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1918

Practical
Child Training



PART 4
HOW TO TEACH
OBEDIENCE
TO CHILDREN OVER FIFTEEN
—
SUMMARY OF THE
PRINCIPLES



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Every home should have a playroom where children are permitted to make a noise and have fun.
Principles involved: Coöperation and substitution.

Practical Child Training

PART 4

EASY LESSONS FOR TEACHING OBEDIENCE IN THE HOME

By

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FROM FIFTEEN TO TWENTY- ONE YEARS

Henceforth I learn that to obey is best and love with fear the only God.

—*Milton.*

To talk about teaching obedience to a youth of fifteen or older sounds queer, but it is not unreasonable. It is a regrettable fact, of course, that any child should be disobedient at this age, yet there are ways of making him obedient.

Always, in getting obedience, first gain the child's confidence. To win the child's trust, show an unusual concern in his affairs. Be consistent. Do not show interest in the child one minute and the next show disgust about something. Work with the child in every way until you have his confidence.

You need not worry about obedience when you are preparing something for

your child's benefit. Make occasions to help the child frequent and incidentally give minor commands while preparing for an event in which the child is interested. You might prepare for a party to interest the girl or a supper for your boy's friends. Anything of this nature will make a good starting point for convincing the youth that you are with him.

LEAD CHILD TO TALK

Talk with your child a great deal while you are preparing something for him, and encourage him to talk to you as much as you can. This is an important point in getting a child's confidence—get him to talk to you freely. Talk to your child about everything which you know will interest him. Talk about his plans for the future; you can scarcely discuss them too much. The effect is wholesome, not only from the point of view of obedience but for many other reasons.

There is a great deal in the way you

ask your child to do a thing as to how he responds. Especially is this true of the period which we are now considering. Every command tends to put the youth into a certain mood, either good or bad. It will be a good mood or a bad one, depending partly, of course, upon what the command is, but mostly upon how it is given. If the command is such that it gratifies the youth, the chances are strong that he will obey; if the command is such that it puts him into a combative mood, the chances are he will not obey.

TREAT CHILD AS BEST FRIEND

The following precept you will always find it well to heed in dealing with a youth: treat him just as you would a grown-up friend with whom you want to keep on good terms. This implies trusting your child and also saying those things which will leave him in a good frame of mind.

The well-nigh fatal consequences of underestimating a boy's maturing man-

hood are seen in the following incident, related by the boy's teacher.

EXAMPLE 1

George Brown, aged seventeen, was manly and full of boyish spirit. His father had forgotten that he was not a little boy. Mr. Brown was a good man, interested in church and community, and most anxious that George should not go wrong. In fact, he followed George's every step. When he went out of evenings, his father humiliated him by trying to find out whether he went where he said he would go. This man would call up and inquire if his son were there, or go about trying to find him in some place in which the boy ought not to be. The boy resented this and threatened to leave home.

As his teacher, I had won this boy's confidence. I did my best, but a final break came. He left home, letting neither his father nor myself know his whereabouts. I learned that he had

taken a position with a manufacturing plant, at a low wage.

The father came to me to ask what I knew about his boy. At first I told him that should I find out where George was I would not tell him until he gave me assurance that he would recognize the manly qualities in George and treat him as an equal. He became very angry and in a threatening attitude exclaimed, "So you think you will take me in hand, do you?"

I replied, "I certainly should like to do so if I felt myself big enough to complete the job." He immediately saw the funny side of the situation and laughed as he remarked, "Perhaps we'd better talk the thing over." I showed how he had failed to recognize the manly qualities in his boy by not expecting right conduct from him.

The father gave assurance that he would do the right thing by George if he would only come home.

I had an opportunity to talk with the boy, but could not persuade him to com-

municate with his father. Six weeks later Mr. Brown brought a package to me, stating that the boy's birthday came soon and he wished I would send this present to him and say that his father wanted him to come home and he would do the right thing by him. The boy returned the package unopened, without a word to his father.

Later I found a better position for the young man. By proving to him that I had his best interest at heart, I drew out from him a confession that he was sorry that he had sent back the present unopened. It took about two months to bring father and son together. On Christmas eve the young man went home. Both father and son profited by the experience, as the future careers of both have proved.

UNITY IN FAMILY SENTIMENT

When problems of conduct and life plans become matters of grave concern for a young man or woman, the best

safeguard against unwise decisions is the general family policy. This is built up by years of discussion, not by solitary utterances or advice or orders. Every year must witness a cementing of each child more firmly into the family ground, not a gradual loosening of the bonds between child and family; with this must be an injection into the child's life of the "family mind." This is a powerful force which in many instances will sustain weak impulses in the individual child.

Father (or mother) can voice the family conviction: "We will all hang together on this matter." "Mother is nearly always right; we will all see what she says and try to follow it out." "If the picture show is the right thing we'll all go. We'll settle the matter for the good of all." The family actually all go and discuss the plays when they get home. "We're not going to let any one of our flock wander off like that (instance of disrupted family under discussion). We'll go with him if he starts."

AGREE WITH THE CHILD

It is a great mistake to argue with children as so many parents do. They explain and elucidate and then when their children reply they argue. Our advice is: do not argue with a child. No matter what subject is up for discussion, it is much better for you and your child merely to talk about it, "pro and con," but let each agree with the other as much as possible. When your child makes a remark with which you do not exactly agree, do not say that you do not believe as he does; instead seem to agree with him; that is, put the very best interpretation possible upon what he says and then add your own thought just as if it harmonizes perfectly with what the child has said.

By not arguing, you avoid the suggestion that you are talking against the child. When the child wants to do something and you begin to give reasons why he should not, there is a strong tendency for the child not only to contradict doubt-

ful statements, but even the facts in the case.

When the child says something which at the moment provokes you, it is better in most cases to answer him by perfect silence. In case your child affirms something that is unreasonable, do not antagonize him by quickly disagreeing with him. Speak slowly and softly and it will have much more effect. By not arguing, you also keep your child thinking that your views are more logical and reasonable than if he were disagreeing with you, because then he would not try to see your reasons.

Some authors say that just as the period before fifteen should be a time of unquestioning obedience, so the period after fifteen should be a time of giving reasons; they would request that a certain thing be done and then explain why they want it done.

Now this is unnecessary if obedience is taught correctly. Obedience should rest upon something more fundamental than the reasons which are given for mak-

ing a particular request. At all ages let obedience rest upon confidence. Then the child will grant your request because you make it. When a friend of yours asks you to do him a favor, you do not ask that friend why you should do it; you either do it or not, depending upon how much confidence you have in your friend. So it should be with your child.

While, in asking a favor, it is not necessary to tell why you ask it, yet the favor itself should not appear to be unreasonable. You would not ask a grown person to do for you that which you could just as easily do yourself. Therefore, it is better not to ask a youth of fifteen or twenty to do what you could more easily do. For example, unless you were obviously tied down to a chair in one way or another, you should not ask your child to come across the room to get a paper which is only a short distance from your own chair.

AUTHORITY

You can succeed without showing authority. To ask obedience of a youth in the same way as you ask favors of a grown-up friend will not lessen your authority in the least. In fact, with that method, you need no authority. To use a personal illustration—before I left home, I had the experience of living with my younger brother as he passed through this period (15 to 21). He obeyed me perfectly without being under my authority. (All the authority in our family was in the hands of father and mother.)

No matter what I wanted done, I would ask him to do it and he granted me the favor. He is not an exception. He responded to right methods, just as any boy will do when right methods are used.

Now comes the question, "What were those right methods?" We shall discuss only the most important points. In the first place, the thought of being obedi-

ent never entered the brother's head; he "did favors" for me. That is enough. Let your child consider that he is merely exchanging favors with you as one close friend does with another. This idea appeals to boys and girls of all dispositions.

On the other hand, I always appeared to be as eager to do my brother a favor as he was to assist me. That also is a necessity. Show a willingness to help out your child on every occasion. Talk to him about everything which you know will interest him and do little things for the child which you know will please him.

