it was inevitable that a grand process of

thinking or mental elaboration should begin to work out the import or

doctrinal interpretation of those facts. In this process, diverse

opinions, formulas, sects, controversies, must be

developed--consequently new modes of duty.

The simplicity of mere love, displayed, as it was, in the first scenes

of the gospel, could not continue, however desirable it may seem. Men

must think, as well as love, and thought must make its inroads on mere

relations of feeling. And thus a long process of forming and reforming

must go on, till the Christ of the head becomes as catholic as the

Christ of the heart. Meantime, all must stand for the truth, and there

must be no countenance given to error. The happy days of Christian

childhood are left far behind, and every church is set in relations of

duty that are partly antagonistic. It must take a form required by its

new necessities. What to do for the. truth, whom to acknowledge, when

to resist and when to forbear, how much consequence to attribute to

opinions, over what errors to spread the mantle of charity, how to

maintain a polemic attitude in the unity of the Spirit--these are the

grave questions that are to occupy ministers and churches, and, in the

right exercise of which, they are to justify their Christian name. And

on this will depend the power of religion, quite as much as on the

duties done to those who are aliens and unbelievers.

Next we pass on to a field where the new creating power of the gospel

is displayed yet more distinctly. The first disciples had no thought

but to swim in the strange joy they felt, as forgiven of God and filled

with the love of Jesus. Of Christianity, as a fixed institution, taking

the whole society of man into its bosom, and becoming the school of the

race, they had probably, at first, no conception. Passing thence to the

modern Christian faith, how great is the change! What a variety of

means, instruments and arrangements has it created, maintaining all

from age to age, by a sacrifice, compared with which, the casual

contributions to poor saints at Jerusalem were far less significant in

their effects, and, perhaps, not more to be commended, as proofs of a

Christian spirit.

First, a house of worship; and, in order to this, the new spiritual

life must become a holder of real estate, and be acknowledged as such

in the laws. To make the place worthy of the cause, genius and taste

are to be called into exercise, and a new Christian art developed.

To maintain expenses and repairs, and collect and disburse charities,

there must be officers created, such as deacons and committees of

various kinds, and this requires elections, by-laws, records, and a

fully organized institutional state.

Mere forms and sacraments being insufficient, preachers of the word

must be carefully trained for the service, and installed therein, to

feed the intelligence of the flock, and lead them in the truth. Their

official rights and duties must be ascertained, and, correspondently,

the rights and duties of the flock-matters all how distant from the

scene of the Pentecost!

The times and forms of worship need to be settled; for, whether a

liturgy is used or not, no organic action can be maintained without

forms of some kind, to serve as laws of concert and rules of order.

Christian music, as a new art, must be created, and the children and

youth must be trained therein, so that all may bear their part in the

worship, and the worship exercise and inspire a devout feeling in all.

There must be a punctual and regular attendance somehow established and

made obligatory; for the habit of worship is necessary to its value, as

a power over character. Hence there must be a common

responsibility--all must be enlisted. There must be a church spirit,

and, in order to this, a fraternal spirit in the members, verified by

mutual sympathy and aid under the common burdens of life--a kind of

service, I will add, which is often far more beneficent than a

community of goods would be; for this latter might be only a premium

given to idleness, while the other is but a good encouragement to the

ingenuous struggles of industry. There must, however, be some Christian

provision for the poor, that they also may have their part in the

Christian flock, and the blessings of charity descend upon it and dwell

in it.

Nor is the article of dress, in a Christian assembly, too insignificant

to be a subject of care. Probably no one had a thought of this in the

Pentecostal assembly; but we find the apostles, not long after, giving

serious lectures to the disciples upon their dress. Dress and manners,

manners and morals, morals and piety, are all connected by an intimate

or secret law. A people, therefore, who are careful to appear before

God, in a well-chosen, modest, and appropriate dress--one that is

neither careless nor ostentatious, one that indicates sobriety,

neatness, good sense, and a desire to be approved of God more than to

be seen of men--will avoid barbarous improprieties of every sort. Their

manner will express reverence to God. What they express, they will be

likely to feel; and if they become true disciples of Christ, as there

is greater reason to hope, their manner will have a nicer propriety.

and their whole demeanor will be more thoughtful, consistent, and

lovely.

It may, by and by, become evident that, in order to maintain the full

power of religion, and to gain the neglected youth or children, and

such children as would grow up otherwise in the power of vice, a parish

school must be instituted. as in Scotland, in connection with every

church. And then, at a much later day, it may become evident that

Sunday-schools require to be instituted in the same way, and that

these, enlisting the more capable and devoted of the churches in

Christian studies, and good works--works, that is, of teaching and

attention to the poor--are finally regarded every where, though wholly

unknown to the apostles and the Pentecostal assembly, as being among

the best means for the training of a practically Christian character,

and the gathering in of the outcast families to God.

So far we proceed without difficulty; all these things, though never

preached by apostles, must finally come, we perceive, a outgrowths of

the Christian church. Pentecostal incidents will disappear, and these

will as certainly grow apace in their time.

But the particular point for which I have drawn this sketch has been

purposely left behind. Infant baptism, the relation of the seminal and

undeveloped first period of human existence to Christ and his flock,

that which appears only implicitly in the sermon of Peter, on the day

of Pentecost--where is this, and what is to come, in the way of

development, here? There was no reason, or even room, among the scenes

of the Pentecost, for so much as thinking on this subject of infants

and their church relations, and scarcely more for a considerable time

afterward. It could not become a subject of attention, until the church

itself began to settle into forms of order and structural organization;

and how soon that came to pass we do not definitely know. It should

therefore be no subject of wonder that infant baptism figures somewhat

indistinctly, for so long a time at least; and scarcely more, that it

shows itself only by implication and a kind of tacit development, for a

brief time afterwards.

Furthermore, if it came to pass, by a transference of Jewish ideas into

Christian spheres, Jewish modes and conditions into the Christian order

and economy--just as Peter's Jewish language, when he said, in his

Pentecostal speech, "to you and to your children," finally came back to

him in its Christian power,--it would make no bold and staring figure

any where. If the Christian teachers looked to see all the better

mercies of the old economy transferred into the Christian, and exalted

there into some higher and more perfect meaning, we ought certainly not

to expect any debate, or any thing but a silent, scarcely conscious

flow of transition, when infants are taken to be with their parents, in

the church, the covenant, the Christian Israel of their faith. And in

just this way the defect of any bold declarations on the subject of

infant baptism in the writings of the New Testament, and the fact that

it appears only in a few historic glimpses, and occasional modes of

speech that are subtle implications of the fact, is sufficiently

accounted for.

But we are inquiring after the mode in which this rite became an

accepted element of the Christian organization, and a part of the

church practice, as we certainly know that it did at sometime

afterward. Peter probably conceived as little what his language might

infer respecting it, as he certainly did, what hidden import there was

in his testimony, by the same words. of a grace to the Gentiles; for he

spoke in prophetic exaltation, as the ancient prophets did, not knowing

what the spirit of Christ that was in them did signify. But suppose one

of these adult converts at the Pentecost to have set off, after the few

happy weeks of his sojourn are ended, for his home in some remote

region of Arabia, Parthia, or Greece. He carries Christ with him, he is

a new man, filled with a strange joy, burning with a strange,

all-sacrificing love to the cause of his new Master, and to every

sinner of mankind. He begins to preach the Christ he loves to his

friends, tells them all he knows of the new gospel, speaks to them as

one whom Christ has endowed with power to speak. He gathers a little

circle, which we may call a church, around him, perhaps converts a

little obscure synagogue into a church. He knows that he himself was

baptized as a token of his faith, and he has heard, a thousand times

repeated, Christ's word, "he that believeth and is baptized," "except a

man be born of water and of the Spirit," and he does not scruple to

baptize all his new fellow disciples. Then comes the question, what of

the families? what of the infants we have, who are not old enough to

believe? This, on the supposition that he had heard nothing of infant

baptism before he left Jerusalem, which may or may not be true. But he

has heard the whole story of Christ's life many times over, including

the fact of his beautiful interest in children, and his declaration-"of

such is the kingdom." He recollects also the ancient religion of his

people; how it identified always the children with the fathers, and

included them in the covenant of the fathers, raising doubtless the

question, whether the gospel in its nobler, wider generosity and

completer grace, would fall short even of the old religion in its

tenderness to the family affections, and its provisions for the

religious unity of families. And just here, we will suppose, the words

of Peter, in that first sermon flash on his recollection--"For the

promise is to you and to your children." They meant almost nothing, it

may be, when they were spoken, but how full and clear the meaning they

now take. It is like a revelation. The doubt struggling in his bosom is

over, the question is settled. "My children," he says, "are with me,

one with me in my faith, included with me in all my titles and hopes,

and as I came in, out of the defilements of sin, and was baptized in

token of my cleansing, so too are they to share my baptism and be heirs

together with me in the grace of life."

Thus instructed, he will baptize his children, and( make his religion a

strictly family grace, expecting them to grow up in it; others also

consenting with him in the same conclusion, and offering their children

to God in the same manner. And, as the result, they will no more be

Christians with families, but Christian families--all together in the

church of God. In this manner the Pentecost itself, when the seeds that

are in it are developed, will almost certainly issue the adult baptism

there begun, the baptism of the three thousand, in the common baptism

of the house.

And here we have, in small, just what would most naturally take place

in the development of Christianity itself. Taken as connected with its

own precedent history and preparations, the church could hardly be held

back from infant baptism, except by some specific revelation...

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

VI.

APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY OF INFANT BAPTISM.

"And I baptized also the household of Stephanas."--1 Cotinthians, i.

16.

WE have traced the conditions under which infant baptism would almost

certainly be developed. But we do not leave the question here. We have

many and distinct evidences for the rite, which are abundantly

decisive; some from the nature of the family state, some from the New

Testament, and some from the subsequent history of the church. These I

will now undertake to present in the briefest mianner possible. And

1. The organic unity of the family makes a ground for it, and sets it

in terms of rational respect. The child that is born, is really not

born, in the higher sense of that term, till he has breathed a long

time. He does not live in his own will, but is in the will and life of

his parents. To bring him forward into his own will and responsibility

is the problem of years. He is in the matrix still of parental

character, where all the graces, faiths, prayers, promises, of the

parents are his also. He lives and breathes in them, and is of them,

almost as truly as they are of themselves. What we call the house, is

the organic life that grows him as a mind or agent, tempers him, works

him into his habits, fashions him as by a precedent power, to be born

and finally take dominion of himself. Why then should religion make no

recognition of a fact so profoundly religious? Why not assume that the

child is just where he is; in the faith of the house, to grow up there?

It would even be a supposition against nature to suppose that he will

not. It is very true that he may not, because the faith of the house is

no faith, or so mixed with sense and passion as to have none of the

true power. Still, when the discipleship is assumed to be made by

faith, it must also be assumed that, being so made, it will have all

the power of faith, shaping the parental life in the molds of that

power, and just as certainly including or inclosing in those molds,

there to be also shaped, the infant life of the offspring. The father

and mother are not merely a man and a woman, but they are a man and

woman having children; and accordingly it is the father and mother,

that is, the man and woman and their children, that are to be baptized.

2. It is precisely this great fact of an organic unity that is taken

hold of and consecrated, in the field of religion, by the Abrahamic and

other family covenants. And the whole course of revelation, both in the

Old and New Testament, is tinged by associations, and sprinkled over

with expressions that recognize the religious unity of families, and

the inclusion of the children with the parents All the promises

run--"to you and to your children;" for Peter's language here is only

an inspired transfer and reassertion of the Jewish family ideas at the

earliest moment, in the field of Christianity itself. It recognizes the

fact that Christianity is just what we know it to be, nothing but a

continuation and fuller development of the old religion. It widens out

the scope of the old religion, so as to include all nations, even as

the prophets foretold; and raises all the rites and symbols into a

higher spiritual sense, as they were appointed from the first to be

raised. Taken all together, the old and the new constitute a perfect

whole or system, and the process is neither more nor less than God's

way of developing and authenticating a universal religion. In this

universal religion, therefore, we are to look for the continuance

onward of the old family character and the inclusive oneness of fathers

with their children. The only difference will be that the oneness will

be raised into a more spiritual and higher sense, just as every thing

else was raised. The children are thus to be looked upon presumptively

as believing in the faith, and regenerated in the regeneration of the

fathers. And here again,

3. Circumcision comes to our aid, as another and distinct evidence. For

it was given to be "a seal of the righteousness of faith," and the

application of it, as a seal, to infant children, involves all the

precise difficulties--neither more nor less--that are raised by the

deniers of infant baptism. Let the point here made be accurately

understood. The argument is not that infant baptism was directly

substituted for circumcision. Of this there is no probable evidence.

Such a substitution could not have been made without remark,

discussion, oppositions of prejudice, and the raising of contentions

that would have required distinct mention, many times over, in the

apostolic history. But the argument is this: that the Jewish mind was

so familiarized by custom with the notion of an inclusive religious

unity in families, (partly by the rite of circumcision,) that Christian

baptism, being the seal of faith, was naturally and by a kind of

associational instinct, applied over to families in the same manner.

Not to have made such an application would have required some

authoritative interposition, some dike of positive hindrance, to turn

aside the current of Jewish prepossessions. And if there had risen up,

somewhere, a man of Baptist notions, to ask, where is the propriety of

applying baptism, given as a rite for believers, to infants, who we

certainly know are not old enough to believe? he could not even have

begun to raise an impression by it. Was not circumcision given to

Abraham to be the seal of faith? and has it not been applied from his

time down to the present, in this way--applied to infant children eight

days old? True it is the doctrine of Christ, "he that believeth and is

baptized shall be saved," and our apostles too are saying, "if thou

believest with all thy heart thou mayest." So we all say and think, as

relating to adult persons; but do we not all know that what is given to

the father includes the children, and that his faith is the faith of

the house? Nothing, in short, is plainer than that every argument

raised to convict infant baptism of absurdity, holds, iri he same

manner, as convicting circumcision of absurdity, and all the religious

polity of the former ages. Every such argument, too, mocks the

religious feeling and conviction of all these former ages, in a way of

disrespect equally presumptuous.

It is very true, as declared by the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the

Romans, that circumcision, seal of faith as it was, did not always have

its meaning fulfilled; "for all are not Israel that are of Israel."

Esau and Edom, his posterity, became, thus, an apostate race; and this,

in a certain sense, by Providential appointment. But the scope of God's

providential purpose, as every intelligent Christian ought to know,

does not correspond with the scope of his grace or the measures of his

gifts and promises. For the Providential plan takes in all the

perversities of human action, while the grace-plan or promise

corresponds with the aims and measures of God's paternal goodness. He

means and offers, in other words, more than human perversity will take;

gives a presumption of good, on his part, which he knows that human

wrongs will not allow to be actualized. Then, as his Providential

purposes and plan are graduated to what will actually be, not to what

he means, wishes, and promises, it follows that the facts or issues of

his Providential order do not answer to the scope of his gracious

intention. And thus it comes to pass that, while he gives a seal of

faith, which ought to be answered, by a result in which all are Israel

that are of Israel, the fact is different. Had Israel ruled his house

as he ought, had Rebekah been an honest woman, loving both her sons

impartially, and seeking the true welfare of both--not conspiring with

one to rob and cheat the other--Esau might have been a different man,

and Edom might have been a family of Israel. In circumcision, as a seal

of faith, God gave, on his part, the pledge and presumption that so it

should be. But Edom was thrown off into apostasy by courses of human

perversity that disappointed the seal. And the same is true of infant

baptism in all those cases where the faith is narrowed, or denied, by

parental misconduct. There is yet no falsity in the circumcision, or

the baptism, because all which it signified was true; viz., that God,

on his part, sought and meant and would have made actual, the whole

promise of it. How often is adult baptism itself applied to such as

have no faith at all; but this does not affect the inherent truth of

the rite, and if they should live so as not to allow it any

correspondence with fact, when applied to their children, does it any

more affect the truth of it there? The rite measures God's intent and

promise, and refuses to narrow itself by the perversity of the

subjects. It says, "this child shall grow up in faith--give it

baptism." Then if, by unbelief and graceless conduct in the parents, it

grows up to be the stem of an Edomitish stock, it will not disappoint

God's providential order and plan, and as little will it disprove God's

promise and truth in the baptism. God is honored, and the rite is

honored still. It is only the parental faith atd life that are not.

4. It appears that Christian baptism was not a rite wholly new, but a

reapplication of proselyte baptism. The custom had been, as the Gentile

was an unclean person, to baptize him, as a token of cleansing, when he

was received to be a Jew; and his family, of course, were baptized with

him, to make the lustration complete. So Christ proposes baptism, as

the token of that lustration, which is to purify such as become

citizens in the kingdom of heaven. And the conversation ot Christ with

Nicodemus evidently supposes such a rite previously existing and

familiarly known by him. This being true, all that he says of baptism,

or the lustration by water and the Spirit, supposes a baptism also of

children with their parents, according to the custom. The civil

regeneration of the proselyte and his family by such ceremonies will be

answered, in reapplying the rite, by the spiritual regeneration of the

convert and his family. If infants were, in this case, to be excepted,

or not baptized, the exception required to be expressly made; for

otherwise, the very transfer of the rite to a spiritual use must, of

itself, carry infant baptism with it. Thus Lightfoot says with great

force, "the Baptists object--it is not commanded that infants should be

baptized, therefore they should not be baptized. But I say it is not

prohibited that infants should be baptized, therefore they should be

baptized; for since the baptism of children was familiarly practiced in

the admission of proselytes, there was no need that it should be

confirmed by express precept, when baptism came to be an evangelical

sacrament. For Christ took baptism as he found it, and the whole nation

knew perfectly well that little children had always been baptized. On

the contrary, if he had intended that the custom should be abolished,

he would have expressly prohibited it." Wetstein also says, in the same

manner--"I do not see how it could enter into their thoughts to expunge

boys and infants from the list of disciples, or from baptism, unless

they had been excluded by the express injunction of Christ, which we

nowhere find." [2]

5. Christ comes very near to a specific and formal command of infant

baptism, when we put together, side by side, what he says of baptism in

the third chapter of John, and what he says concerning infants

elsewhere. There he recognizes baptism as a token of one's entrance

into the kingdom of God; elsewhere he says--suffer little children to

come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

These terms, "kingdom of God," and "kingdom of heaven," denote,

externally, the church; and the church is also presented under the

figure of a school, as here of a kingdom, in all those cases where

becoming "a disciple" or learner is spoken of. In this latter view or

figure, baptism is conceived to be one's enrollment openly as a

disciple; and what is more fit than that children should be

learners--brought in by their parents to be learners with them--of the

Christian grace? This, in fact, was the general significance of faith

in those times; they were called believers who so recognized the truth

of Christ's person that they were ready to become learners under him.

And the Baptists themselves act on this same principle, never holding

the necessity that baptism should actually follow faith. in the high

and complete sense of spiritual conversion. Probably half their

members, in the church, come into doubt, before they die, of the time

when they were really born of the Spirit; and, in cases of open

apostasy, where there is a recovery, and the disciple openly testifies

that he was not before a truly converted person, he is not rebaptized.

It is enough that, by his baptism, he has openly signified his wish to

be a disciple in the school of Christ; where, if he has never learned

before, it is only the more necessary that he be a true learner now;

which if he become, tht great law, "he that believeth and is baptized,"

is sufficiently fulfilled. Just so with the child of a Christian

parentage; whatever doubts may be entertained of his certainly growing

up in the faith, there is a much better presumption that he will, if

the parents are faithful, than there is, in the case of persons

converted from the world, that they will prove to be true believers;

and if he should not grow up in the faith, but afterwards becomes a

Christian, there is just as much greater propriety in his baptism as an

infant, and no more reason why he should be rebaptized, than there is

in the case of apostate professors who become truly converted.

6. What is said in the New Testament of household baptism, or the

baptizing of households, is positive proof that infants were baptized

in the times of the apostles--baptized, that is, in and because of the

supposed faith of the parents. The fact of such baptism is three times

distinctly mentioned; in the case of "the household of Stephanas," of

Lydia "and her household," and the jailor "and all his." In the first

case, nothing is said of faith at all, though doubtless he was baptized

as a believer. In the second, every thing turns on the personal faith

of Lydia--"if ye have judged me to be faithful." In the third, it seems

to be said, according to an English translation, that all the house

believed--"he rejoiced, believing in God, with All his house." But the

participle, believing, is singular and not plural in the original, and

the phrase--"with all his house"--plainly belongs to the verb and not

to the participle. Rigidly translated, the passage would read--"he

rejoiced with all his house, himself believing."

It is often objected that, in all these three cases, for aught that

appears, the households were made up of adult persons, who were

baptized because they all believed. But the chance that this should be

true of the only three households said to be baptized, and that there

should be three households, as households were commonly made up in that

time, in which there were no young children or infants, is not even one

in a million, as computed by what is called the doctrine of chances.

Besides, if it was a thing understood that infants were never to be

baptized, it is important to observe that no such way of speaking could

ever come into use. What Baptist could ever be induced, with his view

of baptism, to say inclusively, and without some kind of qualification,

that he had baptized the household of Richard or Mary? We need not

stop, in this view, to ask whether certainly there were infants in any

one of these households; the mode of speaking itself shows that baptism

went by households, and that when the head was judged to be faithful,

his baptism carried the presumptive faith and consequent baptism of

all. Of this, too,

7. We have a distinct indication, in what is said of children, where

but one of the parents believes. Thus Paul distinctly teaches, "For the

unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife

is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now

are they holy." It is not meant here that the children are actually and

inwardly holy persons, but that only having one Christian parent is

enough to change their presumptive relations to God; enough to make

them Christian children, as distinguished from the children of

unbelievers. So strong is the conviction, even. in these apostolic

times, of an organic unity sovereign over the faith and the religious

affinities of children that, where but one parent believes, that faith

carries presumptively the faith of the children with it And upon this

grand fact of the religious economy, baptism was, from the first, and

properly, applied to the children of them that believe. Hence, too--

8. It was that the children of believers were familiarly addressed with

them as believers; as in the epistles of Paul to the Ephesians and

Colossians. These epistles are formally inscribed to churches or

Christian brotherhoods--"to the saints, which are at Ephesus, and to

the faithful in Christ Jesus"--"to the saints and faithful brethren,

which are at Colosse." And yet in both, the children are particularly

addressed --"Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is

right"--"Children obey your parents in all things; for this is well

pleasing unto the Lord." In this manner, children are formally included

among the "faithful in Christ Jesus." The conception is that children

are, of course, included in the religion of their parentage, grow up

faithful with their faithful or believing parents. Or. the ground of

this same presumption, they were properly baptized with them, or on

their account. Again--

9. It is a point of consequence to notice that such as reject all these

and similar evidences from the Scripture, on the ground that infant

baptism can not be rightly practiced, because it is not directly and

specifically appointed in the Scripture, do yet make nothing of their

own argument in other observances familiarly accepted. Why infant

baptism was not and should not be required to have been specifically

commanded, I have shown already; how, for example, it was necessarily

developed, as from a point distinctly referred to in Peter's first

sermon, and how the very institution of baptism carried, of necessity,

infant baptism with it, apart from any express mention. In the

meantime, it will be found that the objectors themselves are admitting

and practicing, without difficulty, observances that have comparatively

no specific authority at all. At the sacrament of the Supper, they use

leavened bread without scruple, when they know that it was not used by

Christ himself, and was solemnly forbidden at the festival, he was

there, in fact, reappointing for the Christian uses of his disciples in

all future ages. Where then is the authority given for a change even in

the element of the Holy Supper itself? The Christian Lord's day, too,

accepted in the place of the Jewish Sabbath, and that even against a

specific command of the decalogue--how readily, and with how little

scruple, do they accept this Lord's day and let the ancient Sabbath go,

when it is only by the faintest, most equivocal, or evanescent

indications they can make out a shadow of authority for the change?

"Direct proof! positive command! specific injunction!" they say,

"without these, infant baptism has no right." Where then do they get

their authority for these other observances; one of them never referred

to in Scripture at all, and the other so doubtfully, that infant

baptism has, in comparison, the clear evidence of day?

Lastly, it remains to glance at the evidences from church history, or

the history of times subsequent to the age of the apostles. It has been

the mood of Christian learning, in the generation past--for the learned

men have moods and phases, not to say fashions, like others in the less

thoughtful conditions--to make large concessions in the matter of

baptism, both as regards the manner and the subjects. But a reaction is

now begun, and it is my fixed conviction that it will not stop, till

the encouragement heretofore given to the Baptist opinions is quite

taken away.

It has never been questioned, however, that infant baptism, became the

current practice of the church at a very early date. It is mentioned,

incidentally and otherwise, in the writings of the earliest church

fathers after the age of the apostles.

Thus it is testified by Justin Martyr, who was probably born before the

death of the apostle John--"There are many of us, of both sexes, some

sixty and some seventy years old, who were made disciples from their

childhood." And the word made disciples is the same that Christ himself

used when he said, "Go teach [i.e. disciple] all nations, baptizing,"

&c.; the same that was currently applied to baptized children

afterwards.

Ireneus, born a few years later, writes--"Christ came to redeem all by

himself; all who through him are regenerated unto God; infants and

little children, and young men, and older persons. Hence, he passed

through every age, and for the infants he became an infant, sanctifying

infants; among the little children, he became a little child,

sanctifying those who belong to this age; and at the same time,

presenting them an example of well doing, and obedience; among the

young men he became a young man, that he might set them an example, and

sanctify them to the Lord." In the phrase, "regenerated to God," which

is thus applied to infants, expressly named as distinguished from

little children, he refers, it can not be doubted, to baptism; which,

being the outward sign of such inward grace, was naturally and very

commonly called regeneration. Infants plainly could be regenerated to

God in no other sense; and therefore his language can not even be

supposed to have any meaning, if this be rejected.

Tertullian follows, urging the delay of baptism, and, in fact,

advocating the disuse of infant baptism altogether. But his appeal

supposes the current practice of such baptism at the time, and in that

way rather augments than diminishes the weight of historic evidence.

And the more so that he urges the delay of baptism on grounds that are

false and even superstitious, viz.: that baptism carries the

forgiveness of sins, and should therefore be postponed to a later

period, because the sins committed after baptism must otherwise be

cleared by a more purgatorial method.

Origen, who was born near the close of the second century, or about a

hundred years after the time of the apostles, testifies--"According to

the usage of the church, baptism is given to infants." And again--"The

church received an order from the apostles to baptize infants."

Somewhere in these first two centuries, the ancient writing called the

"Shepherd," or the "Shepherd of Hermas," because it purports to have

been written by a teacher of that name, declares the opinion that--"All

infants are in honor with the Lord, and are esteemed first of all--the

baptism of water is necessary to all" Who this Hermas was, and when he

lived, is not ascertained, but he is supposed by many to be the very

same person mentioned by Paul, Rom. xvi. 14. He is acknowledged by

Neander, as one who "had great authority in the first centuries."

It is a remarkable evidence, too, that inscriptions are found on the

monuments of children, considered by antiquarians to be of a very early

age, probably of the first two or three centuries, in which they are

called fideles, that is faithfuls; just as children are addressed by

Paul among the "faithful brethren" of Ephesus and Colosse. The

following is an example --(Buonarotti, 17 Fabretti, Cap. 4,) "A

faithful among faithfuls, here lies Zosimus. He lived two years one

month and twenty-five days." How far they carried the presumption of

infant baptism, that children are to grow up in the grace of their

parents, is here seen.

It signifies little, therefore, as respects this question, after the

authorities cited, that the Bishops of the North African Church, in a

council called by Cyprian, about the middle of the third century,

decided that baptism should not of course be delayed for eight days,

according to the law of circumcision, which many supposed to govern the

rite.

So clear, in short, and decided was the authority of infant baptism,

that Pelagius, a man of great learning, who had traveled in Britain,

France, Italy, Africa Proper, Egypt, and Palestine, declared, in his

controversy with Augustine, about the beginning of the fifth century,

that "he had never heard of any impious heretic or sectary, who had

denied infant baptism." "What," he also asked, "can be so impious as to

hinder the baptism of infants?"

Augustine himself also testifies--"The whole church of Christ has

constantly held that infants were baptized. Infant baptism the whole

church practices. It was not instituted by councils, but was ever in

use."

Infant baptism, therefore, is a fact of church history not to be fairly

questioned. And accordingly the argument may be summed up thus:

beginning at a point previous, we find customs and associations that

would almost certainly be issued in such a rite of family religion; in

the discourses of Christ and the apostolical writings we find that it

actually was; and then we find the facts of church history

correspondent. On the whole, while it may be admitted that baptism

itself is a little more positively authenticated, it can not be denied

that infant baptism is authenticated by all sufficient evidence.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[2] This subject of proselyte baptism has been spoken of also in the

second Sermon, and need not be further dwelt upon here.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

VII.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP OF CHILDREN.

"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at

Colosse."--Colossians, i. 2.

THESE "saints and faithful brethren," it will be seen, include young

children; for the apostle makes a distribution of them afterwards, in

the third chapter of the epistle, addressing the class of wives, the

class of husbands, the class of fathers, the class of servants, the

class of masters, and, among all these, the class of

children--"Children obey your parents in all things; for this is well

pleasing unto the Lord." The Epistle to the Ephesians, too, is

inscribed, in the same way--"to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to

the faithful in Christ;" and this, again, makes a like distribution;

addressing the classes of husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, children,

servants, and masters, all as being included in the church at

Ephesus--"children obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right.

Honor thy father and mother; for this is the first commandment with

promise." Where also it is made clear that he is speaking to quite

young children; for he turns immediately to the fathers, exhorting them

to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

They are children so young, therefore, as to be subjects of nurture,

and yet are addressed among the faithful brethren.

The explanation, then, is not that such children were believers, in the

sense of being converts entered into the fold by an adult experience,

and distinguished from other children not thus converted. When Lydia

speaks of herself as one adjudged to be "faithful," it is probably in

this sense. But when Titus, in ordaining elders, is directed to choose

such as have "faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly," it

would be very singular, if he was permitted to ordain only such as have

all their children thus formally converted. Paul obviously means that

the elders shall be such as are under no scandal on account of their

families; whose children are growing up in the Christian way and grace;

sober, well-behaved, hopefully Christian children. We can see, too, in

the language employed, that Paul includes the Colossian and Ephesian

children among the faithful brethren of the two cities, in this more

presumptive or merely anticipative way. For when he says, "children

obey your parents in the Lord," it is not "children in the Lord," or

"children obey in the Lord, your parents," but it is "obey them who are

parents in the Lord;" as if their very parentage itself, in the flesh,

were a parentage also in the Spirit, communicating both a personal and

a Christian life. So, also, when the parents are required to give a

nurture in the Lord, we may see that the children are expected to be

grown as saints and faithfuls, and to be presumptively in the Lord,

apart from all expectations and processes of adult conversion.

And it was out of such uses that the term "faithful" grew into the

peculiar kind of church use, in which it denotes all the supposed

members of the Christian body, whether adults, or only baptized

children; as, for example, in that very ancient inscription cited by

Buonarotti, where the child "two years, one month, and twenty-five days

old," is described as lying among his Christian kinsmen--"a faithful

among faithfuls." The very language supposes a membership in the

church, or among the faithful brethren, by virtue of baptism and mere

Christian nurture; such as on the footing of strict individualism, held

by our Baptist brethren, could never even be thought of.

What I propose then, at the present time, is a full and careful

discussion of this great subject, the church membership of baptized

children.

And as it has fallen out, in the extreme individualism of our modern

era, that multitudes are unable to conceive it as being any thing less

than a kind of absurdity, or self-evident monstrosity, I shall be

obliged to show the nature and kind of this membership.

As it is very commonly disrespected on the ground of its practical

insignificance, I must also show the reasons why it should exist.

And then, since it is to the same extent, disowned as a rightful part

of the true church economy, I must also establish the fact of its

existence.

1. I am to show the nature and extent of this membership.

All those classes of Christian disciples who practice infant baptism

conceive it, of course, to have a certain common character with adult

baptism, and so to create a supposed, or somehow supposable membership

in the church. And yet they often have it as a question, suppressed, or

openly put without satisfaction --"who is a member of Christ's body,

but one who is able to act and choose for himself, and in that manner

to believe?" Many preachers, too, quite pass over the fact of any

assignable reality in this relationship, publishing a call of salvation

that practically ignores it as having any meaning at all; addressing

young persons and children who have been baptized, in a way that as

steadily and unqualifiedly assumes their unregenerate state, as if they

were the children of heathenism. The opposers of infant baptism are

bolder and more positive, of course, insisting always on the manifest

absurdity of this nondescript, unintelligible, unintelligent

membership; which makes a child a church member, not to be a voter nor

a subject of discipline; which puts the initiatory rite of faith upon

him, when he does not believe any thing, or even know there is anything

to believe; creating thus a membership that has no rational meaning and

no sound verity, but supposes a faith that does not exist, and

constitutes a relationship that brings into no relation.

What then, is this infant membership? what conception can we take of

it, which will justify its Christian dignity? A great many persons who

are very sharp at this kind of criticism, appear to have never observed

that creatures existing under conditions of growth, allow no such terms

of classification as those do which are dead, and have no growth; such,

for example, as stones, metals, and earths. They are certain that gold

is not iron, and iron is not silver, and they suppose that they can

class the growing and transitional creatures, that are separated by no

absolute lines, in the same manner. They talk of colts and horses,

lambs and sheep, and it, possibly, not once occurs to them, that they

can never tell when the colt becomes a horse, or the lamb a sheep; and

that about the most definite thing they can say, when pressed with that

question, is that the colt is potentially a horse, the lamb a sheep,

even from the first, having in itself this definite futurition; and,

therefore, that, while horses and sheep are not all to be classed as

colts and lambs, all colts and lambs may be classed as horses and

sheep. And just so children are all men and women; and, if there is any

law of futurition in them to justify it, may be fitly classed as

believing men and women. And all the sharp arguments that go to cover

their membership, as such, in the church, with absurdity, or turn it

into derision, are just such arguments as the inventors could raise

with equal point, to ridicule the horsehood and sheephood of the young

animals just referred to. The propriety of this membership does not lie

in what those infants can or can not believe, or do or do not believe,

at some given time, as, for example, on the day of their baptism; but

it lies in the covenant of promise, which makes their parents, parents

in the Lord; their nurture, a nurture of the Lord; and so constitutes a

force of futurition by which they are to grow up, imperceptibly, into

"faithfuls among faithfuls," in Christ Jesus. Perhaps no one can tell

when they become such, and it may be that some initiating touch of

grace began to work inductively in them, by a process too delicate for

human observation, even from their earliest infancy, or from their

baptismal day. For there is a nurture of grace, as well as a grace of

conversion; that for childhood, as this for the age of maturity, and

one as sure and genuine as the other.

The conception, then, of this membership is, that it is a potentially

real one; that it stands, for the present, in the faith of the parents

and the promise which is to them and to their children, and that, on

this ground, they may well enough be accounted believers, just as they

are accounted potentially men and women. Then, as they come forward

into maturity, it is to be assumed that they will come forward into

faith, being grown in the nurture of faith, and will claim for

themselves, the membership, into which they were before inserted.

Nor is this a case which has no analogies, that it should be held up as

a mark of derision. It is generally supposed that our common law has

some basis of common sense. And yet this body of law makes every infant

child a citizen; requiring, as a point of public order, the whole

constabulary and even military force of the state to come to the

rescue, or the redress of his wrongs, when his person is seized or

property invaded by conspiracy. This infant child can sue and be sued;

for the court of chancery will appoint him a guardian, whose acts shall

be the child's acts; and it shall be as if he were answering for his

own education, dress, board, entertainments, and the damages done by

his servants, precisely as if he were a man acting in his own cause.

Doubtless it may sound very absurdly to call him a citizen. What can he

do as a citizen? He can not vote, nor bear arms; he does not even know

what these things mean, and yet he is a citizen. In one view, he votes,

bears arms, legislates, even in his cradle; for the potentiality is in

him, and the state takes him up in her arms, as it were, to own him as

her citizen.

In a strongly related sense, it is, that the baptized child is a

believer and a member of the church. There is no unreality in the

position assigned him; for the futurition of God's promise is in him,

and, by a kind of sublime anticipation, he is accepted in God's

supernatural economy as a believer; even as the law accepts him, in the

economy of society, to be a citizen. He is potentially both, and both

is actually to be, in a way of transition so subtle and imperceptible

that no one can tell, when he begins to be, either one, or the other.

Nor is it any objection that there might be some difficulty in the

exercise of a regular church discipline over baptized children; or that

if this can not be done, they are really not church members in any

sense that ought to be implied in the terms. Is then a child no

citizen, because he is not held responsible in the law in precisely the

same manner as adults; responsible, in a private action, for slander;

or responsible, in a public, for murder and treason? The church

membership is, of course, to be qualified and shaded by the gradations

of age; just as the law contrives to shade the progress of the citizen

child into the citizen man. All the logical or theological bantering we

hear, therefore, on one side or the other, showing that the child,

being a church member, ought to be held subject to discipline; or, if

he is not held subject to discipline, that he is really no church

member, is without reason or any proper show of practical dignity.

It was proposed--

II. To show the reasons why this relation of infant membership should

exist, or be appointed. And here it is very obvious--

First of all, that, if there is really no place in the church of God

for infant children, then it must be said, and formally maintained,

that there is none. And what could be worse in its effect on a child's

feeling, than to find himself repelled from the brotherhood of God's

elect, in that manner. What can the hapless creature think, either of

himself or of God, when he is told that he is not old enough to be a

Christian, or be owned by the Saviour as a disciple?

Again, it would be most remarkable, if Christianity, organizing a fold

of grace and love, in the world and for it, had yet no place in the

fold for children. It spreads its arms to say--"For God so loved the

world," and even declares that publicans and harlots shall flock in,

before the captious priests and princes of the day; and yet it has no

place, we are told, for children; children are out of the category of

grace I Jesus himself was a child, and went through all the phases and

conditions of childhood, not to show any thing by that fact, as the

Christian Fathers fondly supposed; he said, too, "Suffer little

children," but this was only his human feeling; he had no official

relationship to such, and no particular grace for them! They are all

outside the salvation-fold, hardening there in the storm, till their

choosing, refusing, desiring, sinning power is sufficiently unfolded to

have a place assigned them within! Is this Christianity? Is it a

preparation so clumsy, so little human, so imperfectly graduated to man

as he is, that it has no place for a full sixth part of the human race;

a part also to which the other five-sixths are bound, in the dearest

ties of love and care, and all but compulsory expectation? It would

seem that any Christian heart, meeting Christianity at this point, and

surveying it with only a little natural feeling, would even be

oppressed by the sense of some strange defect in it, as a grace for the

world. In this view it gives to little children the heritage only of

Cain, requiring them to be driven out from the presence of the Lord,

and grow up there among the outside crew of aliens and enemies. Let no

one be surprised that, under such treatment, they stiffen into

alienated, wrathful men, ripened for wickedness, by the ranges of all

but reprobate exclusion in which they have been classed.

Nor, again, is it any breach on their liberty, that children are

entered into this qualified membership by their parents. What is it but

a being entered into privilege? Is it a hard thing for human parents to

enter their child into the lot of wealth and high society, and a

station of family dignity, because it does not leave them to acquire

the wealth and the position of honor in society, by their own original

exertion, unassisted? When the order of the Cincinnati took their sons

into the grand society of revolutionary honor with them, was it a

breach on the liberty of the children? Or we may take another view of

the question. The church of God is a school, and the members are

disciples, or learners. Does not every parent choose the school for his

children, giving them no choice in the matter, and taking it to be his

own unquestionable right? This, too, on the ground that they are to

have the benefit of his maturer judgment, and his more competent

choice. Where then is the encroachment, when Christian parents baptize

their child into the same discipleship with themselves, and set it in

the school of Christ? It is only a part of their ordinary charge as

parents, for it is given them to have the child in their own character,

so to speak, and be themselves discipled with it and for it, (and why

not it with them?) in all the honors and hopes of the heavenly kingdom.

Consider again the remarkable and certainly painful fact that, in the

view which excludes infant baptism and the discipleship of children,

the conversion itself of a parent operates a kind of dissolution in the

family state, than which nothing could be more unnatural. It is much as

if our process of naturalization in the state, were to naturalize the

parents and not the children; leaving these to be foreigners still, and

aliens. God's effectual calling is no such unnatural grace; it will

never call the parents away from the children; to be themselves

included in the great family of salvation, and look out, in their joy,

to see their children fenced away! No--"The promise is to you and to

your children;" not, to you without your children. Come in hither,

then, ye guilty families of man, parents to be parents in the Lord,

children to obey in the Lord, all to be circled by the common grace of

life and the common fellowship of the saints. Why should we think that

our Great Father who has been refusing, ever since the world began, to

so much as put into any bird of the air, an instinct that will draw it

away from its nest, may yet, as a matter of celestial mercy, be engaged

by his Spirit, in the gathering of human parents away from their young!

It is a matter, too, of great consequence to parents, as respects their

own fidelity in their office, that their children are not put away, by

the Saviour, to hold rank with heathens outside of the fold, but are

brought in with them, to be heirs together with them in the grace of

life. What will justify, or will naturally produce, a more sullen

remissness of duty in parents, than to feel that;, for the present, God

has shut away, and is holding away their children, and that they are

never to be disciples of the fold, till after they have been passed

round into it, through long detours of estrangement and ripening

guiltiness? If there is nothing better for them than to be converted

just as heathens are, why should they, as parents, be greatly concerned

for their own example, and the faithfulness of their training, when the

conversion is to be every thing and will have power to remedy every

defect?

How refreshing the contrast, when the children, given to God in

baptism, are accounted members of the church with them, as being

included in their faith, and having the seal of it upon them. They look

upon it now as their privilege to be parents in the Lord. Their

prayers, they understand, are to keep heaven open upon their house.

