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AS BECOMETH WOMEN PROFESSING GODLINESS. NO. 3. CHRISTIAN WOMEN AS MOTHERS.

Since a large proportion of those called to be saints are already charged with the care of families; and since God does in no sense release them from those cares and responsibilities, it behooves such to carefully study how they may best fulfill them according to the divine directions.

In searching the Scriptures we do not find full and complete directions as to methods and plans for the training of children, but we do find principles laid down which we are expected to study and work out with care, and which we are assured will in due time develop the desired results. Solomon said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6.) Parents are exhorted not to provoke their children to anger, but to rebuke and punish when necessary, and to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, etc. And then we have the example of our heavenly Father set forth for our study and imitation. [R1097 : page 6] A little reflection upon these simple rules, together with a close observation of God's methods of training and discipline, will supply all the needed instruction on the subject.

In the first place, if we would govern others properly, we must, God-like, govern ourselves: We must be just, benevolent, kind, thankful, patient and loving, remembering always that our *most effective* lessons are given by personal example. If you teach only by word, you are constantly condemning yourself and pointing out your weaknesses, and the ready perception of childhood will quickly draw the inference that you should first practice what you preach; and all your preaching will be in vain, unless you do so. Here, then, is the first rule for Christian parents – So far as possible, *be what you would have*

your children be; Never for a moment forget that you are a teacher, and that from morning till night you are being studied and copied. If you are peevish, fretful, and complaining, disliking to do this duty, and despising that, wishing the lines had fallen to you in pleasanter places, coveting your neighbor's wealth, or health, or ease, etc., etc., do not be surprised, if you find the same dispositions cropping out in your children. And if it does, its constant friction and interference with the home duties, will necessitate force and pulling and driving and punishing, and thus greatly increase your burdens and cares.

If, on the other hand, you are cheerful and happy, regarding the duties of life as your greatest pleasure, yes, even what many are pleased to style the menial offices of home service; if you are thankful for such things as you have in the present life, and anxious and helpful in relieving the cares and lightening the burdens of your less favored neighbors, the little ones around your feet will quickly discern and catch your happy, thankful, energetic and helpful spirit; and thus half the victory in the matter of home training will be accomplished.

Dear mothers, never let the little ones hear you say, "I dislike to wash dishes," or "I dislike to cook," or that you dislike to perform any other duty that devolves upon you now; and never allow such an expression from them to pass unreprieved. Rather say, "My dear children, if you will think again, you will see that you are very unthankful when God has so generously filled your plates, to be too indolent to wash them, that he may fill them again." Perhaps if we continue such ingratitude he may some time refuse to fill them, to bring us to our senses and show us, how mean we have been. Never give them the idea, by word or look of yours, that pleasure is to be sought for elsewhere than in the line of duty. Then you will be preparing them to find happiness all day long in the kindly offices of love and duty, instead of stolidly toiling all day at irksome tasks, and impatiently waiting for a little diversion or frolic at the end of the day or week as compensations. In the cheerful performance of duty is the highest form of happiness, with which an evening's diversion, a picnic, etc., are not

worthy to be compared. And yet such innocent pleasures, when they come without special seeking – *i.e.*, when they are not looked for, and longed for, and sought after, as the chief end of existence – are pleasant, healthful and happy episodes which may add greatly to the happiness especially of young life, particularly when they come not too frequently, and as pleasant surprises from loving parents or friends. The habit of some, of paying children for what they do, detracts from their sense of duty in the matter of home service and substitutes a selfish and independent spirit. Better far let any gift be understood as entirely independent of remunerative considerations.

Our second rule should be, never by word or example to encourage idleness. Idleness is the mother of vice and a fruitful source of every evil; for Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. Nature itself teaches plainly that idleness is not the normal condition of any healthy human being. You cannot punish a child more severely than to require perfect idleness. The human mind is never idle except when asleep, and sometimes not then. And it is almost an impossibility for the human body to be inactive, unless disabled by disease.