"FAVOR" IDEA IS PRACTICAL

Can anyone object to this policy on the ground that in order to make your child obedient, you must also be "obedient" to the child? Certainly not. No parent can expect the right sort of obedience unless he is, in a certain sense, obedient to the child. He need not be obedient in the same sense, of course, but nevertheless, obedient in spirit. There is

no other way of securing the right kind of obedience.

It would be just as reasonable for a parent to ask us for a method to teach his child kindness, while he continually says and does unkind things to the child, as to ask for a method to teach absolutely one-sided obedience. Either request would be absurd. A child simply responds to the methods used. If a parent works against the child instead of with him he will very likely have trouble getting obedience.

Consider any two boys or any two girls who are friends. See that they get to exchange a few little favors back and forth, and note how quickly they become even closer friends. Exchanging favors is really the secret of close friendship. By favors are meant any acts which seem to further the interests of another. Let either one of two persons decline to assist or show interest in the other and the friendship instantly declines.

Whenever one person shows kindness to another, the effect is two-fold. It

benefits the one for whom the favor is done, making him feel disposed to return the favor at the first opportunity, and it also has an excellent psychological effect upon the one doing the favor. The thought of his act being appreciated makes him feel eager to do other favors for that person in the future.

It is this double effect of doing favors which makes the idea so valuable in getting obedience. It works practically in the same way on all dispositions. There is no middle ground. If you do not appeal to the youth, in a kind spirit, the effect will be just the opposite of that produced by kindness. This opposite or bad effect is also a double one, as will be explained in Part 5, under the head of Anger and Ill-temper.

CONSIDER CIRCUMSTANCES

Another very important point is to avoid giving commands in unfavorable circumstances. When you see that a command will conflict too much with

what your child is already doing, and especially if you think there is any danger of his being slow to obey on that account, you should postpone your command. This consideration will not only aid you in getting obedience in the future, but it is only a courtesy which you would naturally show to a grown-up friend.

In giving commands, especially those which you expect to have carried out immediately, it is very important to consider the mental condition of the child.

Many parents have lost their temper because they did not appreciate this point, and after giving a command, were provoked at the child's disobedience. In one case, a high school boy worked at decorating the school-house with one of his teachers until one o'clock in the morning. The fullest reaction from the loss of sleep did not show until the next morning after this, so his parents did not appreciate the reason for his negligence on that morning. When told to do what he had always done before, very quickly (e. g.,

turn off the alarm) he gave the excuse that it would quit pretty soon of its own accord. His father then told him to make the fire; to this, he replied that the house was already warm.

DO NOT RAISE VOICE

The real reason for this disobedience was not that the boy was just becoming rebellious, but it was the physical reaction caused by the loss of sleep from two nights before. The father, not appreciating this, followed his natural tendency and began to raise his voice and repeat the command, thinking that he mustn't let a case of disobedience pass unreprieved. Just as sure as a parent does raise his voice and repeat his command, he will weaken his power of control. The chances are ten to one that the boy will lie still and listen to two or three more calls, and while he is doing this, he is being convinced that such a delay is possible at any time, and on the next occasion when he feels only half as tired

as he does this morning, he will try his father's patience again.

Now, one might reason that if the process described weakened the father's power to command, by allowing the boy to lie peacefully in his bed while his father called, it would be better if the father came into the boy's room prepared for action at the very first refusal to obey his command. But this would be worse still.

It would be absurd for you to try to force a friend of yours to do you a favor, by inflicting pain. And it would be just as absurd for you to try to force obedience from a youth of fifteen or more.

This would not only seem unjust to the boy, but it would antagonize him. The father has apparently failed to understand the situation which the boy understands perfectly well. The boy knows that he does not feel like doing anything just then. The father also must certainly know that is the case, but he does not realize the important point that it is

better not to attempt to enforce a command in that situation.

Just as it shows good judgment to request favors in such a way that it will put a youth in the right mood for granting them, so it is wise not to ask any favors when the youth is already in a bad mood which cannot be changed in a minute. In other words, you should not command a youth of fifteen or more in a gruff tone for the simple reason that it would put him in a wrong mood for obeying. Therefore, if he is already in such a mood, it is better not to give any command.

LOOK AHEAD

It is always wise for parents to look ahead. Anticipate that when your child loses two or three hours' sleep in one night for the next two or three mornings he will not be normal in his feelings if awakened at the usual time. In any case, whether a certain condition could be anticipated or not, be quick to dis-

cern when your child is not feeling well or in a bad mood for any reason whatever, so that you can postpone asking favors of him until this feeling changes.

In a case like that cited above it would be better for the father to make the fire himself and let the boy know that it was done as a favor to him in order to allow him to finish his sleep. Of course, if there were no one else to make the fire and it had to be made, the proper thing to do would be to go right to the boy's bed and see that he gets out before you leave him and then have him make the fire, or if the fire goes out as a result of his tardiness let him find out for himself.

It is more reasonable to treat a person who has lost sleep as a sick person than as one who is perfectly well. A father who appreciates this not only avoids losing confidence by understanding the situation and doing the chore himself instead of asking it of the boy (who would be inclined to disobey), but he has actually gained the boy's good-will.

EXAMPLE 1

“Norman, Norman. Get up! Breakfast has been ready this half hour,” called Mrs. Hudson from the foot of the stairs.

“Norman, do you hear me?”

“Yes,” drawled Norman sleepily as he turned over to take another nap.

Twenty minutes later ten-year-old Alice said, “I’ll get Norman up, mama.”

The old stairs creaked under her cautious tread as she sneaked up to Norman’s room and dashed half a cup of cold water in his face as he lay asleep.

“Ah-oo,” groaned Norman. “Get out of here, Alice Hudson, or I’ll break your back.”

“You get up or I’ll do something worse,” and she raced down the stairs.

Norman was bolting a cold breakfast when his father came in.

“Norm, what does this mean?”

Norman ate in savage silence.

“You’ve got to get up, young man, when you’re called; do you hear me?”

“Gee, what’s the row about? I’ve plenty of time to get to school.”

“Oh yes, school’s all you care about. Do you think I’m going to let you lie abed till school time while I do all the chores?”

Norman had finished his hasty breakfast. He now took up his hat and left the house, slamming the door behind him.

COMMENTS

Everybody in the house had, one way or another, helped to make this a blue day for Norman.

Mrs. Hudson actually drilled her boy into the habit of lying in bed when she called him every few minutes. She should have called him but once and expected results. Repeated calls show her lack of expectancy and only disturb in an annoying way his morning nap. He either should or should not get up. Let him decide which before he goes to bed. Be his agent in waking him at his appointed time and if great issues hang

upon his getting up, see that he does so at once. If nothing serious is at stake, let him alone after the one call, no matter how much longer he sleeps.

Alice's part in the attempt to get Norman up was wholly bad. The only possible result of such a procedure is disgust and antagonism toward his sister. She showed that she knew this by her rapid retreat from his room.

The following anecdote pictures a situation far different.

EXAMPLE 2

A certain mother of three children, the oldest boy being in the high school, has never had one moment of trouble about having her children get up in the morning.

When they are out later than usual at night she says, when they return:

"How early must you get up in the morning, my son?"

"I've got to do twenty problems in algebra before school time."

“How long will that take?”

“I hardly know.”

“Do one now and I’ll time you.”

They find it takes just three minutes to “work” one problem, and calculate that an hour will suffice for the entire task.

“How long will it take you to dress?”

“Fifteen minutes.”

“Then I’ll call you an hour and fifteen minutes before breakfast. Daughter, what do you have to do?”

“I want to study my history half an hour.”

“Very well. You shall be called in time for that.”

“You don’t have any extras, do you?” turning to the younger boy, “so we’ll call you just in time for breakfast.”

In the morning the father cheerfully wakens the children at their appointed times. Sometimes he uses the “Bob White” whistle. Often he caresses them until they waken. If an alarm is used it is the signal that the father will soon call them to arise. Their mother greets

them with a cheery good morning, and sees that they each have opportunity to do back work. Altogether everybody feels as if everybody else is trying to help him along.

