

**THE NORMAL  
TRAINING  
OF THE CHILD**

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The Normal Training of the Child by Madison Ashley Hart

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## A FOREWORD.

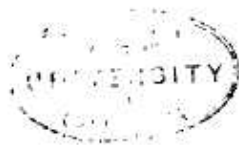
At the genesis of our discussion a foreword of explanation is perhaps necessary and advisable.

In this busy, progressive, epoch-making age, that man is a dilettante, who either reads, writes or talks for the mere thought of discussion. We should be profoundly thankful that we are fast moving away from the thought of simply seeking truth for truth's sake, studying art for art's sake, or achieving progress for fame's sake. It is now for life's sake and man's sake that we use the microscope and telescope, the scalpel of the surgeon, the atom of the scientist, the brush of the artist. Geology, astronomy, philosophy, psychology, as well as religion must bear a vital relation to man before they can perform their highest service in the working out of the eternal purpose. It is wise then to couple our dreaming with soldiering, our praying with planning, our worship with working.

Our purpose is not to rattle the dry bones of either a past or present theology. Rather is it to clothe these bones with flesh, put into them warm

red blood and breathe into them the breath of life. It is almost a waste of time and talent to study either science or theology merely to be scientific. Perhaps it is scientific for a German professor to spend his entire life in the exploitation of the preposition *für*, but the common sense and sane judgment of enlightened Christendom will pronounce such success a failure. Let all things be used with special reference to man. This is the plan of God. It is a hard plan to improve upon.





## THE PROPER FUNCTION OF EDUCATION.

The subject has three key words. These will be used to unlock the doors into our house of study. What we say will be directly related to these words: education, the child, the Bible School. It is not the province of this lecture to deal primarily and fundamentally with the educational problem. And yet when we would talk or write suggestively and intelligently of the child, and the child's relation to the school, the thought of education becomes close, vital and necessary. We must also realize that the child was not made for the school but the school for the child. And the natural and normal answer for the school's existence is for the purpose of education. What then is the function of education? "Education," says President Butler, of Columbia, "is the adaptation of a person, a self-conscious being, to environment and the development of capacity in a person to modify or control that environment. It is first a matter of principles and second a matter of methods." "To prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to discharge,"

says Herbert Spencer, "and the only rational mode of judging of any educational course, is to judge in what degree it discharges such a function." "The object of education," says Froebel, the patron saint of childhood, "is the development of the human being in the totality of his powers as a child of nature, a child of man and a child of God. This education should be conducted according to nature, and should be a free spontaneous growth—a development from within, never a prescription from without." While neither one of these definitions may be immune to criticism, nevertheless we must admit that whether taken alone or collectively, we at least have a clearer conception of education. All things considered I prefer the last one given. With his love for children and the vigorous and intelligent fight he made to secure a higher appreciation of the value of the child from the educational point of view, it is not strange that the people of Thuringia have chiseled the name Froebel in the solid rock in the face of the cliff overhanging the bridle path of his beloved mountain. Better still, his name is written not on tables of stone, that shall one day be dissolved by the elemental forces, but deep in the heart

of an intelligent educational system that will outlive all earthly glory, all earthly grandeur.

To divide education into the secular and the sacred, is an anomaly: to develop the body and mind, and leave the spirit undeveloped, is to miss the divine thought of proportion. In truth, in God's analysis, I feel quite sure all things are sacred. Nothing is secular. Without entering into either the physiological or psychological study of the question, I believe we may safely affirm the body, mind and spirit constitute the educational trinity for our Bible schools, as well as for our public schools, colleges, universities. Unite with this another trinity, namely, man considered as a child of nature, a child of man and a child of God, and we will develop a being not only able to modify, understand and control his environment, but an individual developed in all his parts for complete living. For then he will realize that the proper and only legitimate function of education is to serve and that the fine art of living is to know how to give a life that has been educated according to the divine plan and for a divine purpose.

One of the fundamental facts in our govern-