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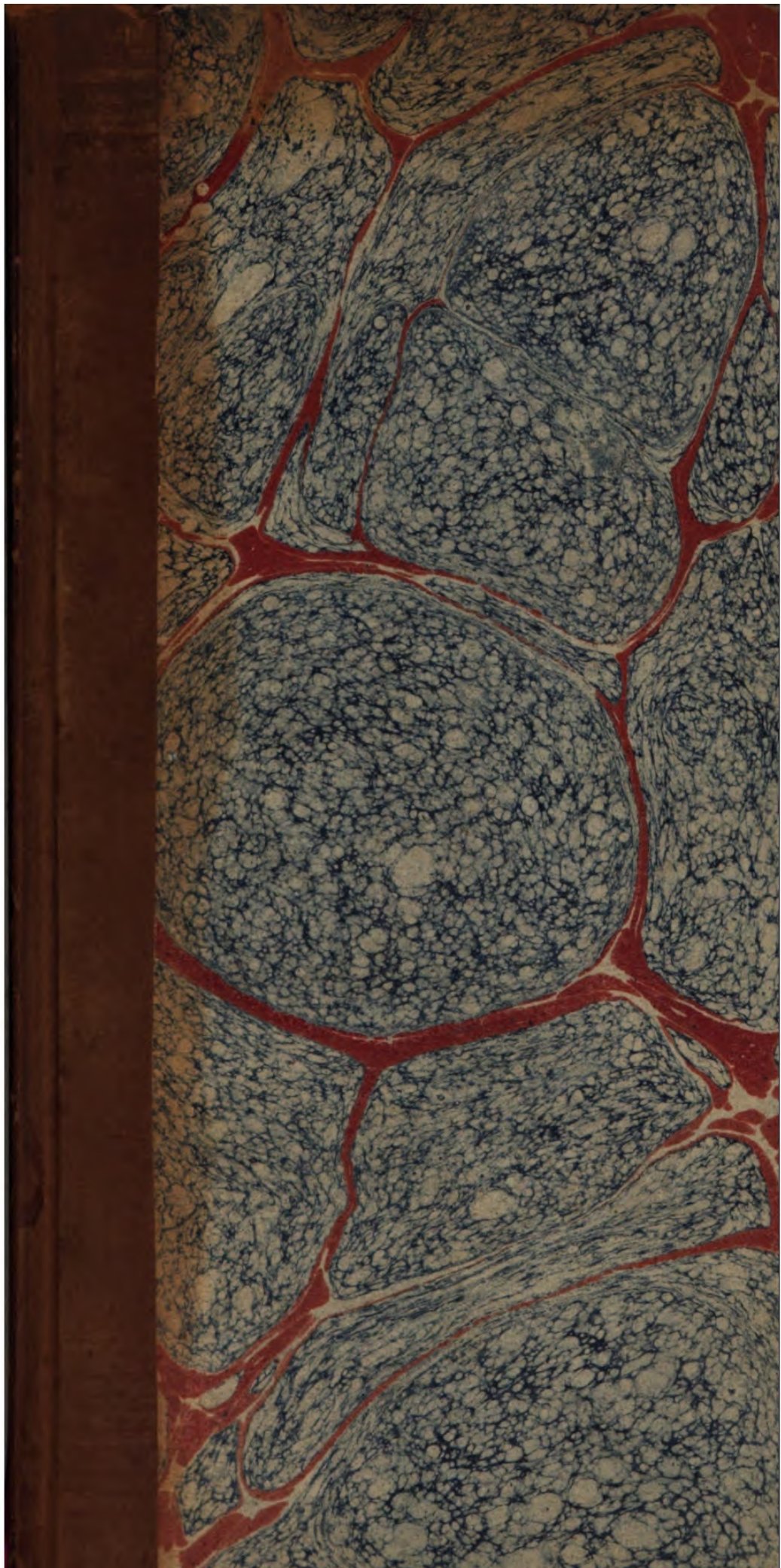
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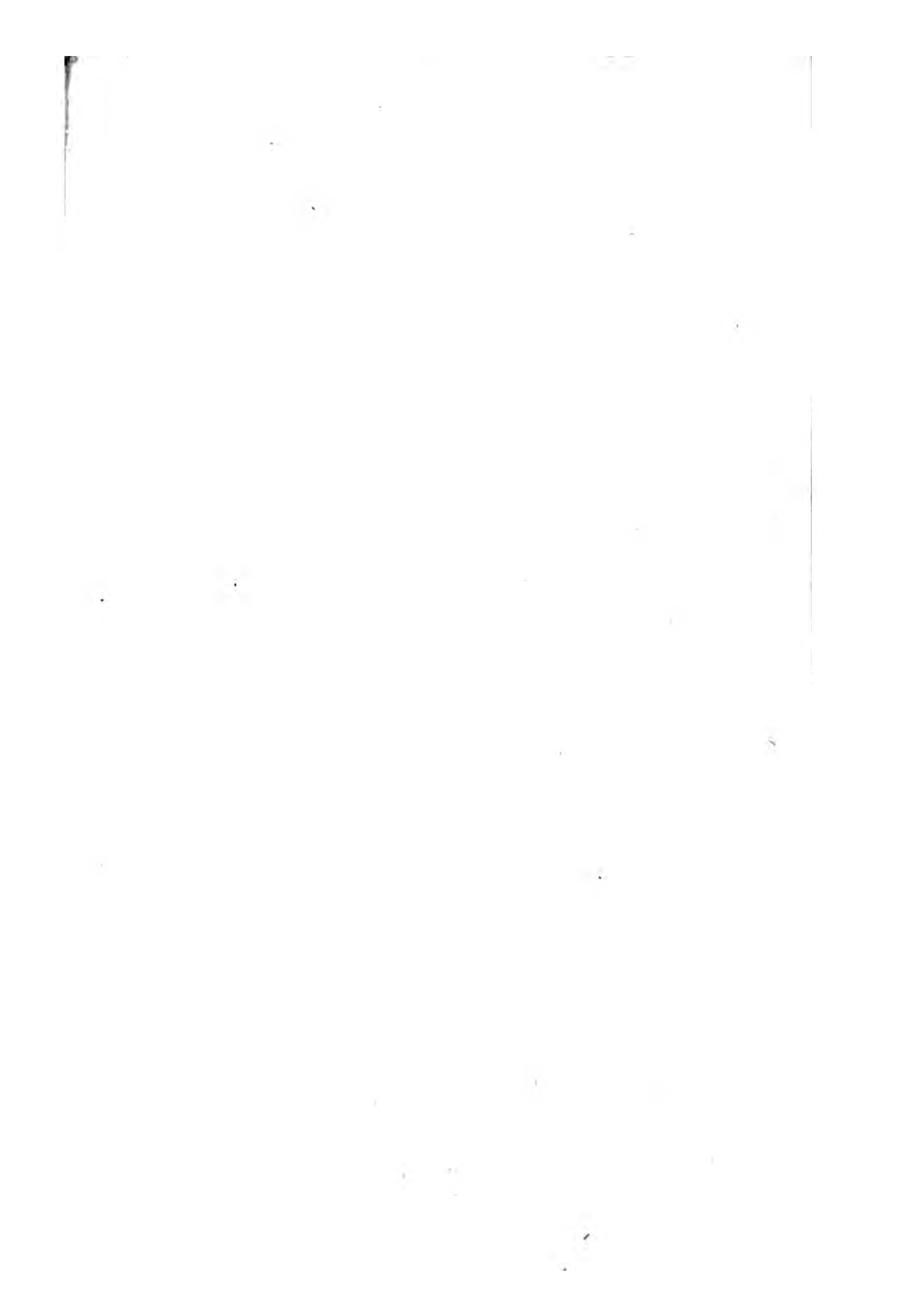
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A LECTURE
ON
EDUCATION,
INVOLVING
MENTAL, MORAL & RELIGIOUS
TRAINING,

