

## CHAP. VI.

*Means for the Support of Parental Authority and Influence.—Rewards and Punishments.*

HAVING mentioned the objects to be kept in view in education, it may now be proper to say something on the means which it is the duty of a parent to employ to make his authority respected, and to influence the minds of his children.

Of these means, rewards and punishments first demand our attention. Various theoretic discussions have taken place respecting the propriety of employing them in education. I shall neither examine nor produce any theories on this subject, but found what I advance on the Divine example and the Divine command, which, I apprehend, will be far safer guides than any theory; and guides far better suited to those persons who have the management of children—persons generally much better qualified to follow a plain rule than a philosophical spe-

culation. In the government of this our world, God manifestly employs rewards and punishments. They are held out to influence his creatures, and lead them to the performance of their duty and to their true happiness. The punishments are used reluctantly, and for the purpose of humbling the mind, and leading it to give up forbidden objects and fly to its God. The rewards are most freely offered to those who will receive them with a right disposition of heart, manifested by right conduct towards the gracious Donor; and are intended to promote and cherish, as well as to bless, such a disposition. They produce their effect partly by a sense of their value; but more, by exciting, in the bosoms of those on whom they are bestowed, a gratitude for the boon and a love for the Giver. These dispositions will be proportionate to their conviction of their own demerit, and of the Divine goodness; and when they have taken root in the heart, they become the most powerful motives to all Christian virtue: they constrain the man, as it were, to live unto his God, and be a new creature in his service. I should trespass improperly on your indulgence, were I to quote passages to prove points which

are clear from the general tenor of Scripture, and will be at once admitted.\*

The parent, in training his child to Christian virtue, will do well to study diligently the Divine plan for promoting the same great object among men, and to follow it as closely as the nature of the case will admit. He will find the precepts on education in the Sacred Volume, to teach his offspring—to guide them—to exact obedience from them—to command them—to correct them—but yet to “forbear threatening,” and not discourage them, best illustrated by that plan, with which they are evidently in harmony.

How, then, should punishment be employed? Always reluctantly, and as sparingly as circumstances will allow, and in such a manner, and with such accompaniments, that while it deters from sin, it may bring the mind into a state to be duly influenced by other and better motives.

And how should rewards be employed? With pleasure, and far more freely, as incentives to good; but still with a guard against their giving rise to habits of self-indulgence or prodigality;

\* 2 Cor. v. 14. See also, Eph. i. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 13, 17; 1 John iv. 18, 19; Rev. i. 5, 6.—vi. 6, 12, 13.

and with a constant recollection, that their highest use is to lead to the performance of duty from the more elevated motives of gratitude and affection.—It will be necessary to consider the heads of this general outline more particularly.

Punishments should be employed *reluctantly*. Will any one dispute this position? And yet how often are they inflicted in such a way, that there is not only no reluctance apparent, but they appear to afford positive gratification! It would give me pain to describe scenes which I have witnessed, when a child has been under the correction of a passionate or ill-humoured parent: nay, even of a parent, in general character, neither passionate nor ill-humoured, but out of temper at the time. Certainly, punishment under such circumstances takes a most offensive form, and is often likely to do much more harm than good. Let all of us who are parents (and I apply this sentiment very feelingly to myself,) take the utmost care that our children shall have no cause to think, that it is partly for our “own pleasure” that we correct them, and not entirely (after the example of God) for their profit,” that they “may be

partakers of his holiness." I will not dwell on this subject: it is a painful one, whether we contemplate the parent or the child; but it is one which ought to engage the most serious consideration, and excite the earnest prayers of all who wish to do their duty to their children. None, perhaps, stand in more need of close attention to it, than those who are most anxious to omit no part of that duty; since they will feel the faults of their children most keenly, and therefore may be most liable to have their tempers ruffled by them.