On Friday evening the mother says: "Tomorrow is Saturday. Every one of you may sleep just as long as you possibly can, but on Monday you must get up at 6:45."

COMMENTS

It's the spirit of this home that tells. Each child may truthfully say, "I know if my parents ask me to get up early it's solely because it's best for me. That's all."

It is better not to give a command than to let your child evade it or put it off. In calling to supper a child who is busy talking to a chum and who is not through "transacting business" it would be better simply to make the announcement that supper is ready and perhaps suggest that he come as soon as he can, instead

of saying, "Come to supper right away."

CONSIDERATE COMMANDS

This point of making each request such that it will be carried out in every detail is exceedingly important. Watch any two parents, one who observes this point, the other who does not, and you will find a great difference in the results. The parent who gives strict commands that are easy to disobey in some particular, does not have as good control as the one who understands and makes allowances by giving careful and considerate commands.

Of course, when asking a child to do some definite thing that only takes a few seconds of time, get his attention and ask him to do it as though you expect him to do it without delay. But when a youth is busy doing something else that he will likely continue to do for even a few seconds after you ask him to change to something else, it would be better not

to say, "right away" but to give the situation sensible consideration.

In training children of any age, you will find occasions for applying this recommendation to advantage.



The untrained parent never neglects to scold a child after it has done the wrong thing. Before the mother started to read the paper she should have provided some form of play or plaything and co-operated with the child until the latter was contentedly occupied. The attractive pitcher plus the mother's lack of co-operation caused the accident.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT



You can force the hand but not the heart.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Since corporal punishment is so widely used as a method of discipline, the discussion of its use in dealing with young children becomes of prime importance here. Having already discussed the positive phase of discipline, that is, the thing to be done in certain situations, let us now consider its negative aspect, that is, the thing which should not be done.

You will have observed already that we do not deny the necessity for the use of punishment in the training of even very young children. In fact, many times our "checks" are punishments by deprivation of some plaything or treasure that the child values highly.

It can scarcely be affirmed by anyone that we can dispense with all forms of punishment. In truth, we cannot avoid the natural penalties of our disregard of the laws of nature. Even when hy-

gienic laws are neglected, the penalties are applied to our bodies. The universal value of these restraints upon our wanton carelessness is so obvious that one must of course believe that education in both home and school must use corrective punishment. But there is a vast difference between non-corporal punishment and corporal punishment. Briefly, the former appeals to the mind of the child directly; the latter attempts to influence the mind indirectly; that is, by some sort of physical discomfort purposely inflicted by the parent or teacher. Corporal punishment is applied when whipping, slapping, cuffing, spanking, shaking or some like penalty is used.

Our discussion of corporal punishment will first of all consider some of the reasons that parents urge in defense of their use of this method of controlling children.

ARGUMENTS FOR CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

First, corporal punishment is held to be a general preventive against undesir-

able conduct in a child. After a child begins to walk, especially if he is two years old or over, he becomes increasingly active and will do many things undesirable or positively contrary to the parents' wishes. The unadvised parent judges that the best remedy is a spanking. Such a parent argues that the infliction of pain on the child will prevent a repetition of the misdeed, and that it is the method best suited to change the child's notions of what he should do or avoid doing.

Is such an argument sound? Yes, it is, provided we assume that the child is on the same plane mentally and morally as the ordinary dumb animal. The theory is effective in controlling dumb animals.

A great many parents who are uneducated in child training say, "Well, if my child openly refuses to do what I tell him, there is nothing else to do but to whip him."

If such parents were talking about their dog, we would agree with them.

However, we should make a distinction between a dog and a child.

But need we say to an intelligent reader that the assumption that there is no distinction between child mind and animal mind is false? Nothing is more certain than that human beings can respond to higher incentives than the mere avoidance of pain. All impulses, whether good or bad, are strengthened by exercise. Your child will be an adult of high or low moral standards, depending on whether you appeal mostly to his higher or lower instincts. It is literally true that if you treat your child as you would an animal he will certainly come to act like one.

A second false doctrine is that since obedience is a desirable habit and indeed a necessity in the life of every child, it makes no difference how it is secured.

This view is positively incorrect. The attitude of a child compelled to obey by reason of his fear of punishment is never a good one. Such obedience is merely a compliance through fear. The real

inner personality of the child is untouched and still remains subject to all sorts of untamed impulses. Hence this attitude becomes, on the part of the child, an attitude of hypocrisy and rebellion. The parent professes to be satisfied, but he could not be so if he understood that the child is yet in a mood of resistance and disloyalty. Both parties rest from the exercise of corporal punishment with a false reconciliation and no real improvement of conditions.

A third argument in defense of corporal punishment is embodied in the old saying, "It is better that a child should be ruled by the rod than not to be trained and governed at all." This statement may sound wise, but it carries a false assumption. It assumes that a person who is not able to manage a child without the rod would be able to use the rod properly; or else it assumes that a child can be controlled by punishment, whether it is applied rightly or not. Either assumption is false.

If I had a splendid, fine horse, which

showed a slight tendency to balk for one driver (who did not know how to drive it) but went all right for another driver (who did know how to drive) from which driver should I withhold the whip, if I were to prohibit its use by one or the other? The one who knew the less about driving would think he needed the whip the more, but he is the one whom I would not allow to use it. Because if I were to give it to him he would soon have that splendid horse balking for everybody. To the other driver, who knew how to drive, I would give the whip, realizing that in case of emergency he might be able to use it to advantage by applying it at the proper time and in the right way.

This illustrates perfectly the correct view about the punishment of children. The more skilled one is and the more one knows about child nature, the more capable he is of using punishment to advantage. And the less one knows, the greater are his chances of doing more harm than good.

Here is the truth in a nutshell: *the more you know about child nature, the less physical punishment you will seem to need.*

A fourth erroneous notion is that every misdeed must be met with a very definite penalty. There is not so much thought about the future as about the past. Some unnatural sense of justice leads the parent to delight in seeing misdeeds visited by vengeance. Individuals may deny this, but such an attitude is a known fact, strange as it may seem.

To describe the situation is to brand it with shame. Vengeance has no least part in the life of the family. A fiendish delight in even-handed justice has no excuse. If a boy refuses to wear his cap when told to do so, his mother need not search for a penalty merely to retaliate on the ground of "an eye for an eye." Perhaps she need not require him to pick up his cap and place it on his head unless he insists on carrying out his project of going out without it. Even so the

notion of a penalty can be entirely eliminated.

Last of all, it is urged that punishment is needed now in order that the spirit of obedience may be developed in the future. No particular wrong deed is anticipated, but a general precaution against disobedience is insisted upon.

The assumption is that by some process of reasoning the child will conclude that he must be an obedient boy on all occasions, since punishment followed one particular offense.

Here again the true state of affairs is not as assumed. The boy experiences shame, remorse and perhaps a sense of defeat, repression, anger and resentment. He resolves on doing something to avoid pain, but thinks little on being a boy of noble character. In other words, he will not draw a very useful general conclusion from the experience of being whipped. The more severe the whippings, the less likely he is to see their value in making him an obedient boy.

Occasionally it happens that a boy or

girl has been spoiled by the unwise use of corporal punishment. Not a few wise ones will pipe up with the adage, "Spare the rod and spoil the child," insisting that the remedy for a bad state of affairs is an abundance of sound whippings.

This seems to be the climax of parental folly. A remedy that has both utterly failed and made a bad case worse is to be repeated in larger doses to cure both ills! We do not believe this view can seriously be held as the truth.

BAD EFFECTS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

OBJECTION 1

From a psychological point of view, the worst effect of corporal punishment is that the parent too often becomes the child's antagonist instead of his friend. This condition is brought about by the spirit of anger aroused in the child's mind because of his treatment and in the parent because of the misdemeanor com-

mitted. The real fault lies in an entire misunderstanding of the situation by the parent.