Their aims are to be Christian. Their tastes and manners to be flavored

by the Christian hope in which they live. There is to be a quickening

element in the atmosphere they make. They will set all things upon a

Christian footing for their children's sake; and their children,

growing up in such nurture of the Lord, will, how certainly, unfold

what their nurture itself has quickened.

It is still another consideration, that the church itself, having this

infant membership in it, will unfold other aims and tempers, and exert

a finer quality of power. It will not be a dry convention of simply

grown up men and women; the men will, some of them, be fathers, the

women mothers, and the children being also included, their tender

brotherhood will make an element of common, consciously felt,

gentleness for all. The parents will learn from the children quite as

much as they teach, and will do their teaching fitly, just be cause

they learn. The church prayers will have a certain paternity and

maternity in them, and the children will feel the grace of these

prayers warming always round them. Even the church life itself, two, or

three, or more, generations deep, will be qualified by the grandfather

and grandmother spirit, and the father and mother spirit, and the

reverent manners of the little ones, and the whole volume of religious

life will be unfolded thus, by taking into itself the whole volume of

nature and family feeling.

Such are some of the reasons, briefly and faintly presented, which

determine, as I conceive, God's appointment of the great fact of an

infant membership in his church. And yet the reasons, taken by

themselves, are hardly a sufficient evidence of the fact. They set us

in the mood of respect, and even put us in the expectation of it, but

they leave the inquiry still upon our hands--

III. Whether the supposed infant membership is a real and true fact?

That it is, may be seen from the following proofs:--

1. Those declarations of Scripture which assert or assume the fact.

Thus, when the Saviour commands--"Suffer little children to come unto

me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," it would

be very singular if they could not come in with the disciples, when

they may so freely come to the Master himself. And if Christ had been

calling his disciples themselves into fraternity with him, what more

could he have said for them, than that of such is the kingdom of

heaven? Nor is it any objection, as respects the children, that, except

a man be born again, he can not be entered into this kingdom; for

potentially, at least they are thus born again; and so are as fitly to

be counted citizens of the kingdom, as they are to be citizens of the

state. Besides, there is still less in this objection, inasmuch as the

kingdom of God, taken in its lower sense as identical with the church,

is expressly likened by the Saviour to a net that gathers of every

kind. And what again does it signify, as regards the apostolic ideas of

this matter of infant membership, that the great apostle to the

Gentiles, in at least two of his epistles to Christian churches,

addresses, directly, children, as being included among the saints and

faithful in Christ Jesus? I allege as proof,

2. The analogy of circumcision. This was given to be the seal of faith,

and the church token, in that manner, of a godly seed. Baptism can

certainly be the same, with as little difficulty, or as little charge

of absurdity. True, they were not all Israel that were of Israel, and

so all may not be Israel that are baptized. Enough that God gives the

possibility, in both cases, in giving the rite itself; and then it is

to be seen whether the parents will be parents in the Lord, as it is

formally permitted them to be. Let the true point here be carefully

observed; some kind of presumption must be given by God, in respect to

the church position of children; for they must either be taken into the

church. or else they must be excluded till they are old enough to be

admitted on the ground of a religious experience--there is no other

alternative. If they are excluded, then it is taken for granted, that

they are to grow up as unbelievers and aliens, which is only their

public consignment to evil. If they are taken to be in the faith,

presumptively, as in the nurture of their parents, and so accepted,

then every kind encouragement is given to them, and every pledge of

divine help is graciously given to their parents. Which of the two

methods is most consonant to nature, and worthiest of God's

beneficence, it is not difficult to see. God, on his part, gives no

presumption, either to the parents or their child, that he is to be

only a transgressor and alien, but he gives the seal of the faith, as a

pledge, to raise their expectation of what he will do for them, and to

throw the blame of a godless childhood and youth, if such there is to

be, on themselves.

3. The church connection of children is virtually assumed, as we may

see, by the apostle Paul, when he teaches that the believing wife

sanctifies the unbelieving husband, and the believing husband the

unbelieving wife--"else were your children unclean, but now are they

holy." He refers, in this matter, it is plain, to the effect of a

parental faith, on the church position of children. He does not, of

course, use the term "sanctify," in any spiritual sense, as affirming

the regeneration of character in the children; but he alludes only to

the church ideas of clean and unclean, affirming that the unclean state

of a godless father, or mother, is so far taken away by the clean state

of a godly mother, or father, that the children are accounted clean, or

holy --so far holy, that is, that they are of the fold, and not aliens,

or unclean foreigners without the fold, as the Jews were accustomed to

regard all the uncircumcised races. One believing parent, he declares,

puts the children in the church classification of believers.

4. All the reasons I have given for the observance of infant baptism,

go to establish also the fact of infant membership in the church. And

this holds good, especially of that which discovers the origin of the

rite in proselyte baptism. For as foreigners, becoming proselytes, were

baptized and so made clean, thus to be accounted natural born citizens,

so Christ, reapplying the rite to a spiritual use, makes it the token

of that regeneration which enters the soul into his heavenly kingdom,

and gives a divine citizenship there. In which you may see how my

comparison of infant membership in the church, to the well-known

citizenship of infants in the state, is borne out by Christian

authority itself. Their very baptism is the figure of their

citizenship; wherein they are shown to be "fellow-citizens of the

saints, and of the household of God." Now it is to be conceded, as

respects all these proofs from the Scripture, that the church

membership of children is not formally asserted in them. According to a

certain coarse way of judging, therefore, they are not as strong as

they might be. And yet, in a more perceptive and really truer mode of

judgment, they lack that kind of strength just because they have too

much of another, which is deeper and more satisfactory, to suffer it.

So familiar is the idea, to all Jewish minds, of a religious oneness in

parents and their offspring, that a church institution of any kind,

arranged to include parents and not their offspring, would even have

been a shocking offense to the nation. Children were as much expected

to be with their parents in their religion, as they were to be in their

sustentation. Does any one doubt that children were citizens in the old

theocracy? And yet I recollect no passage where that sort of membership

with their parents is instituted, or formally asserted. And the reason,

is that it is a fact too familiar, too close to the sentiment or sense

of nature, to be asserted. We can even see for ourselves that they look

upon religious faith itself as a kind of heir-loom ill the family,

descending on the child by laws of family connexion, where it is not

hindered by some bad fault in the manners and walk of the parents. Thus

we hear even Paul himself, the man who knew as well as any other, and

taught as powerfully, the significance of Christian faith, addressing

his young brother Timothy, as having the greater confidence in his

faith because it is hereditary--"When I call to remembrance the

unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother

Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also."

This unfeigned, this certainly true Christian faith, he conceives to

have even leapt the gulf between the old religion and the new, and so

to have come down upon him, through at least two generations of godly

motherhood under the law and before the coming of Jesus. When such

notions of family grace are familiar, what does it signify that the

church membership of children is not formally asserted? How could that

be instituted by an apostolic decree, which no apostle, or man, or

woman, had ever thought could be otherwise?

Over and above these more direct evidences, for the church membership

of baptized children, there is still another kind of evidence to be

adduced, which has, and very properly should have, much weight. I

allude to the opinions of the church and her most qualified teachers,

from the apostolic era downward. In one sense, the mere opinions of men

regarding such a question are of little consequence. But where they

coincide with the known practice of the church from the earliest times

downward, and show the practice to be grounded in the same reasons of

organic unity and presumptive grace that we are now asserting, they

both show that our doctrine is no novelty, and contribute a powerful

evidence in support of its original authenticity.

Thus I have cited already in support of infant baptism, passages from

Justin Martyr, Ireneus, Tertullian, Origen, the Shepherd of Hermas, and

others, which not only show the fact of infant baptism, but discover

also, in their phraseology, the same views of church membership that I

am now asserting. This whole view of infant membership, as it stood in

the first three centuries of the church history, appears to be wet]

summed up, both as regards the facts anid the reasons, in the following

statement of Neander:--

"It is the idea of infant baptism that Christ, through the divine life

which he imparted to, and revealed in, human nature, sanctified that

germ from its earliest development. The child born in a Christian

family was, when all things were as they should be, to have this

advantage over others, that he did not come to Christianity out of

heathenism or the sinful natural life, but from the first dawning of

consciousness unfolded his powers under the imperceptible, preventing

influences of a sanctifying, ennobling religion; that with the earliest

germinations of the natural self-conscious life, another divine

principle of life, transforming the nature, should be brought nigh to

him, ere yet the ungodly principle could come into full activity, and

the latter should at once, find here its powerful counterpoise. In such

a life, the new birth was not to constitute a new crisis, beginning at

some definable moment, but it was to begin imperceptibly, and so

proceed through the whole life. Hence baptism, the visible sign of

regeneration, was to be given to the child at the very outset: the

child was to be consecrated to the Redeemer from the very beginning of

its life." [3]

A more popular and practical view of Christianity, as seen in the

domestic life of families, and one, at the same time, wholly

coincident, is given by Cave:--

"Gregory Nazianzen peculiarly commends his mother, that not only she

herself was consecrated to God, and brought up under a pious education,

but that she conveyed it down, as a necessary inheritance, to her

children; and it seems her daughter Gorgonia was so well seasoned with

these holy principles, that she religiously walked in the steps of so

good a pattern; and did not only reclaim her husband, but educated her

children and nephews in the ways of religion, giving them an excellent

example while she lived, and leaving this, as her last charge and

request when she died. \* \* \* This was the discipline under which

Christians were brought up in those times. Religion was instilled into

them betimes, which grew up and mixed itself with their ordinary labors

and recreations. \* \* \* \* So that Jerome says, of the place where he

lived, you could not go into the field, but you might hear the plowman

at his hallelujahs, the mower at his hymns, and the vine-dresser

singing David's Psalms." [4]

I can not answer for an exact agreement of my doctrine with that of

Calvin. It must be sufficient that he recognizes the valid possibility

of a regenerate character, existing long before it is formally

developed, and the propriety of infant baptism as the initiatory rite

of membership. He says:--

"Christ was sanctified from his earliest infancy, that he might

sanctify in himself all his elect But how, it is inquired, are infants

regenerated who have no knowledge either of good or evil? We reply that

the work of God is not yet without existence because it is not observed

or understood by us. Now it is certain that some infants are saved, and

that they are previously regenerated by the Lord is beyond all doubt

They are baptized into future repentance and faith; for though these

graces have not yet been formed in them, the seeds of both are

nevertheless implanted in their hearts by the secret operations of the

Spirit." [5]

The mercurial mind of Baxter penetrates directly into all the

subtleties of the question, asserting the organic unity of children who

stand accepted in the covenant of their fathers; showing how regenerate

character is to begin, seminally, in the children of them that believe,

and get the start of sin by a kind of gracious anticipation; and so

that, in this view, nurture and growth are God's way of unfolding grace

in the church, as preaching and conversion are his method of grace with

them that are without. Which three points are successively asserted in

the following passages:--

"Q.--Why then are they baptized who can not covenant?

"A.--As children are made sinners and miserable by the parents, without

any act of their own, so they are delivered out of it by the free grace

of Christ, upon a condition performed by their parents. Else they who

are visibly born in sin and misery should have no certain or visible

way of remedy. Nature maketh them, as it were, parts of their parents,

or so near as causeth their sin and misery. And this nearness supposed,

God, by his free grace, hath put it in the power of the parents to

accept for them the blessings of the covenant, and to enter them into

the covenant of God, the parents' will being instead of their own, who

have yet no will to choose for themselves." [6]

"Of those baptized in infancy, some do betimes receive the secret seeds

of grace, which, by the blessings of a holy education, is stirring in

them according to their capacity, and working them to God by actual

desires, and working them from all known sill, and entertaining further

grace, and turning them into actual acquaintance with Christ, as soon

as they arrive at full natural capacity, so that they never were actual

ungodly persons." [7]

"Ungodly parents do serve the devil so effectually, in the first

impressions on their children's minds, that it is more than magistrates

and ministers and all reforming means can afterwards do to recover them

from that sin to God. Whereas, if you would first engage their hearts

to God by a religious education, piety would then have all those

advantages that sin hath now. (Prov. xxii. 6.) The language which you

teach them to speak when they are children, they will use all their

life after, if they live with those that use it. And so the opinions

which they first receive, and the customs which they are used to at

first are very hardly changed afterwards. I doubt not to affirm, that a

godly education is God's first and ordinary appointed means, for the

begetting of actual faith and other graces in the children of

believers. Many have received grace before; but they can not sooner

have actual faith, repentance, love, or any grace than they may have

reason itself, in act and exercise. And the preaching of the word by

public ministers, is not the first ordinary means of grace, to any but

those that were graceless till they come to hear such preaching; that

is, to those on whom the first appointed means hath been neglected or

proved vain; \* \* \* \* therefore it is apparent that the ordinary

appointed means for the first actual grace, is parents' godly

instruction and education of their children. And public preaching is

appointed for the conversion of those only that have missed the

blessing of the first appointed means." [8]

Our New England fathers, coming out as they did from a mode of church

economy which made Christian piety itself to be scarcely more than

baptism, and passing through great struggles to settle a scheme of

church order that should recognize the strict individuality of persons,

and the essential personality of spiritual regeneration, fell off for a

time, as they naturally might, into a denial of the great underlying

principles and facts on which the membership of baptized children in

the church must ever be rested. In the Cambridge Platform of 1649, they

asserted a view of membership, by which it was to be rigidly confined

to such as appear to be renewed persons. Meantime none were allowed to

be qualified as voters in the commonwealth, except in the Hartford and

Providence colonies, who were not members of the church--the same

principle with which they had been familiar in England. The result was,

under their individualizing scheme of membership, that they began to

find, as soon as their sons were grown to manhood, that many of them,

even though baptized, were, in fact, aliens in the state. They could

not vote in the state, and, having no pretense of faith, could not

baptize their children, not being in the church themselves. Another

synod was convened A.D. 1662, to find some way of relieving these

difficulties. And they hit upon the rather strange expedient of a

half-membership, allowing all baptized persons who live reputably, and

give a speculative assent to the gospel, to be so far members that they

may be voters and have their children baptized. This decision was

stoutly opposed by some of the ablest men in the synod, and great

debates followed. And yet as the facts were reported by Cotton Mather,

these three positions were' asserted and agreed to on all hands--even

though the scheme adopted had no systematic and practical agreement

with them, or ground of reason in them.

1. That the children of Christian parents, trained in a Christian way,

often grow up as spiritually renewed persons, and must indeed be

accounted true disciples of Christ, until some evidence conclusive to

the contrary is given by their conduct.

"Children of the covenant have frequently the beginning of grace

wrought in them in younger years, as Scripture and experience show.

Instance Joseph, Samuel, David, Solomon, Abijah, Josiah, Daniel, John

Baptist, Timothy. Hence this sort of persons, [baptized persons]

showing nothing to the contrary, art, in charity, or to ecclesiastical

reputation, visible believers." [9]

2. That baptism supposes an initial state of piety, or some right

beginning, in which the child is prepared unto good, by causes prior to

his own will.

"We are to distinguish between faith and the hopeful beginning of it,

the charitable judgment whereof runs upon a great latitude, and faith

in the special exercise of it, unto the visible discovery whereof, more

experienced operations are to be inquired after. The words of Dr. Ames

are: 'Children are not to be admitted to partake of all church

privileges, till first increase of faith do appear, but from those

which belong to the beginning of faith and entrance into the church

they are not to be excluded.'" [10]

3. That there is a kind of individualism which runs only to evil; that

the church is designed to be an organic, vital, grace-giving power, and

thus a nursery of spiritual life to its children.

"The way of the Anabaptists, to admit none to membership and baptism

but adult professors, is the straitest way; one would think it should

be a way of great purity; but experience hath shewed that it has been

an inlet unto great corruption. If we do not keep in the way of a

converting, grace-giving covenant, and keep persons under those church

dispensations wherein grace is given, the church will die of a

lingering though not violent death. The Lord hath not set up churches

only that a few old Christians may keep one another warm while they

live, and then carry away the church with them when they die; no, but

that they might with all care, and with all the obligations and

advantages to that care that may be, nurse still successively another

generation of subjects to our Lord, that may stand up ill his kingdom

when they are gone." [11]

Under this half-way covenant, and probably in part because of it,

practical religion fell into a state of great debility. The churches

lost their spirituality, and had well nigh lost the idea of spiritual

life itself; when at length the Great Revival, under Whitefield and

Edwards, inaugurated and brought up to its highest intensity the new

era of individualism--the same overwrought, misapplied scheme of

personal experience in religion, which has continued with some

modifications to the present day. It is a religion that begins

explosively, raises high frames, carries little or no expansion, and

after the campaign is over, subsides into a torpor. Considered as a

distinct era, introduced by Edwards, and extended and caricatured by

his cotemporaries, it has one great merit, and one great defect. The

merit is that it displaced an era of dead formality, and brought in the

demand of a truly supernatural experience. The defect is, that it has

cast a type of religious individualism, intense beyond any former

example. It makes nothing of the family, and the church, and the

organic powers God has constituted as vehicles of grace. It takes every

man as if he had existed alone; presumes that he is unreconciled to God

until he has undergone some sudden and explosive experience in adult

years, or after the age of reason; demands that experience. and only

when it is reached, allows the subject to be an heir of life. Then, on

the other side, or that of the Spirit of God, the very act or ictus by

which the change is wrought is isolated or individualized, so as to

stand in no connection with any other of God's means or causes--an

epiphany, in which God leaps from the stars, or some place above, to do

a work apart from all system, or connection with his other works.

Religion is thus a kind of transcendental matter, which belongs on the

outside of life, and has no part in the laws by which life is

organized--a miraculous epidemic, a fire-ball shot from the moon,

something holy, because it is from God, but so extraordinary, so out of

place, that it can not suffer any vital connection with the ties, and

causes, and forms, and habits, which constitute the frame of our

history. Hence the desultory, hard, violent, and often extravagant or

erratic character it manifests. Hlence, in part, the dreary years of

decay and darkness, that interspace our months of excitement and

victory.

Even Edwards himself, fifteen years after the Great Revival, began to

be oppressed with sorrowful convictions of some great defect in the

matter and mode of it, confessing his doubt whether "the greater part

of supposed converts give reason, by their conversation, to suppose

that they continue converts;" protesting, also, his special confidence

in the fruits of family religion in terms like these--

"Every Christian family ought to be, as it were, a little church,

consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by his rules.

And family education and order are some of the chief means of grace. If

these fail, all other means are likely to prove ineffectual." [12]

Dr. Hopkins, a pupil of Edwards, had probably been turned by

suggestions from him, to a consideration of the importance of family

nurture and piety, as connected with the propagation of religion; and,

as if to supply some defect in this direction, he occupied sixty pages

in his System of Divinity, with a careful discussion of the "nature and

design of infant baptism." In this article, he goes even beyond the

notion of a presumptive piety in the children baptized, and says:--"The

church receive and look upon them as holy, and those who shall be

saved. So they are as visibly holy, or as really holy, in their view,

as their parents are." [13]

How far his theory of conversion would compel him to isolate the act of

God by which the spiritual renovation of a soul is wrought, I will not

undertake to decide. Enough, that he asserts an organic connection of

character between parents and children, as effectual for good as for

evil; nay, that they may as truly, and in the same sense, transmit

holiness as they transmit existence. Thus, after asserting, not more

clearly or decidedly than I have done, the impossibility that parents

should spiritually renew their children, considered as acting by

themselves, he says:

"But it does not follow from this, that God has not so constituted the

covenant of grace, that holiness shall be communicated, by Him, to the

children, in consequence of the faithful endeavors of their parents; so

that, in this sense, and by virtue of such a constitution, they do by

their faithful endeavors convey saving blessings to their children. In

this way they give existence to their children. God produces their

existence by his own Almighty energy; but, by the constitution he has

established, they receive their existence from their parents, or by

their means. By an established constitution, parents convey moral

depravity to their children. And if God has been pleased to make a

constitution and appoint a way, in his covenant of grace with man, by

which pious parents may convey and communicate moral rectitude or

holiness to their children, they, by using the appointed means, do it

as really and effectually as they communicate existence to them. In

this sense, therefore, they may convey and give holiness and salvation

to their children." [14]

Dr. Witherspoon, a cotemporary of Dr. Hopkins, held opinions on this

subject that were in a high degree coincident, though presented in a

more popular and less doctrinal shape. He says:--

"I will not enlarge on some refined remarks of persons as distinguished

for learning as piety, some of whom have supposed that they [children]

are capable of receiving impressions of desire and aversion, and even

of moral temper, particularly of love or hatred, its the first year of

their lives. \* \* \* When the gospel comes to a people that have long

sitten in darkness, there may be numerous converts of all ages; but

when the gospel has long been preached, in plenty and purity, andl

ordinances regularly administered, few but those who are called in

early life are called at all. A very judicious and pious writer,

Richard Baxter, is of opinion that in a regular state of the church,

and a tolerable measure of faithfulness and purity in its officers,

family instruction and government are the usual means of conversion,

public ordinances of edification. This seems agreeable to the language

of Scripture; for we are told that God hath set in the church apostles,

prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, (not for converting

sinners, but) for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the

ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." [15]

From all these citations, which could be multiplied without limit, it

will be seen that the children of Christian parents have been looked

upon as being heirs of the parental faith, and presumptively included

in that faith; and so, either with or without a distinct assertion of

the proper church membership of children, such opinions have been held

in all ages respecting them, as make the denial of their membership a

clear impropriety and even a kind of offense against nature.

It is hardly necessary to add, in closing this subject, that if

children baptized are so far accepted as members of the Christian

church, it must be a great fault and a most hurtful dereliction of duty

that nothing is practically made of this membership, and that really it

passes for a thing of no significance. The rite is appointed because it

has a meaning and a value, and then, when it is passed, it is treated

in a way that even indicates the possible absurdity of it. That the

children will see any thing in such a mode of practice is impossible.

And it requires but the smallest possible perception, to see that the

rite will, in this manner, be regularly sinking into discredit, till it

is quite done away, and the value it might have in the church is lost.

To accomplish all that is needed to give full effect to the rite--

Baptized children ought to be enrolled by name in the catalogue of each

church, as composing a distinct class of candidate, or

catechumen-members; and to see that they are held in expectancy, thus,

by the church, as presumptively one with them in the faith they

profess.

Then, when they come forward to acknowledge their baptism, and assume

the covenant in their own choice, they ought not to be received as

converts from the world, as if they were heathens coming into the fold,

but there should be a distinction preserved, such as makes due account

of their previous qualified membership; a form of assumption tendered

in place of a confession--something answering to the Lutheran

confirmation, passed without a bishop's hands.

Children, as soon as they are well out of their infancy, ought to be

taken also to the stated meetings of fellowship and prayer, drawn into

all the moods of worship, praise, supplication, reproof, as being

rightfully concerned in them, on the score of their membership. There

ought to be a great deal made of singing too in such meetings, that

they may join their voices and play into expression their own tribute

of feeling and Christian sentiment

Whenever there are orphan children, that have been baptized, the church

ought to look after them, as being members; see, if possible, that they

are not neglected, but trained up in a Christian manner; provided, if

need be, with a godly fatherhood and motherhood in the church itself;

led into the church and out into the world, as disciples beloved

according to their years.

Meantime, it is a matter of prime significance that the Christian

father and mother should live so as to indicate a sense of their

privilege and responsibility; even as Abraham did when he sojourned in

the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tents with

Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. It is one thing to

live for a family of children, as if they were going possibly to be

converted, and a very different to live for them as church members,

training them into their holy profession; one thing to have them about

as strangers to the covenant of promise, and another to have them about

as heirs of the same promise, growing up into it, to fulfill the seal

of faith already upon them. One great reason why the children of

Christian parents turn out so badly is, that they are taken to be the

world, and the manner and spirit of the house are brought down to be of

the world too, and partly for their sake. Take them as disciples of

Jesus, to be carefully trained for Him; prepared to no mere worldly

tastes, and fashions, and pleasures, but kept in purity, saved from the

world, and led forth under all tender examples of obedience and godly

living; and it will be strange if that nurture of the Lord does not

show them growing up in the faith, to be sons and daughters, indeed, of

the Lord Almighty.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[3] Neander's Church History, Torrey's translation, pp. 311, 312.

[4] Primitive Christianity, pp. 173, 174.

[5] Ins. cap. xvi. � 17, 18, 20.

[6] Teacher of Householders, fol., vol. ii., p. 135.

[7] Confirmation, fol., vol. iv., p. 267.

[8] Christian Directory, vol. ii., cap. 6, � 4, fol. p. 516.

[9] Magnalia, book v., fol. p. 72.

[10] Magnalia, book v., fol. p 77.

[11] Magnalia, book v., fol. p. 81. 187

[12] Vol. i., p. 90.

[13] Vol. ii. p. 319.

[14] Pages 334, 335.

[15] Witherspoon, vol. ii., pp. 395, 397.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

VII.

THE OUT-POPULATING POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN STOCK.

"And did he not make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And

wherefore one? That he might have a godly seed."--Malachi, ii. 15.

THE prophet is enforcing here a strict observance of marriage. And he

adverts, in his argument, to the single and sole state of the first

human pair, as a standing proof against polygamy, inconstancy, and all

similar abuses of the marriage state. God was not spent, he says, in

creating a single man, Adam, and a single woman, Eve, but he had such a

residue, or overplus of creative energy left, that he could have

created millions if he would. Wherefore then did he cease, producing

only just one man and woman, and no more? The answer is--That he might

have a godly seed. In that lies the reason, he declares, of God's

economy in this family institution. We perceive, accordingly,

That God is, from the first, looking for a godly seed; or, what is

nowise different, inserting such laws of population that piety itself

shall finally over-populate the world.

To be more explicit, there are two principal modes by which the kingdom

of God among men may be, and is to be extended. One is by the process

of conversion. and the other by that of family propagation; one by

gaining over to the side of faith and piety, the other by the

populating force of faith and piety themselves. The former is the grand

idea that has taken possession of the churches of our times--they are

going to convert the world. They have taken hold of the promise, which

so many of the prophets have given out, of a time when the reign of

Christ shall be universal, extending to all nations ant peoples; and

the expectation is that, by preaching Christ to all the nations, they

will finally convert them and bring them over into the gospel fold.

Meantime very much less, or almost nothing, is made of the other

method, viz: that of Christian population. Indeed, as we are now

looking at religion, or religious character and experience, we can

hardly find a place for any such thought as a possible reproduction

thus of parental character -and grace in children. They must come in by

choice, on their own account; they must be converted over from an

outside life that has grown to maturity in sin. Are they not

individuals, and how are they to be initiated into any thing good by

inheritance and before choice? It is as if they were all so many

Melchisedecs in their religious nature, only not righteous at

all--without father, without mother, without descent. Descent brings

them nothing. Born of faith, and bosomed in it, and nurtured by it

still, there is yet to be no faith begotten in them, nor so much as a

contagion even of faith to be caught in their garments.

What I propose, at the present time, is to restore, if possible, a

juster impression of this great subject; to show that conversion over

to the church is not the only way of increase; that God ordains a law

of population in it as truly as he does in an earthly kingdom, or

colony, and by this increase from within, quite as much as by

conversion from without, designs to give it, finally, the complete

dominion promised.

Nor let any one be repelled from this truth, or set against it, by the

prejudice that piety is and must be a matter of individual choice. The

same is true of sin. Many of us have no difficulty in saying that

mankind are born sinners. They may just as truly and properly be born

saints--it requires the self-active power to be just as far developed

to commit sin, as it does to choose obedience. This individual capacity

of will and choice is one that matures at no particular tick of the

clock, but it comes along out of incipiencies, grows by imperceptible

increments, and takes on a character, in good or evil, or a mixed

character in both, so imperceptibly and gradually, that it seems to be,

in some sense, prefashioned by what the birth and nurture have

communicated. We may fitly enough call this character a propagated

quality--in strictest metaphysical definition, it is not; in sturdiest

fact of history, or practical life, it is.

Nor let any one be diverted from the truth I am going to assert, by

imagining that a propagated piety is, of course, a piety without

regeneration, dispensing with what Christ himself declared to be the

indispensable need of every human creature. For aught that appears,

regeneration may, in some initial and profoundly real sense, be the

twin element of propagation itself. The parentage may, in other words,

be so thoroughly wrought in by the Spirit of God, as to communicate the

seeds or incipiencies of a godly, just as it communicates the seeds of

a depravated and disordered, character. In one view, the child will be

regenerate when he is born; in another view, he will not be, till the

godly life is developed in his own personal choice and liberty.

Dismissing these, and other like prepossessions, let us go on to

examine some of the evidences by which this doctrine of church

population is to be substantiated.

1. I name, as an evidence, the very important fact that in the matter

of infant baptism and infant church membership, grounded as they are in

the assumption that a believing parentage sanctifies the offspring, God

is seen to frame the order of church economy, so as to bring in the law

of increase, or family propagation; looking to the populating principle

for growth, just as the founder of a new colony, on some foreign shore,

would look. He declares that parents are to be parents in the Lord, and

children to grow up in the nurture of the Lord. The whole scheme of

organic unity in the family and of family grace in the church, is just

what it should be, if the design were to propagate religion, not by

conversions only, but quite as much, or more, by the populating force

embodied in it--just that force which; in all states and communities,

is known to be the most majestic and silently creative force in their

history.

2. It is a matter of consequence to observe, that the Abrahamic order

and covenant stood upon this footing, formally proposing and promising

to make the father of the faithful a blessing to mankind, by and

through the multitude of his offspring. "Look now," says the word of

promise, "toward heaven and tell the stars, if thou be able to number

them. So shall thy seed be." Again, "I will make thee a father of many

nations." And again, "All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in

him." Neither was it to be the only blessing, that Jesus, the Saviour

of mankind, was to be born of this honored family. "I will make thee

exceeding fruitful," was the form of the promise; and the blessing, as

we may see, by all the modes of expression used, was to turn as much on

the wonderful populousness of the stock, overspreading the world, as it

was, on the new-creating grace to be unfolded in it. For if it be

matter of debate, in what precise manner the Christian church has

connection with this more ancient and apparently mere family bond,

there is certainly no doubt in the mind of the great Christian apostle,

that there is a real and valid connection of some kind, such that the

promise passes and spreads, and is to get its fulfillment, only when

the godly seed has filled the world. The spread of Christianity is, in

his view, the blessing of Abraham come on the Gentiles, through Jesus

Christ. These Gentile converts, too, he calls the seed of Abraham--"And

if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to

the promise." He looks, you will perceive, on the Gentile converts as

being grafted in upon the ancient stock; which also he expressly says,

in another place, counting them to be so unified with Abraham, as to be

the outgrowth of his person. Just as the proselytes were taken to be

sons and daughters of Abraham, naturalized into his stock, so are these

converts to become the channel of his over-populating force, till such

time as the natural branches, broken off, are grafted in again. And, in

this view, it is that the Gentile converts are called "a seed," that

being the word that contemplates the fact of their multiplication as a

family of God.

3. It is an argument which ought to be convincing, that the universal

spread of the gospel, and the universal reign of Christian truth--that

which prophets and apostles promise, and which we, in these last times,

have taken up as our fondest, most impelling Christian hope--plainly

enough never can be compassed by the process of adult conversions, but

must finally be reached, if reached at all, by the populating forces of

a family grace in the church. We expect that, in that day, all flesh

shall see the salvation of God, and that every thing human will be

regenerated by it; that the glory of God will cover the earth like a

baptism of water--even as the waters cover the sea. These are to be the

times of the restitution of all things. God, we believe, will put his

laws now in the mind, and write them on the heart, and "all shall know

him from the least to the greatest." I do not care to press these

epithets least and greatest--perhaps there is no reference to children

in them. It would scarcely make the text more significant if there

were; for this universal triumph of the word, in which we all believe,

this imprinting of it on men's hearts, all over the world in such

manner as to make the day of glory--that great day of light which

figures so grandly in the visions of God's prophets and apostles, and

is promised by Christ himself--such a day, I say, can plainly enough

never be reached, as long as the children of the world grow up in sin,

as we now assume to be the fact, still to be called and prayed for as

now and preached into the kingdom. When the little child shall lead

forth in pairs the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the calf

and the young lion; when the sucking child shall play on the hole of

the asp unstung, and the weaned child shall put his hand unbitten on

the cockatrice's den; we not only take hold of it as the prophet's

meaning that there is to be a great universal mitigation of the

ferocities of appetite, and prey, and passion, in the world, but that

the little ones are to have their part in the joy, and be raised in

dominion by that all-renewing grace which has now restored and

imparadised the world. Otherwise our day of glory would be such a kind

of jubilee as shows the adult soils only of the race to be gathered

into the kingdom, while the poor, unripe sinners of childhood, a full

fourth in the total number, are in no sense, in it, but are waiting

their conversion-time on the outside! This is not our millennial day;

we have no such hope.

We conceive that Christ will then overspread all souls with his glory,

and that children, filled according to their age and measure with the

divine motions of grace, will be unfolding the heavenly beauty, as they

advance in years, even as the flowers unfold their colors in the sun.

These colors no one sees in the root, and the clear, transparent sap it

circulates, and yet the color ii there. Just so will God, in that great

day of grace, bring out of infancy and childhood, sanctifyingly touched

by his Spirit, what creates them children of God, as truly as their

parents, though too subtle to be seen, or defined, till it has blushed

into color, in the sunlight of their intelligence in the truth. Such a

day of glory then contemplates a great in-birth of sanctification, or

renewing life. Conversions from without are to have their part in

preparing it, but the consummation hoped for is even impossible, as

regards a third or fourth part of the race, save as it is reached by a

populating process which enters them into life itself, through the gate

of a sanctified infancy and childhood.

4. Consider a very important fact in human physiology which goes far to

explain, or take away the strangeness and seeming extravagance of the

truth I am endeavoring to establish, viz., that qualities of education,

habit, feeling, and character, have a tendency always to grow in, by

long continuance, and become thoroughly inbred in the stock. We meet

humble analogies of this fact in the domestic animals. The operations

to which they are trained, and in which they become naturalized by

habit, become predispositions, in a degree, in their offspring; and

they, in their turn, are as much more easily trained on that account.

The next generation are trained still more easily, till what was first

made habitual, finally becomes functional in the stock, and almost no

training is wanted. That which was inculcated by practice passes into a

tendency, and descends as a natural gift, or endowment. The same thing

is observable, on a large scale, in the families of mankind. A savage

race is a race bred into low living, and a faithless, bloody character.

The instinct of law, society, and order is substituted, finally, by the

overgrown instinct of prey, and the race is lost to any real capacity

of social regeneration; unless they can somehow be kept in ward, and a

process of training, long enough to breed in what has been lost A race

of slaves becomes a physiologically servile race in the same way. And

so it is, in part, that civilization descends from one generation to

another. It is not merely that laws, social modes, and

instrumentalities of education descend, and that so the new sprung

generations are fashioned after birth, by the forms and principles and

causes into which they have been set, but it is that the very type of

the inborn quality is a civilized type. The civilization is, in great

part, an inbred civility. There is a something functional in them,

which is itself configured to the state of art, order, law, and

property.

The Jewish race are a striking and sad proof of the manner in which any

given mode of life may, or rather must, become a functional property in

the offspring. The old Jewish stock of the Scripture times, whatever

faults they may have had, certainly were not marked by any such

miserably sordid, usurious, garbage-vending propensity, as now

distinguishes the race. But the cruelties they have suffered under

Christian governments, shut up in the Jews' quarter of the great

cities, dealing in old clothes and other mean articles for their gains,

hiding these in the shape of gold and jewels in the crevices of their

cellars, to prevent seizure by the emissaries of the governments, and

disguising their prosperity itself by the squalid dress of their

persons--these, continued from age to age, have finally bred in the

character we so commonly speak of with contempt. Our children, treated

as they have been for so many generations, would finally reveal the

marks of their wrongs in the same sordid, miserly instincts.

Now if it be true that what gets power in any race, by a habit or a

process of culture, tends by a fixed law of nature to become a

propagated quality, and pass by descent as a property inbred in the

stock; if in this way whole races of men are cultivated into properties

that are peculiar--off into a savage character, down into a servile or

a mercenary, up into civilization or a high social state--what is to be

the effect of a thoroughly Christian fatherhood and motherhood,

continued for a long time in the successive generations of a family?

What can it be but a general mitigation of the bad points of the stock,

and a more and more completely inbred piety. The children of such a

stock are born, not of the flesh only, or the mere natural life of

their parentage, but they are born, in a sense most emphatic, of the

Spirit also; for this parentage is differed, as we are supposing, age

by age, from its own mere nature in Adam, by the inhabiting grace of a

supernatural salvation. Physiologically speaking, they are tempered by

this grace, and it is all the while tending to become, in some sense,

an inbred quality. Hence the very frequent remark--"How great a

privilege and order of nobility to be descended of a pious ancestry!"

It is the blessing that is to descend to the thousandth generation of

them that love God and keep his commandments. In this view it is to be

expected, as the life of Christian piety becomes more extended in the

earth, and the Spirit of God obtains a living power in the successive

generations, more and more complete, that finally the race itself will

be so thoroughly regenerated as to have a genuinely populating power in

faith and godliness. By a kind of ante-natal and post-natal nurture

combined, the new-born generations will be started into Christian

piety, and the world itself over-populated and taken possession of by a

truly sanctified stock. This I conceive to be the expectation of

Christianity. Not that the bad heritage of depravity will cease, but

that the second Adam will get into power with the first, and be entered

seminally into the same great process of propagated life. And this

fulfills that primal desire of the world's Creator and Father, of which

the prophet speaks--"That he might have a godly seed."

And let no one be offended by this, as if it supposed a possible

in-growth and propagation of piety, by mere natural laws and

conditions. What higher ground of supernaturalism can be taken, than

that which supposes a capacity in the Incarnate Word, and Sanctifying

Spirit, to penetrate our fallen nature, at a point so deep as to cover

the whole spread of the fall, and be a grace of life, traveling outward

from the earliest, moss latent germs of our human development. It is

only saying, with a meaning--"My substance was not hid from Thee, when

I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the

earth." Or, in still another view, it is only conceiving that those

sporadic cases of sanctification from the womb, of which the Scripture

speaks, such as that of Samuel, Jeremiah, and John, are to finally

become the ordinary and common fact of family development.

In such cases, the faith or piety of a single pair, or possibly of the

mother alone, begets a heavenly mold in the predispositions of the

offspring, so that, as it is born of sin, it is also born of a heavenly

grace. If then we suppose the heavenly grace to have such power, in the

long continuing process of ages, as to finally work the general stock

of parentage into its own heavenly mold, far enough to prepare a

sanctified offspring for the world, what higher, grander fact of

Christian supernaturalism could be asserted? Nor is it any thing more

of a novelty than to say, that "where sin abounded, grace did much more

abound." The conception is one that simply fulfills what Baxter,

Hopkins, and others, were apparently struggling after, [16] when

contriving how to let the grace of God in our salvation, match itself

by the hereditary damage, or depravation, that descends upon us from

our parentage, and the organic unity of our nature as a race. And

probably enough they were put upon this mode of thought, by the

familiar passage of Paul just referred to.

Christianity then has a power, as we discover, to prepare a godly seed.

It not only takes hold of the world by its converting efficacy, but it

has a silent force that is much stronger and more reliable; it moves,

by a kind of destiny, in causes back of all the eccentric and casual

operations of mere individual choice, preparing, by a gradual growing

in of grace, to become the great populating motherhood of the world. In

this conviction, we shall be strengthened--

5. By the well known fact, that the populating power of any race, or

stock, is increased according to the degree of personal and religious

character to which it has attained. Good principles and habits,

intellectual culture, domestic virtue, industry, order, law, faith--all

these go immediately to enhance the rate and capacity of population.

They make a race powerful, not in the mere military sense, but in one

that, by century-long reaches of populating force, lives down silently

every mere martial competitor. Any people that is physiologically

advanced in culture, though it be only in a degree, beyond another

which is mingled with it on strictly equal terms, is sure to live down

and finally live out its inferior. Nothing can save the inferior race

but a ready and pliant assimilation.

The promise to Abraham depended, doubtless, on this fact for its

fulfillment. God was to make his family fruitful, above others, by

imparting Himself to it, and so infusing a higher tone of personal

life. Hence also the grand religious fact that this race unfolded a

populating power so remarkable. Going down into Egypt, as a starving

family, it begins to be evident in about four hundred years, that they

are overpopulating the great kingdom of Egypt itself. "The children of

Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied and waxed

exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them." Till finally the

jealousy of the throne was awakened, and the king began to say--"Behold

the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we!"

Afterwards little Palestine itself was like a swarm of bees; building

great cities, raising great armies, and displaying all the tokens, age

upon age, of a great and populous empire. So great was the fruitfulness

of the stock, compared with other nations of the time, owing to the

higher personality unfolded in them, by their only partial and very

crude training, in a monotheistic religion.

And again, at a still later time, when the nation itself is

dismembered, and thousands of the people are driven off into captivity,

we find that when the great king of Persia had given out an edict of

extermination against them, and would like to recall it but can not,

because of the absurd maxim that what the king has decreed must not be

changed, he has only to publish another decree, that they shall have it

as their right to stand for their lives, and that is enough to insure

their complete immunity. "They gathered themselves together in their

cities, and throughout all the provinces, and no man could withstand

them, for the fear of them fell upon all people." In which we may see

how this captive race had multiplied and spread themselves, in this

incredibly short time, through all the great kingdom of the

Medo-Persian kings.