Punishment should be employed as *sparingly* as is compatible with the attainment of its ends. It is in itself an evil; and is attended by several bad consequences, which are comparatively of slight importance when it seldom occurs, but become truly formidable on its frequent repetition. These are the effects to be apprehended on the temper of the child, on its affections, and on its principles of action, and consequently on its conduct. Its temper and its affection for its parent are very likely to suffer during the infliction of punishment, or the immediate dread of it; and if such seasons often recur, they will afford a degree of permanence to feelings, which

would otherwise be incidental and transient, and counteracted by the general harmony and happy intercourse existing between the parent and child. On their deplorable nature, when they become habitual, I need say nothing : every parent will feel it. The child will also suffer with respect to its principles of action ; for, in proportion as it is influenced in its daily conduct by fear of punishment, it acts from the motives which govern a slave ; and these motives will be followed by the dispositions and vices of a slave, (except so far as they are counteracted by other and better motives, and their attendant virtues,) which are selfishness, meanness, deceit, and a propensity to tyranny and cruelty. The danger of these evils, and of those mentioned before, appalling as they are, *must* be encountered, when frequent punishment is *necessary* ; but surely every advisable method should be taken to avoid or to lessen that necessity.

This view of punishment strongly shows the propriety of employing it, when unhappily it is indispensable, in such a manner, and with such accompaniments, as may disarm it as much as may be of its mischief, and lead the mind to

higher motives. First, then, as blows and stripes brutalize and harden more than other punishments, let them, if practicable, be avoided. They appeal to mere corporal feeling, without that mixture of reflection and moral feeling which most other punishments even of a corporal nature tend to excite. During an imprisonment within a room or a house, a boy will probably be led to think; but, during a whipping, he seldom reflects. The difference is also apparent, when the alternative is between a whipping and some fine or privation.—Another evil attending blows and stripes is, that they not only so occupy the mind by corporal suffering, as to leave little or no room for other motives; but they are apt to discompose the minds both of parent and child, and unfit the one to urge such motives, and the other to attend to them in a proper manner, and with a prospect of advantage. This is a most important consideration. In proportion as motives of a higher kind can be mixed with those of a lower, they tend extremely to qualify the evil which arises from the latter. Greatly, then, ought modes of punishment to be avoided, which, while they press most severely on our animal nature, afford the

least room for the influence of higher principles.—After all, in some cases, nothing will answer the purposes of punishment but blows and stripes. These cases, however, will seldom, if ever, occur, I apprehend, in families where education has been properly conducted. Wherever they do occur, they ought to be treated with great temper and deliberation; and punishment ought to be accompanied by a clear exposition to the culprit of the necessity of its use, in consequence of other means having been found ineffectual, and by a deep and cordial expression of concern, that such a punishment should be necessary; — and the infliction should be solemn, but not such as to excite overwhelming terror, which would obliterate any impression made by the preceding conversation, and aggravate evils without a corresponding benefit. After the punishment, great pains ought to be taken to derive every attainable advantage from it, to remedy any evils it may have produced, and to prevent the necessity of its repetition. With this view, the parent should conduct himself towards his child with openness and affection, and show that he has a pleasure in giving him rewards for

good conduct, in gratifying his innocent wishes, and in consulting his happiness. But this must be done with moderation and simplicity; and care must be taken that the child shall not be led to think that the parent is making his peace with him, or granting him indulgences merely because he has been punished. When the child's mind is tranquillized, and his affections appear to flow in their usual course, the parent should avail himself of good opportunities of convincing the child of his former sin and folly, of the unseemliness of his fault, and the beauty of the opposite virtue, and of the pain occasioned not to the child only, but to the parent himself, by the infliction of the punishment: and this pain should be contrasted with the happiness all would have enjoyed, had the child behaved well. He should do his utmost also to make the child feel the force of higher motives; the pleasure which attends the performance of duty and the approbation of relations: and, above all, the peace which passeth understanding, and the bright sunshine of soul, which flow from the favour of God, as foretastes of the everlasting joys reserved for those who yield themselves to the guidance of his Holy

Spirit and are renewed in his image. At the same time, temptations to former faults should be lessened as much as possible, the beginnings of evil should be carefully watched, and immediately checked, and every endeavour should be used to make the progress in good easy and pleasant. It is unnecessary to go into details on other punishments. They ought to be employed in a similar spirit, and with similar precautions, due regard being had to their nature and probable effects.

I should be much concerned, if what I have said on punishments should lead any parent to omit to employ them when necessary. Every method should be used to prevent or lessen the necessity; but when really wanted, they *must* be inflicted. In such cases, the omission of the punishment is an evil of the first magnitude. Much as I deprecate a severe system in education, I fully agree with an approved author, that one of indulgence is more to be dreaded. If we listen to the Divine command, we shall not spoil the child by sparing the rod. If we copy the Divine example, we shall not be led by any inducements to acquiesce in what is wrong. If we have a

predominant hatred of sin and love of holiness, our very feelings will prevent us from doing so. Our principles and inclinations will alike impel us to act with vigour and perseverance in combating evil in our families. No parental fondness, no love of personal ease, will prevail with us to give up the contest. While our conduct exhibits mildness and gentleness, it will as strongly be marked by firmness and decision.

