

# THE HOME SCHOOL

OR

## HINTS ON HOME EDUCATION

BY

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“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”—Prov. xxii. 6.

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DEDICATED

To my Father and my Mother

WHO HAVE BLESSED AND GLADDENED THEIR CHILDREN

AND

THEIR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN

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— "Accipe librum  
Saepe vel e minimis floribus halat odor."

## PREFACE.

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THE contents of the following volume are made up chiefly of papers contributed at different periods to the *Edinburgh Christian Magazine*, and addresses delivered to meetings of parents held in the school districts of my parish. Had these "Hints" been written continuously for publication, they should have had more unity of design, and been better proportioned in their several parts. I am quite sure, however, that if I delayed publication until I had realized my own ideas even, as to the right manner of treating the subject, I should never have published at all; and duty tells me to do the best I can, though I cannot do the best I wish; while I am sternly reminded, by rapidly passing years, of the advice of the Preacher, "Whatever thy hand *findeth* to do, do it with all thy might."

This volume makes no pretence whatever to originality, which, after all, is probably the last thing we care to find in any counsel, asked or given, to help us to discharge our duties. What people call truisms and commonplaces, are often those very truths about common things, which we require most to be reminded of; lest, while gazing on some brilliant meteor in the dis-

tant sky, we may stumble in our path, or fall into a ditch at our feet.

Burns, in his memorable "Cottar's Saturday Night," has described, with equal truth and beauty, that pious family life, which, in his days, was perhaps more general than it is now among the peasant homes of Scotland. I may be pardoned for quoting one of the well-known stanzas:—

" The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face  
 They round the ingle form a circle wide ;  
 The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,  
 The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride ;  
 His bonnet reverently is laid aside,  
 His lyart haffets wearin' thin and bare ;  
 Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,  
 He wales a portion with judicious care,  
 And, ' Let us worship God,' he says with solemn air."

But while such domestic piety is still cultivated in our country generally more than elsewhere on earth, it is, I fear, in some danger of suffering from the present state and habits of society. The severe toil, late and early, in the workshop or counting-house ; the absorbing love of gain ; the ceaseless "movement ;" the constant bustle ; the intense excitement, sadly interfere with the earnest and quiet duties of the family. Life is becoming so public, that meetings and committees, minutes and resolutions about everything under the sun, are apt to rob the family circle, too frequently, of those who ought to be its best and most useful members. There is, also, in some quarters, a tendency to sink the parent and the family in the

priest and the Church; in others to sink all these together in the dead sea of selfish individualism:—

“ How, then, can we escape  
Sadness and keen regret?—we, who revere  
And would preserve, above all price,  
*The old domestic morals of the land.*”

I cannot, therefore, think that an attempt, however humble, is at present uncalled for, to quicken and strengthen the claims of that unobtrusive piety, that peaceful fireside culture of the mind and affections, which can make any home sunny and happy, and the world, in spite of all its cares and sorrows, look still bright and beautiful; nor is it unnecessary to be reminded of the immense moral power, the dignified and elevating responsibilities of parental education.

Being now in my third parish, and several years in each of the others, all large and populous, I may be pardoned, perhaps, for presuming to give advice upon so difficult and delicate a subject as that of the home school; for I cannot be wholly ignorant of, far less indifferent to, the present condition of our families, with their more obvious defects and requirements; and to meet those, I have often, as a pastor, felt the want of some such book as I have now prepared.