Or we may take a more modern illustration, drawn from the comparative

history of the Christian and Mohammedan races. The Christian

development begins at an older date, and the Mohammedan at a later. One

is a propagation by moral and religious influences, at least in part;

the other a propagation by military force. Both have religious ideas

and aims, but the main distinction is that one is taken hold of by

religion as being a contribution to the free personal nature of souls;

and the other is taken hold of by a religion whose grip is the strong

grip of fate. For a time, this latter spread like a fire in the forest,

propagated by the terrible sword of predestination, and it even seemed

about to override the world. But it by and by began to appear, that one

religion was creating and the other uncreating manhood; one toning up a

great and powerful character, and the other toning down, steeping in

lethargy, the races it began to inspire; till finally we can now see as

distinctly as possible, that one is pouring on great tides of

population, creating a great civilization, and great and powerful

nations; the other, falling away into a feeble, half-depopulated,

always decaying state, that augurs final extinction at no distant

period. Now the fact is that these two great religions of the world had

each, in itself, its own law of population from the beginning, and it

was absolutely certain, whether it could be seen or not, that

Christianity would finally live down Mohammedanism, and completely

expurgate the world of it. The campaigning centuries of European

chivalry, pressing it with crusade after crusade, could not bring it

under; but the majestic populating force of Christian faith and nurture

can even push it out of the world, as in the silence of a dew-fall.

What a lesson also could be derived, in the same manner, from a

comparison of the populating forces of the Puritan stock in this

country, and of the inferior, superstitious, half Christian stock and

nurture of the South American states. And the reason of the difference

is that Christianity, having a larger, fuller, more new-creating force

in one, gives it a populating force as much superior.

How this advantage accrues, and is, at some future time, to be more

impressively revealed than now, it is not difficult to see. Let the

children of Christian parents grow up, all, as partakers in their

grace, which is the true Christian idea, and the law of family increase

they are in, is, by the supposition, so far brought into the church,

and made operative there. And then comes in also the additional fact,

that there are causes and conditions of increase now operative in the

church which exist nowhere else.

Here, for example, there will be a stronger tide of health than

elsewhere. In the world without, multitudes are perishing continually

by vice and extravagance, and, when they do not perish themselves, they

are always entailing the effects of their profligacy on the

half-endowed constitution of their children. Meantime, in the truly

Christian life, there is a good keeping of temperance, a steady sway of

the passions, a robust equability and courage, and the whole domain of

the soul is kept more closely to God's order; which again is the way of

health, and implies a higher law of increase.

Wealth, again, will be unfolded more rapidly under the condition of

Christian living than elsewhere; and wealth enough to yield a generous

supply of the common wants of life, is another cause that favors

population. True piety is itself a principle of industry and

application to business. It subordinates the love of show and all the

tendencies to extravagance. It rules those licentious passions that war

with order and economy. It generates a faithful character, which is the

basis of credit, as credit, of prosperity. Hence it is that upon the

rocky, stubborn soil, under the harsh and frowning skies of our New

England, we behold so much of high prosperity, so much of physical

well-being, and ornament. And the wealth created is diffused about as

evenly as the piety. A true Christian society has mines opened, thus,

in its own habits and principles. And the wealth accruing is power in

every direction, power in production, enterprise, education,

colonization, influence, and consequent popular increase.

There will also be more talent unfolded in a Christian people, and

talent also takes the helm of causes everywhere. Christian piety is

itself a kind of holy development, enlarging every way the soul's

dimensions. It will also be found that Christian families abound with

influences, specially favorable to the awakening of the intellectual

principle in childhood. Religion itself is thoughtful. It carries the

child's mind over directly to unknown worlds, fills the understanding

with the sublimest questions, and sends the imagination abroad to

occupy itself where angels' wings would tire. The child of a Christian

family is thus unsensed, at the earliest moment, and put into mental

action; this, too, under the healthy and genial influence of Christian

principle. Every believing soul, too, is exalted and empowered by union

to God. His judgment is clarified, his reason put in harmony with

truth, his emotions swelled in volume, his imagination fired by the

object of his faith. The church, in short, is God's university, and it

lies in her foundation as a school of spiritual life, to energize all

capacity, and make her sons a talented and powerful race.

Here, too, are the great truths, and all the grandest, most fruitful

ideas of existence. Here will spring up science, discovery, invention.

The great books will be born here, and the highest, noblest, most

quickening character will here be fashioned. Popular liberties and the

rights of persons will here be asserted. Commerce will go forth hence,

to act the preluding of the Christian love, in the universal fellowship

of trade. And so we see, by this rapid glance along the inventories of

Christian society, that all manner of causes are included in it, that

will go to fine the organization, raise the robustness, swell the

volume, multiply the means, magnify the power of the Christian body. It

stands among the other bodies and religions, just as any advanced race,

the Saxon for example, stands among the feebler, wilder races, like the

Aborigines of our continent; having so much power of every kind that it

puts them in shadow, weakens them, lives them down, rolling its

over-populating tides across them, and sweeping them away, as by a kind

of doom. Just so there is, in the Christian church, a grand law of

increase by which it is rolling out and spreading over the world.

Whether the feebler and more abject races are going to be regenerated

and raised up, is already very much of a question. What if it should be

God's plan to people the world with better and finer material? Certain

it is, whatever expectations we may indulge, that there is a tremendous

overbearing surge of power in the Christian nations, which, if the

others are not speedily raised to some vastly higher capacity, will

inevitably submerge and bury them forever. These great populations of

christendom--what are they doing, but throwing out their colonies on

every side, and populating themselves, if I may so speak, into the

possession of all countries and climes? By this doom of increase, the

stone that was cut out without hands, shows itself to be a very

peculiar stone, viz: a growing stone, that is fast becoming a great

mountain, and preparing, as the vision shows, to fill the whole earth.

We are not, of course, to suspend our efforts to convert the heathen

nations--we shall never become a thoroughly regenerate stock, save as

we are trained up into such eminence, by our works of mercy to mankind.

It is for God to say what races are to be finally submerged and lost,

and not for us. Meantime, we are to gain over and save as many as

possible by conversion, and so to hasten the day of promise. And what

feebler and more pitiful conceit could we fall into, than to assume

that we have the grand, over-populating grace in our own stock, and sit

down thus to see it accomplish by mere propagation, that which of

itself supposes a glorious inbred habit of faith, and sacrifice, and

heavenly charity. I only say that, when we set ourselves to the great

work of converting the world, we are to see that we do not miscondition

the state of childhood, and throw quite away from us, meantime, all the

mighty advantages that God designs to give us, in this other manner;

viz., in the religious nurture and growth of the godly seed.

Once more, it is a consideration that will have great weight with all

deeply thoughtful persons, that the vindication of God in sin,

suffering, punishment, and all evil pertaining to the race, probably

depends, to a great degree, on just the truth I am here endeavoring to

establish. How constantly is the question raised, why God, as an

infinitely good and gracious Father, should put on foot such a scheme

of existence as this; one that unites such oppressive disadvantages,

and is to be such a losing concern? We begin life, it is said, with

constitutions depravated and poisoned, and come thus into choice with

predispositions that are damaged even beforehand. Idolatry, darkness,

and guilt, overspread tie world, in this manner, from age to age, and

the vast majorities of the race, rotting away thus into death under

sin, are being all the while precipitated into a wretched eternity,

which is their end; for they go hence in a state visibly disqualified

for the enjoyment, either of themselves, or of God. The picture is a

very dark one, though I feel a decided confidence that every single

part of God's counsel in it can be sufficiently vindicated. But this is

not a matter in the compass of my present inquiry, except so far as the

general difficulty is relieved by the possibility and prospect of great

future advantages that are to accrue, in the fact of a grand

over-populating righteousness, which is finally to change the aspect of

the whole question. We are not to assume, with many, that the world is

now just upon its close, but to look upon it as barely having opened

its first chapter of history. Its real value, and what is really to

come of it, probably does not even yet begin to appear. When its

propagations cease to be mere propagations of evil, or of moral damage

and disaster, and become propagations of sanctified life, and ages of

life; when the numbers, talents, comforts, powers of the immense godly

populations are increased to more than a hundred fold what they now

are; and when, at some incomputable distance of time, whose rate of

approach is only hinted by the geologic ages of the planet, they look

back upon us as cotemporaries almost of Adam and forward through ages

of blessing just begun, beholding so many worlds-full of regenerated

mind and character, pouring in from hence to over people, as it were,

eternity itself; they will certainly have a very different opinion of

the scheme of existence from that which we most naturally take up now.

Then it will be confessed that the nurture of the Lord has meaning and

force enough to change the aspect of every thing in God's plan. Our

scheme of propagated and derivative life is no longer a scheme of

disadvantage, but a mode of induction that gives to every soul the

noblest, safest beginning possible. On the other hand, if we cling to

the present way and state as the measure of all highest possibilities,

and expect to go on converting over, out of heathenism and death, the

sturdy, grownup aliens of depravity, it will be a most

difficult--always growing more and more difficult--thing to vindicate

the ways of God in what he has put upon the world. Shall we miss, and

give it to the future ages to miss, a vindication of God's way so

inspiring ill itself and so often promised in his word?

Having reached this closing point or consummation of the doctrine of

nurture, we are able, I think, to see something of the dignity there is

in it. How trivial, unnatural, weak, and, at the same time, violent, in

comparison, is that overdone scheme of individualism, which knows the

race only as mere units of will and personal action; dissolves even

families into monads; makes no account of organic relations and uses;

and expects the world to be finally subdued by adult conversions, when

growing up still, as before, in all the younger tiers of life, toward a

mere convertible state of adult ungodliness. Such a scheme gives a most

ungenial and forlorn aspect to the family. It makes the church a mere

gathering in of adult atoms, to be in creased only by the gathering in

of other and more numerous adult atoms. It very nearly makes the scheme

of existence itself an abortion; finding no great law of propagative

good and mercy in it, and taking quite away the possibility and

prospect of that sublime vindication of God which is finally to be

developed, and by which God's way in the creation is to be finally

crowned with all highest honors of counsel and beneficence. Opposite to

this, we have seen how it is God's plan, by ties of organic unity and

nurture, to let one generation extend itself into and over another, in

the order of grace, just as it does in the order of nature; to let us

expect the growing up of children in the Lord, even as their parents

are to be parents in the Lord, and are set to bring them up in the

nurture of the Lord; on this ground of anticipation, permitting us to

apply the seal of our faith to them, as being incipiently in the

quickening of our faith, even before they have intelligence to act it,

and consciously choose it; so accepting them to be members of the

church, as being presumptively in the life of the church; in this

manner incorporating in the church a great law of grace and sanctifying

power, by which finally the salvation will become an inbred life and

populating force, mighty enough to overlive, and finally to completely

people the world. And this is what we call the day of glory. It lies,

to a great degree, in the scheme of Christian nurture itself, and is

possible only as a consummation of that scheme. If I rightly conceive

the gospel work and plan, this is the regeneration [palingennesia]

which our Lord promises, viz.: that he will reclaim and re-sanctify the

great principle of reproductive order and life, and people, at last,

the world with a godly seed.

The church, as being made up of souls that are born of the Spirit, is a

new supernatural order thus in humanity; a spiritual nation, we may

conceive, that was founded by a colony from the skies. It alights upon

our globe as its chartered territory. Can it overspread the whole

planet and take possession? We see that it can unfold more of health,

wealth, talent, than the present living races of inhabitants. It has

within itself a stronger law of population, as well as a mighty power

to win over and assimilate the nations. Its people have more truth,

beauty, weight of character to exalt their predominance. And, what is

more, God is in them by his all-informing, all-energizing Spirit, to be

Himself unfolded in their history, and make it powerful. Not to believe

that the Heavenly Colony, thus constituted and endowed, will finally

overspread and fill the world, is to deny causes their effects, and to

quite invert the natural order of strength and weakness. God, too, has

testified in regard to this branch of his planting--"They shall inherit

the land."

It is very obvious that this general view of Christian nurture and its

effects is one that, becoming really installed in our faith, and the

aims of our piety, would induce important modifications in our

Christian practice, and change, to a considerable degree, the modes of

our religious demonstration. Our over-intense individualism carries

with it an immense loss of feeling, affection, sentiment, which hardens

the aspect of every thing, and dries away the sweet charities and

tender affections that would grace the older generations of souls, when

conceiving that the younger live in them, and are somehow folded in

their personality. We not only lose our children under this atomizing

scheme of piety, which is a loss we can not afford, but a certain

misproportion is induced, which distempers all our efforts and

demonstrations.

One principal reason why we are so often deficient in character, or

outward beauty, is, that piety begins too late in life, having thus to

maintain a perpetual and unequal war with previous habit. If it was not

true of Paul, it is yet too generally true, that one born out of due

time will be found out of due time, more often than he should be,

afterwards--unequal, inconsistent with himself, acting the old man

instead of the new. Having the old habit to war with, it is often too

strong for him. To make a graceful and complete Christian character, it

needs itself to be the habit of existence; not a grape grafted on a

bramble. And this, it will be seen, requires a Christian childhood in

the subject. Having this, the gracious or supernatural character

becomes itself more nearly natural, and possesses the peculiar charm of

naturalness, which is necessary to the highest moral beauty.

It results also from our mistaken views of Christian training, that we

fall into a notion of religion that is mechanical. We thrust our

children out of the covenant first and insist. in spite of it, that

they shall grow up in the same spiritual state as if their father and

mother were heathens. Then we go out, at least on certain occasions, to

convert them back, as if they actually were heathens. Our only idea of

increase is of that which accrues by means of a certain abrupt

technical experience. Led away thus from all thought of internal growth

in the church, efforts to secure conversions take an external

character, becoming gospel campaigns. Accretion displaces growth. The

church is gathered as a foundling hospital; and lest it should not be

such, its own children are reduced to foundlings. Immediate repentance

proclaimed, insisted on, and realized in an abrupt change, proper only

to those who are indeed aliens and enemies, is the only hope or inlet

of the church. We can not understand how the spiritual nation should

grow and populate, and become powerful within itself.

Piety becomes inconstant, and revivals of religion take an exaggerated

character from the same causes. If all Christian success is measured by

the count of technical conversions from without, then it follows that

nothing is done when conversions cease to be counted The harvest closes

not with feasting, but with famine Despair cuts off Christian motive.

The tide is spent; let us anchor during the ebb. It is well indeed to

live very piously in the families; still, there is nothing depending on

it. The children will be good subjects enough for conversion without.

The piety of the church is thus made to be desultory and irregular by

system. The idea of conquest displaces the idea of growth. Whereas, if

it were understood that Christian education or training in the

families, is to be itself a process of domestic conversion; that as a

child weeps under a frown and smiles at the command of a smile, so

spiritual influences may be streaming into his being from the handling

of the nursery and the whole manner and temperament of the house,

producing what will ever after be fundamental impressions of his being;

then the hearth, the table, the society and affections of the house,

would all feel the presence of a practical religious motive. The homes

would be Christian, the families abodes of piety.

Here too is the greatest impediment to a true missionary spirit. The

habit of conquest runs to dissipation and irregularity. It is as if a

nation, forgetting its own internal resources, were scouring the seas,

and trooping up and down the world, in pursuit of prize-money and

plunder, forsaking the loom and the plow, and all the regular growths

of industry. Whereas, if the church were unfolding the riches of the

covenant at her firesides and tables; if the children were identified

with religion from the first, and grew up iin a Christian love of man,

the missionary spirit would not throw itself up in irregular jets, but

would flow as a river. We suffer also greatly and even produce a

somewhat painful evidence of mistake, in our endeavor to be always

operating by an immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, when we make

his mediate influence a matter of little account. For there is, I

apprehend, a certain fixed relation between those exertions of

spiritual influence which are immediate, and those which flow mediately

from the church; else why has not the Spirit left the church behind,

and poured itself, as a rushing, mighty wind, into the bosom of the

whole world in a day? There needed to be an objective influence, as

well as one internal; else the subject of the Spirit would not know or

guess to what his internal motions are attributable, and might deem

them only nervous or hysteric effects; or possibly, if a heathen, the

work of some enchanter or demon. When the church, therefore, grows arid

manifests the work of God by the beauty of her life, and the heavenly

energy of her spirit, when the sanctification she speaks of visibly

strikes through--through the body, through the manners and works, into

the family state, into the community-that is the mediate influence

necessary to another which is immediate. Looking on her demonstrations,

the observer is not only impressed and drawn by the assimilating power

of her character, but he distinguishes in her the type and form of that

into which he is himself to be wrought, and so he is ready for the

intelligent reception of the Spirit in himself. If now there is this

fixed relation between God's mediate and immediate agency in souls. how

great is the mistake, when we virtually assume, in our efforts and

expectations, that he will come upon souls, only as the lightning is

bolted from the sky. How desultory and irruptive is the grace he

ministers, how little respective of the work he has already begun in

others, whom he might employ to be the medium of his power! On the

other hand, if we are right in this view--if there is a fixed relation

between the mediate and immediate influences of the Spirit--such that

one measures the other, (and we could urge many additional reasons for

the opinion,) then are we brought fairly out upon the sublime

conclusion, that the growth or progress of Christian piety in the

church, if it shall take place, offers the expectation of a

correspondent progress in the development of those spiritual influences

that are immediate. The mediate and immediate are both identical at the

root. If therefore the church unfolds her piety as a divine life, which

is one, the divine life will display its activity as much more potently

and victoriously without, which is the other. And as the kingdom of

heaven, which was at first as a grain of mustard seed, advances in the

last days toward the stature of a tree, the more it may advance; for

the Holy Spirit will pour himself into the world, as much more freely

and powerfully. Grant, O God! that we may not disappoint ourselves of a

hope so glorious, by attempts to extend thy church without that holy

growth of piety, on which our success depends! Pour thyself n thy

fullness and as a gale of purity, into our bosom! Expel all schemes

that are not begun in Thee! Let there be good desires in us, that our

works may be good! And that Thou mayest do thy will in the earth do it

in us perfectly!

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[16] See quotations from these writers in the last Discourse.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

PART II.-THE MODE.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I. WHEN AND WHERE THE NURTURE BEGINS.

"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee which

dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and I am

persuaded that in thee also."--2 Timothy, i. 5.

THIS faith of Timothy, which is but another name for the grace of life

in his character, the apostle speaks of here, it will be seen, as a

kind of personal hereditament, or heir-loom in the family. He does not

mean to say, as I understand him, that it is literally such, or in what

sense, and how far, it is such. He only recognizes a godly parentage,

doing godly things in him and for him, for one, two, three, or he knows

not how many, generations back. He regards his young friend as born of

godliness, nurtured and trained by godliness, and indulges a certain

pleasant conviction that his present, full developed faith in Jesus,

was a seed somehow planted in him by the believing motherhoods of the

past, and began to live and grow in him, thus, long before he knew it

himself, or others observed it in him. So by a short method, which

includes and covers all, the apostle calls it his heir-loom;

complimenting his godly motherhood in the figure, and testifying the

greater confidence in his piety, that it was so near to being the

inborn nobility of his Christian stock.

I use the text, accordingly, not to draw some definite conclusion or

truth, from the evidently well understood indefiniteness of the terms

of it, but simply to head a discussion of the question, when and where,

at what point, and how early, does the office of a genuine nurture

begin?

Having settled our conceptions of the scheme, or doctrinal import, of

Christian nurture, finding what place it has, and is to have, in the

Christian plan, we are come now to a matter farther in advance, and, in

one view, more practical, viz: to a consideration of the modes and

means, by which the true idea of a godly nurture may be realized in the

training of families. And here it becomes our first endeavor to

rectify, or expel a whole set of false impressions, that have grown up

round the gate of responsibility itself, turning off, and pushing aside

all due concern, till the time of greatest facility and advantage is

quite gone by. The very common impression is that nothing is to be done

for the religious character of children, till they are old enough to

form religious judgments, put forth religious choices, take the meaning

of the Christian truths, and perceive what is in them as related to the

wants of sin, consciously felt and reflected on. There could not be a

more sad or, in fact, more desolating mistake, in any matter, either of

duty or of privilege. And it is the more wonderful, the closer in

appearance to real fatuity, that it holds its ground so firmly, where

all the tenderest pressures of affection might be expected to force it

aside, and clear the field of its really cruel usurpations.

In discussing the question proposed, I should not properly cover the

whole ground of it, and could not really be said to answer it, if I did

not--

1. Bring into view the very important, but rather delicate fact,

suggested or distinctly alluded to in the apostle's words, that there

is even a kind of ante-natal nurture which must be taken note of, as

having much to do with the religious preparations or inductive mercies

of childhood. We are physiologically connected and set forth in our

beginnings, and it is a matter of immense consequence to our character,

what the connection is. In our birth, we not only begin to breathe and

circulate blood, but it is a question hugely significant whose the

blood may be. For in this we have whole rivers of predispositions, good

or bad, set running in us--as much more powerful to shape our future

than all tuitional and regulative influences that come after, as they

are earlier in their beginning, deeper in their insertion, and more

constant in their operation. It is a great mistake to suppose that men

and women, such as are to be fathers and mothers, are affected only in

their souls by religious experience, and not in their bodies. On mere

physiological principles it can not be true, for the mind must temper

the body to its own states and changes. Living, therefore, in the peace

and purity, holding the equilibrium, flowing in the liberty, reigning

in the confidence, of a genuine sanctification, the subjects of such

grace are penetrated bodily, all through, by the work of the Spirit in

their life. Their appetite are more nearly in heaven's order, their

passions more tempered by reason, their irritabilities more sweetened

and calmed, and so far they are entered bodily into the condition of

health. Where the constitution was poisoned originally by descent, or

has since been broken down by excess and abuse, it may not be wholly

restored in this life. I do not suppose that it will; but, since the

soul is acting itself always into and through the body, when it becomes

a temple of the Spirit the body must also, just as the Scriptures

explicitly teach, be undergoing, with the soul, a remedial process in

its tempers and humors, and prospering in heaven's order, even as the

soul prospereth. This being true, it is impossible, on mere

physiological principles, that the children of a truly sanctified

parentage should not be advantaged by the grace out of which they are

born. And, if the godly character has been kept up in a long line of

ancestry, corrupted by no vicious or untoward intermarriages, the

advantage must be still greater and more positive. Even temporary

changes in the Christian state of character and attainment, will have

their effect; how much more the godly keeping of a thoroughly and

evenly sanctified life; how much more such a keeping of inbred grace

and faith, in a long line of godly ancestors.

I might even state the case more strongly, bringing into the comparison

a godly and a vicious parentage. Take a parentage that has in it all

the dyspeptic woes of gluttony and self-indulgence, one that is stung

and maddened by the fiery pains of intemperance, one that is poisoned

and imbruted by the excesses of lust, one that is broken by domestic

wrongs or exasperated by domestic quarrels, one that is fevered by

ambitions, one that is soured by the morbid humors of envy and

defeat--lengthen out the catalogue, take in all the sins, which, in

some true sense, are also vices and have their effect on the body, how

is it possible, on any principle of rational physiology, that the

children who are sprung of this distempered heritage, should be as pure

in their affinities, as close to the order of truth, as ready for the

occupany of all good thoughts, as well governed before all government,

as ductile in a word to God, as they that are born of a glorious

lineage in faith and prayer and God's indwelling peace. Nothing could

be more improbable antecedently, or farther off from the actual fact

afterward. On the contrary, it is a most dismal and hard lot, as every

one knows, to be in the succession of a bad, or vicious parentage. No

heritage of wealth could repay, or more than a little soften, the

bitterness of it.

It is somewhat difficult to investigate the facts of this subject,

because of the complexities induced by unpropitious and exceptional

marriages. But when such marriages are reduced by the more general, and

finally universal, spread of Christian piety, and when the pitch of

Christian sanctification is raised, as it will be, by the fuller

inspiration from God, breaking into his saints all over the world, it

will be found that children are born as much closer to God, and with

predispositions that waft them as much more certainly into the ways of

duty and piety. It will be as if the faith-power of the past were

descending into the present, flowing on down the future, and the

general account of the world will be, that, as it has been corrupted,

so also it is in some equally true sense, regenerated from the womb.

Precisely that which is named in Scripture, as the fact extraordinary,

will become at last the ordinary and even the universal fact.

Here, then, is the real and true beginning of a godly nurture. The

child is not to have the sad entail of any sensuality, or excess, or

distempered passion upon him. The heritage of love, peace, order,

continence and holy courage is to be his. He is not to be morally

weakened beforehand, in the womb of folly, by the frivolous, worldly,

ambitious expectations of parents-to-be, concentrating all their

nonsense in him. His affinities are to be raised by the godly

expectations, rather, and prayers that go before; by the steady and

good aims of their industry, by the great impulse of their faith, by

the brightness of their hope, by the sweet continence of their

religiously pure love in Christ. Born, thus, of a parentage that is

ordered in all righteousness, and maintains the right use of every

thing, especially the right use of nature and marriage, the child will

have just so much of heaven's life and order in him beforehand, as have

become fixed properties in the type of his parentage; and by this

ante-natal nurture, will be set off in a way of noblest advantage, as

respects all safety and success, in the grand experiment he has come

into the world to make.

Having called your attention to this very important but strangely

disregarded chapter, in the economy of Christian nurture, I leave it to

be more fully and circumstantially developed by your own thoughtful

consideration; for it is a matter which will open itself readily, and

prove itself by striking and continually recurring facts to such as

have it in their hearts to watch for the truth and the duties it

requires. We pass now--

2. To that which is the common field of inquiry, and here we raise

again the question, where and how early does the work of nurture begin?

here to set forth and maintain still another answer, which antedates

the common impression, about as decidedly as the one just given. The

true, and only true answer is, that the nurture of the soul and

character is to begin just when the nurture of the body begins. It is

first to be infantile nurture--as such, Christian; then to be a child's

nurture; then to be a youth's nurture--advancing by imperceptible

gradations, if possible, according to the gradations and stages of the

growth, or progress toward maturity.

There is, of course, no absolute classification to be made here,

because there are no absolute lines of distinction. A kind of proximate

and partly ideal distinction may be made, and I make it simply to serve

the convenience of my subject--otherwise impossible to be handled, so

as to secure any right practical conviction respecting it. It is the

distinction between the age of impressions and the age of tuitional

influences; or between the age of existence in the will of the parent,

and the age of will and personal choice in the child. If the

distinction were laid, between the age previous to language and the age

of language, it would amount to nearly the same thing; for the time of

personal and responsible choice depends on the measure of intelligence

attained to, and the measure of intelligence is well represented,

outwardly, by the degree of development in language. Of course it will

be understood that we speak, in this distinction, of that which is not

sharply defined, and is passed at no precise date or age. The

transition is gradual, and it will even be doubtful, when it is passed.

No one can say just where a given child passes out of the field of mere

impression into the field of responsible action. It will be doubtful,

in about the same degree, when it can be said to have come into the

power of language. We do not even know that there is not some

infinitesimal development of will in the child's first cry, and some

instinct of language struggling in that cry. Our object in the

distinction is not to assume any thing in respect to such matters, but

simply to accommodate our own ignorance, by raising a distribution that

enables us to speak of times and characteristics truly enough to serve

the conditions of general accuracy, and to assist, in that manner, the

purposes of our discussion.

Now the very common assumption is that, in what we have called the age

of impressions, there is really nothing done, or to be done, for the

religious character. The lack of all genuine apprehensions, in respect

to this matter, among people otherwise intelligent and awake, is really

wonderful; it amounts even to a kind of coarseness. Full of all

fondness, and all highest expectation respecting their children, and

having also many Christian desires for their welfare, they seem never

to have brought their minds down close enough to the soul of infancy,

to imagine that any thing of consequence is going on with it. What can

they do, till they can speak to it? what can it do, till it speaks? As

if there were no process going on to bring it forward into language; or

as if that process had itself nothing to do with the bringing on of

intelligence, and no deep, seminal working toward a character,

unfolding and to be unfolded in it. The child, in other words, is to

come into intelligence through perfect unintelligence! to get the power

of words out of words themselves, and without any experience whereby

their meaning is developed! to be taught responsibility under moral and

religious ideas, when the experience has unfolded no such ideas! In

this first stage, therefore, which I have called the stage of

impressions, how very commonly will it be found that the parents, even

Christian parents, discharge themselves, in the most innocently

unthinking way possible, of so much as a conception of responsibility.

The child can not talk, what then can it know? So they dress it in all

fineries, practice it in shows and swells and all the petty airs of

foppery and brave assumption, act it into looks and manners not fit to

be acted anywhere, provoking the repetition of its bad tricks by

laughing at them, indulging freely every sort of temper towards it, or,

it may be, filling the house with a din of scolding between the

parents--all this in simple security, as if their child were only a

thing, or an ape! What hurt can the simple creature get from any thing

done before it, toward it, or upon it, when it can talk of nothing, and

will not so much as remember any thing it has seen or heard? Doubtless

there is a wise care to be had of it, when it is old enough to be

taught and commanded, but till then there is nothing to be done, but

simply to foster the plaything kindly, enjoy it freely, or abuse it

pettishly, at pleasure!

Just contrary to this, I suspect, and I think it can also be shown by

sufficient evidence, that more is done to affect, or fix, the moral and

religious character of children, before the age of language than after;

that the age of impressions, when parents are commonly waiting, in idle

security, or trifling away their time in mischievous indiscretions, or

giving up their children to the chance of such keeping as nurses and

attendants may exercise, is in fact their golden opportunity; when more

is likely to be done for their advantage or damage, than in all the

instruction and discipline of their minority afterward.

And something like this I think we should augur beforehand, from the

peculiar, full-born intensity of the maternal affection, at the moment

when it first embraces the newly arrived object. It scarcely appears to

grow, never to grow tender and self-sacrificing in its care. It turns

itself to its charge, with a love that is boundless and fathomless, at

the first. As if just then and there, some highest and most sacred

office of motherhood were required to begin. Is it only that the child

demands her physical nurture and carefulness? That is not the answer of

her consciousness. Her maternity scorns all comparison with that of the

mere animals. Her love, as she herself feels, looks through the body

into the inborn personality of her child,--the man or woman to be. Nay,

more than that, if she could sound her consciousness deeply enough, she

would find a certain religiousness in it, measurable by no scale of

mere earthly and temporal love. Here springs the secret of her

maternity, and its semi-divine proportions. It is the call and

equipment of God, for a work on the impressional and plastic age of a

soul. Christianized as it should be, and wrought in by the grace of the

Spirit, the minuteness of its care, its gentleness, its patience, its

almost divine faithfulness, are prepared for the shaping of a soul's

immortality. And, to make the work a sure one, the intrusted soul is

allowed to have no will as yet of its own, that this motherhood may

more certainly plant the angel in the man, uniting him to all heavenly

goodness by predispositions from itself, before he is united, as he

will be, by choices of his own. Nothing but this explains and measures

the wonderful proportions of maternity.

It will be seen at once, and will readily be taken as a confirmation of

the transcendent importance of what is done, or possible to be done,

for children, in their impressional and plastic age, that whatever is

impressed or inserted here, at this early point, must be profoundly

seminal, as regards all the future developments of the character. And

though it can not, by the supposition. amount to character, in the

responsible sense of that term, it may be the seed, in some very

important sense, of all the future character to be unfolded; just as we

familiarly think of sin itself, as a character in blame when the will

is ripe, though prepared, in still another view, by the seminal damages

and misaffections derived from sinning ancestors. So when a child,

during the whole period of impressions, or passive recipiencies,

previous to the development of his responsible will, lives in the life

and feeling of his parents, and they in the molds of the Spirit, they

will, of course, be shaping themselves in him, or him in themselves,

and the effects wrought in him will be preparations of what he will

by-and-by do from himself; seeds, in that manner possibly, even of a

regenerate life and character.

That we may conceive this matter more adequately and exactly, consider,

a moment, that whole contour of dispositions, affections, tempers,

affinities, aspirations, which come into power in a soul after the will

is set fast in a life of duty and devotion. These things, we conceive,

follow in a sense the will, and then become in turn a new element about

the will--a new heart, as we say, prompting to new acts and a continued

life of new obedience. Now what I would affirm is, that just this same

contour of dispositions and affinities may be prepared under, and come

after, the will of the parents, when the child is living in their will,

and be ready as a new element, or new heart, to prompt the child's

will, or put it forward in the choice of all duty, whenever it is so

matured as to choose for itself. Of course these regenerated

dispositions and affinities, this general disposedness to good, which

we call a new heart, supposes a work of the Spirit; and, if the parents

live in the Spirit as they ought, they will have the Spirit for the

child as truly as for themselves, and the child will be grown, so to

speak, in the molds of the Spirit, even from his infancy.

This will be yet more probable, if we glance at some of the particular

facts and conditions involved. Thus if we speak of impressions, or the

age of impressions, and of that as an age prior to language, what kind

of religious impressions can be raised in a soul, it may be asked, when

the child is not far enough developed in language to be taught any

thing about God, or Christ, or itself, that belongs to intelligence?

And the sufficient answer must be, that language itself has no meaning

till rudimental impressions are first begotten in the life of

experience, to give it a meaning. Words are useful to propagate

meanings, or to farther develop and combine meanings, but a child would

never know the meaning of any word in a language, just by hearing the

sound of it in his ears. He must learn to put the meaning into it, by

having found that meaning in his impressions, and then the word becomes

significant. And it requires a certain wakefulness and capacity of

intelligent apprehension, to receive or take up such impressions. Thus

a dog would never get hold of any religious impression at the family

prayers, all his lifetime: but a child will be fast gathering up, out

of his little life and experience, impressional states and

associations, that give meanings to the words of prayer, as they, in

turn, give meanings to the facts of his experience. All language

supposes impressions first made. The word light does not signify any

thing, till the eye has taken the impression of light. The word love is

unmeaning, to one who has not loved and received love. The word God,

raises no conception of God, till the idea of such a being has been

somehow generated and associated with that particular sound. How far

off is it then from all sound apprehensions of fact, to imagine that

nothing religious can be done for a child till after he is far enough

developed in language to be taught; when in fact he could not be thus

developed in language at all, if the meanings of language were not

somehow started in him by the impressions derived from his experience.

Observe, again, how very quick the child's eye is, in the passive age

of infancy, to catch impressions, and receive the meaning of looks,

voices, and motions. It peruses all faces, and colors, and sounds.

Every sentiment that looks into its eyes, looks back out of its eyes,

and plays in miniature on its countenance. The tear that steals down

the cheek of a mother's suppressed grief, gathers the little infantile

face into a responsive sob. With a kind of wondering silence, which is

next thing to adoration, it studies the mother in her prayer, and looks

up piously with her, in that exploring watch, that signifies unspoken

prayer. If the child is handled fretfully, scolded, jerked or simply

laid aside unaffectionately, in no warmth of motherly gentleness, it

feels the sting of just that which is felt towards it; and so it is

angered by anger, irritated by irritation, fretted by fretfulness;

having thus impressed, just that kind of impatience or ill-nature,

which is felt towards it, and growing faithfully into the bad mold

offered, as by a fixed law. There is great importance, in this manner,

even in the handling of infancy. If it is unchristian, it will beget

unchristian states, or impressions. If it is gentle, even, patient and

loving, it prepares a mood and temper like its own. There is scarcely

room. to doubt, that all most crabbed, hateful, resentful, passionate,

ill-natured characters; all most even, lovely, firm and true, are

prepared, in a great degree, by the handling of the nursery. To these

and all such modes of feeling and treatment as make up the element of

the infant's life, it is passive as wax to the seal. So that if we

consider how small a speck, falling into the nucleus of a crystal, may

disturb its form; or, how even a mote of foreign matter present in the

quickening egg, will suffice to produce a deformity; considering, also,

on the other hand, what nice conditions of repose, in one case, and

what accurately modulated supplies of heat in the other, are necessary

to a perfect product; then only do we begin to imagine what work is

going on, in the soul of a child, in this first chapter of life, the

age of impressions.

It must also greatly affect our judgments on this point, to observe

that, when this first age of impressions is gone by, there is, after

that, no such thing any more as a possibility of absolute control. Thus

far the child has been more a candidate for personality than a person.

He has been as a seed forming in the capsule of the parent-stem,

getting every thing from that stem, and fashioned, in its kind, by the

fashioning kind of that. But now, having been gradually and

imperceptibly ripened, as the seed separates and falls off, to be

another and complete form of life in itself, so the child comes out, in

his own power, a complete person, able to choose responsibly for

himself. Now he is no more in the power of the parent, as before; the

dominion of the older life is supplanted, by the self-asserting

competency of the younger; what can the old stalk do upon the seed that

is already ripe? The transition here is very gradual, it is true,

covering even a space of years; and something may be done for the

child's character by instruction, by the skillful management of

motives, and the tender solicitudes of parental watching and prayer;

but less and less, of course, the older the child becomes, and the more

completely his personal responsibility is developed. But how very

fearful the change, and how much it means, that the child, once plastic

and passive to the will of the parent, has gotten by the point of

absolute disposability, and is never again to be properly in that will!

The perilous power of self-care and self-assertion has come, and what

is to be the result? And how much does it signify to the parent, when

he feels his power to be thus growing difficult, weak, doubtful, or

finally quite ended! What a conception it is, that he once had his

child in absolute direction, and the fashioning of his own superior

will, to dress, to feed, to handle, to play himself into his

sentiments, be the disposition of his dispositions, the temper of his

tempers. Was there not something great to be done then, when the

advantage was so great--now to be done no more? It will be difficult to

shake off that impression; impossible to a really thoughtful Christian

soul. And if the will, now matured and gone over into complete

self-assertion, rushes into all wildness and profligacy, unrestrained

and unrestrainable, the recollection of a time when it was restrainable

and could have been molded, even as wax itself, will return with

inevitable certainty upon the parents, and taunt, O how bitterly, the

neglectfulness and lightness, by which they cast their opportunity

away!

I bring into view accordingly, just here, a consideration that goes

farther to establish the position I am asserting, than any other, and

one that is naturally suggested by the topic just adverted to. We call

this first chapter of life the age of impressions; we speak of the

child as being in a sense passive and plastic, living in the will of

the parents, having no will developed for responsible action. It might

be imagined from the use of such terms, that the infant or very young

child has no will at all. But that is not any true conception. It has

no responsible will, because it is not acquainted, as yet, with those

laws and limits and conditions of choice that make it responsible.

Nevertheless it has will, blind will, as strongly developed as any

other faculty, and sometimes even most strongly of all. The

manifestations of it are sometimes even frightful. And precisely this

it is which makes the age of impressions, the age prior to language and

responsible choice, most profoundly critical in its importance. It is

the age in which the will-power of the soul is to be tamed or

subordinated to a higher control; that of obedience to parents, that of

duty and religion. And, in this view, it is that every thing most

important to the religious character turns just here. Is this infant

child to fill the universe with his complete and total self-assertion,

owning no superior, or is he to learn the self-submission of

allegiance, obedience, duty to God? Is he to become a demon let loose

in God's eternity, or an angel and free prince of the realm?

That he may be this, he is now given, will and all, as wax, to the wise

molding-power of control. Beginning, then, to lift his will in mutiny,

and swell in self-asserting obstinacy, refusing to go or come, or

stand, or withhold in this or that, let there be no fight begun, or

issue made with him, as if it were the true thing now to break his

will, or drive him out of it by mere terrors and pains. This

willfulness, or obstinacy, is not so purely bad, or evil, as it seems.

It is partly his feeling of himself and you, in which he is getting

hold of the conditions of authority, and feeling out his limitations.

No, this breaking of a child's will to which many well-meaning parents

set themselves, with such instant, almost passionate resolution, is the

way they take to make him a coward, or a thief, or a hypocrite, or a

mean-spirited and driveling sycophant-nothing in fact is more dreadful

to thought than this breaking of a will, when it breaks, as it often

does, the personality itself, and all highest, noblest firmness of

manhood. The true problem is different; it is not to break, but to bend

rather, to draw the will down, or away from self assertion toward

self-devotion, to teach it the way of submitting to wise limitations,

and raise it into the great and glorious liberties of a state of

loyalty to God. See then how it is to be done. The child has no force

however stout he is in his will. Take him up then, when the fit is upon

him, carry him, stand him on his feet, set him here or there, do just

that in him which he refuses to do in himself--all this gently and

kindly, as if he were capable of maintaining no issue at all. Do it

again and again, as often as may be necessary. By and by, he will begin

to perceive that his obstinacy is but the bluster of his weakness; till

finally, as the sense of limitation comes up into a sense of law and

duty, he will be found to have learned, even beforehand, the folly of

mere self-assertion. And when he has reached this point of felt

obligation to obedience, it will no longer break him down to enforce

his compliance, but it will even exalt into greater dignity and

capacity, that sublime power of self-government, by which his manhood

is to be most distinguished.

By a different treatment at the point or crisis just named, that is by

raising an issue to be driven straight through by terror and storm, one

of two results almost equally bad were likely to follow; the child

would either have been quite broken down by fear, the lowest of all

possible motives when separated from moral convictions, or else would

have been made a hundred fold more obstinate by his triumph. Nature

provided for his easy subjugation, by putting him in the hands of a

superior strength, which could manage him without any fight of

enforcement--to have him schooled and tempered to a customary

self-surrender which takes nothing from his natural force and

manliness. And so is accomplished what, in one view, is the great

problem of life; that on which all duty and allegiance to Gods in the

state even of conversion, depends.

It only remains to add that we are not to assume the comparative

unimportance of what is done upon a child, in his age of impressions,

because there is really no character of virtue or vice, of blame or

praise, developed in that age. Be it so--it is so by the supposition.