Let not any parent fear the loss of his child's affection from proper strictness in education, when combined with the other parts of the course I am recommending. I am convinced that, on the contrary, the child's love for him will be increased by such strictness making a part of his system. Without it, there will be less esteem, perhaps no esteem, for the parent ; and it is unnecessary to show, how very greatly esteem contributes to real affection ; so greatly indeed that I believe an attempt to obtain genuine affection by indulgence will not only fail, but will produce the opposite effect. Indulgence will foster selfishness and sensuality, and with them hardness of heart. A person whom you indulge will often love to be with

you, will cling to you, and show great fondness; but cease to indulge, and comparative coldness and indifference will quickly follow. Does not this change prove that *self* was at the bottom of former appearances, and was the chief if not the only object of affection?—Can we wonder at such a result? God's blessing accompanies the performance of duty; his displeasure its omission. With his blessing, all things will work together for good. With his displeasure, what can be expected but disappointment and evil?

I should enlarge somewhat more on this very important subject, though conscious that I have already detained my readers long upon it, had there not appeared, in the *Christian Observer* for January 1813, two letters which throw light on the point before us, as well as on others of high importance in education, and possess the advantage of showing, as it were, general rules reduced to practice. These letters, with a short one explanatory of the occasion on which they were written, are inserted in an Appendix.

Rewards are an engine in the hands of a parent, which he will employ with pleasure,—a

pleasure which, while it sweetens his own labours, will increase the affection of his child, by showing what an interest he takes in his happiness, and will impart double value to the gift he may bestow. To give churlishly or grudgingly would be so monstrous, that nothing need be said to prevent such a practice; but I have not seldom thought that I have seen rewards bestowed on children in a manner somewhat ungracious, and consequently received with far less pleasure than would otherwise have been excited, and, what is more important, with little or no appearance of gratitude to the donor. Surely this mode of giving ought to be carefully avoided. We all know how very greatly our feelings, on receiving a present, depend on the manner in which it is offered to us. Will it be supposed, that the sensibility of children is less alive on such occasions? But there are errors more common and more prejudicial. Rewards are often of such a nature as to nourish sensuality, prodigality, or (especially in girls) vanity; and still more frequently no care is taken to instil into the child, that they are not to be considered principally as means of personal gratifi-

cation, but rather as means of usefulness and sources of bounty. If we would avoid these evils, it is apparent that the gratification of the palate should not be consulted, and that showy articles of dress and unmeaning toys are not good rewards. Still less is money, (especially much of it,) when it is to be spent just as the child pleases. But whatever is given, children should be early taught that they are trustees under God; and that an employment of what they receive from their parents or others in a way pleasing to him, while it will obtain his favour will also sweeten all their enjoyments. They will be easily made to feel this, if some pains are taken to select objects of bounty whom they love, or with whom they will readily sympathize; and to point out little purchases, as proper books, or tools, or useful toys, which may lead to their improvement, or exercise their ingenuity, or promote active exertion, at the same time that they afford pleasure. Thus their little property, instead of administering to frivolity and other vicious propensities, may contribute very materially to the invigorating of their bodily and mental powers, the forming of their dispositions, and, above all, to their

being early trained in the most important, perhaps, of all habits, that of viewing all they possess as not their own but God's, and that of always associating pleasure with duty, and of considering the former as not only unhallowed in itself, but as wanting its best ingredient, and scarcely to deserve its name, when severed from the latter.