To release a child, therefore, from all the restraints of duty, is not always to rest him. If no duties or responsibilities are placed upon him, he will spend the time and effort in doing as he pleases and in learning from other willful and untrained children what you may afterward find it impossible to eradicate or fully counteract. Children are better for having some responsibility and some care, though, if possible, they should not be overburdened. They will also develop more perfectly, if they have some time and opportunity to work out their own original ideas. Boys will be well and happily employed with carpenter's tools and other constructive implements; and girls with dolls and needles and pins, etc. But do not give them too many or too complete a set of toys, or you will leave no room for ingenuity. A rag doll of Katie's own make and on which Johnny has displayed his art in penciling features will often be more precious than one you might purchase. And economy and carefulness can be taught by very special care of the finer

Christmas doll. And as they acquire skill, let it be applied to things useful, and let them see that you appreciate their skill by giving them this liberty to utilize it. Play should always be secondary to real service. Nellie must drop the doll quickly to heed the cry of the [R1097 : page 7] real baby; and Johnny must leave the interesting hammer and nails to run the necessary errands. If taught to do so from infancy these habits will grow, and they will be both useful and happy in so doing.

Prompt, cheerful, loving obedience should be expected and enforced – not by repeated urging to duty, but by a simple showing of duty, and a penalty of some kind for its non-performance. Do not lower your dignity, work yourself into a nervous excitement, and disturb the peace of the rest of the family, by continually upbraiding and urging a refractory one. Rather give some one else the *privilege* (for so they should be taught to regard it) of doing that duty, and let that one feel that he missed both the privilege and the approval that comes with it.

And this gives another suggestion, namely, to train children to be sensitive to the approval of parents, of God, and of their own consciences. If conscience is unheeded, if God is unknown or unloved, and if parents are only regarded as servants, nothing but brute force will compel submission to authority; and that submission will be an ignoble one, and at best only temporary. How can this be done? Well, it cannot be done in a day; and listless, heedless parents cannot do it at all. This is one of the fine points that will require skill and ingenuity. You will need to study the disposition of your child, to watch for the opportunities to instruct and impress him, and to let none of them slip. You will need to watch the little things in his deportment, to express your affectionate approval of his good points (when expedient, but not always, lest it cultivate vanity) and your pain and displeasure at his errors and failures. Let him feel that your eye and God's is ever upon him, just as we feel that God's eye is upon us. (2 Chron. 16:9; Psa. 34:15; 1 Pet. 3:12; Prov. 15:3.) Do not let him sit by your side at the table and eat like a savage who does not know the use of a knife and fork; do not let him be mean enough to grab the best of everything for

himself and pay no attention to the wants of others. Teach them to be generous, to prefer one-another, and to be watchful for one-another's interests; and the table, however plain be the meal, is one of the best opportunities for inculcating such lessons. Let good manners and good principles be the frequent subjects of conversation at such times. In fact no other opportunity so favorable and so frequent presents itself. Make good use of them all, and study to do so. Remember, too, that your children come into the world ignorant of everything, and even the commonest civilities must be taught them by both word and example. Therefore be patient, careful, watchful and wise both in teaching them good and in counteracting evil.

Cultivate the acquaintance of your children; enjoy their society and let them enjoy yours. Be young with them, but give them the advantage of your years of experience; and to this end never let your dignity descend to the level of frivolity or foolishness. Hold your own standpoint, but sympathize with theirs, and do not forget your feelings and experiences at their age. Invite their confidence and never make light of their troubles, but comfort and advise them as your love and experience enables you to do. Never speak slightly of one to another, nor allow them to do so without correction.

Watch for the first outcroppings of wrong principles and talk to them seriously about them. Show them the mean principles in some very small actions and what their miserable fruits are when a little more matured. Talk freely, not always to them, but before them of the wants and sufferings and trials of others, and let them see you planning and active in efforts to relieve as much of it as possible. Send them or take them with you on errands of love and mercy; and let them see that you prefer to go to the house of sorrow and mourning to comfort those that weep, rather than to the house of mirth.