But the power, the root, the seed, is implanted nevertheless, in most

cases, of what he will be. Not in every case, but often, the seed of a

regenerate life is implanted--that which makes the child a Christian in

God's view, as certainly as if he were already out in the testimony and

formal profession of his faith. I was just now speaking of the dreadful

power of will or willfulness, some times manifested even in this first

age, that we have called the age of impressions, and of the ways in

which, by one kind of mismanagement or another, the character may be

turned to vices that are as opposite, as the vices of meanness and the

crimes of violence and blood. So it will be found that almost every

sort of mismanagement, or neglect, plants some seed of vice and misery

that grows out afterwards into a character in its own kind. Thus the

child by a continual worry of his little life, under abusive words, and

harsh, flashy tempers, grows to be a bed of nettles in all his personal

tempers, and will so be prepared to break out, in the age of choice,

into almost any vice of ill-nature. A child can be pampered in feeding,

so as to become, in a sense, all body; so that, when he comes into

choice and responsible action, he is already a confirmed sensualist,

showing it in the lines of his face, even before it appears in his

tastes, habits and vices. Thus we have a way of wondering that the

children of this or that family should turn out so poorly, but the real

fact is, probably, if we knew it, that what we call their turning out,

is only their growing out, in just that which was first grown in, by

the mismanagement of their infancy and childhood. What they took in as

impression, or contagion, is developed by choice--not at once, perhaps,

but finally, after the poison has had time to work. And in just the

same way, doubtless, it may be true, in multitudes of Christian

conversions, that what appear to be such to others, and also to the

subjects themselves, are only the restored activity and more fully

developed results of some predispositional state, or initially

sanctified property, in the tempers and subtle affinities of their

childhood. They are now born into that by the assent of their own will,

which they were in before, without their will. What they do not

remember still remembers them, and now claims a right in them. What was

before unconscious, flames out into consciousness, and they break forth

into praise and thanksgiving, in that which, long ago, took them

initially, and touched them softly without thanks. For there is such a

thing as a seed of character in religion, preceding all religious

development. Even as Calvin, speaking of the regenerative grace there

may be in the heart of infancy itself, testifies--"the work of God is

not yet without existence, because it is not observed and understood by

us."

By these and many other considerations that might be named, it is made

clear, I think, to any judicious and thoughtful person, that the most

important age of Christian nurture is the first; that which we have

called the age of impressions, just that age, in which the duties and

cares of a really Christian nurture are so commonly postponed, or

assumed to have not yet arrived. I have no scales to measure quantities

of effect in this matter of early training, but I may be allowed to

express my solemn conviction, that more, as a general fact, is done, or

lost by neglect of doing, on a child's immortality, in the first three

years of his life, than in all his years of discipline afterwards. And

I name this particular time, or date, that I may not be supposed to lay

the chief stress of duty and care on the latter part of what l have

called the age of impressions; which, as it is a matter somewhat

indefinite, may be taken to cover the space of three or four times this

number of years; the development of language, and of moral ideas being

only partially accomplished, in most cases, for so long a time. Let

every Christian father and mother understand, when their child is three

years old, that they have done more than half of all they will ever do

for his character. What can be more strangely wide of all just

apprehension, than the immense efficacy, imputed by most parents to the

Christian ministry, compared with what they take to be the almost

insignificant power conferred on them in their parental charge and

duties. Why, if all preachers of Christ could have their hearers, for

whole months and years, in their own will, as parents do their

children, so as to move them by a look, a motion, a smile, a frown, and

act their own sentiments and emotions over in them at pleasure; if,

also, a little farther on, they had them in authority to command,

direct, tell them whither to go, what to learn, what to do, regulate

their hours, their books, their pleasures, their company, and call them

to prayer over their own knees every night and morning, who could think

it impossible, in the use of such a power, to produce almost any

result? Should not such a ministry be expected to fashion all who come

under it to newness of life? Let no parent, shifting off his duties to

his children, in this manner, think to have his defects made up, and

the consequent damages mended afterwards, when they have come to their

maturity, by the comparatively slender, always doubtful, efficacy of

preaching and pulpit harangue.

If now I am right in the view I have been trying to establish, it will

readily occur to you that irreparable damage may be and must often be

done by the self-indulgence of those parents, who place their children

mostly in the charge of nurses and attendants fur just those years of

their life, in which the greatest and most absolute effects are to be

wrought in their character. The lightness that prevails, on this point,

is really astonishing. Many parents do not even take pains to know any

thing about the tempers, the truthfulness, the character generally, of

the nurses to whom their children are thus confidingly trusted. No

matter--the child is too young to be poisoned, or at all hurt, by their

influence. And so they give over, to these faithless and often cruelly

false hirelings of the nursery, to be always with them, under their

power, associated with their persons, handled by their roughness, and

imprinted, day and night, by the coarse, bad sentiments of their voices

and faces, these helpless, hapless beings whom they call their

children, and think they are really making much of, in the instituting

of a nursery for them and their keeping. Such a mother ought to see

that she is making much more of herself than of her child. This whole

scheme of nurture is a scheme of self-indulgence. Now is the time when

her little one most needs to see her face, and hear her voice, and feel

her gentle hand. Now is the time when her child's eternity pleads most

entreatingly for the benefit of her motherly charge and presence. What

mother would not be dismayed by the thought of having her family grow

up into the sentiments of her nurse, and come forward into life as

being in the succession to her character! And yet how often is this

most exactly what she has provided for.

Again, it is very clear that, in this early kind of nurture, faithfully

maintained, there is a call for the greatest personal holiness in the

parents, and that just those conditions are added, which will make true

holiness closest to nature, and most beautifully attractive--saving it

from all the repulsive appearances of severity and sanctimony. In this

charge and nurture of infant children, nothing is to be done by an

artificial, lecturing process; nothing, or little by what can be called

government. We are to get our effects chiefly by just being what we

ought, and making a right presence of love and life to our children.

They are in a plastic age that is receiving its type, not from our

words, but from our spirit, and whose character is shaping in the molds

of ours. Living under this conviction, we are held to a sound verity

and reality in every thing. The defect of our character is not to be

made up here, by the sanctity of our words; we must be all that we

would have our children feel and receive. Thus, if a man were to be set

before a mirror, with the feeling that the exact image of what he is,

for the day, is there to be produced and left as a permanent and fixed

image forever, to what carefulness, what delicate sincerity of spirit

would he be moved. And will he be less moved to the same, when that

mirror is the soul of his child?

Inducted, thus, into a more profoundly real holiness, He shall, at the

same time, grow more natural in it. The family quality of our piety,

living itself into our children, will moisten the dry individualism we

suffer, relieve the eccentricities we display, set purity in the place

of bustle and presumption, growth in the place of conquest, sound

health in the place of spasmodic exaltations; for when a conviction is

felt in Christian families, that living is to be a means of grace, and

as God will suffer it, a regenerating power, then will our piety be

come a domestic spirit, and as much more tender, as it is closer to the

life of childhood. Now, we have a kind of piety that contains,

practically speaking, only adults, or those who are old enough to

reflect and act for themselves, and it is as if we lived in an adult

world, where every one is for himself. If we could abolish also

distinctions of age, and sex, and office, we should only make up a

style of religion somewhat drier and farther off from nature than we

now have. We can never come into the true mode of living that God has

appointed for us, until we regard each generation as hovering over the

next, acting itself into the next, and casting thus a type of character

in the nexi, before it comes to act for itself. Then we shall have

gentle cares and feelings; then the families will become bonds of

spiritual life; example, education and government, being Christian

powers, will be regulated by a Christian spirit; the rigidities of

religious principle will be softened by the tender affections of nature

twining among them, and the common life of the house dignified by the

sober and momentous cares of the life to come. And thus Christian

piety, being oftener a habit in the soul than a conquest over it, will

be as much more respectable and consistent as it is earlier in the

birth and closer to nature.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

II.

PARENTAL QUALIFICATIONS.

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his house hold

after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord."--Genesis, xviii

19.

THE real point of the declaration, here, is not that Abraham will

command his children, but that he is such a man, having such qualities

or qualifications as to be able to command, certain to command, and

train them into an obedient and godly life. The declaration is, you

will observe--"For I know him;" not simply and directly--"For I know

the fact." Every thing turns on what is in him, as a father and

householder--his qualifications, dispositions, principles, and modes of

life--and the declaration is, that what he is to do, will certainly

come out of what he is. He will certainly produce, or train a godly

family, because it is in him, as a man, to do nothing else or less. The

subject raised then by the declaration is, not so much family training

and government, as it is--

The personal and religious qualifications, or qualifications of

character, necessary to success in such family training and government.

There is almost no duty or work, in this world, that does not require

some outfit of qualifications, in order to the doing of it well. We all

understand that some kind of preparation is necessary to fill the place

of a magistrate, teach a school, drill a troop of soldiers, or do any

such thing, in a right manner. Nay, we admit the necessity of serving

some kind of apprenticeship, in order to become duly qualified for the

calling, only of a milliner, or a tailor. And yet, as a matter of fact,

we go into what we call the Christian training of our children, without

any preparation for it whatever, and apparently without any such

conviction of negligence or absurdity, as at all disturbs our assurance

in what we do. Not that young parents, and especially young mothers,

are not often heard lamenting their conscious insufficiency for the

charge that is put upon them, but that, in such regrets, they commonly

mean nothing more than that they feel very tenderly, and want to do

better things than, in fact, any body can. It does not mean, as a

general thing, that they are practically endeavoring to get hold of

such qualifications as they want, in order to their Christian success.

After all, it is likely to be assumed that they have their sufficient

equipment in the tender instinct of their natural affection itself. So

they go on, as in a kind of venture, to command, govern, manage,

punish, teach, and turn about the way of their child, in just such

tempers, and ways of example and views of life, as chance to be the

element of their own disfigured, ill-begotten character at the time.

This, in short, is their sin--the undoing, as it will by and by appear,

of their children--that they undertake their most sacred office,

without any sacred qualifications; govern without self-government,

discharge the holiest responsibilities irresponsibly, and thrust their

children into evil, by the evil and bad mind, out of which their

training proceeds.

I know not any thing that better shows the utter incompetency of mere

natural affection as an equipment for the parental office, or that, in

a short way, proves the fixed necessity in it, of some broader

competency and higher qualification, than just to glance at the real

cruelties, even commonly perpetrated, under just those tender, faithful

instigations of natural affection, that we so readily expect to be a

kind of infallible protection to the helplessness of infancy. How often

is it a fact, that the fondest parents, owing to some want of insight,

or of patience, or even to some uninstructed, only half intelligent

desire to govern their child, will do it the greatest wrongs--stinging

every day and hour, the little defenseless being, committed to their

love, with the sense of bitter injustice; driving in the ploughshare of

abuse and blame upon its tender feeling, by harsh words and pettish

chastisements, when, in fact, the very thing in the child that annoys

them is, that they themselves have thrown it into a fit of uneasiness

and partial disorder, by their indiscreet feeding; or that in some

appearance of irritability, or insubjection, it has only not the words

to speak of its pain, or explain its innocence. The little child's

element of existence becomes, in this manner, not seldom, an element of

bitter wrong, and the sting of wounded justice grows in, so to speak,

poisoning the soul all through, by its immedicable rancor. The pain of

such wrong goes deeper, too, than many fancy. No other creature suffers

under conscious injury so intensely. And the mischief done is only

aggravated by tihe fact that the sufferer has no power of redress, and

has no alternative permitted, but either to be cowed into a weak and

cringing submission, or else, when his nobler nature has too much stuff

in it for that, to be stiffened in hate and the bitter grudges of

wrong. I know not any thing more sad to think of, than the cruelties

put upon children in this manner. It makes up a chapter which few

persons read, and which almost every body takes for granted can not

exist. For the honor of our human nature, I wish it could not; and that

what we call maternal affection, the softest, dearest, most

self-sacrificing of all earthly forms of tenderness and fidelity, were,

at least, sufficient to save the dishonor, which, alas! it is not; for

these wrongs are, in fact, the cruelties of motherhood, and as often, I

may add, of an even over-fond motherhood, as any--wrongs of which the

doers are unconscious, and which never get articulated, save by the

sobbings of the little bosom, where the sting of injury is felt.

Here, then, at just the point where we should, least of all, look for

it, viz: at the point of maternal affection itself, we have displayed,

in sadly convincing evidence, the need and high significance of those

better qualifications of mind and character, by which the training of

children becomes properly Christian, and upon which, as being such, the

success of that training depends. Few persons, I apprehend, have any

conception, on the other hand, of the immense number and sweep of the

disqualifications that, in nominally or even really Christian parents,

go in to hinder, and spoil of all success, the religious nurture of

their children. Sometimes the disqualification is this, and sometimes

it is that; sometimes conscious, sometimes unconscious; sometimes

observable by others and well understood, and sometimes undiscovered.

The variety is infinite, and the modes of combination subtle, to such a

degree, that persons taken to be eminently holy in their life, will

have all their prayers and counsels blasted, by some hidden fatality,

whose root is never known, or suspected, whether by others, or possibly

by themselves. The wonder that children, whose parents were in high

esteem for their piety, should so often grow up into a vicious and

ungodly life, would, I think, give way to just the contrary wonder, if

only some just conception were had of the various, multifarious,

unknown, unsuspected disqualifications, by which modes of nurture,

otherwise good, are fatally poisoned.

Sometimes, for example, it is a fatal mischief, going before on the

child, but probably unknown to the world, that the parents, one or

both, or it may be the mother especially, does not accept the child

willingly, but only submits to the maternal office and charge, as to

some hard necessity. This charge is going to detain her at home, and

limit her freedom. Or it will take her away from the shows and

pleasures for which she is living. Or it will burden her days and

nights with cares that weary her self-indulgence. Or she is not fond of

children, and never means to be fond of them--they are not worth the

trouble they cost. Indulging these und such like discontents, unwisely

and even cruelly provoked, not unlikely, by the unchristian discontents

and foolish speeches of her husband, she poisons both herself and her

child beforehand, and receives it with no really glad welcome, when she

takes it to her bosom. Strange mortal perversity that can thus repel,

as a harsh intrusion, one of God's dearest gifts; that which is the

date of the house in its coming, and comes to unseal a new passion,

whereby life itself shall be duplicated in meaning, as in love and

duty! This abuse of marriage is, in fact, an offense against nature,

and is no doubt bitterly offensive to God. Though commonly spoken of,

in a way of astonishing lightness, it is just that sin, by which every

good possibility of the family is corrupted. What can two parents do

for the child, they only submit to look upon, and take as a foundling

to their care? If they have some degree of evidence in them that they

are Christian disciples, they will have fatally clouded that evidence,

by a contest with God's Providence, so irreverent to Him, and so cruel

to their child. If now, at last, they somewhat love the child, which is

theirs by compulsion, what office of a really Christian nurture can

they fill in its behalf? They are under a complete and total

disqualification, as respects the duties of their charge. They are out

of rest in God, out of confidence toward Him, hindered in their

prayers, lost to that sweetness of love and peace which ought to be the

element of their house. Delving on thus, from such a point of

beginning, and assuming the possible chance of success, in what they

may do in the spirit of such a beginning, is simply absurd. What can

they do in training a child for God, which they have accepted, at his

hands, only as being thrust upon them by compulsion?

I might speak of other disqualifications that have a similar character,

as implying some disagreement with Providence. But it must suffice to

say generally, that there can be no such thing as a genuine Christian

nurture that is out of peace with God's Providence--in any respect. On

the contrary, it is when that peace is the element of the house, and

sweetens every thing in it--pain, sickness, loss, the bitter cup of

poverty, every ill of adversity or sting of wrong--then it is, and

there, as nowhere else, that children are most sure to grow up into

God's beauty, and a blessed and good life. The child that is born to

such keeping, and lovingly lapped in the peaceful trust of Providence,

is born to a glorious heritage. On the other hand, where the endeavor

and life-struggle of the house is, at bottom, a fight with Providence;

envious, eager, anxious, out of content, out of rest, full of complaint

and railings, it is impossible that any thing Christian should grow in

such an element. The disqualification is complete.

Another whole class of disqualifications require to be named by

themselves; those I mean which are caused by a bad or false morality in

the parties, at some point where the failure is not suspected, and

misses being corrected by the slender and very partial experience of

their discipleship.

They are persons, for example, who make much of principles in their

words, and really think that they are governed by principles, when, in

fact, they do every thing for some reason of policy, and value their

principles, more entirely than they know, for what they are worth in

the computations of policy. Contrivance, artifice, or sometimes

cunning, is the element of the house. A subtle, inveterate habit of

scheming creeps into all the reasons of duty; and duty is done, not for

duty's sake, but for the reasons, or prudential benefits to be secured

by it. Even the praying of the house takes on a prudential air, much as

if it were done for some reason not stated. A stranger in the house,

seeing no scandalous wrong, but a fine show of principle, has a certain

sense of coldness upon him, which he can not account for. How much of

true Christian nurture there may be in such a house, it is not

difficult to judge. Here, probably, is going to be one of the cases,

where everybody wonders that children brought up so correctly, turn out

so badly. It is not understood that such children were brought up to

know principles, only as a stunted undergrowth of prudence, and that

now the result appears.

Again there is, in some persons, who appear, in all other respects, to

be Christian, a strange defect of truth or truthfulness. They are not

conscious of it. They would take it as a cruel injustice, were they

only to suspect their acquaintances of holding such an estimate of

them. And yet there is a want of truth in every sort of demonstration

they make. It is not their words only that lie, but their voice, air,

action, their every putting forth has a lying character. The atmosphere

they live in is an atmosphere of pretense. Their virtues are

affectations. Their compassions and sympathies are the airs they put

on. Their friendship is their mood and nothing more. And yet they do

not know it. They mean, it may be, no fraud. They only cheat themselves

so effectually as to believe, that what they are only acting is their

truth. And, what is difficult to reconcile, they have a great many

Christian sentiments, they maintain prayer as a habit, and will

sometimes speak intelligently of matters of Christian experience. But

how dreadful must be the effect of such a character, on the simple,

trustful soul of a little child. When the crimen falsi is in every

thing heard, and looked upon, and done, he may grow up into a

hypocrite, or a thief, but what shall make him a genuine Christian?

In the same manner, I could go on to show a multitude of

disqualifications for the office of a genuine Christian nurture, that

are created by a bad or defective morality, in parents who live a

credibly Christian life. They make a great virtue, it may be, of

frugality or economy, and settle every thing into a scale of

insupportable parsimony and meanness. Or, they make a praise of

generous living, and run it into a profligate and spendthrift habit.

Or, they make such a virtue of honor and magnanimity, as to set the

opinions and principles of men in deference, above the principles of

God. Or, they get their chief motives of action out of the appearances

of virtue, and not out of its realities. There is no end to the

impostures of bad morality, that find a place in the lives of reputably

Christian persons. They are generally too subtle to be detected by the

inspection of their consciousness, and very commonly pass unobserved by

others. And yet they have power to poison the nurture of the house,

even though it appears to be, in some respects, Christian. Hence the

profound necessity that Christian parents, consciously meaning to bring

up their children for God, should make a thorough inspection of their

morality itself, to find if there be any bad spot in it, knowing that,

as certainly as there is, it will more or less fatally corrupt their

children.

We have still another whole class of disqualifications to speak of,

that belong, as vices, to the Christian life itself, and will, as much

more certainly, be ruinous in their effects. Some of them would never

be thought of as disqualifications for the Christian training of

children, and yet they are so, in a degree to even cut off the

reasonable hope of success. Probably a great part of the cases of

disaster, that occur in the training of Christian families, are

referable to these Christian vices, which are commonly not put down as

evidences of apostasy, or any radical defect of Christian principle,

because they are not supposed to imply a discontinuance of prayers or a

fatal subjection to the spirit of this world.

Sanctimony, for example, as we commonly use the term, is one of these

vices. It describes what we conlceive to be a saintly, or over-saintly

air and manner, when there is a much inferior degree of sanctity in the

life. There is no hypocrisy in it, for there is no intention to

deceive; but there is a legal, austere, conscientiousness, which keeps

on all the solemnities and longitudes of expression, just because there

is too little of God's love and joy in the feeling, to play in the

smiles of gladness and liberty. Now it is the little child's way, to

get his first lessons from the looks and faces round him. And what can

be worse, or do more to set him off from all piety, by a fixed

aversion, than to have gotten such impressions of it only, as he takes

from this always unblessed, tedious, look of sanctimony. What can a

poor child do, when the sense of nature and natural life, the smiles,

glad voices, and cheerful notes of play, are all overcast and gloomed,

or, as it were, forbidden, by that ghostly piety in which it is itself

being brought up? And yet the world will wonder immensely at the

strange perversity of the child that grows up under such a saintly

training, to be known as a person mortally averse to religion! Why, it

would be a much greater wonder if he could think of it even with

patience I

Bigotry is another of these Christian vices, and yet no one will assume

his infallible capacity, in the matter of Christian training, as

confidently as the bigot. Has he not the truth? is he not opposite, as

possible, to all error? has any man a greater abhorrence of all laxity

and all variation from the standards? Is he not in a way of speaking

out always, and giving faithful testimonies in his house? Yes, that

must be admitted; and yet he is a man that mauls every truth of God,

and every gentle and lovely feeling of a genuinely Christian character.

His intensities are made by his narrowness and hate, and not by his

love. He fills the house with a noise of piety, and may dog his

children possibly into some kind of conformity with his opinions. But

he is much more likely, by this brassy din, to only stun their

intelligence and make them incapable of any true religious impressions.

There is no class of children that turn out worse, in general, than the

children of the Christian bigots.

The vice of Christian fanaticism operates, in another and different

way, but with a commonly disastrous effect. The fanatic is a man who

mixes false fire with the true, and burns with a partly diabolical

heat. He means to be superlatively Christian, but it happens that what

he gets, above others, is the addition of something to his passions,

which would be more genuine, if it were in his affections. He scorches,

but never melts. He is most impatient of what is ordinary and common,

and does not sufficiently honor the solid works and experiences of that

goodness which is fixed and faithful. This kind of character makes a

fiery element for childish piety to grow in. What can the child become,

or learn to be, where every thing is in this key of excess? It is as if

there were a simoon of piety blowing through the house, and it dries

away all gentle longings and holiest sympathies of the child's

affectionate nature, so that all attractions God-ward are suspended. A

certain violence and harshness in the parental fanaticism wakens often

the sense of injustice too, or hate, and makes the superlative piety

appear to be no better, after all, than it might be.

Another Christian vice is created by a censorious habit. Not by that

habit of judging and condemning, which takes a pleasure in condemnation

itself--that is the vice of a Christless character, not of a

Christian--but there is a large class of disciples who think it a kind

of duty, and a just acknowledgment of the fact, of human depravity, to

be seeing always dark things. They judge evil judgments because they

will be more faithful, and will be only doing to others just as they do

to themselves. This habit is like a poisonous atmosphere in the house.

It kills all springing sentiments of confidence and esteem. That

charity which believeth all things, and hopeth all things, appears to

be already stifled in it. What shall a child aspire to, when there is

no really estimable growth, and good, and beauty, any where?

It is a great vice also, as regards the Christian training of a family,

that there is a habit in the parents of receiving nothing by authority,

and really disowning authority in all matters of religious. God reigns

himself by authority, and because he is God; and parents are to govern

by authority, partly, in the same manner. If the parent is a debater

with God in every thing, saying always No, to God, till he has gotten

his proofs, the spirit will go through the house. The children will

demand a reason for every thing required, and will put the parents

always on trial, instead of being put under authority themselves.

Nothing breaks down faster the religious conscience, or untones more

completely the divine affinities of the childish nature, than to have

lost the feeling, ceased to hear the ring, of authority. Abraham could

believe God's words, and so it was in him to command his children after

him.

Anxiousness is another infirmity, or vice of character, that has always

a noxious effect in the training of Christian families. Where there is

but a little faith, there is apt to be great anxiousness. And nothing

will so dreadfully torment the life of a child, as to be perpetually

teased by the anxious words and looks and interferences of this unhappy

superintendence. And if the pretext given is a concern for the child's

piety, the effect is only so much more disastrous. What can he think of

piety, when it has only worried him at every play and every natural

pleasure of his life? Just contrary to this feeble, half-believing,

half-Christian vice of anxiety, the parental habit should be one of

confidence; gladdened always in the faith that God is the child's

covenanted keeper, and will never fail to guard the trust that is

faithfully committed to his hands, never allow to grow up in sin what

parental fidelity is training, by all reasonable diligence, for a godly

life.

This enumeration of the moral and religious vices, that spot the beauty

and mar the completeness of character, in one way or another, of almost

all merely ordinary Christians, could be indefinitely extended.

Nothing, in fact, is farther off, generally, from the truth, than the

assumption, by nominally Christian parents, of their sufficiency, or

their properly qualified state, as regards the training of their

children. They are almost all disqualified, or under-qualified, to such

a degree as to make their work perilous, and as ought to fill them with

real concern for their success. What are we all, in the merely initial

state of Christian living, but diseased patients, just entered into

hospital? We are not all in the same sort of weakness and defect, but

all weak and defective--one-sided, passionate, broken in principle,

corrupted by mixed motive, lame in faith. How foolish then is it for us

to be assuming that, because we have come to Christ and begun to be

disciples, we are ready, of course, for the holy nurture and safe

ordering of our families. How foolish, also, to be wondering, as we so

often do, that the children of one or another Christian, or reputedly

good Christian family, turn out so ill--as if it were some evidence of

a singularly perverse and reprobate nature in such children. Little do

we know what subtle poisons were hid in what we took to be the good

Christian piety of those families. After all, it may have been much

less good, or more exceptionably good, than we thought.

It may occur to some of you, as a discouraging disadvantage, that,

where one parent is duly qualified for the training of the children in

piety, the other is not, but is in fact, a real hindrance to the right

and safe proceeding of the endeavor. The parents are never equally well

qualified; and one, or the other of them, is likely to be a good deal

out of line, in some kind of personal defect, or obliquity of practice.

Sometimes one of them will be a purely worldly-minded person, or an

unbeliever, or, it may be, even fatally corrupted by vicious habits.

There is, accordingly, no hope of concert in the endeavor to train the

children up in piety. And this, the other party, who is more commonly

the mother, may be tempted in some hour of discouragement to think,

amounts to a fatal disqualification, such as quite takes away the

rational confidence of success. Let me come to her aid, in the

assurance that God connects Himself even the more certainly with one

party, if only there is, in that one, a believing and truly faithful

spirit, prepared for the work. He pledges himself in formal promise to

one party, in all such conditions, declaring that the believing wife

sanctifies, takes away the defect of, the unbelieving husband. Let her

also consider what is said of young Timothy--how the apostle figures

the faith of the good grandmother, and her daughter the good mother,

descending on Timothy in the third generation, when his father, all

this time, was a Greek, probably an unbeliever and idolater. There was

not force enough, you perceive, in all that father's influence to break

the descent of the faith of these two godly mothers upon his son.

This, then, is the conclusion to which we are brought; that

qualifications are wanted for this work as for almost no other, and

that where they are really had, if it be only by one party, they are

not likely to fail. But how shall they be obtained? that is the

question. Who is subtle enough to go through this hunt of the

character, and actually find every loose joint of morality ill his

practice, every vice of defect, or distemper in his Christian life? No

one, I answer--that is impossible. No weeding process, carried on by

ourselves, ever did or can extirpate our evils. The only true method

here is the method of faith; to be more perfectly and wholly trusted to

God, more singly, simply Christian. God's touch in us can feel out

every thing; every most subtle spot of wrong or weakness he can heal.

The reason why we have so many of these spots and disqualifying vices

is, that we are only a little Christian. Whereas, if we could be fully

entered into Christ's keeping, and have our whole consciousness

overspread and clothed by his righteousness, we should live, in every

part, and be kept in holy equilibrium above our defects and disorders,

all the time. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ then as a complete

investiture, and there will be no poison flowing down upon your

children, from any thing in your life and example. If Christ is made,

to those who trust in him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and

redemption, what is there that he can not and will not be made?

Wonderful is the completeness of any soul that is complete in him. How

pure and perfect the morality, how wise the discretion, how gentle and

full, and free, the life in which he lives! The house and its

discipline become a most joyous element to children, when thus

administered. Every thing good in it is welcome, even the restraints

and supervisions; for they have a genera] air of confidence and hope

and gentle feeling, that wins and not repels. Even authority itself is

welcome, because it is enforced by character, and not by tones of

violence, or dictatorial airs of heat and menace. Whoever comes thus

into God's full love, to be in it and of it, has a true equipment for

the family administration. If it can be said--Herein is Love, what else

can really be wanting? This bond of perfectness, brings all needed

qualifications with it, so that when the love or the faith working by

it, really reigns and tempers the man by its impulse, it can truly be

said, as of Abraham--For I know him, that he will command his children

and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

III.

PHYSICAL NURTURE, TO BE A MEANS OF GRACE.

"Feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee and

say, who is the Lord?"--Proverbs, xxx. 8-9.

A MOST fit subject of prayer! And if the feeding of an adult person,

such as Agur, has a connection so intimate with his religious life and

character, how much more the feeding and the physical nurture of a

child. I use the text, therefore, to introduce, for our present

consideration, as a kind of first point, the food or feeding of

children, and their physical treatment generally.

It will not be incredible to any thoughtful person, least of all to any

genuinely philosophic person, that the treatment and fare of the body

has much to do with the quality of the soul, or mind--its affinities,

passions, aspirations, tempers; its powers of thought and sentiment,

its imaginations, its moral and religious development. For the body is

not only a house to the mind as other houses are, which we may live in

for a time with no perceptible effect on our character, but it is a

house in the sense of being the mind's own organ; its external life

itself, the medium of all its action, the instrument of its thought and

feeling, the inlet also of all its knowledges and impressions, and the

instigator, by a thousand reactions, of all such spiritual riot and

corruption as have had their leaven brewed in as many physical abuses

and disorders. So intimate is this connection of mind and body, so very

close to real oneness are they, that no one can, by any possibility, be

a Christian in his mind, and not be in some sense a Christian in his

body. If his soul is to be a temple of the Holy Ghost, then his body

must be. If his soul is under government, then his body will be. And if

his body is not under government, then his soul, by no possibility, can

be; save that, in every such ease, it will and must be under the

government of the body; subject to its power, swayed by all its

excesses and distempers.

Hence that most determined, almost proud, resolve of the apostle, when

he declares--"I will not be brought under the power of any." Under the

body? No! he will scorn that low kind of thraldom. Meats, drinks,

appetites--none of these shall have the mastery in him. He will assert

the supreme right of the soul or person, above the house it lives in;

so God's preeminent right in the soul. He will say to the body--"stay

thou down there"--as they that fast do, in fasting; and, what is more

profoundly, more scientifically rational than fasting, when it is

practiced in the real insight of its reasons? It is the soul rising up,

in God's name, to assert herself over the body; over its appetites,

passions, tempers, and, if possible, distempers, And how often the

poor, coarse, stupid, sensual, fast-bound slaves of the body, calling

themselves disciples, need this kind of war, and a regular campaign of

it, to get their souls uppermost and trim themselves for the race.

One must be a very inobservant person, not to have noticed, that all

his finest and most God-ward aspirations are smothered under any load

of excess, or overindulgence. It is as if the body were calling down

all the other powers, even those of poetry, magnanimity, and religion,

to help it do the scarcely possible work of digestion. At that point

they gather. The sense of beauty is there, and the soul's angel of

hope, and the testimony of God's peace, and the music of devotion, and

the thrill of sermons, dosing, all together, and soughing in dull

dreams round the cargo of poppies in the hold of the body. To raise any

fresh sentiment is now impossible. Even prayer itself is mired, and can

not struggle out. The news of some best friend's death can only be

answered by dry interjections, and forced postures of grief, that will

not find their meaning till to-morrow.

And much the same thing holds true, only under a different form, when

the body is prematurely diseased and broken, by the excesses of

self-indulgence. Its distempers will distemper the mind itself; its

pains prick through into the sensibilities, even of the spiritual

nature. Out of the pits of the body, dark clouds will steam up into the

chambers of the soul, and all the devils of dyspepsia will be hovering

in them, to scare away its peace, and choke the godlike possibilities,

out of which its better motions should be springing.

So important a thing, for the religious life of the soul, is the

feeding of the body. Vast multitudes of disciples have no conception of

the fact. Living in a swine's body, regularly over-loaded and oppressed

every day of their lives, they wonder that so great difficulties and

discouragements rise up to hinder the Christian clearness of their

soul. Could they but look into Agur's prayer, and take the

meaning--feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full, and deny

thee, and say, who is the Lord?--they would find a real gospel in it.

And making it truly their own, they would dismiss, at once, whole

armies of doubts; their faith would get wings to rise; they would rest

their soul in an element of power, and peace and sweetness, and would

run the way of God's commandments with a wonderful clearness and

liberty.

I have spoken, thus briefly, to a fact of adult experience, because it

is adult conviction which my subject needs to obtain. To simply look on

children from without, and tell what effects will be wrought on their

religious tempers and habit by their feeding, and the general nurture

of their body, will not carry any depth of conviction by itself; for

there is no creature of God less adequately understood, or conceived,

than a child. And therefore it is that I appeal to parents, in this

manner, requiring them to make some observation of themselves; to

notice what becomes of them, and their sentiments, and senses of Christ

and of God, when they are down under the burdens of an overloaded, or

permanently diseased body.

The principle I am here asserting, as regards the religious import of

feeding and bodily nurture, in the case of children, is the same on

which the child Daniel and his friends acted, in the choice of their

very simple and temperate diet. Whether Daniel had been brought up from

his infancy in this manner does not appear. He may have been prompted

to this choice, by a purely divine impulse. But whether he came into it

by one method or the other, makes little difference; for, in either

case, the most important matter is to observe the result, and that such

kind of feeding was chosen, or instituted, for the sake of the result

that would follow, on perfectly natural principles, viz: to give

greater clearness to the religious perceptions and sentiments of the

soul. The body grew toward perfect health, because it was burdened and

distempered by no excesses. And the soul was just as much more open to

God and the sense of unseen things, as the body was more serenely and

blissfully well, in its physical condition. In this manner the child's

nature grew apace, in the molds of a perfectly evened judgment, and was

also wonderfully opened to God and all highest discoveries of his will.

In a certain sense, he became a great prophet by his physical

nurture--God gave him knowledge, thus, and skill, in all learning and

wisdom, and he had understanding in all visions and dreams. His feeding

stood with his health, and with all purest affinities and deepest

openings toward God.

Let us glance a moment, now, at some of the points here involved, and

distinguish, if we can, the 1esllts that are always depending on the

sight feeding of children.

The child is taken, when his training begins, in a state of

naturalness, as respects all the bodily tastes and tempers, and the

endeavor should be to keep him in that key; to let no stimulation of

excess, or delicacy, disturb the simplicity of nature, and no sensual

pleasuring, in the name of food, become a want or expectation of his

appetite. Any artificial appetite begun, is the beginning of distemper,

disease, and a general disturbance of natural proportion. Intemperance!

the woes of intemperate drink I how dismal the story, when it is told;

how dreadful the picture, when we look upon it. From what do the father

and mother recoil, with a greater and more total horror of feeling,

than the possibility that their child is to be a drunkard? Little do

they remember that he can be, even before he has so much as tasted the

cup; and that they themselves can make him so, virtually, without

meaning it, even before he has gotten his language! Nine-tenths .of the

intemperate drinking begins, not in grief and destitution, as we so

often hear, but in vicious feeding. Here the scale of order and

simplicity is first broken, and then what shall a distempered or

distemperate life run to, more certainly, than to what is intemperate?

False feeding genders false appetite, and when the soul is burning, all

through, in the fires of false appetite, what is that but a universal

uneasiness? and what will this uneasiness more naturally do, than

betake itself to the pleasurable excitement of drink? What is wanted is

a sensation--the soul is aching for a sensation; for it is one of the

miseries of food that the tasting pleasure is soon over and the cloyed

body turns away in disgust; one of the excellencies of drink, that the

sensation is a long one, and may be easily drawn out so as to cover

whole hours of duration. Food, sleep, friends, the self-enjoyment of

character-what an excellent and easy substitute it is for them all!

Thus, for example, when a very young child, taken by the captivating

flavor of some dainty or confectionery, has refused to restrain itself,

and has kept on, as by a kind of spell, repeating the sensation again

and again, till the organs, dried and cloyed by excess, refuse to give

it longer, you will see that a wonderful uneasiness follows, asking

what sensation next? and really there is nothing that can fill the

vacant space, or quiet the uneasiness. One toy or another will be

seized and thrown into the fire. The plays that before satisfied look

insipid and do not please. The world goes ill because there is nothing

good enough in it, and a general cry finishes the overdone pleasure of

the day. And here you have in small, as in a single view, just that

misery of distemper and uneasiness which is wrought, by the bad feeding

of childhood, and prepares the vice of intemperance, even before it

appears.

It is only a larger and more comprehensive mischief of the wrong

feeding of children, that it puts them under the body, teaches them to

value bodily sensations, makes them sensual every way, and sets them

lusting in every kind of excess. The vice of impurity is taught, how

commonly, thus, at the mother's table. The finer sentiments and wits of

children are smothered also and deadened, by this same animalizing

process. They make a dull figure at school. Their feeling is coarse,

their conscience weak, their passions low and violent. Their higher

affinities, those which ally them to God and character and unseen

worlds, appear to be closed up, and the lines of their faces,

particularly about the mouth, give a low sensual expression, even when

the upper-head is large and full. A certain degree of selfishness is

likely to be somehow developed in children, for sin of every kind is

selfish, but the lowest, meanest, and most utterly degraded type of

selfishness, is the sensual; that which centers in the body, and makes

every thing bend to bodily sensation And yet the early feeding and

growth of children tends, how often, to just this and nothing higher.

Saying nothing of genius and great action, impossible to be developed

in this manner out of the finest possible organization, what hope is

there under such abuse of nature, that religion will there begin to

loosen her noble aspirations, and claim her sonship with God? What

place can the love of God find open, in a soul that is shut up under

the brutishness of sensuality? What sensibility is left for Christ and

God, when the body has become the total manhood?

And exactly this it will most certainly be, if first it becomes the

total childhood. We have a way of saying, continually, that children

are creatures of the senses, and we please ourselves in making

allowances for them in this manner, and raising expectations of them

that suppose the likelihood of their, by and by, coming out of their

senses, into the higher ranges of thought and spiritual impulse. But we

do not remember, always, the immense distinction between being in the

senses and being in the sensualities; between going after the eyes, and

going after the stomach; between the almost divine curiosity of

intelligence, exploring all objects, sounds, and colors, to get in the

stock of its mental furniture, and the totally incurious hankering of

appetite, for some finer, freer indulgence of the animal sensation.

Little hope is there of a child, who is in the senses, after this

latter fashion. This he will quite seldom or never outgrow; on the

contrary, it will overgrow him, and subjugate all nobler impulse in

him, by a kind of natural law; even as disease propagates more disease

and not health. In this manner, a child can be fairly put under the

body for life, by the time he is five years old. And just this, I

verily believe, is often true. Kindness, it may be, has done it, but it

is that kindness which is better called cruelty. Coarseness of feeling,

lowness of impulse, gluttony, dissipation, drunkenness, adultery--all

foul passions that kennel in a sensual soul, it has cherished as a

foster-mother; not once imagining the fact, in the indiscreet feeding

of the hapless creature trusted to its care.

This, too, will be rendered yet more probable by reviewing, briefly,

some of the methods by which a more judicious, and more properly

Christian feeding will conduce toward a different and happier result.

First of all, it will not be a permitted practice, to quiet the child

in states of irritation, or stop it in crying, or pacify it in fits of

ill-nature, by dainties that please the taste. What is this but a

schooling and drawing out of sensation, by making it the reward of just

that which is most totally opposite to self-government? It must be a

very dull child that will not cry and fret a great deal, when it is so

pleasantly rewarded. Trained, in this manner, to play ill-nature for

sensation's sake, it will go on rapidly, in the course of double

attainment, and will be very soon perfected, in the double character of

an ill-natured, morbid, sensualist, and a feigning cheat beside. By

what method, or means, can the great themes of God and religion get

hold of a soul, that has learned to be governed only by rewards of

sensation, paid to affectations of grief and deliberate actings of

ill-nature?

Simplicity also, as opposed to luxuries, condiments, and confections,

is a condition of all right feeding for infancy and childhood, which

ought to approve itself to the most ordinary measure of parental

discretion. Of course I do not mean to say that the child is never to

have his holiday feast--that would be to cut him off from another kind

of benefit--I only insist that he is not to have a perpetual holiday,

and be stimulated by continual flavors on his organs, till the

beautiful simplicity of his appetite is gone and nothing pleases

longer, but that which is intense enough to be rather poison than food.

Coffee, for example--what can be worse for a child's body, or his

future character, than to be dosed every morning with his clip of

coffee? No matter if he cries for it, all the worse if he does; for it

shows that he has been already taught to love it, and is so far taken

away, prematurely, from the natural simplicity of his tastes. And how

is the child going to be drawn by the beauty of God, and the sacred

pleasures of God's friendship, when thinking always of the dainties he

has had, or is again to have, and counting it always the main blessing

of existence, to have his body seasoned by the flavors of sensation?

Instead of praying, as possibly he may be taught, in words--"Feed me

with food convenient for me"--he prays, in fact, from morning to night,

with all diseased longings and hankerings, to be fed, in the exact

contrary, with what will most increase his already overgrown

sensuality. In a manner faithfully characteristic of his low,

prudential morality, Paley advises that all children and young person

should live simply, because they are now susceptible enough to relish

simple things; in order that, as their tastes grow duller with

advancing age, they may allow themselves a freer indulgence in the

stimulations of appetite, and may so maintain the feeding pleasures to

the last. Counsel not to be questioned, even if these pleasures were

the chief end of life itself. We are only disappointed and vexed by the

lowness of it, when we recall, what is the real and true penalty of

youthful indulgence, that it takes away the possible relish of truth,

duty, and religion, and makes the soul forever inaccessible to these

noblest powers of character and blessedness.