DELIVERED IN
ZION CHAPEL, LONGTON,

BY THE
REV. J. TAYLOR.

Published by Request.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS Lecture was delivered in the Methodist New Connexion Chapel, Longton, at the request of the Sunday-school Committee. The author had not the remotest idea of its publication ; but as a request was afterwards made to that purpose, his only apology is the subjoined letter, received from the Secretary of the Longton Quarterly Meeting.

Longton, January 12th, 1843.

Dear Sir,

*After you left the Quarterly Meeting yesterday afternoon, it was resolved that you be requested to publish the Lecture on Education, delivered in our Chapel, last evening. * * * * * We hope therefore you will comply, as the Meeting was unanimous in its request.*

Yours truly,

G. L. Robinson, Sec.

To the Rev. J. Taylor.

EDUCATION

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

LECTURING on Education at the present day, is an exercise attended with disadvantages neither few nor small ; for every department of mental and moral culture has of late years undergone the strictest scrutiny, and so many improvements have been suggested, that a Lecture on this subject can scarcely be rendered attractive by its originality. Nor is this all. Lecturers on this subject have greatly multiplied ; for the delivery of their popular orations, they have been generally and enthusiastically applauded ; great interest has been excited and the public prints made vocal with eulogy. As these, in many instances, have spent a series of years in accumulating apt and interesting illustrations, and indeed given themselves up to promote the advancement of Education in general, it cannot be expected that I shall be able to sustain or excite an interest in any degree proportionate, especially when you remember

that I have numerous and pressing engagements arising from what may be properly termed, my legitimate duties. If however on this occasion I should be instrumental in refreshing your memories with subjects to which you have previously listened, and in connection with this, should be instrumental in inducing you to carry those subjects out into constant, vigorous and practical operation, my highest object will be answered, and my most ardent wishes gratified.

The subject as announced for this evening's Lecture is "Education," involving Mental, Moral, and Religious training.

MENTAL.—That the human mind, like the body to which it is united, and the material objects which surround it, is simply a substance possessing qualities susceptible of various affections and modifications, which existing successively as momentary states constitute the phenomena of thinking and the capability of improvement,* that is, that there is in the human mind a natural and original genius, is a fact demonstrated by the reasonings of mental Philosophers, and the experience of every age; the mind being capable of improvement in a progressive and to an illimitable extent. While genius or the capability of improvement however, is naturally and originally inherent in every mind, every mind has its natural and original peculiarities; for in the whole range of our intercourse with Society, we never found two who in a state of maturity had on all things, the same views or possessed in all things the same

* Dr. Brown.

inclinations. By some the mind in its original and infantile state has been likened to a sheet of paper unwritten by the scribe ; an analogy inaccurate to a crime. Were this comparison correct, then, as we are capable of writing on two sheets of paper the same sentiments, we should be capable of making on two minds the same impressions. If this comparison is to be admitted under any circumstances whatever it must be to shew that human minds like sheets of paper, differ in their comprehensiveness—texture—shade—and purposes of use ; every sheet of paper is capable of some impression, and every mind is capable of some improvement, but while some are used for recording a nation's statutes, others are fit only for the common purposes of trade ; each is useful but not each equal ; so with the constitution of the human mind. The influence of education therefore however potent must be modified by natural susceptibility. The mind then has genius original and peculiar ; and how often do we behold this genius rising from the dust of poverty, bursting through the influence of retarding circumstances, and reaching an altitude which calls forth courtesy and applause. Some with a genius for invention, ply the energies of an ingenious intellect on the constructions of machinery ; others for painting, catch as if by instinct the beauties of creation, and the colourings of nature—dash their impressions on the canvass with an amazing exactness—transmitting the representation of objects to distant nations, and persons to future generations. Some with ears tuned to the harmonies of music, immortalize their names by their

popular productions containing a plaintiveness of strain and a swell of chorus, which attract attention, and excite emotion ; while others with the fertile imaginings of poetry, gather sentiments of beauty from every object around them, and entwine for themselves a wreath which shall remain fresh amidst all the winters of a world's existence.

While genius has its natural and original peculiarities, a general genius is of rare occurrence. So much so that even in their favourite branch, that for which they appear to have such a constitutional aptitude, their capability in many instances is confined to one or two of its departments. In these they excel, while in the remainder they rise no higher than mediocrity, nay, in some cases sink into common place. In painting one excels in landscape, another in portrait. In speaking, one can play with the feelings, another work upon the judgement. In music, one can compose, another can perform. In poetry, one excels in epic, another in dramatic. In writing, one is characterized by harmony, another by strength. In architecture, one can design, another execute. And in business, one is enterprising, and another hesitating. If then there is such a peculiarity of mind, such originality and distinctiveness of genius, as to render a general genius rare it must be obvious that many if not most of the systems of scholastic education are radically defective

Here in one room they oft confound at once,
The daring thinker, and the plodding dunce,

The soaring mind must sink into a plan
 Forget her wings, and crawl where dullness can,
 Th' unfeathered wing must take as lofty flight,
 As his whose plumage shines most bright,
 For each there's one decree, one plan, one rule,
 And each must come to that, or pass as fool.