EXAMPLE

Buddy Lathrop wiped his shoes on the mat with unusual care and stuck his head doubtfully through the door opening into the warm, lighted kitchen.

“There he is now—the scamp!” exclaimed his Aunt Dora.

“Buddy—where have you been?” demanded his mother. “Come on in here! Didn’t I tell you that you were never again to stay out after dark? Here I’ve been worrying about you for an hour and a half. I told you I’d whip you if you did it again. You come here!”

The boy moved hesitatingly toward his mother’s chair. Aunt Dora looked at him suspiciously.

“I believe he’s been on the lake again, Mary,” she said. “And he’s bareheaded! Where’s your cap?—He’s lost it, Mary, I can tell by the way he looks.”

“ Well, if he’s lost that cap, I’ll give him something to remember it by. Come here! ”

Buddy went meekly forward. His mother, with a deft motion, landed him over her knee.

“ And just see what a big boy he’s getting to be, ” she remarked reproachfully as she surveyed him while she reached for her slipper; “ almost a man and has to be whipped. ”

She began to apply the slipper with skill acquired by frequent practice. But, to her surprise, the boy did not emit the usual number of groans; instead he was doggedly enduring the pain. This distressed Mrs. Lathrop, for, had she told her real state of mind, it would have been something like this:

“ I cannot believe Buddy is sorry; he would surely cry if he were. But he shall know that he is to mind me hereafter if it takes all the strength I have. ”

Not even a whimper came from Buddy; he stood the beating like a martyr.

It was long in the night before he closed his eyes. He was planning a campaign for the future.

When, the following morning, he called for Billy Woodall, his constant companion, he revealed the following:

“Do you know what? I pulled off a great bluff on mother last night. I believe it’ll work.

“When she was drubbing me with dad’s slipper, I never let out a whimper. She can’t make me cry after this; that’d please her too much.”

OBJECTION 2

The second great objection is that corporal punishment never gets at the real source of the evil. It only prevents the open expression of it, at best, and generally the price is too great to pay. For example, if you compel a child by physical effort or in any way apply force, as a corrective, there is bound to be unpleasant reaction later on. The incident will be stored up with others like it in

the child's mind; it will be hidden and nursed like a wound until some day it will cause the child to assert himself and challenge your authority. No boy or girl can foresee an impending whipping or experience the pain of it without resistance. Anguish of spirit forces the child to protect himself against the dangers that are about to engulf him. A child of stubborn disposition may refuse to yield under punishment even though it seriously injure him. In any case the spirit of waywardness involved in the disobedient act is more deeply enkindled by natural resistance of the child when pain is threatened and may easily lead to violent action toward the parent. Both the stubborn and the sensitive child who has a morbid fear of physical pain may succumb under parental force, thereby registering an everlasting grudge against a brutal parent. If parents knew the proper limits to which they might go in the use of corporal punishment they could often avoid this feeling of resentment.

The use of corporal punishment is sure

to blind the parent to the real nature of his problem. It seems to him to be a short cut to the solution of any difficulty. Haste in punishing is always a possible blunder; it is most likely to occur when the rod is too convenient a weapon and too readily grasped by a person irritated or angered by a disobedient child.

Blind haste excludes due inquiry into the reason the child disobeyed. There is always a reason which a thinking child can often be induced to give. Unless the parent knows this reason, he has no right to inflict any penalty on the child whatsoever. If a parent is inconsiderate enough to ignore the reason which caused the refusal and simply commands again that the thing be done, he will, by this act, have the child in such a mood (and also himself) that punishment would seem to him the natural thing and the only possible way of getting the command carried out. When he is in just this frame of mind he is least fitted to act with wisdom.

NATURAL PUNISHMENT

Some educators advise the use of only natural punishment—that is, the sort that will naturally befall the child when he is out of the parent's reach.

For example, a baby soon learns to keep his hands away from a hot stove because pain invariably follows the act of touching it. Now certain authors suggest to us that the presentation of a few such cases by the parent may aid him to develop in the child a greater confidence in the opinion of his elders in those cases in which there is no natural check.

LIMITATIONS OF THEORY

Well, how does the theory work? That is the question. The hot stove punishment will not cure a boy of pulling the cat's tail. And, if after being told not to pull the cat's tail, the cat scratches him, this will not keep him from running near the edge of a bridge when his mother forbids it, and so on. Natural

punishment, at best, serves only for particular misdemeanors and this is far from teaching obedience in all acts. Correct obedience must be based upon confidence. It is impossible to gain a child's trust—his belief that you are working for his welfare—by calling his attention to the natural result of his disobedience after the act has been committed.

No punishment has much educative value unless it stirs a feeling of regret or repentance. Corporal punishment, in most cases, has a very different effect. Therefore, if a boy sets fire to a paper by holding it too near the fire and thereby burns the curtain near which he stands, he should not be whipped, because his feeling sorry for the direct consequences of his own act alone will be a much better lesson for him than if, in addition, he were to suffer physical pain from the hand of his mother. In the latter case, the physical pain, because of its very nature, would obscure the intensity of the "moral" pain.

If one were reasoning from a theoretic-

cal viewpoint, he might think that a vivid experience with fire after being warned would cause the boy to have more respect for what his mother tells him. But experience and observation say, "Not true." A boy will be more careful around fire in the future because of his experience with it now. But the lesson is on "fire," and only indirectly, if at all, on obedience. His experience with fire will not make him obey other commands any better than before, and even in regard to fire itself if the command appears to be somewhat strict, he will pass his own judgment upon it and be ruled by that judgment rather than by the command itself.

In the same way, a child may be told to put on a certain coat in chilly weather. If the child refuses and immediately catches cold, it would seem that he would at least have respect for the mother's judgment about clothes in the future, but not so. If the child has not been taught obedience correctly, he will continually use his own judgment about the

weather and may be mistaken time after time and even suffer because of his action.

NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

There is one form of experience under the rule of natural law that has a most wholesome effect on the life of a child. It is quite unnecessary to designate it as "punishment" in our discussion, much less should a parent allude to "penalty" when he permits the law to affect his child. A farmer assigned to his son Harry the duty of dragging a potato patch with an upturned A-harrow, charging him as follows: "When you have finished the work reverse the harrow so that no harm can come from those sharp harrow-teeth." But Harry failed to obey; Roxy, the mare, literally "sat" down on the harrow, sending a sharp spike into her hip. In a few weeks she died.

Harry suffered no physical punishment, he endured no scolding at the hands of his father. Neither was there any

amelioration of the deep cloud of sorrow that rested on his boyish heart. He lost many a trip because of the accident; he saw the family treasury suffer because of it. Along with the others he suffered the unhappy consequences that followed his carelessness.

Leonard received a pair of splendid driving gauntlets as a Christmas present. The first time he went out to skate he left them on the river bank, never to see them again. On returning, brother and sister, father and mother condoled with him over his loss; no one scolded him; no "punishment" followed; neither has anyone bought him a new pair to this day; the loss is not made good. This is the best sort of natural "punishment"—when human hands do not manipulate details, but leave the course of events to shape themselves.

A minister's son began driving with girl friends at an early age. With his father's permission he borrowed a sleigh for a midwinter drive. Within thirty minutes of the start it was overturned

and partly wrecked by the frightened horse.

On receiving the report, his father said, "Well, *you'd* better drag the sleigh in to the wagon-maker's shop and have it repaired. It will not cost you an impossible sum."

The plan was carried out, though the sacrifice of nearly every penny in his pocket for repairs with not one cent of assistance from the parental treasury was no pleasant experience. There was one compensating fact: this is the way men do things; they pay their own bills. Here natural consequences operated with but the slightest contact of the father's hand. Not one word was said about punishment and the penalty was all the more effective because the possibility of ill-judged interference was reduced to the very lowest.

COMPLIANCE AND OBEDIENCE

There is a difference between merely training a child to do what you say, and

teaching the basic principles of obedience.

