

APPENDIX.

No. I.

[EXTRACTED FROM THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER FOR JANUARY, 1813.]

WE are the parents of several young children, and are anxious for their salvation. Not long since, one of our little boys went to visit a very kind friend, who has been remarkably successful in the pious education of his family. We were desirous to have our friend's opinion of our son. His leading observation was, that the child did not show a *cordial concern* for his faults. Feeling the justice of this sentiment, and our own inexperience, we requested him to tell us at length how, under God's grace, this concern might be best excited; which drew from him the first of the following letters. We still expressed doubts on the subject of correction by the rod, whether it should ever be used at all, or whether it should ever be used where

some contrition has been already produced by affectionate and serious conversation. This procured us the benefit of the second letter. Having found these letters of considerable use in the religious education of our children, and having obtained permission from our truly Christian friend to make them public, we beg to send them to you, in the hope that you will judge them well worthy of insertion in the Christian Observer.

“ My dear Sir,

“ The subject on which you request my sentiments is one of the most important in education. Without a *cordial concern* for a fault, no sound foundation is laid for its cure. Even if the parent looked no farther than to worldly principles, to mere prudence and fair character, this would be true. It is eminently and obviously true, when the reference is to religion, and to God who searches the heart. Without this *cordial concern* there can be no repentance, and without repentance there can be neither forgiveness nor the Divine blessing ; and therefore all must be unsound, even if outward reformation be obtained. I ought to apo-

logize for repeating truths so familiar to you, as applied to adults, if not also as applied to children, to whom they are equally applicable. It is their very high and fundamental importance, and their not meeting with due attention in education, even from very many religious parents, which induces me to state them. I too frequently see parents make the reformation of their children's faults a matter in which religion is scarcely, if at all, referred to; and little or no appeal is directed to the heart and conscience. Thus morality comes to be considered as consisting entirely (or nearly so) in mere outward observances: God, Christ, and the Holy Ghost, are little brought into view in the course of the child's daily conduct; and he gets into the habit of being satisfied with himself, if he does nothing contrary to rule, though his motives may not have been holy, and his heart may have been in a very indifferent state. You could describe to me, better than I to you, the evils of such a state, and the hardness of conscience, and other future miseries threatened by it.

“ The system here has been, carefully to counteract these evils, both present and future,

by doing our best to lead our children to have God in all their thoughts, and to habitual daily repentance and tenderness of conscience before him;—in short, to that frame of mind, making proper allowance for their age, which is required in all of us by our Heavenly Father. To this end we always endeavour, in correcting a fault in a child, to have a right religious view of it, and to give the child, partly by precept and illustration, and partly by sympathy (for ‘*si vis me flere dolendum est primum ipsi tibi,*’ is eminently applicable in this case,) a right feeling respecting it, as an offence against his Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. It is too common, as you know, to cut short the notice of a fault. It is strongly blamed—perhaps the child undergoes some punishment—perhaps he is threatened with severe punishment if he repeats the fault; or perhaps he is required to say, that he is sorry, and will not repeat it. The parent is peremptory, the child is frightened, and all is over in a very short time, without any useful impression on the child, except that he is less disposed to commit the outward act which has drawn upon him these animadversions. Mrs. ——— and I, on the contrary, endeavour to make

every fault of our children to be felt by them as an offence against God, and a sin to be repented of, and upon repentance to be pardoned through our Saviour. We therefore carefully guard against the child's thinking that his fault is re-proved as a personal offence against ourselves. We talk to him solemnly, but tenderly; feeling and expressing much concern that he has offended God; contrasting his conduct with the love of God; painting the pleasure with which his holiness would be received in heaven, particularly by Christ, and the pain which his sin has occasioned. In short, we talk with him, *mutatis mutandis*, as with a friend with whom we tenderly sympathise, while we feel that we have a right to command. We temper the terrors of the Lord with representations of his love and mercy; and we persevere in this course, till the child's mind appears humble and softened, and brought into such a penitent frame as God looks upon with favour. The whole often ends in a short affectionate prayer of half a minute, or a minute, for pardon and grace, dictated by ourselves, as far as the child's own thoughts will not of themselves supply it. This process is never hurried over, nor is it ever brought to a