Irrespective of natural genius each scholar at the same Academy, must go through the same routine. He must learn Latin if his genius is mathematics, and he must learn Ornamental penmanship, if his genius is mechanics. And if a child thus wrongly directed by its tutor, manifests as it naturally will, a dullness in taking in that for which it has so little natural capacity, he beats it, as rational a procedure as if he should beat a poor blind boy for refusing to distinguish the alphabetical signs. Who has never traced the faultiness of an education which respects not the tendencies of natural genius as they have beheld the hard toiling operative after a day's fatigue, amusing himself with constructing a Loco-motive on a minus scale, or working out in plaster of Paris, the orders of Roman Gothic and Ionic architecture? and who has never regretted that natural genius should have been so lost to the world, as they have beheld the wearied mechanic, a martyr to his study, solving the problems of Euclid, or pursuing the windings of metaphysical abstraction with interest and success. The probability, nay more than probability, is, that had the original genius of such persons been respectively considered, and their studies properly directed, they would have excelled, and instead of returning to the grave with the reward of the indolent, as it

respects the gratitude of the public, they would have become the instructors of future generations, and would have added to the treasures of science by discovering truths yet latent and unknown.

Upon every mind however peculiarly constituted early training has a powerful and in many instances a permanent influence. Indeed no man who is accustomed to watch the workings of his own mind, the feeling most easily excited, and the train of ideas for which it appears to possess the greatest aptitude and delight, but must be surprised at the numerous instances in which he can trace their source to the early impressions of youth. How important then must it be to have every aid which care can bestow, and every help which wisdom can suggest, in order rightly to train the mind to habits of thought and contemplation.

The first thing to be accomplished in a course of mental training is—*to excite a love for knowledge*. There is in the human mind an instinctive inquisitiveness that is, there is a natural desire to know. This is evident from those developments of infantile curiosity seen in the anxious gaze, the tip toe look, and the ceaseless prattle of “Who made this mamma? and who made that?” but there is a love for playful amusement which is also natural to childhood; and this if improperly indulged has a tendency to weaken the mind, for if it does not lessen the love for knowledge it will render study (the means of its attainment,) task-like and insipid. Hence many reluctant to study, gratify their natural propensity to get knowledge, in a cheap and

easy way, they are ever and anon prying into the affairs of others, a mean and despicable practice, a practice always indicative of a weak or untutored mind. If then such baneful practices are to be prevented, let there be at an early age, when the child is incapable of spending a portion of its leisure time in reading to profit and delight, the greatest attention paid to counteract that desire for profitless play, which will daily strengthen, unless useful lessons are imparted in pleasing and playful forms. With children, as with people of maturer years the strictest attention should be paid to the original peculiarities of their constitution. As one child differs from another, so should their instructions differ; a subject which would be pleasing and interesting to one, would be tasteless and unamusing to another. The difference requisite to be known at an early age like this is easily discovered. You have only to listen to the nature of their enquiries, and find out whether the child is exercising its perceptive or reflective faculties. One child will be clamorous to *see* this and *hear* the other, while another of the same age, with all the graveness of a philosopher will say "Mamma who made God?" who does not perceive that the one is merely perceptive and the other strictly reflective. The former might be instructed in natural history, say, by shewing it pictures of birds, insects, and beasts; and the latter by a simple and interesting narration. The adage is "children love pictures," an adage perfectly philosophical because in childhood the perceptive faculties are in full active and vigorous play, while the

reflective with but a few exceptions are dormant and inactive. The perceptive is the medium through which we awaken and unfold the reflective; and a child perhaps has never more gratification and pleasure than when you are gently unfolding its reflective faculties, shewing it a sheet of paper or a piece of silk, and describing their manufacture, or taking it to Museums Zoological gardens, or even open fields, in order to create an opportunity of imparting instructive information.

Here is the grand secret why so many systems of education have failed to give the mind a mental aspiring. The children have been sent to an academy before they could perceive the value of a good education; they have been compelled to store their memories with words to them without meaning, and to go through a so many years education with no other stimulus than the cane. Parents have injudiciously made the school assume the appearance of a prison, "O you naughty boy," says one "I'll send you to school," and "Hark ye" says another "if you wont tease me I'll let you stay at home this afternoon." Teachers have made learning assume the character of punishment, hence if a child has been negligent or refractory, they have set him tasks, leaving him to conclude in his own mind, that learning was a punishment for his crime. Instead of exciting a love for knowledge and making it appear so much superior to their frivolous amusement, parents and teachers have conspired to make the years of scholastic discipline a period of mental slavery. The parent has sometimes

permitted it to stay at home in compliance with its anxious and tear-bedewed solicitation, giving it a temporary liberty, but this has only made it return to its drudgery with an increased reluctance. Education then in general is not made so pleasing as it ought to be in order to supply the lack of other motives in a youthful mind. Modes of instruction founded on principles of simplicity, and adapted to the respective mental capabilities of the children, might here be suggested, but we defer it to a future occasion, and would say in conclusion, let the instructions given, be such as will excite a love for knowledge, that they may seek their future gratifications in objects worthy of their time and labour —be preserved from the evils of vicious associations— and qualified for moving in honourable and intelligent circles.

The next step in a course of mental training is *to give suitable directions*. When a desire for acquiring knowledge has been awakened in a youthful mind, mental training, is so far from being completed, that without suitable directions we have only furnished the mind with that which may become the individuals bane and in his movements in society, qualify him for an extensively pernicious influence. Is it not reiterated by the monopolists of knowledge, that men with the most learning have in numerous instances done the most mischief? an allegement less forcible than true. For however true such an allegement may be as it respects the past or even the present experience of society, unless it can be proved that such mischief is *consequent*

upon a course of mental training it is an argument of no weight, for if it must be admitted to any extent it must be admitted to the whole, then mental culture must be stopped, and the world relapse into the ignorance and barbarism of by-gone years. That such mischief is not consequent upon a general education is a fact substantiated by the testimonies of past experience, many are living exceptions; nay so far from having done the most mischief, they have conferred on society an incalculable good. Only let the inquiring mind be suitably directed and then the unhappy instances to which we have just referred will be few and far between.

If then we would give suitable directions to the youthful student we must have respect to *constitution*. Some are naturally timid and reluctant, others daring and courageous; some careless and inattentive, others watchful and intent; some are discouraged by a frown, others ruined by a smile: directions therefore cannot be brought to rule, inasmuch as they must be varied to suit an infinitely diversified peculiarity of mind.

There must be respect not only to constitution but to *time*. Not when the youth is surrounded by a host, for this, if his directions are properly adapted is only, to exhibit his foibles to others, human nature likes no such exhibition, neither is there any necessity for it. Not in the hours of recreation, when the mind is seeking a temporary relief; to give important instructions when the attention is obviously absorbed with other subjects is worse than useless; it is positively injurious. Not

when the physical energies are exhausted by labour. But rather select a period when some perplexing difficulty has prompted them to solicit your advice—their anxiety to know—their consciousness of your superiority—in connexion with the demonstrations of your kindness—will have prepared them for listening with attention and interest.