I know that parents have been benefited by these “Hints,” already given elsewhere in the manner I have mentioned, which encourages me to hope that more good may be done by them in a more connected form. This is all I wish; and I shall really feel thankful if any benefit, however small, is received by those

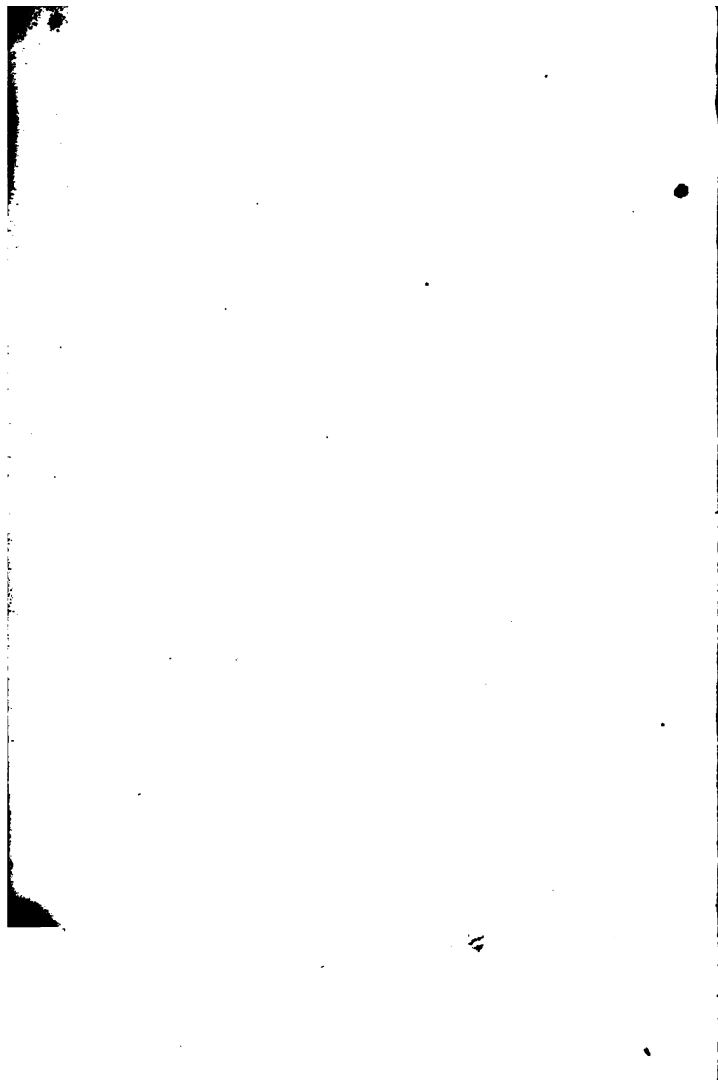
who may differ much with me in the truth of some of my views, or in the wisdom of some of my counsels.

There are deeply interesting questions connected with home education, such as public schools and public "charities," in their relationship to the family, that I have not touched upon, from my desire not to enlarge the volume.

Should any one truly interested in this subject take the trouble of reading and criticising what I have written, it will be kind in him, if he engages in the easy task of detecting faults, to grapple, at the same time, earnestly with the more needful and difficult one of pointing out how something better may be accomplished. Without forgetting that "there is a time to break down," we should also remember that "there is a time to build up:" and builders up are needed in our day to give us positive realities, more, perhaps, than breakers down, to expose and destroy our so-called "shams." May this book prove a fitting, though a small stone, in the great social edifice, or prompt others to build up a larger portion of its sacred wall!

One hint more, and I will bring my too long and too egotistical preface to a conclusion. It is this: As much of what is here published was originally intended for the working classes, perhaps some of my readers may take fitting opportunities of directing their attention to its most useful portions: for, let me remind those who express a wish to do good by instructing their poorer neighbours,—yet ask almost in despair how this can be done,—that many of these cannot read

for themselves; many more read so ill that little sense can be gathered from the rude attempt; while others who can read easily, may not be able to procure books. In such circumstances, therefore, much good may be accomplished by educated persons, in small meetings of working people, reading aloud, and, if necessary, explaining and illustrating such tracts or books as they think would be helpful to them. Useful book-reading thus saves much useless speaking, and is often a gain where mere book-distributing would be profitless.





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# HOME EDUCATION.

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## CHAPTER I.

### A FEW WORDS TO PARENTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR CHILDREN.

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones : for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.”

