

# DISCIPLINE.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### INTRODUCTORY.

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DISCIPLINE is the climate of the school. It may be severe or genial, subject to tempestuous disturbances or of even temperature, so to speak; it may have a tendency to produce unhealthy conditions of body and mind, or be conducive of the highest development of the physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual faculties of the child.

No school or family can be without some kind of discipline, any more than a country can be conceived to be without any climate. The discipline may be wretched in many ways, as some climates are, but there must be some condition of affairs prevailing in every family or school, that characterizes the intercourse between parents or teachers on the one side, and children or pupils on the other. This condition is not only the result, but is the very essence of discipline.

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## CHAPTER II.

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### METHODS.

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A METHOD is a systematized procedure by which some abstract principle assumes a concrete form of action. There is not only a great variety of methods by which any one principle may be sought to be carried out or cultivated, but these methods themselves are often subject to variations as to time, conditions, experience, and individualities. Principles are formulated truth, and as such are exceedingly conservative and tenacious; while methods are fluctuating and more or less experimentative in their nature. They ought to be used judiciously, as an organist uses the stops of his organ, now some, now others, as the various passages in the piece to be performed may require.

There is, however, one caution which parents and teachers may observe with great advantage; that is, to guard against experimentalism in educational methods. Our educational journals are full of all kinds of suggestions, our teachers' institutes, conventions, and lectures, are constantly bringing forth new ideas in regard to disciplinary methods. There are some parents and teachers always on the alert for something new in that line to experiment with, on their children or pupils. These experimentalists are like some cranks, that try every patent medicine advertised in the papers.

All methods of discipline may be classified under two heads, compulsory and emulative. The former is best characterized by the imperative "Thou shalt," while the latter sees in the cultivation of the "I will" of the pupil, its chief disciplinary motive.

## COMPULSORY.

To the honor of our present stage of civilization be it said, that the days of the switch and ferule, and other means of corporal punishment are rapidly passing away. The despotic reign of the schoolmaster of olden times was a suitable groundwork upon which to erect the superstructures of tyranny, aristocratic supremacy, arbitrary laws, with their cruel modes of punishment, and that state of society which recognized only two classes of people, one class that had the power of command, the other the duty to obey.

Inasmuch as the school and the fireside are the two great nurseries of the human family, much depends upon the controlling principles according to which the education of the rising generation is to be regulated. These principles shape, to a very great extent, the character of the generation into whose charge the inheritances of the past will be placed for further improvement. They will either prove themselves worthy of that sacred trust, or fall short to their own sorrow.

Corporal or physical punishment of any kind is illogical, and is not a natural sequence or result of the offense, but must of necessity bear to some extent the character of arbitrariness.

The laws of nature have excluded forever in their operation the principle of arbitrariness; neither are the laws governing the moral, mental, and spiritual operations constructed upon an arbitrary plan. Why should educational operations be carried on differently?

The application of corporal or physical punishment of any kind is always an evidence, that either on the part of the parent or teacher all moral and mental resources to meet the emergency were either exhausted or unknown, or that on the part of the child or pupil the comprehension of the require-

ment was too dull, or the will-power to follow instructions, was too weak, so that the element of fear or physical suffering had to be introduced as a stimulator.

The application of such means is either a confession of moral or intellectual deficiency on the part of the educator, be he parent or teacher, or it may be a matter of an exceptional necessity. These compulsory means may enforce compliance with some requirement but will never convey conviction of its rightfulness to the mind of the pupil or child. If conviction comes at all, it must come by other means.

Any educator of long experience may recall incidents which seemed to make corporal or physical punishment of some kind a necessity. There are, for instance, moral cripples, as well as physical, and mental ones. While asylums provide for the last, and hospitals for physical unfortunates; the reform schools, and in aggravated cases, jails and penitentiaries, attend to moral cripples. Mental cripples, in greater or lesser degrees of decrepitude, are found in many schools and families: in some instances heredity, in others evil surroundings, may be responsible for them, nevertheless, there are natural liars, natural thieves, hypocrites, cheats, etc., to be handled in education. In such exceptional cases, the educator finds himself in the situation of a physician, who finds that mere hygienic or medicinal appliances would be of no avail, but that the emergency calls for heroic treatment, or an operation. Even in surgery it is plain to an observing mind that the urgency for such dangerous operations is constantly lessened by the progress of the medicinal sciences. This is likewise the case in education.

As no physician resorts to operations in trifling ailments, so no educator is justified in applying violent measures in his regular disciplinary course.