Nor, should attention be paid only to time and constitution; *suitable directions must be given by suitable directors.* Tacitus in his memorable dialogue on the decline of Roman Oratory represents Messala as speaking on the practices of former times and saying “the infant as soon as born was not consigned to the mean dwelling of a hireling nurse; a matron related to the family and distinguished by the purity of her life, was chosen to watch the progress of the tender mind. In her presence not one indecent expression was uttered; nothing was done against propriety and good manners. The hours of study and serious employment were settled by her directions; and not only so, but even the diversions of the children were conducted with modest reserve and sanctity of manners. Thus it was that Cornelia the mother of the Gracchi, superintended the education of her illustrious issue. It was thus that Aurelia trained up Julius Cæsar; and thus Atia formed the mind of Augustus. Indeed whatever was the peculiar bias whether to the military art, the study of the laws, or the profession of eloquence, that engrossed the whole attention; and the youth thus directed embraced the entire compass of one favourite

science." What a perfect contrast does this present to the modes of mental discipline adopted in our day. Female Education, so necessary to prepare them for a mother's duties is comparatively neglected, and instead of children been placed under the care of those who are adequate to the task they are placed in the hands of nurses who are strangers even to the rudiments of science. Those who are unacquainted with domestic arrangements and considered incompetent to its duties, are set apart and to them is entrusted the task of sketching the mental character of a rising generation! any girl can be a nurse providing her terms are moderate, no other qualifications are sought. And what is the result? The mind instead of being suitably directed, is, as we might reasonably calculate, is filled with superstitious fears. Impressions are made which time cannot erase. Injury is done which life cannot repair.

And if directions are to answer their purpose due attention must also be paid to the *manner* in which the directions are given. Not dogmatical—not in tones of superiority—not as though you thought them undeserving of the instruction which you are capable of imparting. No. Such a conceited look or tone once displayed may paralyze the efforts of a noble mind. And under the influence of such a stroke the aspirations of genius may wither and expire. Had I allotted to myself three evenings for a subject so comprehensive and important—a subject which expands as we proceed—a subject which seems only at its commencement when we are necessitated to conclude—then I might have

done something in the way of justice, to myself, my subject and my audience, but as it is we can only glance at topics which from their importance demand a prominent and extensive amplification.

The directions, as given on important branches of scholastic education at the present day so far from being adapted to the varied tastes and capabilities of the children, and consequently so, far from being suitable directions ; are vague, superficial and injurious. Grammar for instance is represented to them through the medium of unexplained rules, and is destitute of attractiveness, they neither perceive pleasure nor utility. Arithmetic is taught them so mechanically that it is of little service beyond the first four rules, and how often have we seen a boy puzzled with the simplest question, and in tears, reply, " We never did that at school sir." Would that we could speak better of penmanship and composition, but in many instances the former has to be unlearnt, being ill suited to the expertness required in commercial affairs, and the latter is nothing but theory ; of its application to practical purposes they are utterly incompetent. Not that we would wish for a moment to throw a shade of contempt upon those who are engaged in the dignified office of training the rising generation ; we could only wish for the adoption of such systems as would best accomplish the ends of their anxiety and toil. Of serious existing defects, however no careful observer can be ignorant ; nay we speak that which we do know, and testify that which we have experienced. In order that these evils might be ef-

fectually prevented—the office sustain its dignity—and every one thus engaged be competent to its duties—to me it has often appeared desirable that they should pass through a kind of Collegiate examination and receive a professional diploma. As the time forbids us to expatiate, suffice it to say, that among the directions to be suitably given, in an arrangement for general utility, we notice reading, thinking and speaking. *Reading* makes them acquainted with the sentiments of others. *Thinking* renders them capable of discriminating between truth and falsehood, sophistry and reason ; while *Speaking* enables them to utter their sentiments and give expression to their views. How needful then, that suitable directions should be given on reading ; not only to prevent the youthful from a loss of time, but to guard them against those works which have only a tendency to enfeeble the mind, disorder the imagination, and corrupt the morals. How needful also that proper directions be given on thinking ; to save them from those fluctuations of sentiment which would otherwise attend an acquaintance with the diversified opinions of men. And how especially needful, as speaking is so much the result of habit, that suitable directions be given on speaking, that possessing a correct knowledge of their own language, they may be able to express their sentiments in a clear and perspicuous style. Untold evils have arisen from a defective mental training. Let those defects be obliterated, let education be made attractive and pleasing, and let suitable instructions be imparted—then the tone of our nation's intellect will

be raised—the trifling and fantastic literary productions of the day, uncalled for and despised—the civil rights and political liberties of the masses secured—characters estimated by a correct criterion—and the hard-toiling operative enabled to realize an exquisite gratification, which is never known but when the heart is expanded with the noblest truths, and the mind teems with the loftiest conceptions.

MORAL.—While mental training is a branch of education so important as to require the strictest attention of parents and tutors, *moral* training is still more important, seen in the fact, it is more neglected. How many parents do we see who, after teaching their sons, by example, every thing licentious in manners and after lavishing upon them the means of a similar licentiousness, are regardless of their moral culture, inasmuch as they never inform them of that essential distinction which exists between right and wrong—a consciousness of which is essential to the formation of virtuous habits and the controlment of vicious passions. We know that morality, in the strict sense of the term, can only flow from a regenerated heart, and be produced by the operations of a spiritual agency ; but in the common acceptation of the term—a morality which consists in the discharge of civil, social and domestic duties—it may be produced to a marvelous extent by the potent influences of a proper training. The duty of moral training primarily devolves upon the parent ; rendering that situation one of importance and responsibility. In moral as in mental training, the strictest

attention should be paid to the peculiar dispositions and natural besetments of the child; with which peculiarities the slightest observation will make them acquainted. Indeed to some extent these peculiarities force themselves upon a parent's notice, and whether they make them the foundation of a proper mode of government, or not, they are conscious of them. Nothing is more common than to hear parents speak of these constitutional differences. One child they will say, is gentle and mild, ever careful to obey. Another capable of persuasion, but not compulsion; you may lead it but cannot drive it. Another is passionate and irritable; the slightest zephyr will raise it into billows. While another is reserved and stubborn; you can neither lead it nor drive it. These are phrases ever floating on the lips of parents, and although they may not be strictly and philosophically correct; yet they indicate a natural distinction of which the parents are conscious. As these peculiarities are varied as the countenance itself, it would be useless attempting to strike out a system of moral training which would be of universal application; but while each child in minor things requires a distinctiveness of treatment, there are rules of general application too frequently neglected.