EXAMPLE

Mr. Barton, the father of a sturdy son of fourteen years, was looking over the diary of his boyhood. His eyes lighted on the account of a memorable incident in the sixteenth year of his life.

“My father licked me tonight because he found out I lied to him as to my whereabouts last evening. I believe I have the fear of a coward in my heart. Anyway, I have made up my mind not to take any more risks of lickings. After this he shall know.” This is an instance of mere compliance.

Directly following this entry came these words, descriptive of a Saturday afternoon:

“I missed playing with the team today, because Uncle Bob asked me to go on an errand which took up the good part of the day. But what’s the difference? Uncle Bob goes for a trip with

the boys when I ask him to. He is a great fellow. I would jump into the lake, if he told me to."

It was especially fitting that Mr. Barton should read this reminder of his own youth on that particular night, for he had long been wondering just why his boy so doggedly and so reluctantly obeyed his father, when for his scout-master he would fairly risk his life to carry out the leader's orders.

COMMENTS

Confidence—that was the secret. It had been lost for him through one severe whipping he had foolishly given his son some months ago.

Of course, there is no question but that anyone can easily make a child obey through fear. A parent commanding him in loud tones, and slapping him now and then, can make the child comply with almost any requirement. But what is the child's motive in that case? It is the lowest possible one. When a child obeys

because his parent tears the leaves from a switch, it is from no better motive than a dog has when you feign to pick up a stone from the ground and say, "Go away." The dog understands and runs away, but he knows no other kind of obedience. The child will be no stronger morally than the dog if the parent continually appeals to him in the same way.

One should not be so extreme as to say that there are never any cases where punishment could be used to advantage. On the contrary, a parent often places himself in a predicament where some punishment seems necessary. As a crude example of this, suppose a father, in haste, threatens that punishment will follow if a certain order is not carried out. Then if the command is not obeyed, punishment must follow. Ordinarily it would be a mistake not to punish in that case. In nearly every instance where corporal punishment seems unavoidable the parent has so mismanaged the situation that this brutal method has become his sole dependence.

Parents who frequently punish their children with bodily pain of any sort show by that fact that they do not understand child nature. That is, they lack the knowledge of correct principles in dealing with children. Proper information would prevent the occasion for punishment in the first place. Most parents have a great deal to learn about giving commands, and about gaining the child's confidence as a basis for them.

After making a thorough study of various traits and how to develop them in children, we are convinced that corporal punishment cannot be applied to advantage in any case, except for disobedience. Even for disobedience, there are so many precautions necessary to observe in order to keep it from doing more harm than good that the average parent is almost sure to fail in its use.

IMPORTANT PRECAUTIONS

In administering corporal punishment, a parent must not make the punishment

too severe for the particular child. A parent must not punish in anger. He must consider the motive and temptations of the child before he can choose the proper penalties suited to the deed. A parent must not exaggerate the bad effects of the child's offence. He must not condemn the child, but the deed only. He must be sure that the child knows exactly the thing for which he is punished. He must be sure that the child sees the relation of the offence to the punishment. The punishment must not injure health. Necessary food must never be withheld as a penalty.

OTHER FORMS OF PUNISHMENT

Having established our contention that corporal punishment is intolerable in most cases, we must briefly treat of other forms of punishment that also might easily be misused.

TASKS IMPOSED AS PUNISHMENT

If you were to impose work upon your boy as punishment, he would tend to look upon similar work in the future as undesirable. For this reason, parents should be very careful not to bring any useful or beneficial idea into discredit by connecting it in the child's mind with some mode of correction. Other examples of thoughtlessness on the part of some parents might be mentioned, such as trying to make a child go to sleep for some misdemeanor, or requiring a child to stay at home or compelling him to attend some religious service or to say, "Excuse me," to another person against his will. Parents who are in the habit of assigning penalties of this nature seldom, if ever, consider that they are teaching dislike for such acts as are held to be common duties.

USELESS PENALTIES

If a boy refuses to wear his cap when going out to play in the winter weather,

the mother has the choice of two courses. She may force him to yield to her wishes, compelling him, by use of her own muscular powers, to pick up the cap, put it on his head and go out of doors. Or, she may have him stay in and inflict some punishment upon him for the act of disobedience and make no second effort to have him carry out her order. The latter method is the better, but there is still the element of antagonism. Furthermore, to punish a child for refusing to obey one command by giving another command is to increase trouble. That is to say, a boy who has been taught obedience so poorly that he would slam his cap down on the floor in response to a command would very likely resent vigorously any punishment imposed on him, and might refuse even to remain indoors.

No wise parent keeps the idea of punishment in the forefront of his mind. Even when he is obliged to deprive a child of some pleasure for disciplinary purposes, he looks upon it altogether apart from the notion of "penalty" or

“ justice ” and makes no brave talk about “ punishing ” his child for misbehavior. If a penalty seems needful it should be discussed in moderate terms, with a judicial attitude and not applied when the passions of a child are wrought up in some act of disobedience. A necessary punishment may lose all of its value by a blunder in administering it.

A BETTER WAY

WORK WITH THE CHILD

There are certain fundamental principles by which we can appeal to all children and expect a desirable response. These principles rest upon the idea of working with the child, so that even when they are not applied by a tactician, the effect on the child's behavior is not as bad as when ill-considered punishment is used. Comparatively few people can punish severely without antagonizing the child.

Until after a parent has established

confidence as a basis for absolute obedience he should think twice before giving any very disagreeable command, and, if possible, avoid it altogether. Second, he should assume the attitude of expecting the child to do anything he requires. To give the command either in a thundering or a whispering tone would be equally ineffective. He should give it in a low voice, slowly but firmly. If the child says, "I do not want to," after such an order, do not, like so many, become hasty and assume the child has no ground for his conduct and that he is stubborn. Instead, maintain the opposite attitude, that he has some very good reason or else he would have obeyed at once. Say in a pleasant tone, "Come here, John." After he comes to you, pause a few seconds before saying anything more. Don't look cross or irritated. Be calm. Say, "What is the matter?" The purpose is to handle the child in such a way that he will tell you what is in his mind. Do not say anything that will irritate or antagonize the child and if you can do this,

obedience will take care of itself, without punishment.

An excellent and practical idea on avoiding punishment is this: in the case of any child (it makes no difference what his natural disposition or inclinations may be) make sure that the child realizes that in every situation, you are with and not against his interests, and lead him to tell you his thoughts. When you have succeeded in this, you have practically solved your problem. If you can continually appear to your child to be on the same side as he is by showing that you realize his point of view, you may be sure that you understand him.

In the above sentence, the word "appear" is important. Many a parent, in fact, most parents want to do the best thing for their children's interest, but they often appear to the child to be antagonistic. When this is the case, the child will not reveal his thoughts plainly to his parents, which reluctance results quite naturally in a misunderstanding and the consequent punishment of the child.

This punishment is very often unjust. It is not the child's fault that he does not explain to the parent everything in his mind; it is the parent's blunder.

EXAMPLE 1

Louisa has revolted.

Mother has distinctly commanded her to pick up her playthings; she has told her three times to do this. Louisa has refused. This is one of the mothers who do not believe in pounding their children into subjection. Louisa knows this. So there is a deadlock. What is to be done?

I can hear the so-called "old-fashioned" mother answer, "I would conquer that child's will if I broke every bone in her body. I would show her who is master."

This standpoint involves two suppositions. One is, that it is a mother's duty always to gain the mastery over her child. The other is, that it is necessary and desirable to break the child's will. These suppositions the modern mother denies.

W. L. George has stated the modern parent's attitude. "It is not I who am master, but I am responsible." It is not so essential to conquer Louisa as to help her conquer herself. It is easy enough for a mother to lose her temper and strike Louisa; and probably afterward, Louisa would pick up her playthings. But what would have been accomplished? The mother did not need to prove that she was stronger; she would only have proved that she was more stubborn. And as for Louisa—would such a punishment have the result that she would be more willing to obey next time? Surely not. Louisa would only have been incited to evasion, slyness or cunning rebellion; or if she is so weak that she could be frightened into obedience her power of will to do good would be weakened as well as her power of resistance against evil. For no moral remedy would have been applied at all, but mere brute force. In no sense would the mother's responsibility to the child have been fulfilled. It is true, she might have obtained her point

in that the toys would have been picked up, but she would not have advanced one step in the right direction. Her object should have been to have so wrought that ever afterward Louisa would be more ready and willing to pick up her toys. This was not accomplished.