In a wise, physical nurture, it is a matter of great import also to

regulate the times of feeding. For this induces the sense of order,

which is closely allied to a habit of self-government. If the nursing

child is simply stuffed to its last limit, at any and all hours, then

it is put in the way, not of intelligent feeding, which is interspaced

by rest, but of always being filled to its limit. The feeding must, of

course, be as much more frequent in infancy as the demands of a more

rapid consumption require, but there should be times, and a degree of

order established, as soon as possible; otherwise the stuffing method

will go on into childhood, and boyhood, and by that time the bodily

habit is in total disorder, carrying the tempers and general character

with it. The breakfast before breakfast, and the dinner before dinner,

and the casual snatching and feeding at all hours between, bring the

child to the table with a scowl upon his face, and a nervous, morbid

look of disgust, which declare, as plainly as possible, that there is

nothing good enough prepared for him; and, quite as plainly, that he is

a poor, misgoverned and spoiled child. He is overtaken by all the woes

of sensuality, and yet has gotten almost none of its pleasures; for he

is always kept, by his irregular, ungoverned feeding, so close up to

the line. of possible appetite, that peevishness and ill-nature are the

spice of all his sensations, and his body and soul are about equally

distempered by the morbid irritations and dyspeptic woes that have come

upon them. What a preparation is this for the calm, sweet, thoughtful,

motives of religion, and the gentle whispers of God's truth in the

heart!

It should also be understood in the religious training of children, how

great mischiefs are likely to follow, when much is made of the

pleasures of the table. If the feeding is the great circumstance of the

house and the day, if the discourse turns always on the peculiar relish

of this, or the wonderful delicacy of that, and the main stress of life

in general on the bliss of good living, it will not much avail, that

the parents have a certain wish to see their children grow up in

religion. A stranger falling into such a family, will be amazed to find

how pervasive and spirit-like this most unethereal, undiffusive kind of

bliss may be. The smack of appetite will seem to be in the atmosphere

of the house. It will be as if the gastric nerve of the family were

become the whole brain. A certain coarseness of feeling and character

will appear in every thing. The grain will be coarse, both of body and

soul; and the general expression of manners, faces, and voices, will be

such as indicates a reduction of grade, in all the finer impulses of

society, intelligence, and duty. The family affections themselves will

seem to have fallen back, to make room for the valued bliss of the

appetites. No matter how much of prayer and regular church-going there

may be in such a family, the child brought up in it has a most sad

fortune to bear, in the savoring habit to which it trains him. Nor is

it only in some high conditioned family, where wealth is steeping

itself in luxury, that this kind of woe is put upon children. It quite

as often begins at the coarse, low table of the sensually minded poor.

These are even most likely of all to live, and teach their children to

live, for what they may eat. The humble Christian mother, it may be,

having no luxuries of dress and show to give her children, makes it a

great point to have them enjoy the feeding of their bodies; and so,

instead of fining them to a nobler pleasure in the virtues of

frugality, order, gentle society, and good action, she graduates them

into just that coarsest sensuality which is the bane of all character,

for this life and the next.

It is a much greater point, in this connection, than is commonly

supposed, that children should be trained to good manners in their

eating. Good manners are a kind of self-government which operates

continually to keep the body under, and hold the sensualizing tendency

of food in check. Animals have no manners, and the higher gift of

manners is allowed to man, to keep him from the coarseness and lowness

to which his animal nature would otherwise run. In this view, good

manners are even a sort of first-stage religion, for the reduction of

the body. If the child is practiced carefully, at his food, in

deferring to superiors and seniors; in the restraint of haste, or

greediness; in the proprieties of positions, and the handsome uses of

tools; in the limitation of his feeding by his wants, and a

good-natured submission to restriction when restriction is needed for

his good; he will not grow sensual in that manner, but his mind will be

all the while getting sovereignty over the body. Good breeding and

civility are, in this view, indispensable. The Christian training of

children, without any care of their manners in these respects, is only

the training, in fact, of barbarians and savages, in thie houses of

such as call themselves Christian people.

There is great importance also, for a similar reason, in the observance

of a Christian blessing, or giving of thanks at the table. The mere

form, taken only as a constantly recurring acknowledgment of God and

the obligations of gratitude, laid on the family by his goodness, is a

matter of inestimable value. The bare recollection of a higher nature

and the higher meaning of life, coupled uniformly thus with the order

of the table, qualifies the lower sensations, and raises them to a kind

of spiritual dignity It is even a pitiful figure, in this view, which

the great Franklin makes, when, with so little show of philosophy,

saying nothing of Christian reverence, he recites, in a manner of

evident pleasure, the wit of his boyhood: asking his father, at the

packing of his barrel of meat, why he did not say grace over the whole

barrel at once, and save the necessity of so many repetitions? These

repetitions are the very things most wanted. They compose the liturgy

of the table, and have their value, not in the quantities of meat they

season, but in the seasoning of the partakers themselves, by so many

reiterations of their, at least, formal homage and gratitude. At the

same time there should be much care taken to make these blessings of

the table more than a form; to connect a real and felt meaning with

them, and make them the expression of a living and true gratitude in

all present. Children can be so trained, in this matter, as even to

miss the flavor of their meat, when no blessing is upon it. What then

can be expected, in a Christian family, when the children are put to

their food with no such recognition of God and have their faces turned

downward always upon it, even as if they were animals? Doubtless the

blessing may, too often, be a mere form, but it is a form which, apart

from any conscious glow of sentiment, no Christian family can afford to

lose.

Much also may be done for children, by associating subjects, and

sentiments, and plans of practical charity, with the blessings and

pleasures of the table. To do this requires no very ingenious methods,

or deeply studied plans. It will be done almost, of course, if the

parents themselves are, at all, given to such things; for, in such a

case, they can hardly fail to speak of the children of the poor, and

the bitter pains and pinings of their unsatisfied hunger. If the

appetites of children are eager and easily turned to a habit of

sensuality, their sympathies also are quick, and their compassions

wonderfully tender. Let these last be called into play, and kept in

play, as they may be always by a few simple words of charity, and

proposed acts of bounty to the children of want, and the former, the

appetites, will become incentives even habitually, to what is noblest

in feeling and remotest from a properly sensual character. The body

itself becomes the interpreter, in such a case, of want, and offers

itself dutifully to mercy, to be used as its organ.

Such are a few of the suggestions that require to be noted and

observed, in the right feeding of children Others will occur to you

daily, as your work goes on, if only you are really awake to the

transcendent importance of the subject. Let it never be assumed, for

one moment, that you are now doing nothing and can be doing nothing for

your children, because you are only feeding their bodies. A very

considerable part of your parental charge lies just here; in giving

your children such a nurture in the body, as makes them superior to the

body; subordinates the passions, and evens the tempers of the body;

prepares them to a state of robust and massive healthiness; gives them

clearer heads, and nobler sentiments of truth; preparing them, in that

manner, to be good scholars, to have their affectional nature opened

wide by a general love, to have their perceptive feeling quickened to

all highest forms of beauty and good, and so to have them ready, more

and more ready, for a state of eternally unsealed affinity with God.

There is not any thing, in the highest ranges of their spiritual and

religious nature, that will not be somehow affected, and powerfully

too, by the feeding of their bodies. Even their conscience itself,

which is God's own organ or throne, so to speak, in their nature--the

most self-asserting and, as we should say, most indestructible of all

their powers--can be made to ring out clear and true, like a bell in

the night, or it can be stifled and choked, so as scarcely to be

audible--all by the mere feeding of the body. So there is a feeding

that makes a manly life, and a feeding that makes a mean, weak, ignoble

life. So there is a feeding which makes room for God, and a feeding

that leaves him no vacant space or chamber to fill. The question here

is not, exactly, what converting power is exerted or not exerted, what

Christian truth impressed or not impressed, but it is what kind of

metal, in fact, the future man is to be made of; for all that is

entered, thus early, into the feeding habit of the body, is about as

really composite and substantial as that which is prepared in the

inborn properties of nature itself. This feeding nurture, if we take

the real sense of it, is to grow in good or bad affinities and

possibilities; to grow a body under the soul, or over it; to form a

good or bad staple, in the substance of the man, which is going to

remain unchanged, by all his future changes and transformations, about

as certainly as his face, or gait, and in much the same degree.

To complete this view of the bodily nurture and keeping, something

ought also to be said of personal neatness, and also of dress, in both

of which the bodily habit is concerned, though in a more external and

less decisive way.

As regards the matter of personal neatness, I will only suggest the

very close relationship of association between it, as a habit, and the

spiritual habit of the soul in religion. In this holy endeavor of

grace, or religion, the soul aspires to be clean. Conscious of great

defilement in sin, it hears a call to come and be made white, even as

the snow. It begins with the prayer--"Create in me a clean heart, O

God," and the longing after purity and a clean consciousness before

Him, draws it on. To be washed, purified, made clean--under these, and

such like terms of aspiration, it is exercised, in all the keeping of

the life, that it may incur no spot or stain, and be effectually purged

from all most subtle defilements. In this view, bodily neatness, or the

cleanly keeping of the person, is a kind of outward religion going

before, preparing tastes, images, sensibilities, habits that make the

soul more akin to religion, readier to feel the obligation, and labor

in the purifying endeavor. And, in this view, the mother, the poor

Christian mother, who has nothing of this world's good, as we commonly

speak, to put upon her children, has yet one of the best goods of all.

which she may, without fail, bestow, viz: a cleanly habit. She gives

them a great mark of honor, and sets them in a way of great hope and

preferment, as regards all highest character, when she trains them to a

felt necessity of neatness and order. On the other hand, if she allows

them to grow up in a filthy and loose habit, crowding all bounty upon

them, and breathing out her soul beside, in prayer and fasting on their

account, it will be wonderful if they have much sensibility to the

defilements of the soul, or come to God in any determinate longings

after purity. Nay, it will be wonderful if the dirt upon their persons

and clothing is not found upon their conscience also, and if they do

not go on to live the disorder in their souls, which has been the

untidy element of their bodies.

There is also this very peculiar excellence in neatness, that it is not

ambitious, not for show, but more for what it is in itself--an honest

kind of benefit, or good, that brings along no bad or false motive with

it. Hence there is no temptation in the practice. Honor and ornament

and grace of poverty, as it often is, it is only the more truly such,

that it simply fulfills and perpetuates a fixed necessity, looking

after no reward, save what it is to itself. Formed to such a habit, and

scarcely conscious of it, the children grow into a kind of pure

simplicity in good, which is itself one of the finest symbols and

surest outward preparations of the religious life and character.

The subject of dress, taken as related to religious character in youth,

is one of transcendent importance, but as I am treating mostly of what

is to be lone for children, in the few first years of their training, I

shall dismiss the subject with only a few suggestions, such as my

particular purpose appears to require.

There is this very singular and striking contrast between animals and

men, that they are born dressed, and these to be dressed; while yet the

fact of a dress is equally necessary to both. The object of the

distinction appears to be, to allow, in the latter case, a certain

liberty of form and appearance, even as there is given a grand central

liberty of life and character within. It allows us to choose what shall

be added to finish out our form, or appearing; and it is a singular

fact, in this connection, that we always take our dress to be, in some

sense, ourselves; just as if it grew out of our bodily substance; so

that we feel ourselves ordinarily limited and hampered, in behavior and

manners, in thought and feeling, and fancy, by the dress we have on.

The consciousness of being badly, or half absurdly dressed, makes us

awkward. We can not sit down to write in a sordid and tattered

dress--thought can not sufficiently respect itself, the feeling nature

and the taste and the fancy can not be in trim in such a guise. As a

king would not like to appear in the dress of a convict, so they ask a

dress that more respects their quality. There is a fearfully powerful

reaction, thus, in dress, upon what is inmost and deepest in character.

And so much is there in this fact, that every Christian parent should

be fully alive to it, even from the first; understanding that the child

is going to enlarge his consciousness, so as, in a sense, to take in

his dress and be configured to it--inverting the common order of speech

on the subject, when we talk of cut ting the dress to the child; for it

is equally true, in a different sense, that the child will be cut to

his dress.

Hence the dreadful mischief done to a child, by what may be called the

dolling of it; that is, by dressing, or over-dressing it, just to

please, or amuse, or, what is really more true, to tickle a certain

weak and foolish pride in the parents. What meantime has become of that

most tender and godly concern, which belongs to the Christian charge

put upon them, in the gift of this same child? It takes whole months,

how often, to get the child's looks and dress into such trim that it

can be offered by them for baptism, making the desired impression; in

which it turns out that the chief object to them, of baptism, is the

exhibition of the doll they have been dressing; not to get the seal and

sacrament of God's mercy upon it, as a creature in the heritage of

their own corrupted life.

And then, afterwards, the dressing goes on still, in faithful keeping

with its sad beginning. In a few days this same child appears, marching

the streets, in the figure of a little gentleman with a cane; or if it

be a daughter, hung with necklaces and chains, and set off with as much

of finery as can well be supported--visibly conscious, in either case,

of the fine show being made; even!. the foolish parents, it might fitly

despise, were just now admiring their doll at home, and praising to

itself the pretty figure it made!

Is this now the dress of a Christian child? is this such a dress as a

properly Christian nurture prescribes? What is this child training for,

but simply to be a fop, or fashionist, or fool? This taste for show,

and finery, and flattery--what is it but the beginning of all

irreligion? and what will the after life be, but the continuance of

this beginning?

Just contrary to this, whoever will bring up a child for God, must put

him, at the very first, into God's modes and measures. The real

question of dress, is what shall be put upon this child, to make it

feel most like a Christian--what will give him the finest feeling with

the least of show and vanity? What will leave him in a state most

natural. and simple, and farthest from affectation? What will be most

like to the putting on of Christ himself, his righteousness, beauty,

truth, meekness, and dignity? Dress your child for Christ, if you will

have him a Christian; bring every thing, in the training, even of his

body, to this one final aim, and it will be strange, if the Christian

body you give him does not contain a Christian soul.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

IV.

THE TREATMENT THAT DISCOURAGES PIETY.

"Fathers provoke not your children to anger, lest they be

discouraged."--Colossians, iii. 21.

DISCOURAGED, the apostle means, in good; that is, in worthy purposes

and pious endeavors. Nothing will more certainly put a child in a

discouraged feeling, than to be angered by a parent's ill-nature and

abuse. The anger is, most certainly, far enough from being itself a

state of discouragement; but anger is a passion that can not hold long

and the after state into which it subsides, in the case of inferiors

and dependants, is commonly a giving up to the bad, a passionless and

low desperation, that is equivalent to a general surrender of all high

aims and aspirations.

In this view, it would not be altogether amiss, and certainly no

improper use of the apostle's words, if I were to offer under them a

lecture to parents, on the provoking ways of treatment and government.

But I have chosen them for a different purpose, and one that is more

inclusive, viz: to introduce and give sanction to a discourse on--

The discouragement of piety in children; the ways in which it is

discouraged, and the great care necessary to avoid a mistake so

injurious.

I speak here, of course, to parents who really desire the spiritual

welfare of their children. Nothing is farther off from their design,

than to push their children away from Christ into a state of alienated

and discouraged feeling. And yet they do it, very often, by faults of

management not suspected, and never afterwards discovered; unless,

possibly, after the injury is done, when it can no longer be repaired.

It becomes, in this view, a very serious and practically important

question, how, or by what methods, Christian parents, unawares to

themselves and contrary to their really good intentions, discourage

piety in their children? Let us see if we can partially answer the

question.

We begin, then, where the apostle begins with his remonstrance. His

language is particularly addressed to fathers; for he seems to have in

view the case of children, who are in the more advanced stages of

childhood, or in what we call the period of youth. And yet the language

is equally applicable to the case of mothers and very little children.

It might not be wholly amiss for a half-grown lad, or youth, who has

violated his father's feelings, by some really base act of crime, or

disobedience, to see, by the smoke of his indignant passion, how deeply

his right sensibility is revolted. That will never discourage him in

any thing good. It might even rouse his moral nature, when nothing less

violent would suffice. The father will really discourage good in his

son, only when he stings him with a sense of injustice, and keeps him

in a wounded feeling, by his own ungoverned, groundless passion. But in

the case of the mother, dealing with her very young child, there is no

place even for so much as a feeling of impatience. No crisis occurs

that she has any right to carry by a storm. And yet there are many

mothers who breed a climate of 5torms for their children to grow up in,

even from the first. They make an element of pettishness and passion,

and call it Christian nurture to maintain a kind of quarrel with their

children, from infancy upward. We do not commonly conceive that the

children are discouraged, thus, in the matter of piety; but the real

fact is, that their better, higher nature, quite worn down by such

treatment, sinks at last into a kind of atrophy, which is the essence

of all discouragement. By the time they are passed through this first

chapter of torment, their faces even have begun to take on a forlorn

expression, as if their well-abused feeling had been quite choked off

from every thing hopeful or good. Nothing is more beautiful than the

God-ward affinities, and glad impulses to good, in a childish soul; but

when it has once been kiln-dried in this hot furnace of motherly or

fatherly passion, there is no more any putting forth after the divine.

A kind of indifference, or sullen prejudice, sets off the heart from

God, and the gentle affinities close up under the stupor of so great

early abuse and discouragement.

Children are also discouraged and hardened to good by too much of

prohibition. There is a monotony of continuous, ever sounding,

prohibition, which is really awful. It does not stop with ten

commandments, like the word of Sinai but it keeps the thunder up, from

day to day, saying always thou shalt not do this, nor this, not this,

till, in fact, there is really nothing left to be done. The whole

enjoyment, use, benefit, of life is quite used up by the prohibitions.

The child lives under a tilt-hammer of commandment, beaten to the

ground as fast as he attempts to rise. All commandments, of course, in

such a strain of injunction, come to sound very much alike, and one

appears to be about as important as another. And the result is that, as

they are all in the same emphasis, and are all equally annoying, the

child learns to hate them all alike, and puts them all away. He could

not think of heartily accepting them all, and it would even be a kind

of irreverence to make a selection. Nothing so fatally worries a child,

as this fault of over-commandment. The study should be rather to forbid

as few things as possible, and then to soundly enforce what is

forbidden. Such kind of prohibitions the child will even like, and will

be al] the happier, that he has something good to observe. But nothing

can be more impotent, in the way of authority, than the din of a

continual prohibition. Even the commandments of God will, in such a

case, be robbed of all just authority, by the custom of a general

weariness and distaste; in which all highest man. dates are leveled to

equality with the pettiest and most useless restraints.

Again, it is a great discouragement to piety in children, when they are

governed in a hard, unfeeling, way or in a manner of force and

overbearing absolutism Any thing which puts the child aloof from the

parent. or takes away the confidence of love and sympathy, will as

certainly be a wall to shut him away from God. If his Christian father

is felt only as a tyrant, he will seem to have a tyrant in God's name

to bear; and that will be enough to create a sullen prejudice against

all sacred things. Nor is the case at all better when the child is

cowed under fear of such a parent, and reduced to a feeling of dread or

abject submission. There is a beautiful courage in children as respects

approach to God, when God is not presented as a bugbear; and this

natural state of courage, is just that which makes the time of

childhood so ingenuously open to religion. But if their courage, even

toward their father, is already broken down into fear and servile

submission, they will only think of God with as much greater fear, and

shrink from all the claims of piety with a kind of abject recoil, as

from a thing forbidden. No gentleness even of Christ will suffice, in

such a case, to win, or reassure the broken courage of the soul. I

recall a family in which the father, known as a man of condition and of

no little repute for his Christian good works, brought up a large

family of boys to be ruled at a distance. He addressed them in a kind

of imperious, unfeeling way; not with any violence of manner, but with

a stern-faced grin that seemed to say, "it is well that you fear me."

And fear him they most certainly did--fear was the element in which

they grew. And the result was that having no self-respect, and living

under a law of mere suppression, they fell into base immoralities from

their childhood, ant were never afterwards known, even one of them, to

have so much as a thought of piety.

Another and even more common way of discouraging children ill matters

of piety is by an over-exacting manner, or by an extreme difficulty of

being pleased. Children love approbation, and are specially

disappointed, when they fail of it in their meritorious endeavors.

Their chagrin is nevermore complete, in fact, than when, having set

themselves to any purpose of well-doing, they are still repulsed by a

manner of fault-finding at the end, and blamed on account of some

trivial defect which they did not know, and would really have tried to

avoid. Some parents appear to think it a matter of true faithfulness,

that they be not too easily pleased, lest their children should take up

loose impressions of the strictness of duty. They do not consider how

they would fare themselves, if God were to make a point of treating

them in the same manner. His manner with them is exactly opposite. He

perceives that he will only repel them, by making it a matter of

difficulty to please him, and that he could never draw them on, if he

did not yield them his smile under great faults and shortcomings, and

did not give them the testimony that they please him, when they are a

great way off from his own scale of perfection. In all which we may

readily see how great discouragement is put upon children, in all their

good attempts, when their parents will not allow themselves to be

pleased with any thing they do. Possibly they are withheld by scruples

of orthodoxy. If so, the mischief is only the greater. What can win a

child to the attempt to please God, when his parents dare not suffer so

much as a thought of the possibility in him, and, for the same reason,

dare not so much as approve him themselves. Such kind of orthodoxy can

not be too soon forsaken, or too earnestly repented of.

Closely akin to this, is the fault of holding displeasure too long, and

yielding it with too great difficulty. It is right that children, doing

wrong, should encounter some kind of treatment that indicates

displeasure. But the displeasure should not take the manner of a

grudge, and hold on after the wrong is visibly felt and repented of. On

the contrary, there should even be a hastening toward the child, in

glad recognitions and cordial greetings, when the tokens only of

relenting begin to appear; even as the prodigal's father is

represented, in the parable, as discovering him, in his return, when he

is yet a great way off, and advancing to meet and embrace him. By this

tender figure God is shown us, and the holy generosity of his

fatherhood is represented. We see that he is only the more ready to be

pleased, because of his magnanimity; holding no resentments, putting

off the feeling of offense at the earliest moment, and the cheapest

possible rate. Nay, He will even take our good by anticipation;

accepting us for what we ask, before he can accept us for what we are.

Well is it for those parents who think it incumbent on them, to hold

their displeasure till the culprit is sufficiently scathed by it, if

they do not hold it just a little too long; turning, thus, even his

repentance into a sullen aversion, and setting it in his feeling, that

there is the same heavy tariff of displeasure still to be paid, when he

would forsake his sins and turn himself to God. When will it be learned

that penance is no fit beginning of piety?

And here let me speak of the very great danger, after a time of

discipline, that the parent may hold his displeasure too long; as he

certainly will, if there is any ugly feeling, or wicked, natural

resentment in him. Thus Jean Paul beautifully says:--"A punishment is

scarcely of such importance to a child as the succeeding quarter of an

hour, and the transition to forgiveness. After the storm, the seed

finds the soil warm and softened; the terror and hatred of the

punishment are now past, which before resisted and struggled against

the word, and gentle instruction finds its way, and brings healing with

it, as honey assuages the sting of bees, and oil the pain of a wound.

In this hour we can say much, if we use the utmost gentleness of voice,

and by the manifestation of our own pain, soothe that of the child. But

every continuance of wintry anger is poisonous. Mothers easily fall

into this prolongation of punishment. This continuance of anger; this

would-be punishment of pretending a diminution of love, either fails to

be comprehended by the child, because he is wholly immersed in the

present and so misses its effect, or else he becomes satisfied with a

deprivation of the signs of love, and learns to do without it; or else

he is embittered by the continuance of punishment for a sin which he

has already buried. Through this prolongation of harshness, we lose

that beautiful and touching transition into forgiveness, which, by

coming slowly and after a long period, only loses its power." [17]

Hasty and false accusations again are a great discouragement to piety

in children. Their good feeling, or intention, appears to be rated low

by their parents, when they are put under the ban of dishonor, by false

and groundless imputations; and they are very likely, as the next

thing, to show that they are no better than they were taken to be. On

this account, a wise parent will be religiously careful of all

volunteer and random charges of blame, lest he may discourage fatally

all pious or ingenuous aspirations by them; for to batter self-respect,

or insult the sense of character, thus gratuitously, is the surest way

possible to break every natural charm of virtue and religion. The

effect is scarcely better where acknowledged faults are exaggerated,

and set off in colors of derision. It will do for a parent to be just,

severely just; for, by that means, he will best impress the sacred

severity of principle. God is just in all his charges and reproofs; but

there is no manner of excess or spirit of exaggeration in them. And

exactly this it is which makes his kindness so beautiful, so inspiring

to our courage, so attractive to our love. But harsh justice,

exaggerated justice, is injustice. When a child, therefore, is

persecuted by railing words, cauterized by satire, blamed without

reason or measure for faults not easily corrected, the severity is

really unprincipled as well as unfriendly, and is only the more

dreadfully mischievous, that it takes on airs of piety, and bears the

Christian name. How can he be drawn by that which has no grace of

allowance, and yields no sympathy to the struggles of his infirmity?

How many poor children are beaten out of all their natural affinities

for good, by just this kind of cruelty! They had parents who, in fault

of the better evidences of love and patience, thought to make up the

deficit in being at least severe enough to be Christian; which, though

it was an easy grace for them--the only grace at their command--was,

alas! fearfully hard on the subjects.

We bring into view a different class of discouraging causes, when we

speak of that anxiousness, or always miserable concern, for children,

by which some parents keep them in a continual torment of suppression.

We have really no right to allow a properly anxious feeling any where.

Anxiety is a word of unbelief, or unreasoning dread. Full faith in God

puts it at rest; any solid conviction of necessity and right is

chloroform to the pain of it. And we have the less right to be anxious,

that it is a feeling which destroys the comfort of others whenever and

wheresoever it appears. Only to be in a room with an anxious person,

though a stranger, is enough to make one positively unhappy; for the

manner, the nervous unsteadiness, and worry, and shift, are so

irresistibly expressive, that no effort of silence, or suppression, is

able to conceal the torment. To go a journey thus with an anxious

person, is about the worst kind of pilgrimage. What then is the woe put

upon a hapless little one or child, who is shut up day by day and year

by year, to the always fearing look and deprecating whine, the

questioning, protesting, super-cautionary keeping of a nervously

anxious mother. If the child catches the infection himself, he will

never come to any thing; never dare any great purpose that belongs to a

man, or a Christian. And if he does not catch it, which is more

probable, then he will pitch himself into a campaign of will and

passion with all that kind of control, a good deal less rational,

probably, than the control itself. Simply to enter the house will raise

a breeze in his feeling, and he will be worried and fretted, till he

has somehow made his escape. Nothing is more opposite to the hopeful

and free spirit of childhood, and nothing will so dreadfully overcast

the sky of childhood, as the sad kind of weather it is always making.

It worries the child in every putting forth and play, lest he should

somehow be hurt; takes him away, or would, from every contact with the

great world's occasions, that would give fit schooling to his manhood.

And then, since the child will most certainly learn, at last, how

little reason there was in the eternal distress of so many fears and

imaginations of harm, he is sure to be issued finally, in a feeling of

confirmed disrespect, which is the end of all good influence or advice.

And then it will be so much the worse, if the anxiety whose bagpipe

melody has been the torment of his early days, has shown itself in the

same unregulated way in matters of religion. Nothing will set a child

farther off from religion, or make him more utterly incapable of

sympathy with it, than to have had it put upon him in a whining and

misgiving way, in all his moods and occasions. No! there must be a

certain courage in maternity and the religion of it. The child must be

wisely trusted to danger, and shown how to conquer it. A pleasure must

be taken in giving him a certain range of adventure; and he must see

that his courage and capacity are confided in. And then it must be

seen, in the same way, that his truth, fidelity, piety, are as much

expected as his manhood. In a certain good sense, the mother may be

anxious for him, burdened in her prayers in his behalf, but she must

take on hope and confidence nevertheless, and show that courage in him,

as regards all good endeavor, is met and supported by courage in

herself.

Again, it will be found that piety is very commonly discouraged in

children, by giving them tests of character that are inappropriate to

their age. There is an immense cruelty put upon children here, by

parents who have really no design but simply to be faithful. Their

child, for example, loses his temper in some matter in which he is

crossed; and the conclusion is forthwith sprung upon him that he has a

bad heart, and is certainly no Christian child. Whereupon he ceases to

pray; or, if he is put to it as a form, does it with an averted and

reluctant feeling, as if the wrong were conclusive against his prayers.

It is only necessary to ask how the father, how the mother would

themselves fare, tested by the same rule? If irritation, passion, any

loss of temper, is conclusive against the little being who has scarcely

begun to be practiced in self-government, how is it with them who ought

by this time to be immovably fixed in their serenity? So if the child

has played, or shown some eagerness for play on Sunday, has not the

father, or the mother, who indeed has outgrown all such care for play,

been delving still, even in the church worship itself, and at the table

of communion, in schemes, and projects, and works, that thrust out, for

the time, even these most sacred things from any due place in their

attention? If sometimes a mere child is carried away by exuberant life

and playfulness, is that worse than to be cankered by the love of gain,

or by the severe and sober sins of a grasping, eager, worldly manhood?

The sins of children are ingenuous and open, and on just that account

are to be less severely judged. The sins of manhood are sins of

gravity, prudence, self-seeking, always contriving to wear some

plausible aspect of sobriety and dignity; but they ale not any the more

consistent with piety on that account. We do not judge that any one is

of course without piety, or is no Christian, because he has faults, or

failings, or even because he is overtaken by sins; why then should a

child be condemned, as having no true evidence of piety, just because

he is only a little less under the power of evil than his Christian

father and mother? God, I am certain, judges children's faults in no

such manner, and therefore it is never to be assumed by us that they

are without piety, because they falter in some things. If they only

falter, seeming still to love what is good, and struggle ingenuously

after it, there is just as good reason to hope that their hearts have

been touched by the Spirit of God, as there is that the hearts of older

persons have been, when they are groping always in the seventh chapter

of the Romans, having a mind to serve God, but always failing in the

service. The child must be judged or tested in the same general way as

the adult. If he is wholly perverse, has no spirit of duty, turns away

from all religious things, it will not discourage any thing good in him

to tell him that he is without piety; but if he loves religious things,

wants to be in them, tries after a good and obedient life, he is to be

shown how tenderly God regards him, how ready he is to forgive him; and

when he stumbles or falls, how kindly he will raise him up, how

graciously help him to stand. Nor does it make any difference that no

time is remembered, when he seemed to be brought unto God, by a great

change of experience, such as adult persons are often the subjects of.

He ought not to be the subject of any such change; and if he is

properly trained, will not be. As regards the testing of his condition

or character, nothing at all depends on that. It will even be a good

sign for him that he has always seemed to love Christ; and it will be

no proper evidence to the contrary, that he sometimes falters. Children

are very ingenuous, and they may even show some disinclination, for a

time, to all religious duties, without creating any such evidence.

Adults often suffer such disinclination, when they do not allow it to

appear. The sum of all I would say here is, let children be judged as

children, and let them not be cruelly discouraged in all thoughts of

love to God, because they falter, as older people do; only in a

different manner.

I must also speak of another and more general mode of discouragement,

in what may be called the holding back, or holding aloof system, by

which children are denied an early recognition of their membership in

the church, and an admission to the Lord's table. I have spoken of this

membership already, in another place, and shall also speak, hereafter,

of the supper in its more positive uses. What I now refer to, more

especially, is the negatively bad or discouraging effect thrown upon

their piety, by these methods of detention, or exclusion. The child

giving evidence, however beautiful, of his piety, is still kept back

from the fellowship and table of Christ, for the simple defect of

years. As if years were one of the Scripture evidences of grace.

Sometimes the difficulty is that he can speak of no experience, or

change, such as we call conversion; and sometimes, if he can, that he

is yet too young to be confided in. And so it turns out, after all that

is said of the membership initiated in baptism, that nothing is

practically made of it, or allowed to be made of it. The membership it

creates is only a disjunctive conjunction; words for a show, answered

by no conditions or consequences of fact. The poor child still is

virtually counted or assumed to be an alien, required to be converted

in just the same fashion as all heathens are, and to show the fact by

the same kind of evidences. The little, saintly daughter, for example,

of a venerable Presbyterian minister, aching for a place at the Lord's

table, goes to her father, after being several times postponed by him

and by the session, asking--"father, when shall I be old enough to be a

Christian?" He and his session, alas! did not believe that of such is

the kingdom of heaven. Had the dear child gone to Jesus, she would most

certainly have gotten a different answer. True, the religious

experience of children is of course small--only not as small, or

unreliable, by any means, as the experience commonly is of an adult

convert only a few weeks old. Besides, what is the use of a fold, if

the lambs are to be kept outside till it is seen whether they can stand

the weather?

The chilling, desolating effect of this very unnatural and cruel

practice, will be understood without difficulty. No plan could be

devised for the discouragement of piety in children, that would be more

certain of its object. They are only mocked and tantalized by their

baptism itself. They are thrust away and kept aloof from the communion

of Christ, for reasons that make it impossible for them to be reliably

Christian. And so their courage is broken down, and all their religious

longings are crippled, just when they most want grace and sympathy to

draw them on.

The remedy is plain. In the first place, there ought to be some

exercise or service in every church, to which the baptized children may

be called, in common with the adult members, there to be recognized in

a begun relationship. They should be formally addressed and prayed

with. But the chief exercise, in which they can as heartily partake as

any, should be the singing of simple hymns to Christ, such as are used

by the Moravian brethren for this purpose. In this manner, too, they

will quite as much edify, as be edified, by the adult brethren. Their

childish sympathies will, in this manner, be laid hold of at the

earliest moment. They will perceive that so much, at least, of worship

and religion is open to them as to others, and will begin to feel

themselves at home among the brethren.

In the next place, there should be some arrangement, in which it is

understood that children, piously disposed, though not confirmed or

accepted formally as members on their own account, may be allowed,

either on consultation with the pastor or without, to come to the

Lord's table for the time, on the score of their initial membership in

baptism, and their hopefully gracious character. In this manner, some

confidence will be shown that they are going to claim their place, in

full church relations, as soon as they are better matured in character

and evidences; and this kind of confidence will have great power with

them, to encourage and support their struggles, and help them forward

into an established Christian life.

And then, once more, no child should ever be kept back from a complete

and formal, or formally professed, membership in the body of Christ,

simply because of his age. Some children will give more reliable

evidence of Christian character at seven years of age than others at

fourteen. Were every thing as it should be, and as the most genuine

ideas of baptism and Christian nurture suppose, nearly all the subjects

would be found in the church, as brethren accepted, by the time they

are twelve years old, and the greater part of them before they are ten

years old.

While the church cooperates, in this manner, cherishing the baptized

children as her own, it is understood, of course, that parents are to

be engaged in putting forward their children and preparing them to bear

the Christian profession. They are not to assume that the matter of

true prudence here is all on one side, the side of detention; as if

there were nothing to be sure of, but that their children do not get on

too fast. If that were all, it were the easiest thing in the world to

settle every question, by the argument of delay; which negative grace,

alas! is about the only kind of function some parents are equal to. No,

this grip of detention is not any so easy and safe kind of duty. It may

put the child by his time for life. It may fatally discourage all his

beginnings of godliness, and may so far choke his growth in good that

he will never be recovered.

The matters which I have gathered up in this discourse, it is not to be

denied, my brethren, make a melancholy picture. When we discover in how

many ways even Christian parents themselves discourage the piety of

their children, it ceases to be any wonder that they so often turn out

badly, and come to a sad figure in their life. There are very few

children brought up in Christian families, who do not, at some time,

show a particular openness and tenderness to the calls of religion.

These flowering times of piety, ought to be all setting times of fruit,

and 1 verily believe that thee would be, if the flowers were not broken

off by some rough handling, or discouraging treatment. And it should

scarcely be any wonder that so many children of Christian parents come

forward into life, in a dulled, uncaring mood; as if their conscience

were under some paralysis, or as if they had somehow fallen out of all

sense and sentiment of religion. The reason is, how often, that all

their religious affinities have been battered by parental

discouragement. They think of religion, if they think of it at all,

only as a kind of forbidden fruit; and since it has never been for

them, why should it ever be?

Here, too, is the solution of, alas! how many cases, where Christian

parents speak, with great sadness, of a time when this or that child,

now utterly submerged under the world, or the world's vices, was

greatly exercised in matters of religion, fond of prayer, wanting even

to be admitted to Christ's table. How many children have been

discouraged, kept back, with just the same effect! Treated as if their

piety was impossible, how could it become a fact? O, if they had been

wisely and skillfully encouraged, assisted, led along, how different

probably the state and character in which they would now be found!

A heavy shade is here thrown, too, upon all those sorrowful regrets in

which Christian parents bewail what they call the mystery of their lot,

in having children grown up to a prayerless and godless maturity. Alas!

it is too easy, in most cases, to account for this mystery. When we see

in how many ways children may be thrown off from the courses of holy

obedience, or discouraged in them, we have a strong ground of

presumption that the mystery deplored by their parents is not as deep

as they suppose. For myself, when I look over this field of misuse,

misconception, misdirection, seeing in how many and subtle ways

children are turned off from Christ, when they might be and ought to be

drawn to his fold, it is no longer a wonder that they go astray; it

would only be a greater wonder if they met the call of Christ more

faithfully, and stood in a character more answerable to the privilege

he gives them.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[17] Levana iii. � 65.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

V.

FAMILY GOVERNMENT.

"One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection

with all gravity."--1 Timothy, iii. 4.

TO BE a Christian bishop, whether in a clergy of one order or of three,

is to be set in a high office, demanding high qualifications. What may

be taken as qualifications, the apostle is here specifying; and among

the rest, he names the character evinced by maintaining a good and

sound government in the house. "For if a man know not how to rule his

own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" A very

singular test, in one view, for a Christian bishop; one that passes by

the matter of learning and eloquence, and church reputation, laying

hold, instead, of a gift in which some very ordinary men, and not a few

ordinary women, excel. And with good reason; for, in fact, how very

much alike, in the elements of merit and success, are all that purchase

to themselves a good degree, in whatever rank, or sphere--alike in

fidelity, order, patience, steadiness, attention, application to the

charge that is given them. Nay, when the apostle drops in thoughtfully

what he takes to be the same thing in effect, as ruling one's house

well, viz: "the having his children in subjection with all gravity,"

the words themselves, appear to have a sound of character and office in

them, as if spoken of a bishop with his flock. And what indeed is the

house but a little primary bishopric under the father, taking oversight

thereof?

Family Government, then, is the subject here suggested for discussion.

And we naturally endeavor--

I To ascertain what is the true conception of family government.

Of course it is to be government; about that there ought to be no

hesitation. It is not to be a mere nursing, or dressing, or

provisioning agency; not to be an exhorting, advising, consulting

relationship; not to be a lavishing of devotion, or parental

self-sacrifice; but the radical constitutive idea, that in which it

becomes family government, is that it governs, uses authority,

maintains law and rules, by a binding and loosing power, over the moral

nature of the child. Parents, it would sometimes appear, fall into a

practical ambiguity here--as if the governing power were a kind of

severity, or harsh assumption; not perceiving that, by common consent,

we speak of an ungoverned family as the synonym of a disorderly,

wretched, and dishonored, if not ruined, family. There is no greater

cruelty, in fact, than this same false tenderness, which is the bane of

so many families. There is a kind of cruelty indeed, which is exactly

opposite, and misses the idea of government on the other side, viz:

that brutish manner of despotic will and violence, which makes no

appeal to the moral nature at all, driving straight by, upon the fears,

in a battery of force. And yet, whether even this be really more cruel

in its effects, than the false tenderness just named, is a fair subject

of doubt. The true idea, that which makes the domestic order and state

so beneficent, is that it is to be a state of government; a state where

love has authority, and presides ill the beneficent order of law.

But when we have reached this point, that family government is to

govern, we shall find that multitudes of parents who assume the

Christian name, have yet no practical sense of the intensely religious

character of the house, or the domestic and family state. They go into

their office loosely, and without any conception, for the most part, of

what their authority means. This, I will now undertake to show, drawing

out especially the points in which they most commonly seem to fall

below the real sense of their office, in the opinions they hold

concerning it.

First of all, their family government is never conceived, in its true

nature, except when it is regarded as a vicegerent authority, set up by

God, and ruling in his place. Instead of creating us outright, God has

seen fit to give us existence under laws of reproduction; having it for

his object, in the family order and relationship, to set us forth,

under a kind of experience in the small, and in terms of sense, that

faithfully typify our wider relationship to Him, the eternal Father and

invisible Ruler of the worlds. We are infants too, men and women in the

small, that we may be as flexible in our will as possible. Our parents,

if they are godly themselves, as by the supposition they will be, are

to personate God, in the double sense of bearing his natural and moral

image before us, ever close at hand; and also in the right of authority

with which they are clothed. And, that they may have us at the greatest

advantage, it is given them to clothe us, and feed us, and bathe us,

day and night, in the unsparing and lavish attentions of their love;

enjoying our enjoyments, and even their own sacrifices for us. First,

the mother has us, at her bosom, as a kind of nursing Providence.

Perused by touch and by the eyes, her soul of maternity, watching for

that look and bending ever to it, raises the initial sense of a divine

something in the world; and when she begins to speak her soft

imperative, putting a little decision into the tones of her love, she

makes the first and gentlest possible beginning of authority. And then

the stiffer tension of the masculine word, connected with the wider,

rougher providence of a father's masculine force, follows in a stouter

mode of authority, and the moral nature of the child, configured

thereto, answers faithfully in a rapidly developed sense of obligation.

The parents are to fill, in this manner, an office strictly religious;

personating God in the child's feeling and conscience, and bending it,

thus, to what, without any misnomer, we call a filial piety. So that

when the unseen Father and Lord is Himself discovered, there is to be a

piety made ready for him; a kind of house-religion, that may widen out

into the measures of God's ideal majesty and empire. Hence the

injunction, "Children obey your parents in the Lord." They could not

make a beginning with ideas of God, or with God as an unseen Spirit;

therefore they had parents given them in the Lord--the Lord to be in

them, there to personate and finite himself, and gather to such human

motherhood and fatherhood, a piety, transferable to Himself, as the

knowledge of his nobler, unseen Fatherhood arrives.

Again, it is another point, very commonly overlooked, or forgotten,

that parental government is genuine, only as it bears rule for the same

ends that God Himself pursues, in the religious order of the world.