If the minds of youth are to be trained to future greatness and goodness, *parental authority must be sustained*. It has been the opinion of some that the most effectual way to secure a child's compliance with its parent's request, is for the parent to persuade to reason and to expostulate. Plausible as this may seem,

and indeed good as it may be to a great extent, experience will prove it weak and inefficient ; for although it is needful that parents should convince their children of the reasonableness and propriety of their requirements, yet numberless instances will occur in which the child blinded by inclination, will be incapable of perceiving their reasonableness, so that it is equally needful that, that degree of parental authority be sustained, which will prompt to a ready and spontaneous obedience, whether the child can perceive the reasonableness of their requirement or not. How many circumstances however transpire wherein parents suffer this authority to be weakened or destroyed ; the child perhaps is sick ; is an only one ; or an only one of the sex, and must therefore be indulged, an indulgence too, at no less a price, than the sacrifice of parental authority. Would the parent, about to weaken such authority by one apparently frivolous act, ponder over the impressive truth that, that indulgence may be the turning point of its character and destiny, the very attachment which would have permitted the indulgence would surely dictate a different procedure. Abbot in his principles of maternal duty says, " Sometimes a child gets its passions excited and its will determined, and it cannot be subdued but by a very great effort. If however in the contest the child should gain the victory, it will be next to impossible for the parent to regain that authority, so that when these contests are once entered upon, however painful to the parents mind it must not be discontinued until the child is subdued." In illustra-

tion of this point he gives us the following striking, and appropriate instance. "A Gentlemen sitting by his fire side one evening with his family around him, took up a spelling book and called one of his little boys to read. The child was about four years of age, and had a perfect knowledge of the alphabet. John however happened to be in a sullen mood and reluctantly arose from his chair. When his father pointing to the first letter said "What letter this?" he could get no answer. John was sulky and silent. "My son" said the father in a pleasant tone "you know the letter A," "I cannot say A," said the boy. "But you must" replied the father in a decided tone, "what letter is this?" again John refused. The contest was now fairly begun and the father feeling that upon its issue awaited much of the child's future character and conduct determined like a prudent parent to subdue him. He took him into another room and punished him, and returning asked him again, but no answer still. A second time he retired and returned, still the child refused. Again he inflicted punishment but the child with its whole frame in agitation refused to yield. Now the father became anxious and regretted, that he had been brought into the contest but he knew that the question was now to be settled who should be master, and after the son had withstood so long he feared the result. With a heavy heart the father was about to lead him out to punishment again, when the child shrunk, and to the joy of its father cried "I'll tell it papa I'll tell it." He pointed to the letter and the child replied in an humbled tone "A." Now

carry your book to mamma and tell her, he did so ; and learnt never to engage in such an unequal warfare again." It is well however for parents to avoid such collisions as much as they possibly can, but when they do occur never return from the contest vanquished. A habit of perpetual fault-finding weakens parental authority, and threatening them without punishing is next to destroying it, for the child learns to disregard what its parent says and is prompted to the perpetration of a similar act with a similar hope. Most of the evils in society, and most of the crimes of maturer years might have been checked if not prevented by a due attention to their development in youth ; and whenever the youthful population are brought under proper parental restraint there will be the elements of a great and extensive improvement.

It indeed seems strange at the first sight that the children of pious parents should frequently be the most unruly and perverse, and would almost lead us to conclude that the moral influence of education was less potent than is generally believed ; but upon a close examination its strangeness diminishes and we see that such a conclusion would be premature and unwarranted. You perhaps look upon the failures of learned and pious parents, and as you see their children indulging in extravagance and crime, you are ready to say—if parents with such extensive information and deep toned piety are inadequate to the efficient training of their offspring, how can we be successful ? It does not follow because a man is extensively informed that he has paid the strict-

est attention to his children's education ; is not the probability against him ? has he not spent the time in acquiring his extensive information, which ought to have been spent in watching over his children's interest ? It does not follow because a man is pious that he has adopted the best system of education—religion gives a man no claim to infallibility ; and a profession of religion is far from being a guarantee that all his erroneous views shall be rectified, and all his practices formed by the dictates of an enlightened judgement ; so far from this there is a possibility of him abusing even the excellencies of religion through ignorance ; and through unwatchfulness, of acting in matters of this kind, even with less prudence than an intelligent non-professor. For instance religion has a natural tendency to soften the sternness of our nature, implant dispositions of peacefulness, and inspire the strongest emotions of love ; and who does not perceive that these tendencies under the influence of an ill informed mind might just lead to the results alleged. Nay, for proof look at those pious parents who have offspring unruly and perverse, and ask if one of the two causes specified have had no imaginable influence. Have they not spent their time, and consequently neglected their children, in acquiring their extensive knowledge, and discharging those public and official duties to which their intelligence has raised them ? or on the other hand, have not their affections preponderated over their judgement—have they not failed to discharge their parental duties from a mistaken fondness ? If that statement of Holy Writ be

correct "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," we are brought to this conclusion, that neither the children of wicked nor God-fearing parents are properly trained with but a few exceptions. This being the case it is easy to show why the children of the wicked avoid many of those excesses into which the children of the pious are drawn. For illustration take the case of Drunkenness. Here then are two children with parents widely differing in their moral and religious character, the one having a sober, the other a drunken father. Neither of these children have had imparted to them extensive views of human nature, and they both enter upon the world imagining themselves competent to the task of self-government. Now I ask which of these children is likely to become a drunkard first? why the pious man's child unless he has previously become the subject of grace. But why should the pious man's child become a drunkard sooner than a drunkard's child? for this obvious and palpable reason—neither of them are acquainted with their own weakness, the fascinations of society, nor the thirst-creating tendencies of liquor; but the drunkard's child knows its results; and perhaps in his youthful days, as he has felt the pinchings of want—beheld his mother weeping for grief—and heard the oaths of his drunken father, he has inwardly resolved "I'll never be a drunkard." He has had early impressions of the evils of drunkenness by example if not by precept. Curiosity also has a powerful influence in drawing aside the unconverted sons of pious parents.