“But don't you think that in a case where there is a direct conflict it is important that the child should always yield?”

Boldly, no. We agree with Mrs. Gruenberg that while, in emergencies, swift, blind obedience may sometimes be necessary, that is no justification for swift, blind commands. Such issues as this are not unavoidable. These peremptory orders are needless. It is not necessary that we should create a situation in which we must fight a child in order to get him to obey. If we fight him when we should be helping him, we know it is we ourselves who are wrong.

“What should Louisa's mother have done then?”

Several things might have been done.

She could have anticipated the whole difficulty by getting Louisa to promise before she took her toys out that she would put them away. She could have started to have them put up before Louisa was so tired that she was obstinate. She could have allowed Louisa a time-limit in which to finish her play. And why might she not have even helped Louisa a little herself?

“But what if Louisa were rebellious, even so?”

If it were evening and Louisa were tired, we should advise quietly putting her to bed. In the morning, then, this clearing up could be made the first order of business. After breakfast Louisa should not be allowed to do anything else until she had picked up her toys. She might miss rides, outings, play, parties, anything but food and sleep, but it should be impressed upon her patiently and reasonably that little girls must not litter the house and make things uncomfortable for others. To show her that obedience is heaven's first law one should

make it her law until she loyally accepted it.

By this method she largely compels herself. The point is, that the mother who uses the latter method saves her own self-respect and her child's respect for her. Louisa and her mother should both sleep over the matter, and both would then be able to see duty more clearly and to respond to it more cheerfully. Instead of being a brute with a lash the mother should have the satisfaction of knowing that she is acting with somewhat of the dignity and leisure of a firm but merciful Providence.

To sum up. If you are not hasty, you never need to get into a blind alley like that of the situation just discussed. Also, there are better ways to tame a child than to compel by brute force.

EXAMPLE 2

The following letter from a father, received by the Parents' Association, may be of interest:

We have only read the information on obedience, but we find it a great help using it every day in practice.

We have cut down on the word "Don't," have tried to substitute other things for undesirable things child is playing at. We have cut down on whippings and we use more self-control ourselves. We try to be more companionable to child. We have not lived wholly up to the principles, as we still think a whipping, or little spanking rather, is of good value occasionally. For example, sometimes the child refuses to be undressed for bed. If I try to joke and laugh and tell little stories and play with her and try to get her undressed, she still will fight and works herself into almost a nervous condition, whereas a little spank will make the child give right up, undress, say her prayers, go right to bed and soon to sleep. Which do you consider best? I would like to receive something on this.

The answer was in part:

You know there is an art in applying principles of child training and our view

is that the more one knows about child nature and the more skilful he is about applying principles, the less he will need to use physical punishment in any form. This proposition holds up pretty well.

In other words, if the *management* is right, spanking would be unnecessary, the substitute for spanking being the correct application of the fundamental principles expounded in the Course. If you asked what particular principle more than others would serve as a substitute, I should say the principle of Expectancy. This is a wonderful principle and very effective when properly applied.

As to the particular instance you mentioned, you were attempting (by your joking and telling stories) to apply the principle of substitution. This is all right after the child has become reconciled to the fact that she is to discontinue play for the evening. It will help her to be contented. But it will *not* serve in *place* of the other principle.

Give the child the advantage of ten minutes' warning before she actually is to quit her play. Tell her two or three times even during the ten minutes, how much longer she has. Then when the

clock strikes, simply take it for granted that all play-wheels are to stop and immediate preparation for bed is the thing in order. Don't allow another thing to be done after the clock strikes. Tell her this beforehand so her mind will be prepared for it. And above all, carry out the same policy one evening after another. Your child's habit is like the crying habit precisely. It takes a certain length of time for the child to learn that the new policy is iron-bound. But a few evenings will do it if you allow no exceptions.

If you use the warning idea just as suggested and make full use of the principle of expectancy and you find that spanking is the only thing that will carry out your idea, then it would be justified, but it would indicate strongly that your own method is faulty if you had to repeat this procedure every few evenings.

To use the principle of expectancy, do not say anything to the child unless you have her undivided attention. Then speak slowly, calmly and with a certain firmness which suggests to the child that there is nothing to do but obey.

The father to whom this letter was addressed, has already written us that he was quite surprised to see how perfectly willing the child was to respond to the procedure recommended.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER IN APPLYING THE FUNDA- MENTAL PRINCIPLES

Respect the child. Be not too much his parent. Trespass not on his solitude.

—*Emerson.*

Do the duty that lies nearest thee; which thou knowest to be a duty! The second duty will already have become clearer.

—*Carlyle.*

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER IN APPLYING THE FUNDA- MENTAL PRINCIPLES

The ideas on child training set forth in the preceding lessons cannot be worked out in a careless and unthinking fashion. Even the animal trainer clearly lays out a plan of action and just as cautiously decides how to put his method into effect. He uses a method in applying his method-of-training.

A child's acts—his behavior, his conduct—are the first indication of the nature of your problem. The maxim to be followed here is: select a method of treatment that accords with the conduct of the child. This statement is intended to prevent a parent from unduly attempting to adjust his management to a dimly conceived temperament, disposition or heredity. Attack the problem from

its outer aspects; try first of all to control the muscular acts of the child. Measure your success by the changes in the most obvious activities of the child.

In any given lesson which has been presented the *usual* reactions of the child have been recorded and the methods outlined are carefully adapted to suit each of these types of behavior.

THE CHILD'S INTENTION

Adjust your method of treatment to the intention of the child. Perhaps the easiest way to spoil a child is to misunderstand his intention. Often, we do not consider adequately what motive underlies the child's conduct. A little girl injured her mother's new hat when she was only trying to "look like mother" and the little boy ruined a costly plant when he pulled it up to show it to his parent. To accuse these two of malicious carelessness and to punish them accordingly produces disastrous confusion in the children's minds and

hopelessly complicates the difficulty of management.

A similar failure to take the intention of the offender into consideration was apparent in the case of a father who was in the garden industriously hoeing up the weeds, and occasionally pulling up some of the larger ones. His very young son followed, also pulling up "weeds." At the end of the row the father turned to behold his precious tomato plants lying strewn across the garden. He duly spanked his son, who saw nothing in the punishment but a grievous play of fate. The method was positively wrong. The father deserved the penalty for ignorantly handling a well-meaning innocent.

Before attempting discipline, then, know accurately what is in the child's mind. Take plenty of time to discover the purpose and the sentiment revealed in an act. Then correction and commendation can be wisely given.

THE CHILD'S HABITS

Principles of discipline must be applied with adjustment to the habits of the child. Two things are to be considered: first, the parents are obliged to know the habits of the child. "Habits" may be either good or bad. Good habits are as valuable as bad ones are detrimental. No one act can be safely judged unless its possible relation to the whole round of habit is understood. Staying out late at night, for example, cannot be properly handled unless the habitual conduct during these hours is known. Is it the boy's habit to frequent the pool-room or the attic of a neighbor boy where a piece of machinery is being invented? The difference in these cases is immense.

Then, second, the parents must study the method by which a habit is built up. It will be readily observed, for example, in dealing with your children that, after drilling on some point for a whole year if one single exception is permitted to occur which brings pleasure to the child,

trouble without end is thereby provoked. We have known this to be the case when a child's cries to be taken into mother's room were yielded to once or twice; the habit of a whole year seemed broken up.

Habits are the regular ways in which instincts are expressed in acts. They have a definite origin and growth. They can be studied with no end of profit. The wise parent gives this matter daily attention.