conclusion before the end appears to be attained ; as nothing can be more important, so nothing is suffered to supersede or interrupt it. It is taken up *very* early, and is always accommodated in its different parts to the years and knowledge of the child. It appears formidable on paper ; but it is surprising how short, and even pleasant it is, in all common cases, through its being commenced so early and habitually practised. It has almost banished punishment from our house, and has brought with it various other good consequences. I need not say, that considerable discrimination and discretion must be exercised by the parent. Religion must be made to wear an amiable and endearing, as well as an awful, countenance. The bruised reed must not be broken ; the feelings must not be excited beyond what nature will bear ; and if a storm of feeling arises, it must be allayed without any improper indulgence, destructive of the effect to be produced. You will see, that sagacity and self-command are wanted on the part of the parent, for which he cannot hope, if he do not maintain an unruffled mind.

“ There are some necessary concomitants of this system, which, were they not so, would be

recommended by their own intrinsic importance. Holy things must always be approached in a holy way. The Bible must never be read with levity or indifference. Hymns, and the Catechism, must never be *jabbered* over, nor repeated with that hard tone and manner which bespeaks an unconsciousness of their sacred nature. Religion must practically be made the main-spring of life ; and she must not only be so, but appear to be so, without departing from her native modesty, and without losing dignity by the frequency of her introduction, or by the kindness with which she is invested. You will be aware that difficulties, and very great ones, must be encountered, where, instead of habits of proper feeling and repentance on committing faults having been formed from infancy, other habits have been formed. These difficulties are in their kind the same which you clergymen experience in bringing adults to repentance. In their degree they will be greater or less according to circumstances.—I had a child here for several months, some time ago, whom I could never bring to quite a satisfactory state of mind on his committing faults ; owing, as I believe, to the errors of his previous education. With

our own children we have never experienced very formidable difficulties, God be praised ! His is the work ; but he makes great use of the instrumentality of parents, and gives, as I believe, an especial blessing to a well-directed early education.

“ I remain, &c.”

“ My dear Sir,

“ As ours is quite a Sunday subject, I will employ a little of to-day in giving you my thoughts upon it.

“ With respect to punishments, our practice has been very generally to omit the employment of them altogether, when the child was brought to real repentance ; but at any rate to confine their use on such occasions to strong cases, and then to employ restraints, and not corporal correction. But we have endeavoured to recal the child’s mind to faults, from time to time, in a solemn but tender manner, that they might not slip out of his remembrance ; and especially at prayer-time, and other seasons when it appeared likely to be done with most effect.

“ We have been led to this course, partly by feeling ; but it has accorded with our principles, as I will endeavour to explain.

“ The great and leading use of punishments (in the case of children at least) seems to be, to humble the mind at the time of a fault, and prepare it for repentance ; or, when inflicted after a fault, to impress the fault more on the memory, that repentance for it may be more abiding : and, in both cases, to deter from a repetition of the crime, through fear of a repetition of the suffering. Now though it has these uses, it has also evils attending it. The parent’s temper is apt to be ruffled in inflicting it, and the child’s to be soured and hardened in receiving it ; and the fear of it is apt to lead to concealment and deceit in a child, and also apt to turn his eyes too much from God to man, and from the spiritual to the temporal consequences of crimes. ‘ Perfect love casteth out fear ;’ and one would wish to lead a child towards that state as fast as may be, and to foster and cherish the love of Christ, as the great constraining principle in his bosom. Endeavours to this end will be not a little counteracted by a system which draws his mind habitually, on the commission of faults, to human punishments.