From their infancy up, they have been restrained from an association with men whose intentions are vile, whose conversations are engaging, and whose deceptions are plausible, and as in connection with this they have never been warned of the danger of associating with all who make professions of friendship, as though their professions were sincere, they are unfortified against their bland, insinuating and artful attacks. They have also been debarred from frequenting those places of public amusement, to which even the habituated resort with renewed expectations ; and if in compliance with some solicitation they should perchance to go, a novel influence is experienced—scenes congenial to carnal inclination are witnessed—the passions are wrought into a state of high excitement, and while their own voices are drowned in the revelry of the gay, they are led to imagine that such cheerfulness, and mirth are indications of any thing but the misery which has been associated in their own minds with an attendance upon such places. Without entering further however into this subject ; we shall conclude this part of our Lecture by naming a few of the notorious evils of the day, and giving a few hints as directions, tending to check them in the rising generation.

Drunkenness is one of the most prevalent and degrading vices of the times ; and no system of moral training can be considered perfect that does not make special efforts to preserve the rising generation from its contaminating influence. To do this, it will be needful frequently to advert to the baneful tendencies of this

vice as seen in the degraded and poverty stricken appearance of its living illustrations. But while this may have its designed effect upon some constituted with an ambitious and aspiring mind, to render it generally effective it will be needful to urge upon them the necessity of a voluntary abstinence. Voluntary! human nature does not like compulsion and when the restraints are removed they will be in danger of opposite extremes. Even tee-totalers themselves ought not to compel their children to abstain, or we may expect a race of drunkards when these children arrive at maturity and are capable without parental restraint of following the impulses of their own inclination.

Lying, is another evil which moral training ought especially to regard. In order to prevent a child acquiring this disreputable habit shew it the sinfulness of lying, and at the same time never attempt to extort confession when you yourself are evidently under the excitement of passion. The child has a dread of being punished; to prevent this it lies, and habits once formed are not easily broken; rather reward, by not punishing, on condition that it will speak the truth.

Prodigality is an evil too frequently arising from the bad contracted habits of youth—the results of defective moral training. Parents injudiciously permit their children to spend money at the pleasure of their own will, and if an object strikes their fancy, the parents will advance them their weekly little portion enabling them to procure it; so that the child is neither taught the value of money, nor the sinfulness of grati-

fication. Nor is this the only evil leading to prodigality. Many parents encourage their children to deposit their money in their hands and then appropriate it without their knowledge or sanction ; this excites feelings of dissatisfaction and the child allays the anger of its bosom only by resolving “ But I’ll spend it next time,” and from this many evils proceed, the child loses respect for its parents—trys to deceive them—spends money without their consent—and makes efforts to conceal such acts by repeated falsehoods.

Selfishness is an evil on the other hand which ought to claim special attention. Parents should encourage their children to acts of liberality and kindness. Occasionally give them money, but try to make them find a pleasure in appropriating it to charitable purposes, supporting the Missions, relieving a helpless widow, or assisting an afflicted neighbour. But how contrary to this do parents generally act; selfishness is fostered even in the day’s of infancy and childhood ; for if one has a little sweetmeat given in the absence of another the mother will say “ Now get it eaten before brother comes home or he will cry,” instead of saying (as she ought) “ Put it by my dear till brother comes home then you can share it with him.” These may appear little things and childish, but it is with children we have to do. The passions and affections of riper years are developed by children in childish ways. Would we foster anger, resentment and revenge, we have only to sanction a school boy’s quarrels. Nay, would we train up a murderer we have only to carry out the self same

spirit which prompts a child to cut off the legs and wings of a fly ; so that many of the dark deeds which blacken the annals of crime might have been effectually prevented by watching the tendencies of the youthful mind and imposing proper restraints.

RELIGIOUS.—While however we give a course of moral training credit for an ability to prevent and lessen some of the baser crimes of degraded humanity, at the same time we fearlessly assert that education without religion, will do little to restore a degraded and sin-cursed world. Education may polish sin—religion alone can remove it. This is a fact which is frequently lost sight of in Lectures of this sort, and indeed so anxious is degenerate man to dispense with that which is spiritual and make his own expediencies successful, that there seems a needs be for a Lecturer on education to be popular, to give human nature, credit for more than it deserves, and education, credit for more than it can do. Education apart from religion has frequently been tried. In some instances it has raised nations to a lofty altitude of intelligence and renown. In Egypt, Greece and Rome, genius, under the influence of rigorous discipline had well nigh pushed, poetry, architecture and oratory ; music, sculpture and painting, to the goal of perfection. “ Their works ” says Lamartine, “ were seen, done and heard, and seen, done and heard no more till the consummation of ages.” But in all their glory, when they were chiseling statues apparently instinct with life, blending together the harmonies of their undying anthems, and rearing the far-famed monuments upon which

succeeding generations have gazed with admiration and awe—we ask in all their glory what were they? The beautified ruins of fallen humanity. What was their morality? refined barbarism. What was their religion? gross superstition. What was their theology? conflicting conjecture. And what was their enjoyment? deadened sensibility. Education may again be cultivated to a like extent, but apart from religion it will issue in a like result. He who imagines that the world can be restored to a healthy and vigorous state by education alone, must be ignorant of the world's disease, and if under this ignorance he should begin practice, society should scout him away as an undiplomaed practitioner, and regard his receipts as the prescriptions of a moral quack.

The formation of human character whether viewed in an intellectual moral or religious sense, is an exercise fraught with the weightiest responsibilities; and all instructions properly to effect this, must recognize the fact of man's inherent tendency to evil, and bring an agency to bear by which those tendencies may be counteracted. While the heart remains unrenewed by the grace of God lofty intellectual attainments may be made subservient to the purposes of sin, and the purest moral injunctions will fail in producing a righteous man. Here then we discover the necessity which exists for those Athenæums of religion—sabbath school institutions; and at the same time we cannot but perceive a necessity for those who are engaged in conducting them, being themselves personally, practically and experimentally acquainted with

the great truths of christianity. Religious education, that is, the formation of the religious character of the rising generation, may in general be said to devolve on parents and sabbath school teachers, in the majority of instances, on the latter, the former being themselves without God and without hope in the world.