True family government will be just as religious as His, neither more

nor less. It will have exactly the same ends and no other. Just here,

accordingly, is the main root of mischief and failure in the government

of Christian families. The parents are not Christian enough to think of

bearing rule for strictly Christian ends. They drop into a careless,

irresponsible way, and rule for any thing that happens to chime with

their own feeling or convenience. They want their children to shine, or

be honorable, or rich, or brave, or fashionable; so to serve themselves

in them, or their pride, or their mere natural fondness. They bring in,

thus, bad motives to corrupt all government, and even to corrupt

themselves. If they have some care of piety in their government, it is

a kind of amphibious care, sometimes in one element and sometimes in

another. They are never truly and heartily in God's ends. And the

result is that what they do in the name of religion, or to inculcate

religion, shows their want of appetite, and has really no effect but to

make both God's authority and theirs irksome. Nothing answers the true

purpose here, but to bring in all the noblest ideas of truth, and

forgiveness and self sacrifice, and assert a pitch of virtue in the

house high enough to be inspiring. The government will then have a

genuine authority and power, because the rule of God is in it. As it

rules for God, and with God, God will be in it; otherwise it is mortal

self-assertion only.

Closely related is the conviction to be firmly held, that family

discipline, rightly administered, is to secure, and may secure, a style

of obedience in the child that amounts to a real piety. If we speak of

conversion, family government should be a converting ordinance, as

truly as preaching. For observe and make due account of this single

fact, that when a child is brought to do any one thing from a truly

right motive, and in a genuinely right spirit, there is implied in that

kind of obedience, the acceptance of all best and holiest principle. I

do not mean, of course, that children are to be made Christians by the

rod, or by any summary process of requirement. There is no such short

method of compulsory piety here, as some are reported to have held, or

put in exercise. But it is not absurd to expect and aim to realize in

the family, a genuine spirit of obedience; obedience, that is, front

the principle that God enthrones, and which underlies all piety--just

what the apostle means, if I understand him rightly, by having children

"in subjection with all gravity." In the phrase "all gravity," he is

looking at a kind of obedience that touches the deepest notes of

principle and character. Contrary to this, there is an obedience

without principle, which is obedience with all levity; that which is

paid to mere will and force; that which is another name for fear; that

which is bought by promises and paid by indulgences; that which makes a

time-server, or a coward, or a lying pretender as the case may be, and

not a Christian. This latter--that which makes a Christian--is the aim

of all true government, and should never be out of sight for an hour.

Let the child be brought to do right because it is right, and not

because it is unsafe, or appears badly, to do wrong. In every case of

discipline for ill-nature, wrong, willfulness, disobedience, be it

understood, that the real point is carried never till the child is

softened into love and duty; sorry, in all heartiness, for the past,

with a glad mind set to the choice of doing right and pleasing God. How

often is it true that in the successful carrying of such a point,

(which can not be carried, save by great resources of love and gospel

life in the parents,) the fact of a converted will is gained. And one

must be a dull observer of children and their after life, who has not

many times suspected that just the ones who are said to be converted

afterwards, and suppose themselves to be, had their wills not seldom

bowed to this in their childhood, under the government of the house.

Having so far indicated what is the true idea of family government as a

Divine institution, let us next inquire--

II. By what methods it will best fulfill its gracious tnd beneficent

purposes?

It is hardly necessary to say that the vicegerent office to be

maintained, and the gracious ends to be secured, make it indispensable

that parents should them;3elves be living in the Spirit, and be so

tempered by their faithful walk, as to have the Christly character on

them. Nothing but this will so lift their aims, quiet their passions,

steady their measures and proceedings, as to give them that personal

authority which is requisite. For this authority of which I speak

supposes much--so much of grace and piety, that God is expressed in the

life; so much as to even it in all principle, fasten it in all

moderation of truth and justice, gladden it in heaven's liberty and

peace, and, above all, clear it of sanctimony; for if any thing will

drive a poor child mad with disgust of religion, it is to be tormented

day and night with the drawlings and mock solemnities of a merely

sanctimonious piety. Children love the realities, and are worried by

all shams of character. If then parents can not be deep enough in

religion to live it naturally, and have it as an element of gladness,

clear of all sanctimony, it is doubtful whether they might not better

be even farther off from the semblance of it than they pretend to be.

Of this one thing they may be sure, that they get no addition of

personal authority by any thing put on; or by any prescribed longitudes

of expression. The most profoundly real thing in the world is this

matter of personal authority. Jesus had it as no other ever had,

because he had most of reality and divine truth in his character; we

shall have the same, only as we have the same steady affinities in us,

and the same Spirit without measure upon us.

There is also another precondition of authority in parents closely

related to this; I mean that they be so far entered into the Christian

order of marriage, as to fulfill gracefully what belongs to the

relation in which they are set, and show them to the children as doing

fit honor to each other. By a defect just here, all authority in the

house is blasted. Thus Dr. Tiersch, in his excellent little treatise on

the Christian Family Life, says:--"A wife can not weaken the authority

of the father without undermining her own, for her authority rests upon

his, and if that of the mother is subordinated to that of the father,

yet it is but one authority, which can not be weakened in either of the

two who bear it, without injury to both. The mother, therefore, must

consider it a matter of family decorum which is not to be broken, never

even in little matters to contradict the father in the presence of the

children, except with the reservation of a modest admission of his

right of decision, and that in cases which admit of no delay. But just

as much is it the duty of the husband to leave the authority of his

wife unassailed in the presence of other members of the household; and

when he is obliged to overrule her objections, to do it in a tender and

kindly form If he turns to her with roughness and harshness from

jealousy of his place of rule, it is not only the heart of his wife

which is estranged from him; with the children, too, intervenes a

weakening of the moral power, under which they should feel themselves

placed. If in their presence their mother is blamed as foolish or

obstinate, and so lowered to the place of a child or a maidservant,

that sanctity immediately vanishes, which, in the eyes of the children,

surrounds the heads of both father and mother in common." [18]

Again it is of the highest importance in family government, that

parents understand how early it begins--how easily, in fact, the great

question of rule and obedience may be settled, or well-nigh settled,

before the time of verbal order and commandment arrives. Thus there is

what may be fitly called a Christian handling for the infant state,

that makes a most solid beginning of government. It is the even

handling of repose and gentle affection, which lays a child down to its

sleep so firmly, that it goes to sleep as in duty bound; which teaches

it to feed when food is wanted, not when it can be somehow made uneasy,

or the mother is uneasy for it; which refuses to wear out the night in

laborious caresses and coaxings, that only reward the cries they

endeavor to compose; which places the child so firmly, makes so little

of the protests of caprice in it, wears a look so gentle and loving,

and goes on with such evenness of system, that the child feels itself

to be, all the while, in another will, and that a good will; consenting

thus, by habit and quietly, to be lapped in authority, lust as it

consents to breathe, in the lap of nature and her atmospheric laws. And

so it becomes a thoroughly governed creature, under the mere handling

elf its infantile age. Neither should it seem that this is, in any

sense, an exaggeration. For though the government we speak of here is

silent, and utters for the time no law, there still is law enough

revealed to feeling in the mere motions and modes of the house. Who is

ignorant that by jerks of passion, flashes of irritation, unsteady

changes of caprice and nervousness, fits of self-indulgence, disgusts

with self and life that are half the time allowed to include the child,

songs and caresses both of day and night, that are volunteered as much

to compose the mother's or the nurse's impatience as the child's--who

is ignorant that an infant, handled in this manner, may be kept in a

continual fret of torment and ill-nature. Meantime there is, just

opposite, what a beautiful power of order, and quiet, and happy rule,

when the motions and modes of the handling are such as token peace,

repose, firmness, system, confidence, and a steady all-encompassing

love. Here is law, felt, we may even say, in every touch, entered into

every sensational experience, confided in, submitted to, with all

gravity. So that when the time of words arrives, the child is already

under government, and the question of obedience and order is already

half settled.

We come now to the age of language, or the age when words begin to be

used to express requirement and authority. Indeed this will be done,

assisted by tones and signs of manner, even before the child itself is

able to speak.

And here it is to be noted that much depends upon the tone of command,

or the kinds of emphasis employed. It is a great mistake to suppose

that what will make a child stare, or tremble, impresses more

authority. The violent emphasis, the hard, stormy voice, the menacing

air, only weakens authority; it commands a good thing as if it were

only a bad, and fit to be no way impressed, save by some stress of

assumption. Let the command be always given quietly, as if it had some

right in itself, and could utter itself to the conscience by some

emphasis of its own. Is it not well understood that a bawling and

violent teamster has no real government of his team? Is it not

practically seen that a skillful commander of one of those huge

floating cities, moved by steam on our American waters, manages and

works every motion by the waving of a hand, or by signs that pass in

silence; issuing no order at all, save in the gentlest undertone of

voice? So when there is, or is to be, a real order and law in the

house, it will come of no hard and boisterous, or fretful and termagant

way of commandment. Gentleness will speak the word of firmness, and

firmness will be clothed in the airs of true gentleness.

Nor let any one think that such kind of authority is going to be

disrespected, or disregarded, because it moves no fright or fear in the

subjects. That will depend on the fidelity of the parent to what he has

commanded. How many do we see, who fairly rave in authority, and keep

the tempest up from morning to night, who never stop to see whether any

thing they forbid or command is, in fact, observed. Indeed they really

forget what they have commanded. Their mandates follow so thickly as to

crowd one another, and even to successively thrust one another out of

remembrance. And the result is that, by this cannonading of pop-guns,

the successive pellets of commandment are in turn all blown away. If

any thing is fit to be forbidden, or commanded, it is fit to be watched

and held in faithful account. On this it is that the real emphasis of

authority depends, not on the wind-stress of the utterance. Let there

be only such and so many things commanded, as can be faithfully

attended to--these in a gentle and firm voice, as if their title to

obedience lay in their own merit--and then let the child be held to a

perfectly inevitable and faithful account; and, by that time, it will

be seen that order and law have a stress of their own, and a power to

rule in their own divine right. The beauty of a well-governed family

will be seen, in this manner, to be a kind of silent, natural-looking

power; as if it were a matter only of growth, and could never have been

otherwise. At first, or in the earlier periods of childhood, authority

should rest upon its own right, and expect to be obeyed just because it

speaks. It should stake itself on no assigned reasons, and have nothing

to do with reasons, unless it be after the fact; when, by showing what

has been depending, in a manner unseen to the child, it can add a

presumption of reason to all future commands. It is even a good thing

to the moral and religious nature of a child, to have its obedience

required, and to be accustomed to obedience, on the ground of simple

authority; to learn homage and trust, as all subject natures must, and

so to accept 4,he rule of God's majesty, when the reasons of God are in

scrutable. There is little prospect that any child will be a Christian,

or any thing but a skeptic, or a godless worldling, who has not had his

religious nature un folded by an early subjection to authority,

speaking in its own right.

Nay, I will go farther; there is a certain use in having a child, in

the first stages of government, feel the pressure of law as a

restriction. For, as the law of God is a schoolmaster to bring us to

Christ, so there is a like relation between law and liberty in the

training of the house. It is by a certain friction, if I may so speak,

on the moral nature, a certain pressure of control, not always welcome,

that the sense of law gets hold of us. Observances that we do not like,

prepare us to a kind of obedience, further on, that is free--that

welcomes the same command because it is good, the same authority

because it is wholesome and right. And so it comes to pass that a son,

grown almost to manhood, will gladly serve the house, and yield to his

parents a kind of homage that even anticipates their wishes, just

because he has learned to be in subjection, with all gravity, under

restrictions that were once a sore limit on his patience.

At the same time it should never be forgotten, in this due assertion of

authority and restrictive law, that there is a great difference between

the imperative and the dictatorial; between the exact and the exacting.

I have spoken already of the common fault of commanding overmuch, and

forgetting or omitting to enforce what is commanded; there is another

kind of fault which commands overmuch, and rigidly exacts what is

commanded; laying on commands, as it seems to the child, just because

it can, or is willing to gall his peace by exacting something that

shall cut away even the semblance of liberty. No parent has a right to

put oppression on a child, in the name of authority. And if he uses

authority in that way, to annoy the child's peace, and even to forbid

his possession of himself, he should not complain, if the impatience he

creates grows into a bitter animosity, and finally a stiff rebellion.

Nothing should ever be commanded except what is needed and required by

the most positive reasons, whether those reasons are made known or not.

Another qualification here to be observed, belongs to what may be

called the emancipation of the child. A wise parent understands that

his government is to be crowned by an act of emancipation; and it is a

great problem, to accomplish that emancipation gracefully. Pure

authority, up to the last limit of minority, then a total,

instantaneous self-possession, makes an awkward transition. A young

eagle kept in the nest and brooded over till his beak and talons are.

full-grown, then pitched out of it and required to take care of

himself, will most certainly be dashed upon the ground. The

emancipating process, in order to be well finished, should begin early,

and should pass imperceptibly, even as age increases imperceptibly.

Thus the child, after being ruled for a time, by pure authority, should

begin, as the understanding is developed, to have some of the reasons

given why it is required to abstain, or do, or practice, in this or

that way instead of some other. The tastes of the child, too, should

begin to be a little consulted, in respect to his school, his studies,

his future engagements in life. When he is old enough to go on errands,

and to labor in various employments for the benefit of the family, he

should be let into the condition of the family far enough to be

identified with it, and have the family cause, and property, and hope,

for his own. Built into the family fortunes and sympathies, in this

manner, he will begin, at a very early day, to command himself for it,

and so will get ready to command himself for himself, in a way that

will be just as if the parental authority were still running on, after

it has quite run by.

Is it necessary to add that a parent who governs at the point of

authority will not, of course, allow himself to be known only as a

bundle of commandments? In order to have authority, he must have life,

sympathy, feeling unbent in play. He must connect a gospel with his

law, and so instead of being a law over the house, he must undertake to

be a law written in the heart; winning love as commanding out of love,

consummating obedience, by the glad and joyous element in which he

bathes the playful homage and trust of his children.

As to the motives addressed by family government in a way of

maintaining or securing obedience, they need to be of two kinds; such

as belong to a character in principle, and such as belong to a

character that is equivocal in it, or fallen below it. The first kind

should never be left out of sight. They are such as these: doing right

because it is right; loving God because he loves the right; God's

approbation; the approbation of a good conscience; the sense of honor

with himself, as opposed to the meanness of lying and deceit. These

are, by distinction, the religious motives; and where these are

completely ignored, all others are radically faulty, of course. But

there is, beside, a very great and hurtful mistake that is commonly

made in choosing, from among the lower and second-class motives, those

which are really most questionable, and most likely to be followed by

sinister effects. Here again we are to follow God, who undertaken to

dislodge us, in the plane below principle, or keep us from settling

into it, by raking it, every way, in a cannonade of penalty and fear.

No, say the plausible sophisters of our day, in what they take to be

its better wisdom, fear is a mean and servile motive; we will not make

cowards of our children. They do not observe the very considerable

distinction between terror and fear; that terror lays hold of passion,

fear of intelligence: that one dispossesses the soul, the other nerves

it to a wise and rational prudence; that one scatters all distinctions

of principle, and the other turns the soul thoughtfully towards

principle. Missing this distinction, they make their appeal sometimes

to the sense of honor before men, frequently to the sense of

appearance, or to what will be the appearance of the family, not less

frequently to the desire of success in life; praising the shows of

bravery and spirit, deifying, so to speak, human conventionalities and

laws of fashion. They do not see the total want of dignity in these ap

peals; how they all put shams and shows, and falsities, in the place of

solid realities; how they sort with all lying semblances of virtue, run

the soul into all most cowardly fictions of time-serving, pretense,

hypocrisy, sycophancy, and make even hollowness itself the principal

substance of life. Therefore it is that God appeals to fear, backs

authority and law by penalties that waken fear; because this one

prudential motive has a place by itself, in not being positive or

acquisitive, in any sense, but only negative; and so far has the

semblance of unselfishness. It makes no one selfish to fear, though

fear, as a motive, is not up to the level of principle loved for its

own sake. The wise parent, therefore, will not be wiser than God; and

wheresoever fear is needed, he will speak to fear, and make as little

as possible of appearance, popularity, and opinion, understanding that,

if he is to have his children in subjection with all gravity, they must

be brought into God's principle, by a motive that is unambitious,

unworldly and real, and turns the soul away by no computations of pride

and airy pretense.

There is, then, to be such a thing as penalty, or punishment, in the

government of the house. And here again is a place where large

consideration is requisite. First of all, it should be threatened as

seldom as possible, and next as seldom executed as possible. It is a

most wretched and coarse barbarity that turns the house into a

penitentiary, or house of correction. Where the management is right in

other respects, punishment will be very seldom needed. And those

parents who make it a point of fidelity, that they keep the flail of

chastisement always a going, have a better title to the bastinado

themselves than to any Christian congratulations. The punishments

dispensed should never be such as have a character of ignominy; and

therefore, except in cases of really ignominious wickedness, it would

be better to avoid, as far as may be, the infliction of pain upon the

person. For the same reason the discipline should, if possible, be

entirely private; a matter between the parent and child. Thus it is

well said by Dr. Tiersch, "If ever a severe punishment is necessary, it

must be carried out so as to spare the child's self-respect; not in the

presence of his brothers and sisters, nor of the servants. For a

wholesome terror to the others, it is enough if they perceive, at a

distance, something of that which happens. And if only the smallest

triumph over his misfortune, the least degree of mockery arise,

bitterness and a loss of self-respect are the consequences to the

child." [19]

Punishments should be severe enough to serve their purpose; and gentle

enough to show, if possible, a tenderness that is averse from the

infliction. There is no abuse more shocking, than when they are

administered by sheer impatience, or in a fit of passion. Nor is the

case at all softened, when they are administered without feeling, in a

manner of uncaring hardness. Whenever the sad necessity arrives, there

should be time enough taken, after the wrong or detection, to produce a

calm and thoughtful revision; and a just concern for the wrong, as

evinced by the parent, should be wakened, if possible, in the child. I

would not be understood, however, in advising this more tardy and

delicate way of proceeding, to justify no exceptions. There are cases,

now and then, in the outrageous and shocking misconduct of some boy,

where an explosion is wanted; where the father represents God best, by

some terrible outburst of indignant violated feeling, and becomes an

instant avenger, without any counsel or preparation whatever. Nothing

else expresses fitly what is due to such kind of conduct. And there is

many a grown up man, who will remember such an hour of discipline, as

the time when the ploughshare of God's truth went into his soul like

redemption itself. That was the shock that woke him up to the staunch

realities of principle; and he will recollect that father, as God's

minister, typified to all dearest, holiest, reverence, by the pungent

indignations of that time.

There is great importance in the closing of a penal discipline. Thus it

should be a law never to cease from the discipline begun, whatever it

be, till the chill is seen to be in a feeling that justifies the

discipline. He is never to be let go, or sent away, sulking, in a look

of willfulness unsubdued. Indeed, he should even be required always to

put on a pleasant, tender look, such as clears all clouds and shows a

beginning of fair weather. No reproof, or discipline, is rightly

administered till this point is reached. Nothing short of this changed

look gives any hope of a changed will. On the other hand. when the face

of disobedience brightens out into this loving and dutiful expression,

it not only shows that the malice of wrong is gone by, but, possibly,

that there is entered into the heart some real beginning of right, some

spirit of really Christian obedience. Many a child is bowed to holy

principle itself, at the happy and successful close of what, to human

eyes, is only a chapter of discipline.

In order to realize this Christian issue of discipline, it is sometimes

recommended that the child should be first prayed with, and made

conscious, in that manner, of his own wrong, as before God, and of the

truly religious intentions by which the parent is actuated. No rule of

this kind can be safely given; for there is great danger that the child

will begin to associate prayer and religion with his pains of

discipline; than which nothing could be more hurtful. It would be far

better, in most cases, if the prayer were to follow, coming in to

express and gladden his already glad repentances.

There are many things remaining still to be said, in order to a

complete view of the subject; but there are two simple cautions that

must not be omitted, and with these I close--

1. Observe that great care is needed in the processes of detection, or

the police of discovery. The child must not be allowed to go on

breaking through the orders imposed, or into the ways of vice, not

detected. This will make his life a practice in art and hypocrisy; and

what is worse, will make him also confident of success in the same.

Nothing will corrupt his moral nature more rapidly. There must be a

very close and careful watch on the part of fathers and mothers, to let

no deviation of childhood pass their discovery. And then, again, the

greatest care and address will be needed, to keep their circumspection

from taking on the look of a deliberate espionage, than which nothing

will more certainly alienate the confidence and love needful to their

just authority. Nothing wounds a child more fatally, than to see he is

not trusted. Under such an impression, he will soon become as unworthy

of trust as he has been taken to be. On the other hand, he will

naturally want to be worthy of the trust he receives. For the same

reason, he should never be set upon by volunteer charges, or

accusations which have no other merit than to be the ground of a

cross-questioning process. It is a harsh experiment that insults a

child, in order to find out whether he is innocent or guilty. Besides,

if he is guilty, there is no small risk of drawing him on to

asseverations of innocence, that will fatally break down his

truthfulness. Neither will it answer, in the case of little children,

to make then reporters of their own wrongs, by allowing the under

standing that they shall so obtain pardon. For then they are only

trained to a manner of sycophancy that mocks all government. What then

shall be done? First of all, make much of the fact, that when a child

is doing any secret wrong, he grows shy, ceases to be confiding and

demonstrative, even as Adam, when he hid himself among the trees. Then

let the watch grow close-watch his companions, the way he goes, the way

he returns, his times, what he says, and what he particularly avoids

speaking of at all; speak of his shyness, and observe the reasons he

assigns, question his reasons. It will be difficult for any young child

to escape this kind of search. Indeed, this kind of search will almost

never be needed if children are inspected carefully enough, at a very

early period, when, as yet, they are simple, and the art of wrong has

not begun to be learned. Accustomed then to the feeling that art hides

nothing, they will never try to hide any thing by it afterwards.

2. Have it as a caution that, in holding a magisterial relation,

asserting and maintaining law, discovering and redressing wrong, you

are never, as parents, to lose out the parental; never to check the

demonstrations of your love; never to cease from the intercourse of

play. If you assert the law, as you must, then you must have your

gospel to go with it; your pardons judiciously dispensed, your

Christian sympathies flowing out in modes of Christian concern, your

whole administration tempered by tenderness. Above all, see that your

patience is not easily broken, or exhausted. If your authority is not

established in a day, you have small reason, in that fact, to be

fretted, or discouraged and the less reason, if you are and are seen to

be, to believe that it ever can be established. There will sometimes be

a child, or children, given, that have a more restive and less easily

reducible nature than others, and partly because they have more to

reduce. Time with such is commonly a great element, and as time is

needed for them, patience will be needed in you. Let them have a little

more experience of themselves, and of what a good and wise regulation

means; let their rational nature be farther unfolded and come to your

aid, and they will be gradually taking sides with your authority. The

other and more tractable children, winning on their respect, will also

assist in the taming of their repugnances. Meantime God, who perhaps

gave you this trial to complete your patience, and purify all graces in

you, will be raising you to a higher pitch of character and authority,

which no most wayward child can well resist. And so it will be your

satisfaction to see, in due time, that your reward is coming; that your

children are growing into all truth and order together; melting into

all confidence and good understanding with authority itself. Your

triumph will now be sealed. You will have your house in subjection with

all gravity; a little bishopric, as the apostle would say, gathered in

heaven's truth and unity, obedient, Christian filial, and free.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[18] Page 99.

[19] Page 153.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

VI.

PLAYS AND PASTIMES, HOLIDAYS AND SUNDAYS.

"And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in

the streets thereof."--Zechariah, vii. 5.

HAPPY days are these that figure in the prophet's vision. The people of

the city are accustomed to scenes that are widely different, and give a

peculiar zest to his picture. In the times of pestilence, in the

horrors of the siege, in the sweeping out of captivity, what silence of

desolation have they seen--the silence of ghastly death, the silence of

gaunt famine, the silence of emptiness and depopulated life. It shall

no more be so; the city shall be God's mountain, sheltered under his

care, exempt from all the past desolations of pestilence and

war--peaceful, populous, secure, and strong. All which is shown by two

simple touches that make out the complete picture--"There shall yet old

men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with

his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall

be full of boys and girls, playing in the streets thereof."

We can see, too, for ourselves that the prophet's feeling goes into his

picture; and that he has a natural delight in it himself. He sees the

venerable crones gathering at the corners, and blesses himself in the

sight; hears the ring of happy voices in the streets and market-places,

and plays his feeling in, with the playing boys and girls of the Lord's

glad mountain. Inspiration has not taken the nature out of him, but has

only made him love the innocent glee of childhood the more.

I draw it, accordingly, from this beautiful touch of the prophet's

picture, that religion loves too much the plays and pleasures of

childhood, to limit or suppress them by any kind of needless austerity.

Having set the young of all the animal races a playing, and made their

beginning an age of frisking life and joyous gambol, it would be

singular if God had made the young of humanity an exception; or if,

having put the same sportive instinct in their make, he should restrict

them always to a carefully practical and sober mood. What indeed does

he permit us to see, in the universal mirth-time which is given to be

the beginning of every creature's life, but that He takes a certain

pleasure in their exuberant life, and regards their gambols with a

fatherly satisfaction? What, too, shall we judge, but that as all

instincts are inserted for that to which they tend, so this instinct of

play in children is itself an appointment of play?

Besides, there is a very sublime reason for the play-state of childhood

which respects the moral and religious well-being of manhood, and makes

it important that we should have our first chapter of life in this key.

Play is the symbol and interpreter of liberty, that is, Christian

liberty; and no one could ever sufficiently conceive the state of free

impulse and the joy there is in it, save by means of this

unconstrained, always pleasurable activity, that we call the play of

children. Play wants no motive but play; and so true goodness, when it

is ripe in the soul and is become a complete inspiration there, will

ask no motive but to be good. Therefore God has purposely set the

beginning of the natural life in a mood that foreshadows the last and

highest chapter of immortal character. Just as he has made hunger in

the body to represent hunger in the soul, thirst in the body to

represent thirst in the soul, what is sweet, bitter, sour in the taste

to represent what is sweet, bitter, sour in the soul's feeling,

lameness to represent the hobbling of false principle, the fierce

combustion of heat to represent the rage of angry passion, all things

natural to represent all things spiritual, so he prepares, at the very

beginning of our life, in the free self-impulsion of play, that which

is to foreshadow the glorious liberty of the soul's ripe order and

attainment in good. One is the paradise of nature behind us, the other

the paradise of grace before us; and the recollection of one images to

us, and stimulates us in, the pursuit of the other.

Holding this conception of the uses, and the very great importance of

play, as a natural interpreter of what is highest and last in the grand

problem of our life itself, we are led, on sober and even religious

conviction, to hold in high estimation the age of play. As play is the

forerunner of religion. so religion is to be the friend of play; to

love its free motion, its happy scenes, its voices of glee, and never,

by any needless austerities of control, seek to hamper and shorten its

pleasures. Any sort of piety or supposed piety that i.s jealous of the

plays and bounding activities of childish life, is a character of

hardness and severity that has, so far at least, but a very

questionable agreement with God's more genial and fatherly feeling. One

of the first duties of a genuinely Christian parent is, to show a

generous sympathy with the plays of his children; providing playthings

and means of play, giving them playtimes, inviting suitable companions

for them, and requiring them to have it as one of their pleasures, to

keep such companions entertained in their plays, instead of playing

always for their own mere self-pleasing. Sometimes, too, the parent,

having a hearty interest in the plays of his children, will drop out

for the time the sense of his years, and go into the frolic of their

mood with them. They will enjoy no other play-time so much as that, and

it will have the effect to make the authority, so far unbent, just as

much stronger and more welcome, as it has brought itself closer to

them, and given them a more complete show of sympathy.

On the same principle, it has an excellent effect to make much of the

birthdays of children, because it shows them, little and dependent as

they are, to be held in so much greater estimation in the house. When

they have each their own day, when that day is so remembered and

observed as to indicate a real and felt interest in it by all, then the

home in which they are so cherished is proportionally endeared to

feeling, and what has magnified them they are ready to magnify.

On the same principle, too, public days and festivals, those of the

school, those of the state, and those of religion, are to be looked

upon with favor, as times in which they are to be gladdened by the

shows, and plays, and simple pleasures appropriate to the occasions;

care being only taken to put them in no connection with vice, or any

possible excess. Let them see what is to be seen, enjoy what is to be

enjoyed, and shun with just so much greater sensibility whatever is

loose, or wild, or wicked.

Religious festivals have a peculiar value to children; such I mean as

the festivals of Thanksgiving and Christmas--one a festival of thanks

for the benefits of Providence, the other for the benefits of that

supernatural providence which has given the world a Saviour and a

salvation. Both are religious, and, in that fact, have their value; for

nothing will go farther to remove the annoyance of a continual,

unsparing, dry restraint upon the soul of childhood, and produce a

feeling, as respects religion, of its really genial character, than to

have it bring its festive and joyously commemorative days. One of the

great difficulties in a properly religious nurture is, that religion

has to open its approaches to the soul, and make its beginnings in the

shape of law; to say God requires of you this, forbids you in that,

makes it your life to be set in all ways of obedience. It takes on thus

a guise of constraint, and so far wears a repulsive look; but if it can

show how genial it is, how truly it loves even childish enjoyment, by

gilding for it days of joy and festive celebrations, then the

severities of law and responsible obedience take on themselves a look

of benignity, and it begins to be felt that God commands us, not to

cripple us, but to keep as safe and lead us into good. Such days, it is

true, may be greatly abused by what is really unchristian; what is

sensual and low, and very close to vice itself; and it is much to be

regretted that the Christmas festival, otherwise so beautiful and

appropriate, taken as a Christian commemoration of the greatest fact of

the world's history, has been so commonly associated with traditional

looseness and excess. The friends of such a day can not do it any so

great honor, as to clear it entirely of the excess and profane jollity

by which it was made to commemorate any thing and every thing but

Christ, that, setting it in character as a genuine religious festivity,

they may give it to all friends of Christ as a day of universal

observance.

Happily there is now such an abundance of games and plays prepared for

the entertainment of children, that there is no need of allowing them

in any that stand associated with vice. Those plays are generally to be

most favored that are to be had only in the open air, and in forms of

exercise that give sprightliness and robustness to the body. At the

same time, there needs to be a preparation of devices for the

entertainment of children indoors in the evening; for the prophet did

not give it as a picture of the happy days of Jerusalem, that the

streets of the city should be full of boys and girls playing there in

the evening, or into the night, away from their parents and the

supervision of their home. There is any thing signified in that but

happiness and public well-being. Christian fathers and mothers will

never suffer their children to be out in the public streets in the

evening, unless they are themselves too loose and self-indulgent to

assume that care of the conduct and the hours of their children, which

is imposed upon them by their parental responsibilities. In country

places, far removed from all the haunts of vice, and in neighborhoods

where there are no vicious children, it might work no injury if boys

were allowed to be out, now and then, in their coasting or skating

parties in the evening. But the better rule in large towns, the

absolute rule, having no exceptions as regards very young children,

will be that they are never to be out or away from home in the evening.

Meantime, it will be the duty of the parents, and a kind of study

especially of the mother, to find methods of making the house no mere

prison. but a place of attraction, and of always cheerful and pleasant

society. She will provide books that will feed their intelligence and

exercise their tastes--pictures, games, diversions, plays; set them to

inventing such themselves, teaching them how to carry on their little

society, in the playful turns of good nature and fun, by which they

stimulate and quicken each other; drilling them in music, and setting

them forward in it by such beginnings that they will shortly be found

exercising and training each other; shedding over all the play,

infusing into all the glee, a certain sober and thoughtful look of

character and principle, so that no over grown appetite for sport may

render violent pleasures necessary, but that small, and gentle, and

easy, and almost sober pleasures, may suffice; becoming, at last, ever

most satisfactory. Here is the field of the mother's greatest art, viz:

in the finding how to make a happy and good evening for her children.

Here it is that the lax, faithless, worthless mother most entirely

fails; here the good and wise mother wins her best successes.

Meantime some care must be exercised, that the religious life itself be

never set in an attitude of repugnance to the plays of childhood. There

must be no attempt to raise a conscience against play. Any such

religion will certainly go to the wall; any such conscience will be

certainly trampled, and things innocent will be done as if they were

crimes; done with a guilty feeling; done with as bad effects every way,

on the character, as if they were really the worst things. Nothing is

more cruel than to throw a child into the attitude of conflict with God

and his conscience, by raising a false conscience against that which

both God and nature approve. It is nothing less than making a

gratuitous loss of religion, required by no terms of reason, justified

by no principle, even of Christian sacrifice itself.

Suppose, for example, that a child has begun to show many pleasant

evidences of love to God and all good things, but that he is eager

still in play, or sometimes gets quite wild in the excitement of it.

If, at such a time, it is sprung upon him, as a conclusion, that he

does not truly love God, because he is so much taken by the excitements

of play, he will thus be discouraged without reason, in all his

confidences of piety, and it will be strange, if by and by he does not

begin to show a settled aversion to religious things. How can he do

less, when he is compelled to see it, as in conflict with all the most

innocent and most truly natural instincts of his age? Or, to make the

case more plain, drawing the question to a closer point, suppose the

child, having so many evidences of piety in his dispositions, to be

found at some kind of play in the family prayers, or that he rushes out

from such prayers, in a manner that indicates eagerness and an

emancipated feeling, or that he sometimes shows uneasiness in the hours

of public worship on Sunday, or gives manifest tokens, in the morning,

of a desire to escape from it, is it then to be set down, in your

parental remonstrances with him, that he has, of course, no love to

God, or the things of religion? By no means. How often does the adult

Christian feel even a disinclination to such things; how often hurry

away from his formal prayer, that he may get into his shop, or his

field, or into some negotiation that has haunted his sleep in the

night; how often sit through sermons with his mind on the game of

politics, on the investment made or to be made, on his journey, or his

mortgage, or the rivals he has in his trade? Is it worse for a child to

be after his plays, with only the same kind of eagerness? Doubtless all

such engrossments of the soul, whether of one kind or the other, are to

be taken as bad signs, and, as far as they go, to be allowed their due

weight. But which is worse and more fatal, the child's undue possession

by the spirit of play, or the man's by the spirit of gain--the honest,

artless, letting forth of nature by one, or the deliberate, studied,

scheming of the other--it is not difficult, I think, to guess. No

matter if the latter is more sober and thoughtful in the mood,

observing a better show of gravity. For just that reason he is only to

be judged the more harshly. If then we can beat with adult Christians,

who are much in the world, and, forgetting themselves often, fall into

moods of real disinclination to their duty, are we to set it down as

some total evidence against the piety of a child, that, by mere

exuberance of life, he is occasionally hurried away from sacred things,

into matters of play? Nothing is more unjust. Why should we require it

of a child to be perfect, when we do not require it of a man? And if we

tolerate inconstancy of feeling or impulse in one, why not a much less

worldly and deliberate inconstancy in the other?

Thus far we speak for the side of play, showing how far off it is from

the purpose of religion to take away, or suppress, the innocent plays

of childhood; how ready it is, on the other hand, to foster them and

give them sympathy. But it is not the whole of life, even to a child,

to be indulged in play. There is such a thing as order, no less than

such a thing as liberty; and the process of adjustment between these

two contending powers, begins at a very early date. Under the law of

the house, of the school, and of God, the mere play impulse begins very

soon to be tempered and moderated by duty, and the problem is to make

divine order itself, at last, a state of liberty analogous to the state

of play, as already suggested. But the law that is to fashion such

order will be first felt as a restriction; then, when it becomes the

spirit of the life, the order itself will be liberty. There is no such

thing, therefore, as a possibility to childhood of unrestricted play.

Restriction must be encountered as often as the order of the house

demands it, then as often as the school demands it, then as often as

the duties of religion demand it; though such restrictions are never to

be looked upon as hostile to the child's play, but only as terms that

are really necessary for his training into the organic relations under

which he is born, best for his character, and even best for the

enjoyments of his play itself. Otherwise he would either become sated

by it in a short time, or his appetite for it would become so

egregiously overgrown, that no possible devices or means could be

invented to keep pace with it. Besides, a child, thus put to nothing

but mere play, would very soon grow into such lightness and dissipation

of feeling, as to be mentally addled, and would so be wholly

incapacitated for any of the more sober an4 manly offices of life.

Here, then, begins a process of training into moral order, which,

without wishing to be any restriction upon play, is yet of necessity

such a restriction. The child is required to conform his conduct,

including his plays, to the peace of the house, to the conditions of

sick persons in it to the hours and times and general comfort of other

inmates older than himself. Errands are put upon him that require him

to forego his pleasures. When he is old enough, he is set to works of

industry, it may be, that he may contribute something to the general

benefit. By all which restrictions of play, lie is only prepared to

enjoy his pastimes and plays the more. The restrictions he will

doubtless feel, at the time, and may be somewhat restive under them;

but when he is thoroughly brought into the order of the house, and is

set in the habit of serving it, as an interest of his own, then he will

obey, contrive, and work, and even drudge himself to serve it,

constrained by no motive but the service itself.

In the same manner it will be laid upon him to be at his place in the

school, to be punctual to his times, to miss no lesson, to hold his

mind to his studies by close, unfaltering application, even though it

cost him a loss of just that liberty in play that he would most like,

and take it as the very bliss of his good fortune to have. Restricted

thus by the order of the school, he will only enjoy his play-times the

more, and finally will come to the enjoyment of study itself for its

own sake.

And so it will be in religion. There must, of course, be in it, what

may be called restrictions upon children. All law is felt as

restriction at the first, but it will not be that God makes war on

their innocent plays; they only need as much to be established in right

conduct, well-doing, and piety, as to have their indulgence in such

pleasures. If God will take them away from all misrule and

wretchedness, and will bring them into all best conditions of

blessedness and peace, and even of liberty itself, he must pit them

under his commandments, train them into his divine will, and settle

them in his own perfect order; and if he is obliged, in such a design,

to infringe here and there upon their plays, it is not be cause he

likes the infringement, but only that he seeks the higher bliss of

character for them. Thus when a little child is required to say his

prayers and retire at the proper time for sleep, there is nothing to

complain of in that kind of constraint, even though he wants to

continue his play; for the thing required is plainly for his good--this

for the double reason that it trains him toward obedience to God, and a

life in heaven's order, and because it even gives him a better

appetite, and a fuller fund of vigor for, his play itself. And so it is

universally; no constraint is to be blamed as infringement on his

happiness, or a harsh severity against his pleasures, when, in fact,

all highest happiness and widest range of liberty depend on the

requirement imposed.

The suggestions and distinctions thus far advanced, have, it will now

be seen, another kind of use and importance, when taken as preparatives

for the settlement of a great practical question, viz: how to use the

Christian Sabbath, or Sunday. so as to best honor the day in its true

import, and best secure the ends of Christian nurture. The question is

one that relates to a whole seventh part of the child's time, and to

just that part which is most peculiarly religious in the form, and most

likely to assist the implanting and due fostering of religious

impressions. So much indeed is there in this matter of a right use of

Sundays, that the success of family nurture will be more exactly

represented and measured by that use, than by any thing else. Sunday is

preeminently the child's day for the soul, and the defective or bad use

of it is never going to be compensated, by any wisest, best use of the

other six days of the week. Indeed there is so much depending on this

day, as regards human society, and the growth, and purity, and power of

religion, that where it is lost in the training of families, no other

kind of advantage--no liturgical drill, or eloquent preaching, or

faithful and clear doctrine--can possibly make up the loss.

The main question, here, is how much, or little, of restriction is to

be laid upon children in the due observance of the day? And the

tendency is, it will be observed, to one or the other of two opposite

extremes--that of undue severity, or that of unchristian looseness--and

this, for two distinct sets of reasons. Sometimes for the reason of

self-indulgence, or indolence in the parents; and sometimes for the

reason of insufficient views of the day, as it stands in the Scripture,

or in the judgments to be held of its uses. Thus it will be noted--

1. That, where parents are too indolent for any kind of painstaking in

their families, they will contrive to case the burdens of their duty by

one or the other of two distinct methods. They will either take up the

notion that it is best and most soundly orthodox, to make a very stiff

practice for their children; in which case they will perhaps require

them to sit down within doors a good part of the day, learning

catechism or scripture, stilling the house in that manner so as to

allow them to sleep; or else they will take up the notion that, in

modern times, we are to be more liberal, of course, being more

intelligent; in which case they will get their children off to the

Sunday-school, (with a lesson, or without,) or if they better like it,

send them into the streets, or the fields. Here is the first great

obstacle to be encountered, in securing a right and useful Sunday in

families, viz: that invincible self-indulgence in parents, which is the

bane of all true care and responsibility; the poison, too, of all

honest judgment in finding what the way of duty is. They have

frequently nc such earnest and prayerful desire of the religious

benefit of their children, as fastens their own attention, or presses

them into a study of plans and expedients for creating a religious

interest in their minds. And then a double mischief follows, viz: that

they grow rusty themselves in their religious character, and having no

good conscience, subside into a state of silence and acknowledged

incapacity; and next, that, having become mere drones of respectful

nothingness in the positive duties of religion, they stand as actual

impediments in the way of all genuine religious impressions in their

families. The man who can make sacrifices and take pains for his

children at home will grow, and be a useful Christian every where; and

the man who can not, will be a dead weight every where. Here is the

secret of a great part of that drying up of character which we so often

deplore; and the secret also of that strangely irreligious temper, that

hatred and contempt of all religion, that so often excites our wonder

in the children of nominally Christian families. Let no parent hope to

have God's blessing on the Sundays of his house, or indeed on any thing

else that concerns the religious welfare of his children, unless he is

willing to take pains, make sacrifices, burn as a light of holy

example, for them and before them. Pass then,

2. To the inquiry what is the true conception of our Lord's day, or

Sunday? What, according to the Scripture, and to all sound judgment of

the day, as related to the Christian training of families, and to the

general welfare of society, is the mode and amount of restriction

imposed by it? I think it will be found, in giving a right answer to

this question, that the true use of the day lies between two errors, or

extremes, that stand over against each other; one that makes a

virtually Jewish day of it, and an opposite that, with undue haste,

quite sweeps it away. Neither is the mode of scripture, and the two are

about equally weak, as regards their philosophic grounds and reasons.