“ Viewing things in this light, we look on

punishment as never to be employed in Christian education, when it can be avoided ; and we think we have found, that, under the system I described in my last letter, for promoting true repentance in a child, it may be avoided with advantage in almost all cases, when, under that system, by the blessing of God, the mind is become ingenuous and the conscience tender. In cases of obstinacy, whether it takes the form of violence or sullenness — if candour and kindness, and solemn but calm representations, and a countenance and manner in the parent the very reverse of that of the child, will not in some moderate time produce the desired effect on the child's mind (which they commonly will, after the system in question has been followed for some time in a family)—punishment must be employed : ‘ *Debellare superbos.*’ But even in this case it should be sparing and moderate, and inflicted gradually, so as to give time to the child to recover itself from its fit of perverseness ; and when its temper is altered, and bends to the yoke, and gives place to contrition and docility, the punishment should cease. It is to the full as necessary, in a system under a God of love, the leading principles of which

therefore should be love and mercy, to bear in mind the former part of the poet's line, 'Parcere subjectis,' as the latter part which I before quoted. Then is the time for winning the child, by holy kindness, tempered by that mild solemnity which the occasion will inspire, to openness and candour, and a deep, but not an agonising, impression of the evil of sin, and of the love of Christ and his readiness to forgive. Consider how very ill a continuation of punishment would harmonise with the promotion of those filial aspirations to God and the Redeemer. How would it operate in our own case? And how much more likely would it be to operate ill in that of a child, who, from his tender years, is so much more liable to have his mind and feelings engrossed by any thing which, like punishment, makes a strong impression on his outward senses?

“ I have mentioned the effect which the expectation of punishment is likely to have on a child's communications with his parent. It may be worth while to enlarge a little on that point. I am sure we agree in placing the highest value on an affectionate and confidential openness in children towards their parents. It is not only highly gratifying to the parents, and the natural

expression, and pledge, and nurse of filial esteem and love; but it is most closely allied to the promotion of all that is honest and ingenuous in the child, and with the checking and subduing of all that is wrong, not only in his habits, but in his disposition. I need not go into detail on these points. All that I could say will present itself to your mind and feelings. I will merely draw your attention to two opposite pictures, which your own imagination will present to you in sufficiently vivid colours: the one, of a child who feels his parents to be his bosom friends—his wise but tender and sympathising guides through the snares and delusions of life; who, from feeling, as well as from a sense of duty, flies to them to disburthen his mind, both in his joy and in his sorrow; who, in his intercourse with them, endeavours to follow in that Christian path in which they lead the way, to be of one heart and mind with them—and to ‘keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,’ as with all his fellow-Christians, so emphatically with his first, best, and dearest friends, his parents. Contrast this sketch with what is too often the scene even in religious families;—distrust on the part of the parent; re-

serve, and perhaps alienation, on the part of the child, who, instead of sympathising (in the large sense of the word) with his parents, hankers after companions of a very different sort, and enjoys himself most when farthest from parental observation. I have drawn these outlines strongly; but I am sure you must have observed different shades of these characters among your neighbours, as you have passed through life.

“ To return to the main subject, from which I have rather diverged :—After having described the course I should take in a case of obstinacy or passion at first, and repentance afterwards, you are prepared to hear; that, in a case which began with candour and repentance, I would by no means punish, except in the way of some restriction, which should be recommended rather by prudence as a precaution, than be of the nature of a punishment; or perhaps, by exacting some moderate sacrifice (such as staying in the house for some hours) for the purpose of preventing the mind’s too soon exchanging salutary impressions for youthful levity. But whatever I might do in this way, I would take especial care to avoid every thing