In explaining the nature of this duty for the benefit of sabbath school teachers, we observe in the first place—*that you must give them correct religious views.* Although religion is a subject so important that, before it every other sinks within the shade, yet we are every moment in danger of being decoyed from the paths of truth; for not only are the speculative or the vicious labouring to disseminate principles at variance with the disclosures of revelation, but reason itself unenlightened by the Holy Spirit is so far from being able rightly to direct us that like an “*ignis fatuus*” it serves to lead us wrong. If these truths then are applicable to those who have experienced the delusiveness of a thousand plausible schemes, how much greater are the liabilities of the youthful and inexperienced? They are in danger of being driven about by every wind of doctrine. No system of education then can be pronounced good—no sabbath school teacher’s duties can be considered discharged unless special efforts are made to give correct views on every branch of religion, whether doctrinal, practical or experimental. Not that we would have the instructions, communicated in such institutions as these, of a denominational cast, and thus make them nurseries for that exclusive, bigoted and sectarian spirit, with

which the church for ages has been cursed. No, we would rather have their minds furnished with the evidences of christianity, enabling them to give a reason of the hope that is in them. And while in teaching the minutia of scripture *doctrine*, which to some extent must involve the peculiarities of sect, we would have in connection with this, inculcated the minutia of scripture *precept*. We would have them taught that of religion, love is the genus and charity a species. We would have them shewn that a violation of this charity is incompatible with christian character, and that the world can never be restored to peace and good will, until we learn to respect the judgement, the peculiarities and even the prejudices of others. Let the rising generation thus be taught their duties to God, and to each other; let correct religious impressions be made upon their minds—then shall we have done our part to fortify them against the attacks of infidelity, and by the blessing of God, in many instances we shall have given them that which in maturer years will qualify them for becoming defenders of the faith.

In the next place, *you must cultivate religious tastes and desires*. However vigorously you may make efforts to communicate a correct knowledge of religious truths, unless you make corresponding efforts to cultivate religious tastes and desires, the influence of your communications to a great extent will be paralyzed and your labours lost; hence many, after years of sabbath school instruction evince no such taste or desire. The Bible, in which they have been accustomed to read, lays by

neglected or forgotten. The Sanctuary, frequented by them in the capacity of scholars, sees them no more. The sabbath school, in which they were instructed, is left to be carried on by other agents. And the exercises of prayer and praise, might but have been toys for the amusement of their childish minds, and that when they had become men, they had put away their childish tricks. Such a lack of religious taste and desire is unquestionably the result of defective tuition. That there is a necessity for this part of religious education, commanding your especial attention, must be obvious, if you for a moment consider that sin, in order to charm and ensnare appears in disguises as numerous and as varied as the aspects of the ocean. It tempts human interests by a thousand hopeful prospects, and presents itself to human curiosity, with a thousand deceptive fascinations. The *stage*, with its splendid drapery, and imposing representations, steals upon their tastes until by unawares they are found to love that which is the parent of licentiousness, prostitution and want. The *novel* with its plausibility of theme, and descriptiveness of composition, so gains upon the attention of its peruser, as not unfrequently to keep them until a midnight hour, at that which effeminates the mind, and is an open foe to the religion of spirituality and prayer. And the *gaming table* with its temptations to success, not only engenders a selfish spirit, but frequently leads to bold innovations on honesty, as a final expedient. Surrounded thus by the blandishments of sin, the youthful are every moment in danger, and it is only by guarding them

against the outer-circlings of the whirlpool of sin that we can hope to save them from the vortex of destruction.

As sabbath school teachers, then consider your numerous, individual and weighty responsibilities—labour to give the children correct religious views—excite religious tastes and desires—and in connection with this *manifest an anxious solicitude about their soul's conversion*. “Children of a tender age,” says D. E. Ford, in his Decapolis, “are susceptible not only of deep religious impressions, but of true conversion. No child is too young to love the Saviour, who is capable of understanding the nature of his claims. To suppose the contrary, is to make salvation a question of mere intellectual endowment; an hypothesis, which not only ill accords with the perfections of God, but contradicts some of the plainest declarations of Holy Writ.”

If then the children are capable of being influenced by religious truths at such an early age, act not on the now current persuasion that religion is exclusively the business of riper years, but make close appeals to their conscience, and press home upon their attention, the claims of the Redeemer. Exhibit in your own deportment the excellencies of the religion you teach, and make the consistency of your own conduct one of the most powerful attractions. And in addition, occasionally retire to the place of your private devotions to make the interests of the children a subject of special prayer. In a word act from a consciousness of your responsibility. Remember that sabbath schools are institutions for

which there is no substitute ; and that on the proper discharge of your duty depends the welfare—the eternal welfare of those committed to your charge.

That sabbath school instructions have been instrumental in producing to some extent the results anticipated, none can question, and had all the instructions embraced every department of the duty as now exhibited those effects would have been more extensively beneficial and permanent. But in concluding the Lecture it may be needful for your encouragement to shew that sabbath school teachers have not laboured in vain.

In illustration of this fact, glance at the influence which these instructions have had upon *mental culture*. Ere the origin of these institutions, the mental capabilities of the multitude were culpably neglected and knowledge, confined to a few who stood forth like prodigies, conspicuous by the extreme defect of others. For want of these institutions, the language of Shelly was appalingly appropriate, when he said

“How many a rustic Milton has passed by,
Stifling the speechless longings of his heart,
In unremitting drudgery and care !
How many a vulgar Cato has he compelled,
His energies
To mould a pin or fabricate a nail !
How many a Newton to whose passive ken,
Those mighty spheres which gem infinity,
Were only specks of tinsel fixed in heaven
To light the midnights of his native town !”

Through the instrumentality of these institutions however it has been proved that mental capability is not the

exclusive property of any, but that frequently there is

“join’d

A narrow fortune to a noble mind,”

For many of those who are now filling honourable and elevated offices in society, are those who have been raised from the humblest ranks, by the instructions of a sabbath school teacher.

Look also at the influence which they have exerted upon *domestic comfort*. The extent of happy influence which these institutions have exerted on domestic comfort is incalculable, and the gratitude of parents falls far short of commensurate returns. How many hours are youths at the present day spending in close mental application, which before these institutions were established would have been spent in the revelry of cruel amusements? How many who have received sabbath school instructions, have been instrumental in the conversion of their parents, either by a recitation of their instructions, or the exemplary deportment which such instructions have produced? Nay many families are indebted to these institutions, for all their enjoyments temporal and spiritual; domestic and religious.

Nor is this all. Look at the influence which they have exerted on *moral conduct*. In no period were the morals of the youthful population more endangered than the present. *Now* while infidelity is making a vigorous effort to supplant the everlasting gospel, and banish the name of Jesus from the world. *Now* while sensuality has thrown around it the most fascinating attractions. *Now* while the nation’s literature contains the elements

of destruction. *Now* while the religious speculator would make the laws of God of none effect, and substitute the traditions of men. *Now* while the rationalizing christian would destroy the vitality of our holy religion—make its doctrines cognizant to intellectual perception and reduce its enjoyments to the morbid satisfactions of external uprightness. And *now* while others would bring forward a religion encumbered with ornamental trappings, and substitute the corruptions of the dark ages for the christianity of the reformation—there is a needs be that we throw around the rising generation a rampart of religious instruction. Crime is the offspring of ignorance ; and had it not been for the provisions already made—had it not been for the influence which sabbath schools have already exerted the latitude of conscience would ere this have been widened to an *ad infinitum* extent—sabbath restrictions, cast to the winds of heaven—sinful amusements substituted for devotional exercises—England, a modern France—and the habits of Britons degenerated into the brutal practices of olden times. The full extent of moral influence exerted by these institutions, however, will never be properly ascertained until the day of final adjustment, when every action will be exhibited, both in connection with the circumstances under which it was performed, and the extent of moral influence it has really exerted ; but suffice it to say they have exerted a beneficial influence on the morals, not only of our own land, but on the world at large which is operating and shall continue to operate through the ceaseless revolvings of eternal ages.