A judicious discipline may be compared to an iron hand in

a velvet glove. It should not be seen, nor heard, nor felt on every occasion, but be held in reserve; always present, nevertheless.

An absolutely quiet school, or a family life that moves along with the mechanical regularity of clock-work, may be good enough for parade purposes, but can certainly not be considered a model example in education. Restriction or suppression of the legitimate manifestations and development of individuality is not discipline, nor can methods of squeezing immortal souls into a common mould be called education.

#### EMULATIVE.

If the educational motto in times past was: "Go, and do this," and the compulsory methods enforced it with more or less relentlessness, the emulative methods of discipline are adopting another course of procedure.

The highest ideal of emulation is given to us in the example of Jesus Christ, whose educational principles can be condensed in his beautiful saying: "Come, follow me."

Parents and teachers will only be successful in their disciplinary methods to the extent of their own example, and of their being able to make Christ's motto their own. This is one of the strongest emulative methods known. Without it all exhortation, pleading, reasoning, etc., will lack the true ring, and will be "like a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

Presents and gifts as means of encouragement are not objectionable in themselves, as they are acts of kindness, engendering the feelings of appreciation, gratitude and affection, and as long as they are given gratuitously and without discrimination, are harmless. But as soon as they assume the appearance of prizes or rewards for some special merit, they do more harm than good in every case. They engen-

der vanity and conceit in the hearts of the recipients, and jealousy and bitterness among the rest. They are apt to substitute mercenary or ambitious motives for the genuine appreciation of, and love for, virtue and rightful action.

Both praise and censure, should be bestowed moderately. Fulsome praise or cruel and cutting censure, especially if given before others, not only miss the mark, but, while the former surfeits, the latter estranges.

The strongest incentives to discipline are love and confidence. These two almost omnipotent agents in education can not be bought, commanded, enjoined, or prescribed. They "work upon natural principles," as President Heber C. Kimball used to say.

Let the principle of honor be cultivated in every school and at every fireside, by example as well as by precept. Let that divine plant of the heart be nursed by love and confidence, parents and teachers becoming living object-lessons in this regard, and there will be no need for the adoption of many more emulative methods of discipline.

No man can be considered faithful to his God that has not learned to be faithful to his fellow man.

#### CONCLUSION.

Instructions and suggestions in regard to discipline may regulate, systematize, and improve the disciplinary efforts of parents and teachers, but they cannot create discipline. It must be inborn.

There are teachers whose first entrance into the school room impresses the pupils with the feeling that they have found a leader, whom to implicitly follow would be to their best interests. It is not in any particular thing that he says or does, nor in a specially austere or stern countenance or haughty bearing, that he creates that impression; but it is in his eye, and in an indescribable something which the pupils

intuitively recognize and which says to their inmost souls: "Come, follow me." This kind of a teacher always makes a success in the school room, even where others before him, of greater scholastic attainments, have most egregiously failed.

This phenomenon can also be observed in many families. While disorder and confusion seem to prevail in some homes, others, far less favorably situated, perhaps, enjoy the blessings of peace, order, and happiness, because the beneficent influence of a controlling individuality is leading the way in the one, and the lack of it in the other produces the opposite results.

My counsel in regard to this subject to all educators in school and at the fireside is: Strive to be yourself that which you desire your children or pupils to be. Discipline must originate within yourself. A well disciplined mind reveals itself through the eye, the voice and the whole ensemble of the individual.

Loud vociferations and violent gesticulations only betray the mental weakness within, although they are often mistaken for energy and force.

Speak more with your eyes than your mouth, for children as well as adults understand a great deal better with their eyes than with their ears.

Discipline, without the support of a well disciplined mind, but built upon all kinds of disciplinary contrivances, is but a fragile structure, and is bound to give way under any heavy strain just when its support would be the most needed.



## MODES AND METHODS OF INSTRUCTIONS.

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ALL instructions, whether formal or incidental, in school or at the fireside, ought to have a two-fold aim, viz: to assist in the moral, intellectual, and spiritual growth of the individual, and to contribute a proportionate share to the general good of humanity.

Upon these two great aims depend not only the nature but also the very form of these instructions.

It is generally supposed that the nature and form of instructions in school are matters with which the fireside has no immediate concern. This erroneous view deprives, in too many instances, the school of the co-operation of its most valuable auxiliary, and leaves the home without a clear comprehension of the mental development of its children.

All principles underlying the operations of scholastic education, as for instance, regularity, promptness, order, concentration of thought, attention, clear perception, application, obedience, and truthfulness, are those that alone can make domestic education successful.

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