But the highest and noblest use of rewards is to raise the soul to its proper elevation,—to give noble and generous motives their due influence over it, and to emancipate it from a thralldom to those of an inferior kind. The former are, gratitude and love to God, the Giver of all good; and to parents and other benefactors, his vicegerents on earth, in its distribution. The latter are, a love of pleasure and an aversion to pain. In proportion as the first predominate, selfishness is counteracted; and we are led to the contemplation, and love, and imitation of the adorable perfections of the Divine Nature. A human being, in whom the last are the ruling principle, is shut up, as it were, within the narrow bounds of *self*, and will be engaged in studying the gratification of those mean and grovelling dispositions which

he brought into the world. He will remain what he was originally, "earthly, sensual, devilish," "a lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God." How indispensable, then, is it to lead the youthful mind to look beyond the mere possession of a reward, and of the gratifications it can bestow; to direct its view to the love of the immediate donor, and, above all, to the love of Him who put that love into the donor's heart, and conferred upon him all his ability to be bountiful, and created the very thing which the child has received from his bounty! Parental endeavours to give a child such views will naturally be accompanied by an exposition of the Divine holiness and justice, and of the impossibility of the unholy being permanently the objects of Divine love. The wisdom of God will also be described as opening to his view every recess of the human heart; and his power as making it impossible to escape the punishment, or lose the blessings, he appoints. Thus his whole character will be brought before the child; and those attributes which would be most likely to be repulsive, coming, as it were, in the train of love and bounty, will be awful without producing horror;

and, by the Divine help, affection and veneration will be excited in harmonious union in his bosom. Oh, the joy of heart to the parent, who sees his child enter upon the blessed path which is to lead him to his God ! Let him spare no pains in conducting him forward in it, in smoothing it to his steps, and in shielding him from seduction to the right or left. He must not hope to effect his object by set lectures, at stated times. They would not improbably disgust rather than benefit; and even if they could be made agreeable and impressive, they would be forgotten in the hour of temptation. His object can only be attained by watching the little incidents of the day, and taking advantage of them for its promotion. This course must be pursued gently, and as pleasantly as possible to the child ; but always by means which God will approve, and with a deep sense of the infinite importance of the end in view. There must be no flattery, no deceit, no superficial healing of spiritual wounds ; but zeal and honesty must be combined with due allowances for the weakness, tenderness, and volatility of a child, and with patience, benignity, and love.

If the letters in the Christian Observer, al-

ready mentioned, had not appeared, I should have enlarged rather more on some points connected with this subject than will now be necessary. It may be sufficient to say briefly, Let a parent, in pursuing the course which has been recommended, have recourse to representations, appeals, persuasions, and make the best use he can of hymns and passages of Scripture already learnt by the child. Let him touch the conscience, awaken shame, affection, gratitude. Let him encourage openness and confidence by kindness and sympathy; and keep back the exercise of parental authority as much as he can, showing that he wishes not to use it, and that, if obliged to do so, he will be influenced solely by a sense of duty. But though it is his daily endeavour to copy the beautiful forbearance of St. Paul towards Philemon, he must guard against laxity and weakness. He must not fail through tenderness to the child, or from attention to his own ease or convenience, duly to notice the faults he may discover. In this respect he must act on a system, and with undeviating consistency and steadiness. He will watch against the risings of bad tempers, and against mere professions; and counteract such evils by

his own good temper, by his own truth and modesty and simplicity, and by turning the eye of his child upon his heart, as well as by more direct, though perhaps not more efficacious, means. When the child has committed a fault, he will allow time for recovery from incidental agitations, and accept no professions of repentance and good intention while the state of the heart appears doubtful : taking care to impress on the child, that the great object he should have in view should be to make his peace with *God*; that the offence has been an offence against *God*, who sees the inmost soul. He will feel the high importance of the work in which he is engaged, and his own weakness and insufficiency ; and will put up from time to time secret aspirations to God for his blessing on himself, as well as on his child ; and will persevere until there is a satisfactory appearance of mild and ingenuous repentance. Though the child should not be brought by his labours to true Christian conversion, (for in that great work, so peculiarly his own, God will grant certainty of success to no human agent,) yet they will not fail, I think, to make a salutary impression. A consciousness of right and wrong will be

strengthened ; fear will become less a principle of action ; and conscience will stand more in the place of punishment. His love of his parents, and his deference for them, will increase : good habits will be formed, and a general respect at least for religion will be cherished. He will, in this way, undergo an important change. The system under which he is brought up is "the nurture and admonition of the Lord ;" and his parent may humbly hope that it will be "a schoolmaster to bring him to Christ." With many present disappointments, perhaps, as to its effects, he may yet humbly hope that its value will be deeply felt at some future and more happy period, when, under God's providence, the soil is fully prepared for the growth of the good seed. Then may that sown in childhood shoot up with vigour, and bear abundant fruit. But very frequently, I am convinced, God vouchsafes a more speedy and visible blessing. The parent sees the work of genuine regeneration commence and proceed under his eye in early youth. He has the supreme happiness of seeing his child, with true submission of heart, look up to his Saviour, and put himself under the

guidance of the Holy Spirit. In religion, indeed, as in every thing, the child will be a child—ill informed, weak, wavering, and inconsistent: but still there may be satisfactory evidence that he is gradually conquering his native corruptions, and beginning to acquire Christian graces; that he is renewing in the spirit of his mind, and attaining a portion of the image of God.

