

THESIS.

Subject: *Training of the conscience.*

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Conscience is that re-
flecting power of the mind which
compares our qualities and actions
with the law of God. It has been
said that it is that faculty of the
mind which answers the ques-
tion, "What is right, or what is
wrong?"; but the conscience has
no power to do this, for we de-
termine this by our reasoning
and judgment which are given
us to investigate, and when
they have pronounced the
quality of our action then con-
science steps up and either ap-
proves or condemns us.

If a man wish to erect
a building high and straight,
he uses the plummet, - his stan-
dard of measurement, and by
this instrument he corrects his
fallible eye, and his work is
then well done; so it is with
man, he needs an infallible stan-
dard by which to correct his con-
duct, for God, who is Lord of the
conscience, and hath left it free
from the doctrines and command-
ments of men, which are contrary
to his word, has given us an infal-
lible standard - the moral Law,
by which we may judge our

actions. Now comes great ques-
tion, how shall we train our
conscience, that it may be a
guide for us through life, and
when we afterwards stand be-
fore the great bar of justice to
render our final account that
our actions may be approved
by the Almighty King?

Moral training
should begin as soon as the
child is capable of understand-
ing, but must be done in the sim-
plest way possible, as the child
is said to have but the germ
of conscience. It cares not

is given for right or wrong, but
it is influenced by a different
class of motives, such as the de-
sire of enjoyment, love of appro-
bation, self-will, the hopes of
reward, and the fear of punish-
ment, and by these the young
mind is warped, and its ac-
tions controlled. Moral
training should begin at home
where the child associates first
with its parents. Now care
must be taken that examples
of virtue be set before it such as
you wish it to follow, for the
child is an imitative being.

Babington says, "Let your conduct be blameless. It is your example more than your precept that will always influence your children." How often as you pass the stand of tempting fruit, do you hear the one timid little voice say to the other, "Jack, take one of those peaches and run." "No, I won't," is the quick reply, "I'm not allowed to steal." Likewise is the home influence seen where the Bible is read and studied with the children.

But, when for the first-

time, the child leaves its home
and starts to school, a new
world appears to him, and he
at once is brought into the
midst of chattering little
voices, and amidst the excite-
ment, he spends his first hour
in weeping. Here now is the
teacher's first step in teaching,
for he comes gently up to the
child, clasps around it his
arms and tries to replace for
it its fond mother's caress which
is its first relief in all its trials,
for the teacher's work is not
done in regulating the school.

is not merely his routine study,
but also in sympathizing with
the children in the difficulties
they experience while attempting
to control their conduct, thereby
gaining their love for him, and
also his influence over them.

This one word, "influence"
is of vast importance to the
teacher, for his influence is seen
in every act and expression of
the child. Every act of the
teacher, his manner, attitude,
character, and all that he says
or requires of his pupils, de-
velopes either their moral or

immoral tendencies.

What do you think of the teacher who says, "My work is to train the intellect," and then goes off, and leaves the moral part of his work for others to do? He should seek to have their thoughts reach a higher level and create within them that moral courage which will be seen in their influence upon others. We learn to think by thinking, so the teacher must not try to overcome the child's will tendencies by the inculcation of rules,

but lead him into ways of
well-doing.

If you wish to overcome
ruling wills, present to the
child things that will lead him
to higher motives. The minist-
ter thought he was warning his
hearers against a great evil,
when he told them never to read
Shakespeare, but he never
thought what a curiosity he
was creating in his hearer's
minds to know the wicked things
as he said, found in the works
of Shakespeare; and he was
much surprised when he

found two of his young hearers sitting under the tree, perusing the pages he had warned against.

But the teacher must remember that there is a far higher work than merely presenting right motives to the child, but he must lead the children ways that will enable him to rely upon himself, increase his love for study, meditation, and self-examination.

The teacher should also train the pupils to have a high taste for reading, there is generally shown among child-

ren. Thackeray used to say to his audience, "cultivate the society of your betters;" and we do this emphatically by reading, or by the study of literature, for it introduces the pupil to valuable society, which is the moral and intellectual chief of the world.

But in order for the full development of the moral faculty, the influence of the teacher and parent must be aided by other influences.

The social environment of the children is necessary for the

rapid and healthy growth
of the moral feelings. They
must be allowed to communi-
cate, to a certain degree, with
other children where the sense
of justice, amid their indi-
vidual claims presents itself
to them.

How can generosity be
planted in the mind except by
personal administration and
exercise? So we say conscience
is a true moral guide, but just as
our bodily organism will not
grow without exercise, neither
will conscience perform its work

without it be properly trained.

This is the true end of education, not only to be well informed or to enrich the understanding with moral sentiments, but also to fit man for the part he is to perform in life, and to enable him to render all his knowledge available to moral improvement.