THE CHILD'S AGE

Methods must be chosen according to the age of the child. Everyone admits the fact but neglects it in practice. Parents forget that children grow. Those who use the whip invariably are tempted to retain it long after the child has outgrown the corporal punishment method. A full-grown son surely need not consult his parents on spending an evening out; if he is forced to report on the details of his hours away from home as a fourteen-year-old boy, he is suppressed, humiliated, dependent. He should be

treated as a man, with no less of parental concern, but in a way that is congenial to the mind of a self-conscious man.

When a boy of fifteen begins to show in a dozen different ways that he does not like so many commands, the average father, fearing that he may lose control of the boy, increases the number of commands and enforces them with sternness. He reasons that the boy is getting out of practice in obedience and needs more compulsion.

This is wrong. The boy must not be treated as an inferior; he is now approaching a level with the father in many respects. Treat him as an equal; appeal to him with reasons that move adults to action. This can be done without abandoning or seeming to abandon any authority to command. But the less you parade authority the more power you will have to exercise it.

In fact, parents must realize at every turn that their work is not to create character, but to direct its growth. From

the first breath the child draws until he expires in death the individual is growing a character. Parents cannot create instincts or habits or motives in a child; they can nourish, foster, protect and guide the growth of character. They can stir up, incite, stimulate and direct this development.

Direction cannot be purely external. The parents' work must be done indirectly by molding the child's environment and setting the stage for the child's action. At every point parents are to look first to the child and get light from the child's acts, his intentions, his habits, his disposition and his age, so that proper adaptation to the whole situation may occur. "Keep his nature and arm it with knowledge in the very direction in which it points."

REGULARITY IN DISCIPLINE

A most serious blunder is made when parents take up the correction of children by fits and starts. Imagine a farmer

who works in his fields a few whole days, many half days, often beginning late in the morning, whipping his team into a dead run on occasion and idly wandering over the fields at other times. Such is the manner in which not a few light-minded parents proceed. They are not helping their children; they are wrecking lives. Regularity and steady resolution are indispensable. Children should know with certainty what to expect every day from their parents, should know how they stand on a wide range of issues.

If you treat similar misdeeds dissimilarly by yielding to your feelings or whim; if you let certain acts of disobedience pass uncorrected because they failed to disturb you, a serious error is committed. One must not overlook today that which he will not permit tomorrow.

The rule will not be easy to carry out. It is like urging you not to become angry when someone strikes you. But assume the position of a wise trainer; realize that success may hinge on your own self-control.

CHILD'S DEMAND FOR ACTION

Closely related to the subject of obedience is the child's demand for bodily activity. Parental joints often become stiff with toil or age, but children delight in action, in drama, in adventure. A suppression of this impulse to act may easily wreck the whole program of parental guidance. Do not attempt to teach good conduct without utilizing action. Best of all, use the acts in which the child is engaged or which he longs to perform as a medium through which lessons in good conduct can be taught.

The principles of this Course are all taught in terms of action. A mother who, instead of requiring some specific act of courtesy, merely says, "Charles, I hope you will be more polite when grandmother comes again," is aggravating a case, more than likely. Moral injunctions serve but little purpose; they can be superseded, happily, by plans for actions which will render burdensome moral talks unnecessary. Mother can

readily plan a short program when grandmother comes that will involve a courteous act and so bless two lives in one deed.

All the ideas of children (as also those of adults) are full of impulse to action. One needs only wisely to select outlets to entertain and educate any child.

Father is a hero in so far as he is a man of action. Mother is remembered by the kind deeds she does rather than for her words. Both can build themselves into the children's lives just in proportion as they multiply points of contact by providing opportunity for desired activity. Hence the home must be open to the parties and other gatherings of young people; grounds must be provided for outdoor sports; excursions of many sorts must be planned for and executed; and occupational expectations should be discussed at great length. The policy of guiding the child by directing his activity must displace every competing mode of controlling the child. The course of action adopted will then be ingrained in the child's mind and become a safe-

guard against dangerous types of conduct.

COMRADESHIP

Share the life of the child. Sympathetically plan with him so that he may do all that his childish heart desires (except what is dangerous and imprudent). Even a discussion of the impossible is entirely to be commended. Shutting down the gates roughly and rudely quenches the child's spirit and does him no good. Plan with the girl who desires to enter on a wild adventure and you can divert her into a pathway that is safe and satisfying. A wise mother takes long tramps just to please and profit her son oftener than she boils and bakes to pamper a spoiled taste. A father can well forego some of his dollars and accompany his boys on expeditions of discovery and adventure.

If it is athletics that is on the program, father and mother are to consult with the boys, to help buy the equipment, to try on the mitts and the mask, to ex-

amine the balls and the bats and in every way enter into the spirit of the occasion.

If a window is broken or a piece of furniture is damaged in the game, let the boys and girls know that you understand that there was no wrong intention behind the act. Be sure not to spoil games by overcaution and frequent interruptions to protect things. Let the stage be made so thoroughly ready in advance that you, a father or mother, can become genuinely absorbed in the sport.

It is one of the greatest of errors for the parents to accept in silence, and as a matter of course, the good conduct of children, and to call attention to their every misdeed. The exact reverse is the true method. Talk about good results from wise behavior and deal as little as possible with bad conduct.

Take the child into partnership in settling family programs. A family group is a sort of corporation. All the larger questions are of vital concern. If father takes up a new occupation, children's school and play life will be deeply con-

cerned. Get the children to discuss the proposed change and to give their judgment. Nothing will more certainly bind the family into a solid unit where right and justice can rule all conduct. Share all with the children.

TRUST THE CHILD

Trust your child. The suspicious attitude is deadening. Nothing will drive your child away from you more quickly. Nothing will cause him to be more secretive. Confide in your child. Show your real sentiments. Assure him of your respect and confidence. Share with him the family problems. Assure him that you comprehend his troubles, his desires, and that you will risk him to manage many of his own affairs. Trust a boy and he will live up to the trust. Exceptions may occur; time is needed for him to overcome misunderstanding of your method. Distrust thrusts him to a level where he loses self-respect and refuses to be guided by your standards.

A mother often may worry when her children are out at night too late; as often she determines that they shall know that she is worried; perhaps she frets herself into a sickness. She hopes to appeal to their sympathies and so control future conduct. This is a poor method. Chronic over-anxiety soon breeds scorn and contempt. A boy who is old enough to be absent from home at night can once for all reason over the matter with his parents. A fair plan must be devised and the parents are to trust the boy to keep to the plan; a plan that requires no responsible action on the boy's part would not anchor him to the home.

Trust the son or daughter. But know whether your trust is kept or betrayed.

WATCH RESULTS

In applying the method recommended in our definite instructions, every careful mother will watch the results that follow her lessons. It is necessary to be one's own instructor, to a large extent,

as no written directions can foresee every item in lessons of this sort. An observant mother will notice other mothers in their management of children. She will note that a great majority of failures in teaching the child obedience is due to overlooking the direct consequences of unwise attempts to secure obedience. It is the heedless, thoughtless, purposeless attempt at child management that produces the aggravating disobedience of so many young children.

FAULT-FINDING

Learn to replace the fault-finding habit by the better practice of commending that which is good. The "scold," the "shrew," the "vixen" and their kind, unfortunately are known to all the world. They are branded with the scorn of pitiless critics and with the complaints of suffering victims. But the milder "fault-finder," in the home, is yet waiting her doom. When the judgment day comes, if no sooner, the well-meaning, but

blinded, parent will gain an insight that will make self-condemnation a welcome penalty for numerous crimes.

We speak strongly. Fault-finding is never excusable. It is an intellectualized form of torture. It is an abuse and a useless perversion of a necessary instrument of control. It is a twin to corporal punishment; the two must go together.