Be cheerful, do not wear a long dejected face, even if you have trouble, or if you are sympathizing with others in trouble. Let the sunshine of Christian peace and joy illuminate your countenance at all

times, and you can carry that [R1098 : page 7] sunshine not only into your own home, but into all the homes you enter.

Be generous, no matter how poor you are, and teach and talk of generosity and show by word and action, how it needs to be balanced by frugality, and what extremes both run to, when not rightly balanced.

Let your children have access to good books and encourage them to read for information, and to report what they read. Endeavor to give them broad ideas; do not let them think that the little home circle and their immediate friends and relatives are the largest and most important part of the world. Show them that the human race is one great family, children of one father and mother, and that as brothers and sisters they should love one another; that the dead as well as the living were part of this one family, and that history shows how they lived and what they accomplished, how good and great some were, and how wicked others were. This will serve to awaken interest in a very instructive line of reading and prepare the way for further instruction of prophecy which reveals the future destiny of the race. Instructive reading of various kinds will crowd out bad company and its attendant evils.

To these suggestions we might append the following useful hints which some one terms –

THE SCIENCE OF CHILD-TRAINING IN A NUTSHELL.

1. When you consent, consent cheerfully.
2. When you refuse, refuse finally.
3. Often commend.
4. Never scold.
5. Beware of making an issue with your child, but when an issue is forced carry it out. It is with children as with men, few of whom,

says Goethe, are open to conviction, but the majority of whom are open to persuasion.

In other words – Rule yourself before attempting to rule your child.

All of these points good and wise worldly parents have observed and profited by; and even without the restraints and power of a religious training, they have raised sons and daughters to honor and to comfort them in their declining years. And yet, in addition to all the nice points and the fine points of wise and careful training, there is a mightier power than all else in a decided religious training. If the little ones are taught from infancy to know and love God as the wise and loving provider of every blessing they enjoy, as the rewarder of righteousness and the punisher of evil doers (not always now, but in his own due time); if they are early taught to bring their little troubles to him for sympathy and help, and their little joys and blessings to him in thankfulness and praise; and if they are taught the plan and purposes of God as they are able to comprehend it, the instruction thus received in the plastic period of childhood will never be effaced. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." He may stray from it in youth, but by and by under the chastening hand of God, (for God will not forsake them, but will watch over them for your sake), a mother's prayers and counsel and love will be freshly recalled and heeded, – perhaps long after she has been laid to rest.

Since such carefulness and watchfulness and constant attention to the physical, mental and moral wants of children demand almost all of a mother's time and strength, and sometimes more than she has to give, but little can be expected of her beyond the family circle in the earlier years of motherhood. Her faithfulness here, therefore, will show the measure of her desire and willingness to be faithful in the greater work; and verily, she shall not lose her reward, either in the Master's approval, or in the love and respect and reverence of her family. Even if for a

time wayward and thoughtless as some children seem to be naturally, they also will by and by rise up and call her blessed.

The work of Christian parents for their children now should be regarded as part of the great restitution work of the now dawning restitution age. And if the children of the saints are carefully trained and instructed in the plan of God, and the great work he is about to accomplish in the great time of trouble and after it, doubtless God will be pleased to make special use of them as the world's instructors, to point men to the real and only remedy for all their woes.

Work, dear Christian mothers, with this end in view, and God will in due time show that your labor has not been in vain, in the Lord. Humble and obscure though you may seem, you have a blessed mission to fulfill. God bless you all and give you wisdom, and patience, and constancy, and prudence, and faith, and hope, and love, and grace in every way sufficient to act nobly your part, while you walk humbly with God casting your care upon him knowing that he careth for you and yours specially, for your sake.

MRS. C. T. R.

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