**CHRISTIAN PARENTS OF THE WORKING CLASSES!**—I address this first chapter specially to you, though I hope it will be found useful to others who perhaps have fewer difficulties and temptations to contend against.

I wish parents to see clearly, and feel deeply, *the importance of their children*; that so they may consider with serious thought, the nature and importance of the Education which ought to be given to them at Home.

A working man, especially in a great city, is apt to think that neither he nor his family are of any importance whatever. What is he, or they, to this great thronging, busy, and bustling world? Who cares whether he is ill or well, in joy or sorrow, alive or

dead? Of what importance are those children to any human being beyond the walls of his lonely home? The great tide of human life rushes past his door as ignorant and heedless of all within, as the tide of ocean is of the dwellers on the shore which its billows lave! Nevertheless, you and your children, my brother, are of more importance than the tongue can express, or the mind fully comprehend. Let us consider the matter a little with reference to your children.

1. Your children are of great importance *to society*. It is you who supply our factories with hands, our ships with seamen, our army with soldiers, and our houses with servants. Upon the *character* of those whom you send forth every year to the world depend the good and the happiness of millions. In your houses the real prosperity of the nation is determined more than in the Houses of Parliament. In the name of thousands, I say, Have mercy upon us!—and give us sober, industrious, honest men and women.

Are your sons to be employed as workmen? If so, they are of importance to their fellow-workmen and employers. They can become a strength or weakness, a blessing or curse, to both. Let us then have sober steady men, whose words and example will be health and comfort to all around them. Give us, also, those to whom we can entrust our money and our property in our shops and counting-houses; and to whom we can entrust our lives when travelling under their guidance by land or sea. But, oh! deliver us from the blaspheming infidel, the filthy sensualist, the insane

drunkard, the coarse and rude savage, the leader of riots, the contriver of plots, the spouter of nonsense, the preacher of rebellion, the instigator of strikes, and the tyrant of all !

Are your daughters to be servants in our houses ? Give us such as are sometimes to be found, whom we can trust, respect, and cherish, as valued friends of the family ; in whose keeping our goods, our character, our children, are safe. But save us, we beseech of you, from the domestic affliction of a dishonest, lying, quarrelling, disobedient, rude, selfish, or unfaithful servant, who, though leaving her place as soon as possible, may only make way for another of the same description !

In the name, too, of many a young tradesman, we implore that the wife whom he receives from your fireside may be such an one as can be a companion for an intelligent Christian man ; an economical house-keeper for a working man ; a Christian mother to his children : and not a thoughtless, handless, tawdry slattern, who keeps her house like a pig-stye, and her children like pigs ; who idles her time in gossiping with her neighbours, or even in drinking with them—for such companionship of mothers is by no means rare!—thus driving her husband to ruin and misery, and tempting him to riot or desertion.

Once more, in the name of the Christian Church, I pray you to spare no pains to confer upon us the unspeakable blessing of attentive hearers, reverential worshippers, and intelligent, well-principled members, who will help the Church in every scheme of Christian

usefulness, and not only be the friends of missions to the heathen abroad, but also fill up that great gap in society of being themselves missionaries, by their words and life, to the heathen at home, among whom they reside and labour. Kind neighbours to the poor, sympathizing friends of the sick, examples of piety to the unbelievers, are wanted in our country villages, in the lanes and streets of our cities, where the working classes alone reside, and your firesides can furnish such! We want Christian working men and women to strengthen our congregations by the urbanity of their manners, the stedfastness of their attachments, and the soundness of their principles; who will not forsake the assembling of themselves together, but consider one another, and provoke to love and good works; and your houses may thus be helpful to the house of God! Shall you, by ignorance or neglect, not only deprive us of such good, but add to those social evils under which we already groan? Will you empty our churches, and crowd our whisky shops? Will you only increase our heathen at home, and that godless population who are our weakness and disgrace?—or, if you land your children in our churches, will they, from want of proper training, prove a constant anxiety and weakness to us;—slothful, yet busy with everything but their own duties; schismatics, and never united but when causing division; proud, and seeking to rule every person but themselves; vain, ever esteeming themselves better than others; selfish, and never pleasing their neighbours for their good or for their edification;

presumptuous and self-willed, thinking evil of dignities ; a little leaven, yet leavening with evil the whole lump ? Oh ! parents, think how much the well-being of Christian congregations depends upon the early training you give to those who furnish the vast majority of their members !

