

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers I*, 1885 – 1886 Oct 3, '85 to May 29, '86) The original is very badly faded.

Editor's Drawer

A friend who had a three-year-old child, once said that his little girl had taught him more in the year just past than he had taught her or could teach her. A good pupil always makes a good teacher. The enthusiasm of learning is contagious. An earnest seeker after truth is very sure to start others into a more or less vigorous pursuit of the same. A child's mind is peculiarly inquiring. He will ask his parents questions that they never thought of asking themselves, and by the aggressive force of ignorance, stimulate them to reflection and study. The child's imagination is proverbial. Less proverbial, but quite as real, is his tendency to speculative thought. Few children are long in this world until they begin to question how they came into it; where they came from, what they were before they were in their present state of consciousness, etc., etc. The doctrine of transmigration of souls finds a ready soil in the brain of a five year old. Many children are positive enough that they have existed before, but where and how, are questions they can not answer. Yet I knew a four year old boy to declare with startling earnestness that he had once been an old man, and to entertain his older brothers and sisters with long narratives of various things which he had done and seen when he was an old man, and some of which it seemed impossible that he could have done, or seen or ever heard of as a child.

The eagerness with which a bright boy or girl pushes the enquiry to a final cause, and the early age at which children want to know all about God, the Creator, can not fail to attract the attention of the most indifferent observer. One little girl, after asking if God made the grass and trees and birds, and rain and the little holes in the ground where the rain all ran away, and cows and horses and people, and receiving affirmative answers to each branch of the inquiry, suddenly startled her mother by saying, "Well, mamma, I wish God would make some more people, right now, so Willie and I could see him do it."

The same little girl, having noticed that her little brother attracted more admiration and received more attention from strangers than she did, said, after being put to bed one night: "Mamma, I am going up to God and get him to make me all over again; and make me littler. He has got lots of little arms and legs and little cheeks and precious blue eyes, and I am going to get

him to give me a nice little new ones, so peoples will like me as well as Willie.”

One day a fond parent had a very serious time with his boy who was disobedient and quite obdurate. So he took the boy on his lap, and began a long and serious talk on the subject of obedience. The boy listened very attentively, and his expression grew more serious and reflective as the talk went on. The parent was delighted. No one ever undertook to be a moral reformer yet that could not find delight in the evidence that his work was telling a growing solemnity; and tears, followed by sighs and groans are as grateful to the pulpit orator and temperance lecturer as applause is to the opera singer. So the father's heart was filled with joy at the evidence that his little lecture on the moral relations of parent and child was sinking deep into the heart of the boy. When he had finished and had wiped a tear from his eye, the boy said, “Father, do you know that I watched you ever so close all the way through and I don't know whether you said a bedient or o bedient.”

A little girl was cautioned not to do a certain thing on Sunday for the reason that had evidently been assigned often before, that it would displease God. “Well, mamma, I don't care whether God gets mad at me or not anymore. It seems he's bound to be mad most of the time about something or other, and he might as well be mad about this, as anything else.” The prayers addressed to the Almighty sometimes have a powerful effect on the minds of listening mortals. A boy, addressing the child's divinity, Santa Claus, a few weeks before Christmas in hearing of his parents, said, after giving a long list of presents he would like to have: horses, and dogs, and sleds, etc. “Now please, Santa Claus, don't bring me mittens and boots and comforters, and overcoats and spoons and cups, and all such things, because papa and mama can get me common things whenever I need them.”

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Budget

Hinman editor

January 30, 1886