Do not misunderstand us. A tactful, dispassionate, sympathetic conference with a boy or girl, in which the evil aspects of his misdeeds are impartially discussed, is not to be condemned but approved. A physician may serve as our best available model. He never halts until he ascertains the causes of one's ills; he analyzes one's symptoms and freely talks over the situation. He prescribes remedies and gives cautions that will prevent a recurrence of the ailment. But how seldom does he browbeat a patient by a petulant and irritating tirade! To scold is to invite resentment, indignation and the loss of friendship. Every moment spent in fault-finding witnesses a de-

struction of some bond that unites parent and child. Fortunately many homes rebuild their broken links by kindnesses and other expressions of good-will. But the very general lack of good feeling between a severely stern father and son is convincing evidence that fault-finding has proved a monumental farce as a means of correcting a child's mistakes.

Our rule is, "Commend or show that you are willing to commend a child, young or old, male or female, on every occasion when you are holding communication with him. Suppress all impulses to pillory the child on the pegs of his blunders and sins." When discussion of his misdeed is needed, let the very spirit of fault-finding be absent. Profound interest, eager anticipation, mild sympathy—these are the moods that elicit the desired response from son or daughter.

A specific form of fault-finding that frequently is encountered is flat dissent from a statement made by son or daughter, or blunt refusal of a request. These are examples of disapproval. In every

such case, will opposes will; the recoil is painful and dangerous.

“Mother, may I go skating tonight?”

“No, you can't. You stay home” (voice low-pitched, gruff, unsympathetic). Thus spoke one mother.

Another good woman met the situation differently:

“Well, let me see, Charles. You attended orchestra practice on Monday night. Last night you spent the evening at Henry Brokaw's; I'd like you to stay with me tonight. Probably you'd best not go out.”

These words cannot be rudely and harshly spoken if their meaning is fully considered. They arouse little or no irritation, however disappointing the change of program may be. A cautious mother will allay any dawning disappointment by a survey of desirable occupations for the evening at home.

Much less excusable is a blunt denial of a child's affirmation. In younger children one may safely ignore many of their untrue statements when due to misinfor-

mation. If an older child by mistake affirms an untruth, difference of opinion may be made known by a cautious introductory word or phrase, as, "Well, now let us look into that."

Shakespeare's advice is, "Condemn the fault and not the actor." This we will do in correcting faulty opinion and erroneous declarations.

SUGGESTION

In closing this discussion on practical methods of teaching obedience, and the five fundamental principles upon which such training is based, we would remind you that these principles apply to all discipline as well as to the discipline of little children. Suggestion, substitution, co-operation, the expectation and approval of one's fellows, all these are equally potent with adults, for adults are "only children older grown." Note for example the ten thousand ways in which we influence others, and are ourselves influenced by suggestion. As a

single instance, we fail utterly to realize the penetrative implication in the appellations which we give to persons, actions and objects. Pointing across the street a friend says to me, "Drunkard." I look at the man indicated and fasten in my mind forever a prejudice against him. No other words were needed—one single powerful utterance labels the man forever.

In disciplinary issues the suggestiveness of names is of maximum importance. "Drunkard," "gambler," "liar," "hero," "friend," "mother" can be so filled with meaning and used so skillfully as often indirectly to save a boy or girl or man or woman from moral insanity and collapse. A wilful misrepresentation is a "lie"; a successful career as a fireman is a "life spent in the service of humanity"; war is "hell"; home is "heaven on earth." Parents can well search carefully for such phrases as will fix in mind indelibly the real worth of ideals and types of conduct.

To be concrete: when calling atten-

tion to an incident occurring in the home community or discussing a school matter use care in accurately labeling the persons and acts involved.

Do not speak of your minister as "Davidson," or as "Philip," or address him as "Preacher," if you want the children to respect him and to heed his messages. "Be considerate of mother" (not "ma"). "Ask father" (not "dad"). Discountenance nicknames for school teachers in the home. They are likely to weaken discipline in the school.

Watchfulness on all these matters will lead you to suggest to a child opinions, attitudes, feelings and habits such as you must earnestly desire him to adopt. Or, on the other hand, your veiled suggestion may lead him to avoid opinions, attitudes, feelings and habits, which you believe to be harmful to his future welfare. This is one of the surest ways of training a child in good morals.

SUBSTITUTION

The second principle, that of substitution, is so universally admitted in the world at large, that a restatement of it is considered almost trite. In hygienic matters the physician seeks to prevent disease by building up a strong resistance. In order to protect one against contagious disease a patient is vaccinated and so becomes immune to its more violent forms. In solving the problems of transportation in commerce, the method has always been that of substituting a more speedy and more commodious mode of travel for that which is in vogue at the time. In every department of human endeavor invention always implies a substitution of the new for the old. Were the hope of improvement removed from our thoughts, the idea of substitution of the new for the old, of the best for the better, would drop out of mind.

In the improvement of human affairs, the relief of unfavorable conditions is always brought about by the method of

substitution. The oppressions which the Puritans endured in their European homes finally drove them away from their ancestral hearths in search of a new country where they might establish a new community life. New church and political life was instituted in the remote western world. Here they anticipated sufficient modifications of conditions to enable them to pursue their fortunes in peace. They sought to substitute social liberty for oppression.

In our own day, the oppressed are continually endeavoring to establish "better working conditions." There is a prevailing conviction that the present order of things should be laid aside by instituting a new régime. This continual insistence upon improvement is found in essentially every enterprise in which large sections of the public are interested. Not the least important is the almost universal effort to improve our schools. Although our country has witnessed the development of educational ideals for scarcely two centuries, the dissatisfaction

of the last decade bids fair to precipitate a remarkable change in the method by which the public schools educate our children. Every item of this new program is a substitution of another method of instruction or control.

In surveying the popular movements of the day, numerous evils have, from time to time, been discovered; attempts at curing them have been equally numerous. A careful examination of every one of these shows the application of the principle of substitution. The unwholesome dances of a big city are to be displaced with amusements under careful supervision. The problems of children's recreations have compelled municipal authorities to establish scores of playgrounds in the interest of public morals.

These enterprises have not been organized from a conviction that the interests of youth and childhood may be safely suppressed. On the other hand, reformers purpose to direct these energies and to substitute better forms of amusements so that degrading influences may be

eliminated. The consensus of public opinion is that the cure for war will be found in building up a positive sentiment for peace among men, a practical sense of brotherhood which shall prevent the rise of belligerent impulses. Every agitator for universal peace proposes a substitute for the present method of disposing of international issues. It may be a world parliament, or some similar device that deals adequately with international disputes.

We are therefore justified in the conclusion that in whatever way we may turn, man's mind is attempting to relieve undesirable conditions by the substitution of some institution, plan or device that promises adequate readjustment.

INITIATIVE IN CO-OPERATION, EXPECTATION AND APPROVAL

With respect to the other three principles, co-operation, expectation, approval, the grandly impelling force of the first is only just beginning to make

itself realized in the adult world, among leaders of great social and industrial movements; but concerning the other two principles, no one who looks into his own past can fail to admit that he is what he is largely because of what his fellows have expected him to be, and because of the further stimulation of their approval of his conduct, spurring him on to still higher achievement. And if these personal influences are so potent with adults how much more so must they be with little children. The following story is related of the conversation of several gray-haired business men who were recently chatting over their cigars.

“This talk about mother and the boys is all very well,” said one, “but father comes in strong, too. My father devoted one minute a day to us boys that did more at that age to keep us straight than all the mother’s admonitions. She was a sweet, unworldly little person, and we adored her and revered her teachings. However, she never could think of us as anything but her little boys, and



as we grew taller and more worldly, we acquired the usual boyish sense of exalted importance and might have been led to secretly patronize her strict goodness as a little old-fashioned, except for father.

“Father saw the force of appealing to us as man to man long before there was much man in us, I guess. Every night at dinner, I can see him yet—after the blessing—with his carving knife and fork poised over the roast, pause and look us straight in the eyes.

“ ‘Well, boys, how goes the world?’ ”

“And you better believe the thought of that moment steadied us often during the day. We had to keep pretty straight to be able to return that clear look and answer,

“ ‘O. K., father.’ ”

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