It may be proper to add, on the subject of rewards, that, in addition to the value they derive from other considerations, they possess high importance in cases in which punishment must be often employed, as antidotes to the evils which attend it. Without them, (as in many public schools,) punishment has a great tendency to exasperate and harden; and that to such a degree as even to lead the culprit to glory in suffering, without shrinking at the time, and without being at all affected either before or after. In proportion to the horror with which a Christian parent contemplates such obduracy, will he be anxious to prevent every approach to it: and it is obvious how much the right employment of rewards will assist him in his endeavours, by showing his affection, softening the heart of the child, and placing it under the in-

fluence of a better motive than fear. I know a numerous family, in which there is seldom a greater punishment inflicted, than the withholding of a reward. When this is not sufficient, some deduction is generally made from a little property in the parent's hands, consisting of an accumulation of rewards. In that family it is usual, after every lesson, to give some number, proportioned to its merit, to be added to the numerical sum possessed by the child from former rewards. The addition is performed by the child, who may incur a known loss of one or two, if the calculation should be wrong. These numbers are considered as worth a certain sum, say 1s. per hundred; and the child receives for them at the established rate, upon application, for any purpose which the parent approves. The remaining numbers, not exchanged for money, continue the property of the child.—This little detail may appear unnecessary; but education consists of details, and its success depends much on their proper selection and management. A system of this sort comprises many advantages; for, besides being a regular plan for conferring rewards, it makes the child early acquainted with property and its

uses, and provides for his property being the reward of his merit; and it also places the whole so immediately under the eye and controul of the parent, as to enable him both to prevent its abuse and to give any suggestions as to its employment. It possesses a further advantage of some consequence; that of rendering children adroit in adding and subtracting by the head, without this being made a regular object of study.

I cannot dismiss the consideration of rewards and punishments, without cautioning parents, on the one hand, against the mischief of permitting servants, except in very particular cases, to employ them to any considerable extent; and on the other, against suffering those faults and merits of children which manifest themselves in the nursery to escape due notice.—Having already made some remarks on the general character of servants with reference to education, it will be unnecessary now to enlarge on that point. The management of punishments is far too delicate to be entrusted to such hands. When a child is very violent, he must indeed be put under immediate restraint by any one who happens to be present: but servants should not be

allowed to do more in this way than the exigency of the case demands; and recourse should immediately be had to the parents, or, in their absence, to those who supply their place. With respect to rewards, servants would probably be lavish, and indiscriminate, and capricious in their use, neither guarding against the evils to be feared, nor forming any tolerable estimate of the higher and more durable advantages to be derived from them. *Something* must be allowed in a nursery in the way both of punishment and reward: but it ought to be confined within very narrow limits. The parents, particularly the mother, should keep a vigilant eye over the course of things there, and interfere in person in all cases of importance.

From several of the preceding observations, it will be inferred, that very much may be done in inducing a child to perform his duty without having recourse to rewards and punishments. Appeals to his sense of right and wrong, to his gratitude and his love, to his dread of the displeasure and desire of the favour of his parents, and far more of his Sanctifier, his Saviour, and his Heavenly Father:—such appeals, pressed with tenderness, but with warmth, and accom-

modated to the age, knowledge, and disposition of the child, will be found of great efficacy at a very early age, and will become more potent instruments of good in proportion as a child advances in knowledge, in right feeling, and in sound habits, and, above all, as he obtains more and more of the Divine blessing. A parent ought, from the very commencement of education, to look principally to these means of exciting his child "to eschew evil, and to do good;" and should consider rewards and punishments as inferior and subordinate. How will he rejoice to observe the increasing influence of these higher and nobler motives, and his child making a progress towards that holy state in which they become decidedly the paramount principles of action—the undisputed lords of all other principles!—But I must not suffer myself to dwell a second time on this animating subject.