According to the Scripture, God ordained a religious day, called a

Sabbath, at the very morning of the creation. This was the day that

Moses found already existing and only re-enacted in the ten tables of

the moral law, as he did the statutes against lying and murder. The

Sabbath stands, therefore, on precisely the same ground, scripturally,

as the others; on the same too morally, save that the precise natural

and social reasons for it, equally clear to God, are not so to us; and

that, so far, it has the character to us of a simply divine institute,

while the other nine statutes of the decalogue have the nature of

acknowledged principles, grounded in their perceptible moral reasons.

Could we also grasp, as God does, the precise natural reasons for

observing just one day in seven as holy time, tracing perfectly the

vast religious, and social, and moral, and physical effects involved,

it would have no more the look of an institute, and would become a

principle of natural obligation, like the others that stand with it.

In this view, it can not be repealed any more than the statute against

theft, or false witness. It is not a Jewish day, in any proper sense of

the term, but a day of humanity, a world's-creation day; type also and

ground of the new-creation day of the Lord. Moses went on, it is true,

after the delivery of the decalogue, and ordained laws civil, and

police regulations, by which the Sabbath was to be observed and

enforced, and it was these that gave a Jewish character to their

Sabbath. And, so far, no farther, it was that the Sabbath was repealed,

in becoming a Lord's day. When Paul complains to the Colossians, that

they "observe new moons and Sabbaths," and boldly rebukes the

Galatians, that they "turn again to the beggarly elements desiring to

be in bondage," and "observe days, and months, and times, and years,"

he does not mean to call the seventh day of the decalogue beggarly

elements, any more than he does the command to have but one God, or not

to steal or kill. The beggarly elements are the political additions,

those rigors of observance that were added by the political statutes

and the religious drill of the ritual; designed, as it was, for a

slavish people, low in their perceptions, and unable to know religion

at all, save in the practice of austerities under it. Restriction was

to them, at their low point, about the only religious conception they

were equal to, and their whole ritual economy had a great part of its

merit, in the stringent closeness of it, and the perpetual girding of

their practice under its hard austerities. So far the whole economy was

to be displaced, and the civil-law Sabbath was to go down with it. But

the more ancient Sabbath be longed to the covenant of promise itself,

and had the same kind of freedom and genial life in it that pertained,

in Paul's view, to the whole Abrahamic order in religion. We can see

too, for ourselves, that, so far as it is affirmed in the moral code of

the decalogue, in distinction from the civil law, it has a character of

extreme beauty and benignity. What can be a more genial token for God,

than that he appoints such an institute of universal rest from labor?

And what could evidence a more beautiful mercy than that God should

take the part, in this manner, of all labor, even that of servants and

slaves, and indeed of the laboring beasts, the oxen and the asses,

asserting his protection over them (beautiful lesson of mercy to

animals!) even against the selfishness of their owners, and allowing

them to have a respite to their otherwise endless toils. There is, in

fact, no restrictive word in the commandment, save what may be felt of

restriction in the injunction to "keep the day holy," and even that is

interpreted, to a great degree, by the simple requirement of a

cessation from labor; though it is, doubtless, to be understood that

the day is duly hallowed, only by a careful devotion of it to the uses

of religion. Is there any thing harsh or unduly restrictive in such a

day? Does Christianity itself find any thing to accuse, or any want of

benignity in it?

There is, then, no pretext of authority in the Scripture for making the

Lord's day, or Sunday, a Jewish day to children. And those parents who

make it a point of fidelity to lay it on their children, according to

the strict police regulations of the Jewish code, would be much more

orthodox, if they went farther back, and took up conceptions of the day

some thousands of years older. When they assume that every thing which

can be called play in a very young child is wrong, or an offense

against religion, they try, in fact, to make Galatians of their

children; incurring a much harsher, Christian rebuke, than if they only

turned to the beggarly elements themselves, and laid their own souls

under the bondage. What can a poor child do, that is cut off thus, for

a whole twenty-four hours, from any right to vent his exuberant

feeling--impounded, strictly, in the house and shut up to catechism; or

taken to church, there to fold his hands and sit out the long

solemnities of the worship, and what to him is the mysterious lingo of

preaching; then taken home again to struggle with the pent up fires,

waiting in dreary and forlorn vacancy, till what are called the mercies

of the day are over? What conception does he get of religion, by such

kind of treatment, but that it comes to the world as foe to every

bright thing in it; a burden, a weariness, a tariff, on the other six

days of life?

But there comes in, here, a grand scripture reason for some sort of

restriction, viz: that restriction is the necessary first stage of

spiritual training every where. Instead of rushing into the conclusion,

therefore, as many parents do, that all religious observances which

create a feeling of restraint, or become at all irksome to children,

are of course hurtful, and raise a prejudice in their minds against

religion, the Scripture boldly asserts the fact that all law begins to

be felt as a bondage. Law and gospel have a natural relationship, and

they are bound together every where, by a firm interior necessity. It

is so in the family, in the school, and in religion. The law state is

always felt to be a bondage, and the restriction is irksome. By and by,

the goodness of the law, and of them by whom it is administered, is

fully discovered, and the obedience that began as restriction merges in

liberty. The parents are obeyed with such care, as anticipates even

their wishes; the lesson, that was a task, is succeeded by that free

application which sacrifices even health and life to the eagerness of

study; and so the law of God, that was originally felt only in the

friction, rubbed in by that friction, is finally melted into the heart

by the cross of Jesus, and becomes the soul's liberty itself. It is no

fault then of a Sunday that it is felt, in some proper degree, as a

restriction; or even that the day is sometimes a little irksome to the

extreme restlessness of children. All restraint, whether in the family

or the school, is likely to be somewhat irksome at the first. The

untamed will, the wild impulse of nature, always begins to feel even

principle itself in that way of collision with it. Nor is it any fault

of the Sunday observance, that it has, to us, the character of an

institute. If it were a mere law of natural morality, we might observe

it without any thought of God's will; but if we receive it as an

institute, we acknowledge God's will in it; and nothing has a more

wholesome effect on just this account, than the being trained to an

habitual surrender to what God has confessedly enjoined or instituted

by his will. It is the acknowledging of his pure authority, and is all

the more beneficial, when the authority is felt in a somewhat

restrictive way. The transition too is easy from this to a belief in

the supernatural facts of Christianity. The conscience and life is

already configured to such faith; for whatever is accepted as an

institution of God, is accepted as the supernatural injunction of his

will.

The flash judgments, therefore, of many, in respect to the observance

of Sunday, are not to be hastily accepted. We are not to read the

prophet, as if promising that the streets of the city shall be full of

boys and girls, on the Lord's holy day, playing in the streets thereof;

or as if that kind of license were necessary to clear the irksomeness

of an oppressive observance; or as if the power of religion were to be

increased by removing every thing in it, which disturbs the natural

impatience of restraint. Some child that was, for example, now grown up

to be a man--a profligate it may be, a sworn infidel, a hater of all

religion--laughs at the pious Sundays that his godly mother made him

keep, and testifies to the bitter annoyance he suffered under the

irksome and superstitious restrictions thus imposed on his childish

liberty. Whereupon some liberalist or hasty and superficial disciple,

immediately infers that all Sunday restrictions are injurious, and only

raise a hostile feeling in the child toward all religion. Whereas it

may be, in the example cited, for such are not very infrequent, that

the child was never accustomed to restriction at any other time as he

ought to have been, or that his mother was too self-indulgent to exert

herself in any such way for his religious entertainment, as to respite

and soften the strictness of the Sunday observance. Perhaps the

requirement was really too restrictive, or perhaps it was so little and

so unevenly restrictive, as to make it only the more annoying. Be it as

it may, in this or any particular example, a true Sunday observance

needs to be restrictive in a certain degree, and needs to be felt in

that way, in order to its real benefit. What is wanted is to have God's

will felt in it, and then to have it reverently and willingly accepted.

A Sunday turned into a holiday, to avoid the supposed evil of

restrictiveness, would be destitute of religious value for just that

reason.

The true principle of Sunday observance, then, appears to be this: that

the child is to feel the day as a restriction, and is to have so much

done to excite interest, and mitigate the severities of restriction,

that he will also feel the true benignity of God in the day, and learn

to have it as one of his enjoyments. When the child is very young, or

just passing out of infancy, it will be enough that, with some simple

teaching about God and his day, a part of his more noisy playthings are

taken away; or, what is better than this, that he have a distinct

Sunday set of playthings; such as may represent points of religious

history, or associate religious ideas, abundance of which can be

selected from any variety store without difficulty; then, as the child

advances in age, so as to take the full meaning of language, or so as

to be able to read, the playthings of the hands and eyes will be

substituted by the playthings of the mind; which also will be such as

connect some kind of religious interest--books and pictures relating to

scripture subjects, a practice in the learning and beginning to sing

Christian hymns, conversations about God and Christ, such as bring out

the beauty of God's feeling and character, and present Him, not so much

as a frightful, but more as a friendly and attractive being; for the

child who is only scared by God's terrors and severities, will very

soon lose out all proportional conceptions of him, and will want to

hear of him no more. Even the Sunday itself that only brings him to

mind will, for just that reason, become a burden. The endeavor should

be to excite a welcome interest in the day and the subjects it recalls.

And the devices that may be used are endless. The natural history of

Palestine, the rivers, lakes, mountains, every city, every plain, will

be easily associated in the child's memory, with the events and

characters, and religious transactions of the sacred history; so with

lessons of duty and sentiments of piety. For such uses, an embossed map

of the Holy Land would be invaluable in a family of young children.

Here are marked the sites of towns and cities, and the face of the

ground is given on which they stood, or stand. Here was the locality of

a battle, on this mountain or slope, or in this plain, or by this

river. Here dwelt some patriarch, or prophet, or ministering woman.

Looking over these ranges of mountain, through these valleys, and

across these lakes and plains, questions of locality, geography,

prospect, transaction, miracle, travel, can be raised with endless

variety, such as will sharpen the intellectual curiosity, and the sense

of religion together. The whole country may be daguerreotyped in this

manner on the child's mind, and a tenfold interest excited in every

event, whether of the Old or New Testament history.

The day itself also will be raising fruitful topics of inquiry. The

topics of public preaching, especially those which relate to

Christ--Christ the child, Christ the friend, brother, bread, way,

reconciling grace--will raise interesting questions in the child's

mind, and he will be delighted if the parent can make out a good and

lively child's version of them.

Hearing much too of the church, and the communion of saints in its

order and ordinances, he will want to know more exactly what the church

is, what it is for, and who are in it. And when he is rightly informed

concerning it, as being God's holy family, or school, ill which all the

members are disciples or learners together, and how Christ himself

dwells in it, unseen, as the teacher and head, preserving its order

from age to age, and dispensing gifts of life and salvation to them

that are folded with him in it, how tenderly will it move his feeling,

and with what gladness, to hear that he also is a member, whom Christ

has accepted beforehand, to grow up as a disciple in it. His feeling

will thus begin at once to take sides with it, as with his family

itself, and he will be drawn along into the spirit and cause of it,

just as he is into the cause of his family.

Perhaps too he will have witnessed the sacraments, the holy supper, and

baptism as administered to infants, and he will be asking, probably,

for some explanation of these. And nothing can have a more benign

effect on a child's religious feeling than to be trained to a genuine

faith in sacraments. But, in order to this, they must be sacraments;

that is, observances appointed by God, as the occasions of a special

faith in the special visitations and powers he engages to bestow on the

receivers.

We lave become even a little jealous of sacraments. Our recoil from the

extravagances of priestly magic has been carried too far. We keep them

on foot, but we can scarcely be said to have faith in them, or to use

them. The very attitude of mind they require is what we want--want in

the family, want in the church. They set us before God in just the way

to receive Him best. He knew exactly what we wanted, and therefore gave

them to communicate his own divine power in them. Suppose that

Carthage, in giving to her sons an oath (sacramentum) of eternal

hostility to Rome, hat been able to pledge a war-grace also, going into

battle with them to make them strong before their enemy and always

victorious, how eagerly would they have taken hold of it, in the

terrible encounters of the field!

The supper then is to be a sacrament and no merely monumental affair,

as if it were a coming to the tomb of Jesus to read his inscription;

but it is to be an occasion where he is to be discerned, manifested as

discerned, in his most real, only real, presence; dispensing himself

and his reconciling peace to the soul. Explained thus to the child, in

a manner adapted to his understanding, it is also to be added--"this is

for you, and Christ is waiting to receive you and bless you in it,

whenever you can ask it truly believing that he will, according to the

faith to which you were pledged in your baptism." I see no objection

whatever to his being taken to the supper casually, whenever his

childish piety really and seriously desires it; unless some opposing

scruples in the church, or the minister, should make it unadvisible.

Christ, I am sure, would say--"Suffer the child and forbid him not."

The sacrament of baptism, which he will often see dispensed to

infants--and they ought always to be presented in a public way, or in

the open church, for that purpose--can be handled, in these Sunday

conversations, with still greater effect. This preeminently is the

child's sacrament; signifying no regenerative work done upon the child,

(opus operatum,) but the promise of an always cherishing, cleansing,

sealing mercy, in which he is to be grown, as one that is born in due

time; and which he is always to believe in, and be taking hold of, in

all his childish struggles with evil. And he is to have it, not as a

sacrament dispensed once for all and ended, but as a perpetual baptism,

always distilling upon him, pledged to go with him, overliving his many

faults and falls, and operating restoratively when it can not

progressively, assisting repentances when it can not growths in good.

He is thus to be always putting on Christ, as being baptized into

Christ, and to live in the washing of regeneration and the renewing of

the Holy Ghost, shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Sentiments of profoundest reverence for his baptism are to be always

cherished in him. He is to have it as the one pure thing that has

touched, and always touches him. Family government, the family prayers,

the saintly mother's kiss, every thing earthly, has the touch and stain

of evil; but the sacrament of God's pure Spirit has not. All purest

sympathy of God is here with him. He is God's child, and is to be God's

man. Using thus his baptism, growing up into his baptism, obligation

will be serious, but never oppressive; for he breathes for giving help,

and has it for his element.

Now all these subjects of the Sunday conversation--the church, the

supper and baptism--being institutes of God, like the day itself, chime

with the day, and go to keep alive the same institutional faith, thus

to keep alive the faith of a supernatural religion and make it

habitual. Nature being all, there is no Sunday, no church, no

sacraments. All God's institutes are set up on the world by His

immediate authority, never grown out of nature and her causes. And it

is just here that the childish affinities are most readily taken hold

of by religion. Children want the supernatural; and the Lord's day,

used in this manner, or enlivened by this kind of teaching, will

prepare an ingrown habit of faith, and will never annoy them, or worry

them, by its reasonable restrictions. They will "count the Sabbath a

delight, and the holy of the Lord honorable," and will have beside, all

the blessings of the prophet that follow. Under such a practice,

religion, or faith, will be woven into the whole texture of the family

life, and the house will become a truly Christian home. Nothing will be

remembered so fondly, or steal upon the soul with such a gladsome, yet

sacred, feeling afterward, as the recollection of these dear Sundays,

when God's light shone so brightly into the house,, and made a holiday

for childhood so nearly divine.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

VII.

THE CHRISTIAN TEACHING OF CHILDREN.

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been

assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.--2 Timothy, ii. 14.

THIS exhortation of the apostle to his young friend Timothy, is the

more remarkable that it relates to his training in the Old Testament

scriptures, which were the only sacred writings known at the time of

his childhood--"And that, from a child, thou hast known the Holy

Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through

faith which is in Christ Jesus." His father was a Greek, (Acts xvi. 1,)

and probably an unbeliever; but his mother was a woman of such piety,

that she omitted nothing in the training of her son, and the apostle

speaks of her, in the same epistle, even as having let down upon him a

kind of piety by entail. But her faithful lessons--these are what he is

now calling to mind; and it is affecting to notice that he not only

charges it on him to remember what he has learned from the Scriptures,

because they are God's word, but also to value the same things the

more, "knowing of whom he has learned them;" that is, from his gracious

and faithful mother. Under cover of this beautiful example, as it

appears in all the parties concerned, the young minister and disciple,

the godly mother and her instructions, the apostle and his

congratulations, you will perceive that I am going to speak of--

The Christian teaching of children.

And I can not do better than to notice, in the beginning, three points

which stand upon the face of the apostle's exhortation.

1. The very great importance of this teaching, when rightly dispensed.

It is not indeed the first duty of the parent, for other duties go

before, as we have already seen, preceding even the use of language.

Neither is it, as a great many parents appear to assume, a matter in

which their religious duties to their children are principally summed

up. It is not every thing to teach, or verbally instruct their

children, least of all to indoctrinate them in the formulas and

theoretic principles of the faith. But how very great importance must

there be in the teaching, when an apostle, setting his young friend in

charge as a preacher of the gospel, bids him continue still in the

teachings of his godly mother, and even to remember them for her sake.

The New Testament preacher is exhorted still to be an Old Testament

son, and is sent forth, in the power of the ancient Scripture, even

after Christ has come. And just so it will ever be true of the ripest

and tallest of God's saints, who were trained by His truth in their

childhood, that however deep in their intelligence or high in spiritual

attainments they have grown to be, the motherly and fatherly word is

working in them still; and is, in fact, the core of all spiritual

understanding in their character.

2. It is to be noted that the teaching of Timothy's mother was

scriptural--"And that, from a child, thou hast known the Holy

Scriptures." They had, as far as we have been able to learn, no

catechisms in that day. The ten commandments and certain selected

Psalms, were probably the scriptures in which they were most.

exercised, and which probably Timothy had "learned," in the sense of

having them stored in his memory. And there is this very great

advantage in the scriptural teaching, or training, that it fills the

mind with the word and light of the Spirit, and not with any mere

wisdoms of opinion. And there is the less reason, now, for going out of

the divine word to get lessons for the teaching of children, that our

scripture roll is enlarged by the addition of the words and history of

Christ himself. In a right use of the Scripture, thus amplified by the

gospel, there is no end to the subjects of interest that may be raised.

The words are simple, the facts are vital, the varieties of locality,

dialogue, incident, character, and topic, endless.

I do not undertake to say that nothing shall be taught which is not in

the words of the Scripture. But it must be obvious that very small

children are more likely to be worried and drummed into apathy by

dogmatic catechisms, than to get any profit from them. If exercised in

them at all, it should be at a later period, when their intelligence is

considerably advanced; that they may, at least, get some shadow of

meaning in them, to repay the labor of committing them to memory. It is

generally supposed, in the arguments urged for a training in catechism,

that the real advantage to be gained is the fastening or anchoring of

the child in some fixed faith. But the deplorable fact is, that what is

called a fastening is really the shutting in, or encasing of the soul,

in that particular shell of opinion--the training of the child to be a

sectarian before he is a Christian. His anchorage in some Christian

belief, which is certainly desirable, would be accomplished much more

effectually, if he were trained, for example, to recite the Apostle's

or the Nicene creed. Here he does not merely memorize, but he assents;

and, what is more, does it by an act of practical homage, or worship--a

confession. And then what he assents to is no matter of opinion, or

speculative theology, but a recitation of the supernatural facts of the

gospel, taken simply as facts. For these facts are intelligible even to

a very young child, and will be recited always with the greater

interest, that the recitation is itself a religious act, or confession.

I am principally concerned here with the case of very young children,

not with such as are farther advanced in age, or intelligence; and

there is no room for doubt, in their case, whatever may be decided in

respect to others, that the teaching of Timothy's mother, the scripture

teaching, is to be preferred. The memorizing of the ten commandments

and the Lord's prayer, followed by the Apostle's creed and the simplest

Christian hymns, connected with scripture readings, conversations, and

discussions, will compose a body of teaching specially adapted to a

child, and most likely to make him wise unto salvation.

3. It is to be noted that the most genuine teaching, or only genuine

teaching, will be that which interprets the truth to the child's

feeling by living example, and makes him love the truth afterwards for

the teacher's sake. It is a great thing for a child, in all the after

life, to "know of whom" he learned these things, and to see a godly

father, or a faithful mother, in them. No truth is really taught by

words, or interpreted by intellectual and logical methods; truth must

be lived into meaning, before it can be truly known. Examples are the

only sufficient commentaries; living epistles the only fit expounders

of written epistles. When the truly Christian father and mother teach

as being taught of God, when their prayers go into their lives and

their lives into their doctrine, when their goodness melts into the

memory, and heaven, too, breathes into the associated thoughts and

sentiments to make a kind of blessed memory for all they teach, then we

see the beautiful office they are in, fulfilled. In this manner,

Timothy was supposed to have a complete set of recollections from his

mother woven into his very feeling of the truth itself It was more true

because it had been taught him by her. There was even a sense of her

loving personality in it, by which it always had been, and was always

to be, endeared. On the other hand, it will always be found that every

kind of teaching in religion, which adds no personal interest, or

attraction to the truth, sheds no light upon it from a good and

beautiful life, is nearly or quite worthless.. And here is the

privilege of a genuinely Christian father and mother in their teaching,

that they pass into the heart's feeling of their child, side by side

with God's truth, to be forever identified with it, and to be,

themselves, lived on and over with it, in the dear eternity it gives

him.

But these are general considerations, which it is sufficient to have

suggested without further dwelling upon them. There are yet a great

many subordinate and particular points, of a more promiscuous

character, to which also I must call your attention. And I deem it here

a matter of consequence to make out, first of all, a somewhat extended

roll of things, which are not to be taught; for so many things are

taught which are not true for any body, and so many which are only

theologically true for minds in full maturity--to all others

meaningless and repulsive--that many a child is fatally stumbled in

religion, just because of his teaching.

First of all, then, children are not to be taught that they were

regenerated in their baptism. That will only convert the rite into a

superstition, and put the child in a totally false position, where he

will rest his Christian title on a mere outward transaction already

past, and what is even worse, on a function of priestly magic.

Furthermore, if the child should turn out, when he is fully grown, to

be a totally reckless and profane person, having no pretense, or even

semblance of religious character, it will now be discovered to him that

his regeneration meant nothing, had no practical effect or value, and

since there is no second baptismal regeneration, it will only be left

him to have neither any care for the old, or hope of a new that is

better. Indeed he must now be saved, for aught that appears, without

re. generation; which makes a very awkward kind of gospel. If the child

could be taught that his baptism signifies regeneration; supposing a

pledge on God's part of the necessary grace, and so the fact

presumptive, that the faith and careful training of his parents shall

be so far issued in a gracious character, that his very first putting

forth of good endeavor, (having been divinely prepared,) shall be

crowned with Christian evidence, it would be well. But no young child

can grasp such a conception evenly enough to hold it. The most that can

be said to him, therefore, of his baptism, is that God gave it to his

parents and to himself, as a pledge of the Holy Spirit, and all needed

help, that he may grow up into good, as a regenerated man.

As little are young children to be taught that they are of course

unregenerated. This, with many, is even a fixed point of orthodoxy, and

of course they have no doubt of it. They put their children on the

precise footing of heathens, and take it for granted that they are to

be converted in the same manner. But they ought not to be in the same

condition as heathens. Brought up in their society, under their

example, baptized into their faith and upon the ground of it, and

bosomed in their prayers, there ought to be seeds of gracious character

already planted in them; so that no conversion is necessary, but only

the development of a new life already begun Why should the parents cast

away their privilege, and count their child an alien still from God's

mercies?

Again, you are not to teach your children that they need, of course, to

be regenerated, because they fail in obedience, show bad tempers, and

display manifold other faults. Have you no faults yourselves? Do you

then spring it as a conclusion against yourselves, that you are

unregenerate persons, or do you take hold of God's help, with new

earnestness and confidence, that you may get strength to overcome your

faults and be clear of them? Shortcomings, faults, casual

disinclinations of feeling, are bad signs, such as ought to waken

distrust, but they are not, of course, conclusive evidences.

As little are you to teach them that they are certainly unregenerate,

or without piety, because they are light in many of their

demonstrations, full of play, abounding in frolicsome gayeties. Which

is worse and farthest from God, these innocent exuberances of life, or

the covetous, overcaring overworking, enviously plotting, sobriety of

their parents?

Again you are never to teach your very young children that they are too

young to be good, or to be really Christian. Never allow them to see

that you expect them to be pious only at some future day, when they are

older. What you despair of, or assume to be no possibility for them,

they certainly will not attempt and the discouragement of good, thus

thrown upon them, may be even fatal to their future character. Draw

them rather into your own exercises, taking always for granted, that

they will be with you. Promise them a common part with you in God's

friendship, and as your love to God makes you good to them, careful of

them, tender toward them, show them how it will make them good to one

another and to you, and all good and happy together.

Again, do not teach them that they can never pray, or do any thing

acceptable to God, till after they are converted or regenerated. This,

with many, is a great point of orthodoxy, and I would not speak of it

with severity, because it is a very natural mistake and yet it is one

of the most hurtful delusions, short of real infidelity, that can be

put into language. It is not only not true for children, but it is not

true for any body, and is, in fact, a kind of barricade before the

heavenly gate for every body, still outside. It is very true that no

one can pray, or do any thing acceptably, to God, as being and

remaining unconverted, unregenerated; but that is a very different

thing from showing that no one can pray, or do any thing acceptably

till after they are converted, or regenerated. The difference is just

as wide as between all good possibility and none whatever. God is ready

to hear every child's prayer, every man's prayer, calls him to come and

be heard for all he wants, only let him pray as coming to be converted,

or born of the Spirit, in his prayer. If the prayers of the wicked are

an abomination, as they certainly are, let them come to cease being

wicked, and be made right with God. Can not a wicked man become right?

and at what time and where, better than when God is hearing and helping

his prayer? His very prayer will be a praying out of wickedness into

right. But when he can not think, work, pray; can not do any thing

acceptably, till after he is born of the Spirit, that word after fences

him back; shuts him up in his sin, there to bide his time. What

multitudes of children have been shut away from the kingdom of God, by

this one misconception of piously intended orthodoxy.

The mistake of teaching is scarcely less fatal, when the child is put

to the doing of good works, and the making up of a character in the

self-regulating way. That kind of duty is so legal and painful, and the

poor child will be so often floored by his failures in it, that he will

not continue long. A kind of despair will come upon him in a short

time, and religion itself will take on a hard impossible look, that is

even repulsive. Nothing will draw the child onward in ways of piety,

but the sense of forgivenesses, helps, felt sympathies of grace and

love. Salvation by faith, is the only kind of religion that a child can

support. If there is no ladder to heaven but a ladder of will-works and

observances, he will not be climbing it long. Where Luther fell off and

lay groaning infant steps will not persist.

It is a great mistake, too, and a great Christian wrong. under

salvation by faith, to be always showing children what a hard, dry

service the Christian life must be. A great many parents do this

unthinkingly, because it is just so to them. Where there is a real

living faith. and children believe most easily, cheerfulness,

brightness, liberty, joy, are the element of life itself. But if the

parent is down in the lowest grades of possible devotion, worried and

not blessed by his piety, galled and not comforted; if the children

hear him mourning always in his prayer, and confessing shortcomings and

defeats and poverty enough to ungospel all the gospel promises, it

should not be wonderful that they are not particularly drawn to that

kind of piety.

These, now, are some of the things which are not to be taught, but

carefully avoided in the training of children. There are a great many

other things which are not to be taught, for the reason that they can

not be sufficiently apprehended, and will only confound the

understanding instead of giving it light. These are to be taught, not

formally or theologically, but implicitly, in a kind of child's

version, which the confessions commonly do not give. Thus depravity in

Adam, the fall of the race, the atonement by Christ in any view that

makes it a ground of forgiveness, regeneration itself as a

metaphysically defined change in character--none of these can be taught

as a doctrine for young children. And yet they can all be taught

implicitly. Thus we may represent to children that we are all sinners,

and that God is displeased with us whenever we do or think what is

wrong; that we want a better auld a clean heart, so that we shall love

to do what is right, and that Christ came down into the world to give

it to us; that when we feel sorry for wrong he loves to forgive us, and

that when we feel weak and are much tempted he will help us, hearing

our prayer, and coming to us by his Spirit, to give us strength.

Meantime we must not omit teaching that Jesus had a most dear love to

children, took them in his arms, blessed them, loved them even the more

tenderly because of the bad world into which they are come; and that

breathing his own love into them, he was able to say that of such is

the kingdom of heaven. Proceeding in this manner, let the call be to

the child to become good, and to be always trusting Christ to make him

so, and he will get the force, implicitly, of a whole gospel, in this

very simple and summary version.

While the whole teaching centers at this point, the mind of the child

will not be wearied, of course, by a continual reiteration of the same

very simple matter, but it will be led about, into free ranges and

excursions, among the facts and very dramatic incidents of the

Scripture history. Little debates will be raised about duties in common

matters; characters will be held up for approbation, or to be

condemned. The matters of creation, from the sky downward, will come

into notice, and be used to show God's wisdom and greatness. And so

there will be a rotary movement of inquiry and teaching, all round the

great central point of being good, and the readiness of Christ to help

us in it.

Due care will be taken also not to thrust religious subjects on the

child, when he is excited by other things, in a manner to make it

unwelcome. His times of thought and appetite must be watched. Play with

him when he wants to play, teach him when he wants to be taught.

Untimely intrusions of religion will only make it odious--the child can

not be crammed with doctrine.

Children often break upon their parents with very tough questions, and

questions that wear a considerable looking towards infidelity. It

requires, in fact, but a simple child to ask questions that no

philosopher can answer. Parents are not to be hurried or flurried in

such cases, and make up extempore answers that are only meant to

confuse the child, and consciously have no real verity. It is equally

bad, if the child is scolded for his freedom; for what respect can he

have for the truth, when he may not so much as question where it is?

Still worse, if the child's question is taken for an evidence of his

superlative smartness, and repeated with evident pride in his hearing.

In all such cases, a quiet answer should be given to the child's

question where it can easily be done, and where it can not, some delay

should be taken; wherein it will be confessed that not even his parents

know every thing. Or, sometimes, if the question is one that plainly

can not be answered by any body, occasion should be taken to show the

child how little we know, and how many things God knows which are too

deep for us--how reverently, therefore, we are to submit our mind to

his, and let him teach us when he will, what is true. It is a very

great thing for a child, to have had the busy infidel lurking in his

questions, early instructed in regard to the necessary limits of

knowledge, and accustomed to a simple faith in God's requirement, where

his knowledge fails.

Observe also, at just this point, the immense advantage that a

Christian parent has in Jesus Christ, as regards the religious teaching

of his children. I speak here of the fact that all truth finds in him

the concrete form Truth is not less really incarnate in him, than God.

Indeed he testifies, himself, that he is the truth. And he is so, not

merely in the sense that he parabolizes the truth, and gets it thus

into human conditions or analogies, but that his own person also and

life are the eternal form of truth; that he lives it, acts it forth,

groans it in his Gethsemane, sheds it from his veins in the bleeding of

his cross. You may take your children along therefore, through his

childhood, into his ministries of healing, on to his death-scene

itself, and it will be as if you led them through a gallery, where all

divinest, most life-giving truth is pictured. No abstractions will be

wanted, no difficult reaches of comprehension required; you have

nothing to do but to show them Jesus as he is, and the Great Teaching

will be in them--all that is needed as the vital bread of their

intelligence, and heart, and character. The blessed child's doctrine of

the world is Christ. Have it then as your privilege to be always

unfolding your child's understanding, and spiritual nature, by that

which will be life and healing to both; even Jesus Christ, the Word of

the Father's glory. Converse much of him and about him, make him

familiar, and it will be strange if you do not find that both your

conversation and theirs is in heaven, where he sitteth at the right

hand of God.

And of this you will be the more certain if you teach Christ not by

words only, but by so living as to make your own life the interpreter

of his. There is no feebler and more unpractical conception, than that

children are faithfully taught, when they are abundantly lectured. If

you will put in Christ, you must put him on. There is no such gospel

for them, as that which flavors your own conduct, and fills your

personal atmosphere with the Christly aroma.

At the same time it should be the constant endeavor with children, to

make the subject of religion an open subject, and keep it so, never to

be otherwise. Nothing is wider of dignity, or more mischievous in its

effects, than the remarkable shyness of religious conversation in most

Christian families. It argues either some great neglect of the parents,

in which they have let the subject fall out of range as a subject not

to be named, or else it shows that, in trying to make it an open

subject, so much of cant or untimely exhortation has been mixed with

it, as to make it unwelcome. Rightly conceived, there is no subject of

so great interest and such inexhaustible freshness, as that which

pertains to the soul and the future life. Good conversation, too, upon

it, in the house, is better than sermons. Why then should a Christian

family, where every other subject is welcome, taboo this, requiring it

to pass in silence, as if it were in fact the forbidden fruit of their

intelligence?

But I must speak, in closing, of what appears to be a somewhat general

misconception, as respects the aim of Christian teaching in the case of

very young children. According to the view I am here maintaining, it is

not their conversion, in the sense commonly given to that term. That is

a notion which belongs to the scheme that makes nothing of baptism and

the organic unity of the house; that looks upon the children as being

heathens, or aliens, requiring, of course, to be converted. But

according to the scheme here presented, they are not heathens, or

aliens; but they are in and of the household of faith, and their

growing up is to be in the same. Parents therefore, in the religious

teaching of their children, are not to have it as a point of fidelity

to press them into some crisis of high experience, called conversion.

Their teaching is to be that which feeds a growth, not that which stirs

a revolution. It is to be nurture, presuming on a grace already and

always given, and, for just that reason, jealously careful to raise no

thought of some high climax to be passed. For precisely here is the

special advantage of a true sacramental nurture in the promise, that it

does not put the child on passing a crisis, where he is thrown out of

balance not unlikely, and becomes artificially conscious of himself,

but it leaves him to be always increasing his faith, and reaching

forward, in the simplest and most dutiful manner, to become what God in

helping him to be. On this point Dr. Tiersch says, with very great

insight, both of the gospel and of children--

"It is certainly not difficult to bring a child into a condition of

emotion and anxiety, by representations of natural corruption, of the

judgment, and of the influence of the enemy; and to fill him with

doubts of his own salvation, thereby moving him to any thing that may

be desired. It is possible that by these means, deep experiences of the

communion of the soul have been brought to light. But these are

consequences that should rather be objects of our fear than of our

rejoicing. For here comes in the worst of all dangers, the early

wasting of such impressions and experiences, and a creeping in of

untruth, whilst the power vanishes and the forms of speech remain. For

both the most delicate and the most solemn experiences become, after

this method, objects of continual reflection and conversation, under

which, at last, solemn earnestness, as well as all delicacy, is

destroyed, and there remains either a continual self-deception, with

the semblance of the reality of godliness, or a gnawing consciousness

of an increasing untruthfulness, and of an inner unfruitfulness beneath

a mass of phrases." [20]

It is a delicate matter for children to navigate in this rough sea of

conversional tossings, where the stormy wind lifteth up the waves, and

they go up to the heaven, and go down again to the depth, and their

soul is melted because of trouble. There is, for the little ones, a

more quiet way of induction. Show them how to be good, and then, when

they fail, how God will help them if they ask him and trust in him for

help. In this manner they will be passing little conversion-like crises

all the time. Rejoice with them and for them as they do, only do not

put them on the consciousness, in themselves, of what you seem to see.

Let them be accustomed to it as a fact of experience that they are

happy when they are right, and are right when God helps them to be, and

that he always helps them to be when they put their trust in him. The

Spirit of God is nowhere so dovelike as he is in his gentle visitations

and hoverings of mercy over little children.

What is wanted is, to train them by a corresponding gentleness, and

keep them in the molds of the Spirit. No spiritual tornado is wanted

that will finish up the parental duties in a day; but there is to be a

most tender and wise attention, watching always for them, and, at every

turn or stage of advance, contributing what is wanted; enjoying their

bright and happy times of goodness and peace with them, helping their

weak times, drawing them out of their discouragements, and smoothing

away their moods of recoil and bitterness; contriving always to supply

the kind of power that is wanted, at the time when it is wanted. Very

young children religiously educated, it will be remembered by almost

every grown up person, have many times of great religious tenderness,

when they are drawn apart in thoughtfulness and prayer. The effort

should be to make these little, silent pentecosts and gentle openings

God-ward scaling-times of the Spirit, and have the family always in

such keeping, as to be a congenial element for such times; and to

suffer no possible hindrance, or opposing influence, even should they

come and go unobserved Under such kind of keeping and teaching, God,

who is faithful to all his opportunities, as men are not, will be

putting his laws into the mind and writing them in the heart, and the

prophet's idea will be fulfilled to the letter; it will not be

necessary to go calling the children to Christ, and saying, know the

Lord; for they will know him, every one, the least as the greatest, and

the greatest as the least, each by a knowledge proper to his age.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

[20] Christian Family, p. 133.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

VII1.

FAMILY PRAYERS.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I

will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth and the earth

shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear

Jezreel."--Hosea ii. 21-2.

BY this very elaborate and poetically ingenious figure, the prophet

appears to be giving a contrived representation of the fact, that when

God brings in the promised day of his universal reign in the earth,

there will be a grand convergency of causes to prepare it, and, like so

many concurrent prayers, to make common suit for it before Him. Thus he

figures the world as being the beautiful valley called Jezreel, which

is the garden, so to speak, of the land. And it is to be as when the

people of Jezreel get their harvest, by having every thing in a train

of concurrent agency to prepare it--they make petition by their careful

tillage to the corn, the grapes, and olives, that they will grow apace;

these, in turn, make suit to the earth to give them nutriment; this

again hears them, and lifts its petition to the heavens, asking rain

and dew; whereupon, last of all, the heavens hand up the prayers to

God, to furnish them water, and let them shed it down; which petition

he graciously hears, and the harvest follows. So he conceives it will

be, as the harvest of the world approaches. It will be as if all things

were put striving together, and a prayer were going up for it through

all the concurrent circles of Providence. God's counsel and kingdom are

constructing always a perfect harmony, by their convergence on his

perfect end. Then, as the perfect end is neared, and the harmony with

it grows more complete, it will be as if more things were concurring in

it and asking for it, and prayer, falling in as a cause among causes,

will have them all praying with it, or handing up its request. In which

we may see what holds good of all prayer, and how or by what law it

prevails. In one view, the whole future is prayed in by the whole

present, being such a future as the whole present demands. The more

things, therefore, prayer can get into harmony with itself in its

request, the more likely it is to prevail; and the more alone it is,

and the more things it has opposite to it, in the field of causes, the

less likely it is to prevail--even as Adam had less hope of success in

praying for Cain, that the blood of Abel was crying to God against him

from the ground.

All prayer being under this general condition, family prayer will be of

course; and of this I now propose to speak. I choose to handle the

subject in this form, in the conviction that the prayers of families

are so often defeated by the want of any such concert in the aims,

plans, tempers, works, and aspirations of the house, as is necessary to

a common suit before God; in other words, because the prayers, commonly

so called, are defeated by the suit of so many causes contrary to them.

We sometimes use the terms family worship and family prayers, without

any reference at all to their spiritual acceptance with God, or to any

gifts and benefits to be bestowed, in the way of answer to such

prayers. We speak of the worship, or the prayers, as a kind of morning

observance; a religious formality that is to have its value, under the

laws of drill and habitual repetition; good therefore, in that sense,

to be kept a going, and not expected to be good on the high ground of

faith and living intercourse with God. That it is to be the opening of

heaven and the keeping of it open to the family, under the conditions

of prevailing prayer, is either not commonly supposed, or not made a

point of practical endeavor. The benefits thought of are to be such as

will come of mere observance itself, and the religious reverence

impressed by it.

Now that some such kind of benefit may be expected to follow, I am not

about to question. Any such external observance, kept up in the family,

must probably beget a deeper sense of religion, and prepare all the

members to a readier admission of the great principles of faith, and

spiritual devotion to God. And in that view, the observance of family

worship is a matter of such consequence in a family, that the parent,

who confessedly is not a Christian person, ought still to feel it

incumbent on him to maintain that observance. And if such were the

persons with whom I am dealing in this discussion, I should urge it

upon them, as a matter indispensable, and never to be omitted. But my

subject is different. I am addressing Christian parents, on the subject

of the Christian training of their children; showing it to be the same

thing as a training into Christ, and how that training will secure the

real initiation of their children into a state of genuine discipleship.

Having this aim therefore, I shall drop out of notice family worship as

observance, and speak of it only as the open state of prayer and

communion with God in the house. For, as the greater includes the less,

we need not be careful about the less; but only about the greater. And

I shall speak, in the conviction that a great and principal reason why

the family religion of those who are really Christian believers,

carries no saving benefit with it, is that they are content with the

less when they ought to claim the greater; maintaining the family

prayers, in the way of observance only, and not as an appeal of faith

to God. They imagine some impossibility perhaps of maintaining the

family religion on so high a key. It will not only be a wearisome and

over-exhaustive painstaking for themselves, but they sometimes imagine

that the children, too, will be finally drugged by such over-dosing, in

the spiritual intensities of religion, and be only the more repelled

from it.

But they greatly mistake, in this kind of judgment, by mistaking first,

in their conception of what is necessary to the prevalent effect of the

family prayers, and the always open state of the house towards God. No

rhapsodies are wanted, or flights of feeling, or heavings of passional

intercession, as many are wont to assume, but simply that there should

be a sober, calculated harmony between all the plans and appointments

of life and the prayers or petitions made. The great difficulty in

faith, after all, is to be faithful. God is not carried by shrieks of

emotion, but by the honestly meant and soberly contrived ordering of

things, to snake them work in with, and, if possible, work out the

prayers. In this view, let me call your attention--

I. To the manner in which prayers, of all kinds, get their answer from

God. Two things are wanted, as conditions previous to the favoring

answer. First, that the matter requested should agree with God's

beneficent aims, or the ends of good to which his plans are built.