For further illustrations, look at the influence which they have exerted on *christian usefulness*. When children have received a religious education, or perhaps received all the education they have had from their sabbath school teachers, we cannot imagine that no feelings of gratitude will expand their minds, or regulate their practice. Remembering those passages of Holy Writ where the doctrine of proportionate responsibility is taught with the greatest clearness, and remembering those sacrifices of time, ease and wealth, which others have made on their behalf, they will feel the obligations under which they are laid to do likewise in similar institutions. They enter upon their engagement with superior qualifications; bringing to bear the advantages of long experience. Indeed every sabbath school of a few years standing, will, if properly conducted raise up abundant agents for future effective operation. Besides this, the children having imparted to them a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of religion, and of the principle evidences by which those truths are confirmed, they are not only so prepared against the sophisms of infidelity, as to be capable of resisting the blandishments of gain-sayers, but they are capable of defending christianity against the fiercest assaults of its best disciplined foes. From what source we would ask has most of the active and efficient christian instrumentality of the present day sprung? nay, is it not a fact that many who are now preaching the gospel of Christ to the large and intelligent audiences of christian Britain—and many who are now unfurling the banners of the cross,

in distant lands, were once found in these nurseries of religion, and from them were transplanted to their present spheres of useful and laborious toil.

But, in the last place, look at the influence which they have exerted on *eternal destiny*. Were the benefits conferred by a religious training of the youthful population confined to the period of man's earthly sojourning, they would amply repay every lover of his species for all his sacrifices of time, property and ease. But what additional satisfactions are enjoyed when we consider that these communications by the blessing of God, will raise them to the felicities of heaven, where wrapt in holy vision they shall abide in eternal security. We not merely train them up for this life, but for the life which is to come. The Rev. R. Young, of Westminster, concluded his speech at the Sunday school Union Anniversary, in London, with detailing the particulars of an interesting and thrilling circumstance, which came under his own observation, and which cannot fail to give weight to the statements already made. He said, "When I was in the west Indies, I heard of a poor soldier who had been condemned to die, and I wished to see him in his condemned cell. On applying to the jailer, he allowed me to do so, on condition that I should be enclosed in the dungeon during the interval of meals, for some hours. That, in a West-India dungeon, was not a very agreeable thing. However, as I had a sincere desire to talk with this man, I submitted to the condition, and was shut up with him. I found him an interesting young man; and, to my surprise, his countenance indicated pleasure,

rather than grief, when I presented myself before him. I began to inquire relative to the state of his mind ; and to my astonishment, he told me that he had obtained salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. He went on to detail, in a most interesting manner, how he found his way to the Redeemer. Knowing that no pious person had previously visited him, I wished to be informed how he had obtained his light ; when he gave me the following narrative :—“O Sir,” he said, “I was a scholar in a Sabbath-school at Nottingham. I was a very bad boy. I was expelled from the school twice, in consequence of my conduct. - I cherished evil principles in my heart, because I was an exceedingly dissipated young man. | In a fit of intoxication I enlisted as a soldier, and in a few days left my native town. Soon afterwards I was sent out to this country ; and I fear my conduct has broken the heart of my widowed mother. After I had been in this country some time, I did not like the army, and deserted. I was apprehended, and flogged. I deserted again. I was betrayed by a companion, apprehended, and am now sentenced to die. When I came to this loathsome place, I was as dark and as ignorant of God as it was possible for any sinner to be. I meditated vengeance against the person who had informed of me, and against my Judges ; and I thought that I would be amply revenged, if I could but escape my place of imprisonment : but, when left alone to my own reflections, I thought of the Sabbath-school at Nottingham and, all at once, the instructions which I received there flashed upon my mind. I wept, I prayed ; my heart

was broken ; and I found my way to that Saviour who had so often been named in the school to which I refer : and, blessed be God," said he, "he has manifested his love to my heart, and saved me from the fear of death." The time came when he was led forth to be shot. When he arrived at the place of his execution, his conversation and the whole of his proceedings, indicated the tranquility of his mind. He then knelt upon his coffin, prayed for himself, for his regiment, for his mother, (if still alive,) and expressed himself in terms of confidence and hope. The Commanding Officer appeared deeply affected, and evidently felt much reluctance in performing his painful duty. At length however, in a tremulous voice, he said, "Make ready ! present ! fire !" and in a moment the interesting soldier lay a bleeding and a lifeless corpse. Thus" said Mr. Young, "the seed sown in Nottingham Sunday School brought forth glorious fruit in a West-India dungeon." Reading over the Biographical records of the present day, we find numbers ascribing their conversion to those gospel auxiliaries. Numbers of the church militant ; numbers of the church triumphant ; yea millions yet unborn will be found through all the circlings of eternal ages, heightening the swell of heaven's chorus, whose stammering tongues were first taught to lisp the language of praise by those benefactors of humanity—Sabbath School Teachers.

It is true these results have not been invariably consequent upon sabbath school instruction, but let me ask has not that instruction, in many instances, been lamentably defective ? Consider, these institutions have

sometimes been carried on with no other object in view than the children's mental improvement—conducted by unconverted agents; and their labours not unfrequently neutralized by parents' inattention and folly. Much, however, has been done; adopt good systems and much more will be done. Give them not merely the rudiments of a secular knowledge, but Train them for Eternity, Educate them for the skies. Make your communications subservient to pious purposes, that the numerous and conflicting interests of party which so tumultuously agitate and disturb society, may be suppressed by the nobler acts of generosity and kindness, and every ill feeling rendered motionless by the predominance of better principles. Carry out the designs of a Saviour's death, that the on-rolling torrent of iniquity may be checked in its devastating course, and the character of man individual and national be raised to a state little short of perfect rectitude. In a word, labour to bring about the long wished for period—when accomplished prophecies shall unfold their splendour on a regenerated and rejoicing world; when millions in heaven above shall respond to millions on earth beneath, and when the deep echo-roll, shall be heard through the vast universe of God, “Hallelujah, God omnipotent reigneth.”



