

THESIS.

Subject: Development of Reason.

Name: W. D. Cunningham.

In the great plan of creation, it pleased the Almighty to bestow certain distinguishing attributes upon the creatures of his handiwork.

To the insect, bird and beast, it was a wonderful degree of perfection of one or more of the five senses. To man it was Reason in which is centered the essence of all the senses together with a touch of the infinite to bind man to

the great Source.

Reason, being the highest endowment of creature, justly claims the greatest amount of the most careful training. To show the reason for this and the how to do it is our present effort.

Let it be granted that Reason is the highest form of mental activity, that it presupposes all minor processes and is the culmination of all rudex activities - the mainspring of mental action.

It is asked what are reason's claims to prominence in

mental culture: The answer may be briefly stated as follows.

1. Reason should be carefully trained because it aids the memory. e.g. If in some future age a student of history should forget whether the North Atlantic states were known and inhabited after or before the island we call England, reason would say to him that New England presupposes Old England.

2. Reason should be cultivated because the want of it paves the way to sophistry, superstition, and bigotry.

The Indian of the west and the Negro of the south are haughty, credulous, and superstitious because reason has not been cultivated.

3. Reason should be developed because it largely determines for us right and wrong. Queen Reason sits enthroned, in the mind of every sane man, waving her wand of power in the direction of right.

God may be forgotten, or his authority denied but Reason cannot be dethroned.

4. Reason should be cultivated because it largely determines

the value of thought. Elaborate articles may be written on any subject which, devoid of reason, would be as valueless as so many disconnected words.

One of the evils of the expiring system of education is its lack of thought on the part of the learner. Too often is it true that books and teachers are accepted as absolute authority and too little thought is exercised as to the truth of written or printed statements. There is little danger of wrong conclusions resulting from personal inves-

tigation and individual thought.

Another evil of the dying system is the preëminent degree to which memory training is carried, to the criminal neglect of reason. Authority should be recognized and respected, but not to the extent that everything is accepted as true without the why entering the learner's mind.

The how of reason-training is the all important question which here demands an answer.

Much of the teacher's fault or cause of partial

in the chain of reasoning
broken, all is lost.

He is not capable of teach-
ing the young mind to reason
who cannot follow a simple
course of induction, or deduc-
tion as the child-mind must
follow it, taking nothing for
granted but establishing every
statement made.

The nature of the tree
determines the nature of the
fruit and in like manner
the state of the under faculties
determines the state of reason.
All the faculties which form

a factor in the composition of reason should be put in perfect order just as the springs in the mountain side must be clear if purity is desired in the reservoir below.

A clear, concise sensation will tend to produce a clear perception, distinct perceptions make distinct conceptions, clear conceptions make clear judgments and clear judgments make a clear and well-trained reason. As the supporting roots of the giant oak penetrate the deeper for the swaying of the

and so power to reason clearly comes by reasoning.

Reason's best hand-maids are attention and conception, and that they may be good servants they must receive careful training.

Reason is greatly aided by much learning but is not wholly dependent upon it as is shown by the accomplishments of many unschooled thinkers. The ability to discover and apply truths should be the measure of superiority in reasoning power.

Reasoning is dependent upon differences and relations and as it is the function of observation to note such, the cultivation of the latter power is desirable.

Questioning is a popular method of training the reason. Asking questions, the answers to which require the exercise of reason, is an art unmastered by the majority of teachers. Asking the why concerning familiar facts and getting the because is feeding the reason on wholesome food.

Give particulars and ask for a principle or give a principle and ask for particulars and you, by an excellent method, train, respectively, inductive and deductive reasoning.

The law of impenetrability can be applied to the mind. Reason and skepticism cannot occupy the same place. Reason and credulity are not on good terms.

Prejudice is an unhealthy growth in the garden of the mind which must be eradicated.

icated before the tender plant
we call reason, can flourish,
as it should.

Passion will subordi-
nate reason if allowed to
become ungovernable.