Secondly, that the prayer should agree with as many other prayers, and

as many other circles of causes as possible; for God is working always

toward the largest harmony, and will not favor, therefore, the prayers

of words, when every thing else in the life is demanding something

else, but will rather have respect to what has the widest reach of

things and persons making suit with it. It is at this latter point that

prayers most commonly fail, viz: that they are solitary and contrary,

having nothing put in agreement with them; as if some one person should

be praying for fair weather when every body else wants rain, and the

gaping earth, and thirsty animals, and withering trees, are all asking

for it together. Or a man, we may conceive, prays for holiness, getting

off his knees to go and defraud his neighbor; or that he may be

prospered in some plan that requires industry, and, by indolence and

inattention, leaves all the causes of nature making suit against him.

God is for some largest harmony in the hearing of prayers, as in every

thing else. All the prayers that he will hear too must, in some sense,

be from Himself, which is the same as to say that they must chime with

His ends, and the working of his plans generally.

See how it is, for example, in the great realm of nature. The first

thing here to be discovered is that every thing requires every thing;

or, if we take the figure of prayer, that all events make suit for all.

Omit any one, and there would be a shock of discord felt in the whole

frame work. As regards the interior principle of causes, we know

nothing; we only see them all playing into all, and all demanding all,

and then, all together, making suit for a certain general future,

somehow accordant with them and their harmonies. Thus it will be seen

to hold, even scientifically, in the grand astronomic system of worlds,

that all the innumerable parts have a perfect concurrence, demanding

exactly every thing that comes to pass, in the motions, changes of

position, perturbations of parts, and processions of the whole. The

principle, every thing for every thing and all together one, is so

exact, that every atom and tiniest insect feels the touch, in fact, of

every heaviest, highest, and remotest orb, and every such orb a

respectiveness of action reaching downward, after every such minim of

matter and life.

Such is nature, and it would be exactly so, were it not for sin, in the

supernatural order, viz: in the wants, and works, and prayers, and

heavenly gifts of God's spiritual empire. Sin harmonizes with nothing.

It is a principle of general discord with all God's purposes, plans,

and creations; refusing to be included in any terms of intellectual

unity and order. But God is none the less intent on harmony here, that

the constituent harmony of his realm is broken. All that He is doing as

a world's Redeemer, is to gather together in one, all the loosened

elements of discord, and settle the world again, in everlasting concord

and unity. And toward this final issue he puts all things working

together as for the same good issue.

Thus it will be found that the Bible history shows a grand convergency

of all the matters included in it, and that a mysterious concert weaves

all its facts together, and keeps them working toward the same result.

The ritual of Moses, and the forty years' march, and all the

captivities and dispersions of the people, and the dispersions of the

Greek and Roman languages, and all the philosophic exhaustions, and all

the crumblings of the false religions, and all the great wars of the

Romans, and all the fortunes of empire determined by those wars, and

then the universal pacification of the world--by all these vast

concurrences the world is made ready, and set waiting for Christ to be

born. The students of history, looking over this field, are astonished

by the vastness of the preparation, and it is to them, as if they heard

all these world-wide powers voiced in prayer together for the coming of

Jesus. Just here, then was the time for him to come. And thus, in fact,

he came, in the exact fullness of time, when the largest harmony was

asking for him.

In the same way, it will be seen, descending to a lower field, that

every conversion to God takes place when some largest harmony demands

it. Not always, or commonly, when some friend, or wife, or good mother,

prays it, wholly alone, but when others join them, or when, at least,

there is a large concurrence of providences and causes, making the same

suit, and joining in the general conspiracy of reasons. And so much is

there in this, that the subject himself will almost always feel a

conviction of some wonderful conjunction of means, and conditions, and

prayers, just then brought together, to accomplish the otherwise

difficult or impossible result.

Other illustrations, without limit, could be cited from the processes

of God's spiritual administration; for it is always working toward the

largest harmony. But we come directly to the matter of prayer itself

And here we meet the promise, first of all, that--"if we ask any thing

according to his will he heareth us;" for the design is here to draw

the petitioner into the most intimate acquaintance, and bring him into

the most exact conformity with, God's purposes and ends. And probably

the whole economy of prayer, or giving gifts to prayer, which might as

well be given otherwise without prayer, is meant to promote this

agreement of the petitioners with God. Next we have that peculiar

phrasing of the doctrine of prayer, by Christ, when he says--"If two of

you shall agree, on earth, as touching any thing, that they shall ask,

it shall be done for them;" where the intent of the doctrine is to

bring the petitioners into the largest possible circle of harmony among

themselves. Hence the promise too--"Ye shall seek me and find me, if ye

search for me with all your heart;" where the purpose is to bring each

individual into the largest harmony with himself and not leave half his

dispositions, or aspirations, or lustings, praying virtually against

his prayers. Hence, again the command--"Watch and pray lest ye enter

into temptation;" where the endeavor is to set the voluntary powers

chiming with the prayers, and working toward a grand petitional harmony

with them. By the whole economy of prayer, then, God is working toward

the largest, most inclusive harmony, and prayer is to be successful.

just according to the amount of concurrency there is in it. First,

there is to be the completest possible concurrency with God; then a

concurrency of one or two hundred, or, if so it may be, two hundred

millions of petitioners in a common suit; and then all these are to be

total in the suit, bringing all their lustings, affections, works,

plans, properties, and self-sacrifices, into the petition; whereupon

the prayer will grow strong, just in proportion to the amount of

agreement, or concurrence there is in it.

Under this great law, therefore, prayer, as a matter of fact, has been

getting and will always be getting more strength by the larger

harmonies it embodies. Noah prayed alone for his very ungodly times,

and could not be heard--the blood of Abel was crying to God for justice

over against him, and so were all the crimes of violence and murder in

his own most bloody and cruel age. Abraham prayed for Sodom, but there

were no fifty, forty, thirty, twenty, ten, or, as far as we know, more

than one righteous man to pray with him; and therefore he fails,

obtaining only the safety of that godly brother's family. Afterwards

Daniel, in a matter of great peril, was able, going to his house to

pray, to set his three friends praying with him, and he found the light

on which even his life depended. Still farther on, Esther set all her

countrymen in the city praying and fasting with her, and obtained, in

that manner, the deliverance of her whole people, and their promotion

to honor in the kingdom. And so, again, the more wonderful scene of

power which inaugurates the church, on the day of Pentecost, is

distinguished by this principal, all-determining fact, that the

disciples are all with one accord in one place, praying for the

heavenly gift.

Not to extend these illustrations farther, we may safely put it down as

a conclusion, that prayer wants the largest possible harmony praying

with it; or what is the same, as many reasons, and causes, and wants,

and conditions, and persons, as possible, chiming in the suit of it; so

that God may answer it for harmony's sake, and not against harmony. It

may seem that I have led you a long way to reach this conclusion,

especially when my subject is family prayer. But we shall now be able--

II. To dispatch that particular subject as much more briefly; and

besides, I have been able to hit upon no other method, which promised

to unfold the real conditions of family prayer, and show the reasons of

utter failure and abortiveness in it so distinctly and impressively.

The great infirmity of family prayers, or of what is sometimes called

family religion, is that it stands alone in the house, and has nothing

put in agreement with it. Whereas, if it is to have any honest reality,

as many things as possible should be soberly and deliberately put in

agreement with it; for indeed it is a first point of religion itself,

that by its very nature, it rules presidingly over every thing desired,

done, thought, planned for, and prayed for, in the life. It is never to

finish itself up by words, or word-supplications, or even by

sacraments; but the whole custom of life and character must be in it

and of it, by a total consent of the man. And more depends on this, a

hundred times, than upon any occasional fervors, or passional flights,

or agonizings. The grand defect will, in almost all cases, be, in what

is more deliberate, viz: in the want of any downright, honest, casting

of the family in the type of religion, as if that were truly accepted

as the first thing.

See just what is wanted, by what is so very commonly not found. First

of all, the mere observance kind of piety, that which prays in the

family to keep up a reverent show, or acknowledgment of religion, is

not enough. It leaves every thing else in the life to be an open space

for covetousness, and all the gay lustings of worldly vanity. It even

leaves out prayer; for the saying prayers is, in no sense, really the

same thing as to pray. Contrary to this, there should be some real

prayer, prayer for the meaning's sake, and not for the shell of

religious decency in which the semblance may be kept. This latter kind

looks, indeed, for no return of blessing from God, but only for a

certain religious effect accomplished by the drill of repetitional

observance. There is also another kind of drill sometimes attempted in

the prayers of families, which is much worse, viz: when the prayer is

made, every morning, to hit this or that child in some matter of

disobedience, or some mere peccadillo into which he has fallen. Nothing

can be more irreverent to God than to make the hour of prayer a time of

prison-discipline for the subjects of it, and nothing could more

certainly set them in a fixed aversion to religion and to every thing

sacred. This kind of prayer prays, in fact, for exasperation's sake,

and the effect will correspond.

In the next place, what is prayed for in the house by the father, is,

how commonly, not prayed for by the mother in her family tastes and

tempers, and is even prayed against, in fact, by all the instigations

of appearance, and pride, and show, which are raised by her motherly

studies and cares. And this, too, not seldom, when her prayers

themselves are burdened with much feeling, and bear the appearances of

much earnest longing for the piety of her children. Her prayers sound

well in the wording, and she verily thinks that she means what she asks

for; but the notions of standing she is putting in the head of her son,

or the dress she is just now getting up for her daughter, pray, a

hundred fold harder than her prayers, only just the other way; calling

in results of feeling and character that are selfish, worldly, earthly

in the last degree.

It is a matter of the greatest importance, too, as regards the

successful training of children, that they should be inducted into ways

and habits of prayer themselves, as very frequently they are not.

Sometimes even Christian mothers, who pray much for their children,

never lead them into the practice of prayer for themselves. They are

kept from so doing, by the supposed orthodox belief, first, that their

children are of course in the gall of bitterness, and secondly, that

such can offer no prayer, which is not an abomination to the Lord; in

both which conclusions they are, in fact, neither orthodox nor

Christian, and what to the children, at least, is even worse than that,

consent to let them grow up in no personal habit of religion. How then

can they be reached by the prayers of the house, when they are

deliberately put outside of the possibility, even of beginning to pray

for themselves? Sometimes they are taught to pray only in the sense of

saying prayers, or repeating some little formula appropriate to their

age. And there is nothing ill in this, if they only do it occasionally.

But the much better method, in general, is for the mother to word a

simple prayer for them herself, and let them follow after in the

repetition of it, sentence by sentence. The prayer in this case, will

have respect to the particular matters of the day; what has been seen,

felt, enjoyed, wanted, suffered, and needs to be forgiven. Very soon

the child himself, practiced in this way, will begin to drop in a

sentence, here or there that comes directly out of his feeling, and it

will not be long before he will be able to word a whole prayer for

himself, and will so be led along into the habit of praying with his

mother, and be grown, so to speak, into the ruling desires and prayers

of the house. In this method, regularly pursued, the child may be

trained to a perfectly open state in the matter of prayer; so that when

the father is absent, or is taken away by death, he will be ready, at a

very early period on his way to manhood, to take his father's place.

There will be nothing ghostly, or sanctimoniously separated from the

common going on of life, in the way of prayer thus maintained. Having

it for the element of childhood, and being grown into the practice of

it, the very geniality, and sweetness, and good cheer of home, will

seem to be lapped in it, and it will be so far natural, that, if it

were taken away, the course of life itself would seem to be even

painfully unnatural. A house without a roof, would scarcely be a more

indifferent home than a family state unsheltered by God's friendship,

and the sense of being always rested in his Providential care and

guidance. No sweetness of life is so indispensable to a family, brought

up thus, in the open state with God, as to have all the cares,

affections, partings, sicknesses, afflictions, prosperities, marriages,

deaths, and all kinds of works, habitually blessed, by the sense of God

ap pealed to, and consciously witnessing in them.

But this again, depends on yet another fact, where commonly the defect

is manifold greater than it is in the points already referred to. It is

not only necessary to the genuine state of family religion, or the open

state of godly living in the house, that the prayers should be prayers

and not observances, and that both the parents should be truly in them

together, and the children carefully bred into them also as the common

joy of their home; but it is necessary also that the practical ends,

tastes, plans, aspirations, and works of the house, should all come

into the same circle of concert, and join their petition to reinforce

the suit of the prayers. And here, as I have already intimated, is the

great cause of failure in family religion. It is not difficult to get a

Christian father into such a strain of desire for his children, that he

will faithfully maintain the prayers of the house, and press himself at

times into great fervors in his suit for them. These fervors will, too

often, be kindled, in fact, by the conviction of really great

derelictions of duty, such as come between the family and all God's

blessings upon them. No, the difficult thing here is, not to get even

the fervors of prayer, but to get the life itself and its works into

that honest and deliberate agreement with the prayers, that will give

them a genuine power and meaning, without any such flights and

passional vehemences. The difficulty is that almost nothing, in the

arrangements, tempers, and practical ends of the house, agrees with the

prayers. The father prays in the morning that his children may grow up

in the Lord, and calls it even the principal good of their life, that

they are to be Christians, living to God and for the world to come.

Then he goes out into the field, or the shop, or the house of trade,

and delving there, all day, in his gains, keeps praying from morning to

night, without knowing it, that his family may be rich. His plans and

works, faithfully seconded by an affectionate wife, pull exactly

contrary to the pull of his prayers, and to all their common teaching

in religion. Their tempers are worldly, and make a worldly atmosphere

in the house. Pride, the ambition of show and social stand ing, envy of

what is above, jealousy of what is below, follies of dress and fashion,

and the more foolish elation felt when a son is praised, or a daughter

admired in the matter of personal appearance, or what is no better, a

manifest preparing and foretasting of this folly, when the son, or

daughter, is so young as to be only the more certainly poisoned by the

infection of it--O these unspoken, damning prayers! how many are they,

and how totally do they fill up the days! The mornings open with a

reverent, fervent-sounding prayer of words, and then the days come

after piling up petitions of ends. aims, tempers, passions, and works,

that ask for any thing and every thing, but what accords with the

genuine rule of religion. The prayer of the morning is that the son,

the daughter, all the sons, all the daughters, may be Christian; and

then the prayers that follow are for any thing but that, or any thing,

in fact, most contrary to that. Is it any wonder, when we consider this

common disagreement between the prayers, even the fervent prayers of

the family, and all the other concerns, enjoyments, and ends of the

common life beside, that so many fine shows of family piety are yet

followed, by so much of godless and even reprobate character, in the

children!

Here then, my brethren, is the great lesson of family religion; it is

that religion, being the supreme end and law of life, is to have every

thing put in the largest possible harmony with it. And this is to be

done by no superlative fervors, or heats of piety and prayer, but by

the sober, honest, practical arrangement of life and its plans. Thus,

if your children are to grow up into Christ, that is to be made their

prayer, and the prayer of both the parents, and the prayer of all the

buildings, migrations, plans, toils, trades, and pleasures of the

house. All these are to pray, in sober earnest, that the children, as

the practically best thing possible, and most to be desired, may be

Christian in their life. There is no difficulty in forming a whole

family to God, when there is grace enough in the parents to make that

really the object, and set every thing in the largest harmony with it.

The only difficulty is in doing it, when the prayers and the family

religion are one side of every thing else, in a department by

themselves, and the whole body of life's practical works and ends is

operating directly against the result desired and prayed for. Prayer,

in a certain proper view of it, is only one of the great causes of the

world, and all the causes, natural as well as supernatural, are, in a

certain broad sense, prayers. What is wanted, therefore, is to put all

the causes, all the prayers, into a common strain of endeavor, reaching

after a common good, in God and his friendship. The religious

affinities of the house then take the mold of the prayers, and become a

kind of prayer themselves. The children grow into faith, as it were, by

a process of natural induction--only it will be intensely supernatural,

because their faith is both quickened and grown in the atmosphere of

God's own Spirit, always filling the house. He molds the prayers to

agreement with God's will, and the prayers of each to the prayers of

all, and the works and plans and tastes of all to the prayers; and

then, as a consequence, which is also an answer, fills the house with

his ingrown sanctifying power, and seals the members with his seal of

life.

Let us stop here now, in our closing, and contemplate the dignity and

power of a genuine family religion, thus maintained. Consistency and

solid reality, we have seen, are its great distinction--the whole

ordering of the house is worshipful, and faithfully chimes with the

prayers. The very table is sanctified with, as well as by, the blessing

invoked upon it; so that when the house are feeding animal enjoyments,

and, so far, saying that they are animals, they do not become such.

Their sensuality is kept under by a divine spirituality above it. It is

not so much their bodies as their souls that are fed. By their holy

charities and prayers, the family property is also sanctified, and all

the industries by which it is obtained. The training of the house does

not end in money, the conversation is not about money, the plans are

not plans turning on the supreme good of money, the only losses dreaded

or shunned are not losses of money. Their thoughts and affections

therefore, mellowed by the family piety, do not clink in their souls,

as we sometimes almost hear them with a hard-money sound. For the love

of God penetrates and savors, all through, even the works of thrift and

all the ennobled virtues of a genuine economy. The mental life also is

raised by the family religion, for they live thoughtfully, as in

contact with God, and all the highest themes of existence. Events,

providences, nay even things themselves, take on senses related to

intelligence, feeling, and the uses of faith. And so their very talent

grows into volume, because it is never imprisoned, or stunted by the

external measures of things; but is led forth, always, into what things

signify, as related to the broader affinities and the half-poetic life

of religion. They are refined, in this manner, without any ambition to

copy the mannerisms of refinement; refined by the fining of their

intelligence and feeling. They are not emasculated by their culture,

but grow manlier in it; because of the good and great thoughts, and

high subjects, into which they are trained by the sober, honest piety

of their practice.

The family is thus exalted, every way, by the family religion; because

there is such reality and all-diffusive harmony in the scope of it. In

the prayers of the day it recalls, in one way or another and with

filial reverence, the ancestors that have gone before, and looks

hopefully on to the great reunion of the future. Its births are so many

arrivals, or presentations, at the gate of eternity; its baptisms and

baptismal namings are titles recorded in the family register of God;

its deaths are only the migrations of so many into life, to be followed

by the migration of all; and the sense of a good future, to be their

common heritage, imparts a trustful, quietly cheerful air to their

waiting. For that bright gathering of the house, after the storms are

over, gilds their adversities and sicknesses, and kindles a beautiful

expectancy in their prayers--keeps them looking up and away, without

any instigations of asceticism, or false antipathy to the world. The

godly father dwells in such a house, even as the apostle pictures

Abraham, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him

of the same promise viz: that of a city that hath foundations. Heirs

with him--not heirs of his fee-simple, not legatees in his will,

waiting patiently or impatiently for him to die, but heirs with him of

a great angelic future that rests in character and fruits of well

doing, in which they bless, and by mankind as well as God, are blessed.

What scene of family dignity is more to be admired? The highest

splendors of wealth and show, have but a feeble glow-worm look in the

comparison--a pale, faint glimmer of light, a phosphorescent halo,

enveloping what is only a worm. Even the poor laboring man, thanking

God, at his table, for the food he earned by the toil of yesterday,

singing still, each morning, in his family hymn, of the glorious rest

at hand, moving on thitherward with his children, by single day's

journeys of prayer and praise, teaching them, even as the eagles do

their young, to spread their wings with him and rise--this man, I say,

is the prince of God in his house, and the poor garb, in which he

kneels, outshines the robes of palaces.

The beauty of such family scenes has not escaped the notice of poetry

itself, or even of mere worldly observation. But we must not, for a

moment, forget that the charm of all such family pictures depends on

that sound reality of worship, which puts every thing in the house in

keeping with the prayers, and carries back the meaning of the prayers

into every thing in the house. A flourish of prayer in the morning,

followed by all flourishings of vanity and prosperous selfishness, for

the rest of the day, will not answer. We look in upon the Christian

family, where every thing is on a footing of religion, and we see them

around their own quiet hearth and table, away from the great public

world and its strifes, with a priest of their own to lead them. They

are knit together in ties of love that make them one; even as they are

fed and clothed out of the same fund, interested in the same

possessions, partakers in the same successes and losses, suffering

together in the same sorrows, animated each by hopes that respect the

future benefit of all. Into such a circle and scene it is that religion

comes, each day, to obtain a grace of well-doing for the day. And it

comes not by itself, as in the public assembly, not in a manner that is

one side of life and its common affairs. There is no pretense, no show,

no toilet practice going before, no reference of thought to fashion, or

dress, or appearance. It leads in the day, as the dawn leads in the

morning. It blends a heavenly gratitude with the joys of the table; it

breathes a cheerful sense of God into all the works and tempers of the

house; it softens the pillow for rest when the day is done. And so the

religion of the house is life itself, the life of life; and having

always been observed, it becomes an integral part even of existence,

leaving no feeling that in a proper family it could ever have been

otherwise. A family state, maintained without a fire, would not seem to

be more impossible or colder. Home and religion are kindred words;

names both of love and reverence; home, because it is the seat of

religion; religion, because it is the sacred element of home.

This training, in short, of a genuine, practically all-embracing,

all-imbuing family religion, makes the families so many little

churches, only they are as much better, in many points, as they are

more private, closer to the life of infancy, and more completely

blended with the common affairs of life. Here it is that chastity,

modesty, temperance, industry, truth--all the virtues that give beauty,

and worth, and majesty, to character, get their root. Here it is, above

all, that they who are born into life, are led up, in their gracious

training, to knit the green tendrils of existence to God. And so, in

all the future scenes of duty, and wrong, and grief; through which they

are to pass, it will be found that they were furnished here, with

supplies of grace, and armed with shields of confidence from God, to

meet every encounter, bear every burden, and maintain every kind of

well doing, till the victory of life is won.

Holding, now, this conviction, as Christian parents, of the importance

of a true family religion, allow yourselves never to forget the

condition which alone makes it of so great value, viz: that it has such

scope as to include and harmonize all the ways, and works, and cares of

the house. See that you plan to be, in your undertakings, just what you

pray to be in your prayers. Set the general concert of your affairs in

God's own order, to accomplish only what is agreeable to his will, so

to be always praying with you, and the prophet's rich valley, teeming

with all fruits of abundance and luxury, will but feebly represent the

unfailing, never blighted, always fruitful, piety of your children.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A NEW BOOK BY DR. HOLLAND.

EVERYDAY TOPICS.

BY J. C. HOLLAND,

Author of "Sevenoaks," "Arthur Bonnicastle," "The Mistress of the

Manse." " Kathrina," "Bitter Sweet," "Titcomb's Letters," "Gold Foil,"

etc.

ONE VOL. 12mo. PRICE $I.75.

The same sound sense and practical wisdom as applied to the affairs of

everyday life which secured for "Gold Foil" and "Lessons in Life" such

wide and enduring popularity distinguish this volume in a still more

marked degree. It contains careful selections from the articles written

by Dr. Holland for the department "Topics of the Time" in Scribner's

Monthly during the last five years.

Only those papers furnishing permanent value and general interest here

find a place, but the range of topics is surprisingly wide and

extremely attractive--"Culture," "Literature and Literary Men," "The

Popular Lecture," "The Common Moralities," "Woman," "American Life and

Manners" are a few of the general subjects under which the different

articles are grouped.

Upon them all Dr. Holland expresses himself with that grace,

directness, earnestness, and force which have given him so strong a

hold upon such a multitude of readers.

Copies sent post-paid by

SCRIBNER, ARMSTRONG & CO.,

743 and 745 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

SEVENOAKS.

A STORY OF TO-DAY.

BY J. G. HOLLAND,

Author of "Arthur Bonnicastle," "The Mistress of the Manse." "

Kathrina," "Bitter Sweet," "Titcomb's Letters," etc.

With 2 full-page illustrations, after original designs by Sol. Eytinge.

One volume, 12mo. Cloth, $1.75.

Dr. Holland in his latest novel, "The Story of Sevenoaks," has

undertaken to present some typical American characters, and especially

to throw light upon a phase of New York life, the outside of which, at

least, is familiar to every reader. But it is not merely because the

characters and scenes and incidents are thoroughly modern and familiar

that the story has won so much attention during its serial publication

in Scribner's Monthly. The progress of events is rapid, and graphically

narrated; and it is seldom that an American Magazine Story has been

followed from beginning to end by so large an audience, and with such

eager and sustained interest. The book, too, is enlivened by those bits

of out-of-door description, sympathetic touches of character, and

genial philosophies, that his readers always find in Dr. Holland's

stories, and which constitute no small part of their attraction.

Dr. HOLLAND'S WORKS.

Each in One Volume, 12mo.

The MISTRESS of the MANSE $1 50 MISS GILBERT'S CAREER $3 00

\*BITTERSWEET; a Poem 1 50 BAY PATH 2 00

\*KATHRINA; a Poem 1 50 THE MARBLE PROPHECY and other Poems 1 50

LETTERS TO YOUNG PEOPLE 1 50

\*GOLD FOIL hammered from Popular Proverbs 1 75 GARNERED SHEAVES.

Complete Poetical Works, "Bitter Sweet," "Kathrina," "Marble Prophecy,"

red line edition, beautifully illustrated. 4 00

LESSONS IN LIFE 1 75

\*PLAIN TALKS on Familiar Subjects 1 75 ARTHUR BONNICASTLE 2 75

LETTERS TO THE JONESES 1 75

\* These six volumes are issued in cabinet size (16mo), "Brightwood

Edition," at the same prices as above.

Copies sent post-paid by

SCRIBNER, ARMSTRONG & CO.,

743 and 745 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

THREE IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL WORKS.

THE PARACLETE

An Essay on the Personality and Ministry of the Holy Ghost, with some

Reference to Current Discussions.

By JOSEPH PARKER, D.D., Author of "ECCE DEUS," etc. One vol., I2mo,

cloth......... $1.50

From the Church Journal.

"It is written in a warm, devout, earnest manner, with much power of

reasoning and wealth of illustration, and very much suggestiveness, as

though the author were rather burdened with the amount he had to say

and used necessary repression. The introduction, and the essays

reviewing Mr. Huxley, at the end, are perhaps the best parts of the

book."

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MODERN DOUBT AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF

A SERIES OF APOLOGETIC LECTURES ADDRESSED TO EARNEST SEEKERS AFTER

TRUTH. By THEODORE CHRISTLIEB, University Preacher and Professor of

Theology at Bonn. One vol., 8vo, cloth,....... $3.00

From the Presbyterian.

"One rises from the reading of this volume with mind and heart expanded

and enriched, feeling that he has seen the gigantic and imposing

structure of skepticism shattered and the solid rock of Divine truth

disclosed. He knows not which to admire most--the author's wide and

thorough research, the exhaustiveness of his discussion, his

even-balanced and judicial impartiality, or his clear and finished

style. Every minister and every lay student of theology needs the work,

and no one who saw and heard its gifted author while in this country

will need urging to procure it."

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

THE

SUPERHUMAN ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

INFERRED FROM ITSELF.

By HENRY ROGERS, Author of "THE ECLIPSE OF FAITH," etc. One vol. 12mo,

cloth,...... $2.00

From the Congregationalist.

"Mr. ROGERS has constructed a volume which is to outlive all his other

writings. It is an instructive, stimulating, well-compacted book. Most

of the considerations which he has marshaled in proof of his thesis

have been presented by others, some of them with greater fulness and

equal brilliancy. He has brought together what has been scattered In

many treatises. He has freshened familiar illustrations and welded into

one many common proofs, so that they carry a new persuasiveness, and he

has added not a few subtle and suggestive and most satisfactory

illustrations of the wonderful nature of that Word which abideth."

The above books sent, postpaid, on receipt of the price, by the

publishers,

SCRIBNER, ARMSTRONG & CO., NEW YORK.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Indexes

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Index of Scripture References

Genesis

[1]18:19 [2]18:19

Proverbs

[3]22:6 [4]30:8-9

Isaiah

[5]54:13

Jeremiah

[6]7:18

Lamentations

[7]4:3

Hosea

[8]2:21-22

Zechariah

[9]7:5

Malachi

[10]2:15

Acts

[11]2:39 [12]16:1

Romans

[13]16:14

1 Corinthians

[14]1:16

Ephesians

[15]6:4 [16]6:4

Colossians

[17]1:2 [18]3:21

1 Timothy

[19]3:4

2 Timothy

[20]1:5 [21]2:14

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Index of Latin Words and Phrases

\* crimen falsi: [22]1

\* fideles: [23]1

\* opus operatum: [24]1

\* punctum temporis: [25]1

\* sacramentum: [26]1

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Index of Pages of the Print Edition

[27]i [28]ii [29]iii [30]iv [31]v [32]vi [33]vii [34]viii

[35]7 [36]8 [37]9 [38]10 [39]11 [40]12 [41]13 [42]14 [43]15

[44]16 [45]17 [46]18 [47]19 [48]20 [49]21 [50]22 [51]23 [52]24

[53]25 [54]26 [55]27 [56]28 [57]29 [58]30 [59]31 [60]32 [61]33

[62]34 [63]35 [64]36 [65]37 [66]38 [67]39 [68]40 [69]41 [70]42

[71]43 [72]44 [73]45 [74]46 [75]47 [76]48 [77]49 [78]50 [79]51

[80]52 [81]53 [82]54 [83]55 [84]56 [85]57 [86]58 [87]59 [88]60

[89]61 [90]62 [91]63 [92]64 [93]65 [94]66 [95]67 [96]68 [97]69

[98]70 [99]71 [100]72 [101]73 [102]74 [103]75 [104]76 [105]77

[106]78 [107]79 [108]80 [109]81 [110]82 [111]83 [112]84 [113]85

[114]86 [115]87 [116]88 [117]89 [118]90 [119]91 [120]92 [121]93

[122]94 [123]95 [124]96 [125]97 [126]98 [127]99 [128]100

[129]101 [130]102 [131]103 [132]104 [133]105 [134]106 [135]107

[136]108 [137]109 [138]110 [139]111 [140]112 [141]113 [142]114

[143]115 [144]116 [145]117 [146]118 [147]119 [148]120 [149]121

[150]122 [151]123 [152]124 [153]125 [154]126 [155]127 [156]128

[157]129 [158]130 [159]131 [160]132 [161]133 [162]134 [163]135

[164]136 [165]137 [166]138 [167]139 [168]140 [169]141 [170]142

[171]143 [172]144 [173]145 [174]146 [175]147 [176]148 [177]149

[178]150 [179]151 [180]152 [181]153 [182]154 [183]155 [184]156

[185]157 [186]158 [187]159 [188]160 [189]161 [190]162 [191]163

[192]164 [193]165 [194]166 [195]167 [196]168 [197]169 [198]170

[199]171 [200]172 [201]173 [202]174 [203]175 [204]176 [205]177

[206]178 [207]179 [208]180 [209]181 [210]182 [211]183 [212]184

[213]185 [214]186 [215]187 [216]188 [217]189 [218]190 [219]191

[220]192 [221]193 [222]194 [223]195 [224]196 [225]197 [226]198

[227]199 [228]200 [229]201 [230]202 [231]203 [232]204 [233]205

[234]206 [235]207 [236]208 [237]209 [238]210 [239]211 [240]212

[241]213 [242]214 [243]215 [244]216 [245]217 [246]218 [247]219

[248]220 [249]221 [250]222 [251]223 [252]224 [253]225 [254]226

[255]227 [256]228 [257]229 [258]230 [259]231 [260]232 [261]233

[262]234 [263]235 [264]236 [265]237 [266]238 [267]239 [268]240

[269]241 [270]242 [271]243 [272]244 [273]245 [274]246 [275]247

[276]248 [277]249 [278]250 [279]251 [280]252 [281]253 [282]254

[283]255 [284]256 [285]257 [286]258 [287]259 [288]260 [289]261

[290]262 [291]263 [292]264 [293]265 [294]266 [295]267 [296]268

[297]269 [298]270 [299]271 [300]272 [301]273 [302]274 [303]275

[304]276 [305]277 [306]278 [307]279 [308]280 [309]281 [310]282

[311]283 [312]284 [313]285 [314]286 [315]287 [316]288 [317]289

[318]290 [319]291 [320]292 [321]293 [322]294 [323]295 [324]296

[325]297 [326]298 [327]299 [328]300 [329]301 [330]302 [331]303

[332]304 [333]305 [334]306 [335]307 [336]308 [337]309 [338]310

[339]311 [340]312 [341]313 [342]314 [343]315 [344]316 [345]317

[346]318 [347]319 [348]320 [349]321 [350]322 [351]323 [352]324

[353]325 [354]326 [355]327 [356]328 [357]329 [358]330 [359]331

[360]332 [361]333 [362]334 [363]335 [364]336 [365]337 [366]338

[367]339 [368]340 [369]341 [370]342 [371]343 [372]344 [373]345

[374]346 [375]347 [376]348 [377]349 [378]350 [379]351 [380]352

[381]353 [382]354 [383]355 [384]356 [385]357 [386]358 [387]359

[388]360 [389]361 [390]362 [391]363 [392]364 [393]365 [394]366

[395]367 [396]368 [397]369 [398]370 [399]371 [400]372 [401]373

[402]374 [403]375 [404]376 [405]377 [406]378 [407]379 [408]380

[409]381 [410]382 [411]383 [412]384 [413]385 [414]386 [415]387

[416]388 [417]389 [418]390 [419]391 [420]392 [421]393 [422]394

[423]395 [424]396 [425]397 [426]398 [427]399 [428]400 [429]401

[430]402 [431]403 [432]404 [433]405 [434]406 [435]407 [436]408

[437]409 [438]410 [439]411

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This document is from the Christian Classics Ethereal

Library at Calvin College, http://www.ccel.org,

generated on demand from ThML source.

References

1. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Gen&scrCh=18&scrV=19#iii.iv-p29.1

2. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Gen&scrCh=18&scrV=19#iv.ii-p1.1

3. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=22&scrV=6#iii.vii-p42.1

4. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Prov&scrCh=30&scrV=8#iv.iii-p1.1

5. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Isa&scrCh=54&scrV=13#i-p2.1

6. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Jer&scrCh=7&scrV=18#iii.iv-p1.1

7. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Lam&scrCh=4&scrV=3#iii.iii-p1.1

8. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Hos&scrCh=2&scrV=21#iv.viii-p1.1

9. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Zech&scrCh=7&scrV=5#iv.vi-p1.1

10. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Mal&scrCh=2&scrV=15#iii.viii-p1.1

11. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Acts&scrCh=2&scrV=39#iii.v-p1.1

12. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Acts&scrCh=16&scrV=1#iv.vii-p2.1

13. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Rom&scrCh=16&scrV=14#iii.vi-p20.1

14. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=1Cor&scrCh=1&scrV=16#iii.vi-p1.1

15. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Eph&scrCh=6&scrV=4#iii.i-p1.1

16. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Eph&scrCh=6&scrV=4#iii.ii-p1.1

17. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Col&scrCh=1&scrV=2#iii.vii-p1.1

18. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=Col&scrCh=3&scrV=21#iv.iv-p1.1

19. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=1Tim&scrCh=3&scrV=4#iv.v-p1.1

20. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=2Tim&scrCh=1&scrV=5#iv.i-p1.1

21. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3?scrBook=2Tim&scrCh=2&scrV=14#iv.vii-p1.1

22. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-p11.1

23. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-p21.1

24. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-p34.1

25. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-p36.1

26. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-p32.1

27. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#i-Page\_i

28. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#i-Page\_ii

29. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#ii.i-Page\_iii

30. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#ii.i-Page\_iv

31. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#ii.i-Page\_v

32. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#ii.ii-Page\_vi

33. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#ii.ii-Page\_vii

34. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#ii.iii-Page\_viii

35. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#ii.iii-Page\_7

36. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii-Page\_8

37. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii-Page\_9

38. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_10

39. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_11

40. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_12

41. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_13

42. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_14

43. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_15

44. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_16

45. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_17

46. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_18

47. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_19

48. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_20

49. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_21

50. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_22

51. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_23

52. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_24

53. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_25

54. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_26

55. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_27

56. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_28

57. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_29

58. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_30

59. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_31

60. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_32

61. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.i-Page\_33

62. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_34

63. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_35

64. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_36

65. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_37

66. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_38

67. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_39

68. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_40

69. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_41

70. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_42

71. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_43

72. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_44

73. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_45

74. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_46

75. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_47

76. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_48

77. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_49

78. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_50

79. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_51

80. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_52

81. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_53

82. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_54

83. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_55

84. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_56

85. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_57

86. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_58

87. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_59

88. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_60

89. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_61

90. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_62

91. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_63

92. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_64

93. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.ii-Page\_65

94. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_66

95. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_67

96. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_68

97. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_69

98. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_70

99. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_71

100. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_72

101. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_73

102. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_74

103. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_75

104. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_76

105. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_77

106. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_78

107. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_79

108. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_80

109. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_81

110. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_82

111. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_83

112. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_84

113. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_85

114. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_86

115. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_87

116. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_88

117. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_89

118. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iii-Page\_90

119. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_91

120. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_92

121. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_93

122. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_94

123. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_95

124. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_96

125. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_97

126. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_98

127. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_99

128. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_100

129. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_101

130. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_102

131. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_103

132. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_104

133. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_105

134. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_106

135. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_107

136. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_108

137. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_109

138. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_110

139. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_111

140. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_112

141. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_113

142. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_114

143. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_115

144. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_116

145. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_117

146. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_118

147. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_119

148. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_120

149. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_121

150. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_122

151. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.iv-Page\_123

152. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_124

153. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_125

154. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_126

155. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_127

156. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_128

157. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_129

158. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_130

159. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_131

160. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_132

161. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_133

162. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_134

163. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_135

164. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_136

165. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_137

166. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_138

167. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_139

168. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_140

169. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_141

170. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_142

171. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_143

172. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_144

173. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.v-Page\_145

174. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_146

175. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_147

176. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_148

177. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_149

178. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_150

179. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_151

180. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_152

181. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_153

182. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_154

183. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_155

184. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_156

185. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_157

186. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_158

187. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_159

188. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_160

189. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_161

190. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vi-Page\_162

191. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_163

192. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_164

193. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_165

194. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_166

195. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_167

196. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_168

197. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_169

198. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_170

199. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_171

200. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_172

201. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_173

202. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_174

203. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_175

204. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_176

205. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_177

206. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_178

207. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_179

208. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_180

209. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_181

210. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_182

211. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_183

212. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_184

213. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_185

214. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_186

215. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_187

216. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_188

217. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_189

218. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_190

219. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_191

220. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_192

221. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_193

222. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_194

223. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.vii-Page\_195

224. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_196

225. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_197

226. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_198

227. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_199

228. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_200

229. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_201

230. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_202

231. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_203

232. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_204

233. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_205

234. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_206

235. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_207

236. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_208

237. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_209

238. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_210

239. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_211

240. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_212

241. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_213

242. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_214

243. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_215

244. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_216

245. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_217

246. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_218

247. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_219

248. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_220

249. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_221

250. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_222

251. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_223

252. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_224

253. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iii.viii-Page\_225

254. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv-Page\_226

255. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv-Page\_227

256. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_228

257. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_229

258. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_230

259. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_231

260. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_232

261. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_233

262. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_234

263. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_235

264. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_236

265. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_237

266. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_238

267. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_239

268. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_240

269. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_241

270. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_242

271. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_243

272. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_244

273. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_245

274. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_246

275. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_247

276. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_248

277. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_249

278. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_250

279. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_251

280. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_252

281. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.i-Page\_253

282. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_254

283. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_255

284. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_256

285. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_257

286. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_258

287. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_259

288. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_260

289. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_261

290. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_262

291. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_263

292. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_264

293. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_265

294. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_266

295. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_267

296. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_268

297. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_269

298. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_270

299. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.ii-Page\_271

300. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_272

301. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_273

302. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_274

303. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_275

304. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_276

305. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_277

306. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_278

307. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_279

308. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_280

309. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_281

310. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_282

311. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_283

312. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_284

313. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_285

314. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_286

315. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_287

316. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_288

317. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_289

318. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_290

319. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_291

320. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_292

321. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_293

322. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iii-Page\_294

323. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_295

324. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_296

325. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_297

326. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_298

327. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_299

328. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_300

329. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_301

330. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_302

331. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_303

332. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_304

333. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_305

334. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_306

335. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_307

336. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_308

337. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_309

338. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_310

339. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_311

340. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_312

341. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_313

342. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.iv-Page\_314

343. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_315

344. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_316

345. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_317

346. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_318

347. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_319

348. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_320

349. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_321

350. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_322

351. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_323

352. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_324

353. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_325

354. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_326

355. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_327

356. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_328

357. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_329

358. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_330

359. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_331

360. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_332

361. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_333

362. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_334

363. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_335

364. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_336

365. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_337

366. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.v-Page\_338

367. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_339

368. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_340

369. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_341

370. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_342

371. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_343

372. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_344

373. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_345

374. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_346

375. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_347

376. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_348

377. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_349

378. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_350

379. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_351

380. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_352

381. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_353

382. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_354

383. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_355

384. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_356

385. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_357

386. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_358

387. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_359

388. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_360

389. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_361

390. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_362

391. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_363

392. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_364

393. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_365

394. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vi-Page\_366

395. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_367

396. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_368

397. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_369

398. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_370

399. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_371

400. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_372

401. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_373

402. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_374

403. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_375

404. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_376

405. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_377

406. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_378

407. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_379

408. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_380

409. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_381

410. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_382

411. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_383

412. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_384

413. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.vii-Page\_385

414. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_386

415. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_387

416. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_388

417. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_389

418. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_390

419. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_391

420. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_392

421. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_393

422. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_394

423. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_395

424. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_396

425. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_397

426. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_398

427. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_399

428. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_400

429. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_401

430. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_402

431. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_403

432. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_404

433. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_405

434. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_406

435. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_407

436. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#iv.viii-Page\_408

437. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#v-Page\_409

438. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#v-Page\_410

439. file://localhost/ccel/b/bushnell/nurture/cache/nurture.html3#v-Page\_411