austere and forbidding in my countenance and manner, though these would necessarily be marked by serious but tender and affectionate pity and concern. I think I find that this course of proceeding answers the purpose of preventing the affair from sliding too soon out of a child's mind, while it secures his affection, disposes him to confide in me as a friend and confidant, and adds, to his fear of having offended God, a farther uneasiness, from having brought much trouble upon me and himself. Though I have spoken of myself, I have my wife full as much in my eye while I give this description. Occasions are often occurring, in which the little children come to her with full hearts to tell her of some misbehaviour or wrong temper. They come without fear, but with a load of concern and regret, which they evidently hope to lighten by obtaining her sympathy and condolence. You may be sure she always encourages this course of proceeding; and I am convinced that, under God's blessing, it answers the very best purposes. I need not say, that, in the way in which she treats such cases, it is her aim always to give the feelings of the Christian a complete ascendancy over

those of the mother ; and I think she succeeds well. But, after all, will children dread the commission of faults, and guard against them, unless they stand in awe of some immediate punishment ? I think they will, and on the same ground on which men and women do, *provided* our whole system, or some other founded on similar principles, is adopted early, and steadily pursued. It is thought absurd for adults to subject themselves to penances for their sins ; and why should it not be right to subject children to as little of this sort as may be, and to endeavour as early as may be to bring them to a system analogous to that which we Protestants think the right one for grown-up people ? Their minds are capable of being wrought upon by the same means which God has appointed for men in general ; and these means cannot be too early employed, and cannot too soon acquire that preponderance in a system of education, which may make them supersede the use of the rod ; a weapon necessary, in a degree, for managing brute animals, and man also, as far as his nature resembles theirs ; but it is the great business of Christian education to exalt his nature—to cherish that new nature implanted by grace in

his soul, and as speedily as possible to subject him to a discipline suited to the state of heart we wish to encourage.

“ Do not suppose, though we endeavour to banish punishment as much as may be, that our system is one of indulgence. It is a main part of it to establish habits of resolute, though cheerful, self-denial in all points in which duty calls for sacrifices. We always hold up the principle of acting on grounds of right and wrong, and not on those of inclination, except in points purely indifferent, which are brought within a narrow compass. Nothing is ever granted to mere entreaty; and we have none of that begging and whining which shows generally a laxity of principle, and always a defective system of education, wherever it is practised.

“ In this way we endeavour to promote, in our own children that ‘hardness’ which all the soldiers of Christ must learn to endure. But, then, this plan is sweetened by as much affection, affability, cheerfulness, and desire to make our children happy *within* the bounds of duty, as we can pour into it, consistently with the great truth, which is often inculcated, that neither

man nor child must live for pleasure, but that his object and employment must be *work*—the work which God has given him to do; and a considerable part of which (especially in the case of a child) is to prepare for doing better work in future years.

“ As to the passages of Scripture which you mention, I own they do not alter my view of this case. It is most true, that ‘ the rod must not be spared ’ in the cases in which it ought to be used; but then comes the question I have been discussing in this letter: What are those cases? Indeed, the frequency and general complexion of the passages to which you refer would lead one to suppose, that Solomon conceived that cases of this kind would be very common: and, in short, that corporal punishment would be a leading feature in a right education. But it is to be remembered under what dispensation he lived—under one which was comparatively low—one in which there was much of beggarly element; much that was permitted because of the hardness of the hearts of those who lived under it. Should we not expect, that, under such a dispensation, and for the use of such a people as the Jews, many things would be en-

joined not well accommodated to our times ; and, in particular, that the approved system of education would partake less of what is (in a spiritual sense) refined and elevated, than ought to enter into ' the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' under the blaze of the Gospel light most graciously vouchsafed to us ? This general view might be illustrated and corroborated by many things in the New Testament.

“ May God bless us in all we do for our children ! The concluding lines of Cowper's Task may well be applied, in their spirit, to this subject of education.

“ But all is in His hand whose praise I seek,
 In vain the poet sings, and the world hears,
 If He regard not, though divine the theme.
 'Tis not in artful measures, in the chime
 And idle tinkling of a minstrel's lyre,
 To charm His ear, whose eye is on the heart ;
 Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain,
 Whose approbation prosper even mine !”

“ I remain, dear Sir,

“ Your's very truly, &c.”