And, finally, how do you know but those children of yours are destined to play a great part in the world, and one which may be so good or bad, as that millions may rejoice or mourn because of them ? You know that many men, whose names are famous in history, have come from the firesides of the poor. Generals, admirals, judges, ministers, legislators, ay, and kings too ! So have great and notorious criminals. So have thousands upon thousands who have become wealthy, and, as citizens, employers, magistrates, exercised an immense influence upon the good and happiness of the nation. Some such may now be at your fireside !

Had Simon thought of what his son Judas *might* have been, would this not have affected his home education of the boy ? What if the mother of Napoleon, and of his brother kings and sister queens, had considered what those might *possibly* become who were around her humble fireside in Corsica ? “ What a charge that would have been ! ” you perhaps exclaim. But you will see, by and by, that this is nothing when compared with what your children may yet become as immortal beings. But enough, I hope, has been said under this head to make you feel that, even in so far as this world is concerned, your boys and girls, who

are growing up around you to be men and women, are of immense and incalculable importance to society. Have a care, then, how you bring them up!

2. I must come nearer home, and remind you that those little ones are of *great importance to yourselves*. I am sure you feel this, at all events, to be true. Oh! how important are they! They are your most eloquent preachers; your most skilful physicians; your most powerful masters! They strengthen you for labour, and refresh you when at rest. They rouse you up, and send you out in the early morning, and make you glad to return home at night. That child who climbs your knee, twines its arms around your neck, and kisses your rough cheek, has more power over you than all the police in the city or than all the armies of the world, were they arrayed against you! Its winning, confiding look will make you pause in your mad career more than cannon if pointed at you! Its smile holds you fast as no iron chain can do; and its fond caressings will often calm your wild heart, and make yourself a child. It would be nothing, indeed, to the world, if that little light were extinguished; but would it not be darkness to your own home? Many an afflicted parent has had no other cord binding the heart to earth save a tender infant; and, but for that, the grave would be a bed of peace, and to be with Christ far better; and when that babe is removed, the little green spot where it lies interred seems to be the whole world to the lonely mourner. "Save my child!" has often been the last cry amidst



desolation, from one who cared for nought else, and knew all else was lost! That parent has indeed sunk lower than the beasts that perish, when he is no longer thus influenced by the love of his children!

You cannot, then, say—you surely never even thought—that your children are nothing to you? You feel that your happiness even now is bound up in what they *are*. And when they leave the domestic roof, will you not be thankful and proud if they turn out well, and are honoured and respected by the world?—Will you not feel their shame and dishonour to be your own? Will their well-doing not be a crown of glory to you in old age; and would not their ill-doing help to bring down your grey hairs with sorrow to the grave? Therefore, apart from any other or higher consideration, *for your own sakes* have a care how you train them up.

A strong working man once came to me requesting the ordinance of baptism for his child. He was a smith, and confessed that he had formerly been in the habit of drinking to excess, but for two years had lived a strictly sober life. On my asking what led to this change, he replied, after some hesitation: “Indeed, I believe it was the *bairns*.” “The bairns!” I exclaimed, “how was that?”—“Why, sir,” said he, “when I came home at night they used to run and meet me, and play about me; and the youngest was a special favourite, and extraordinary fond of me; and one evening when she had her arms about my neck, and was giving me a kiss, the thocht struck me,

What a beast I was to be taking drink in this way, if it was for no other reason than the harm I was sure to do to baith the bodies and souls of my ain bairna. I took such shame to myself, that I dropped it since then ; and now I hope I have better reasons, even than the good of the family, for keeping sober."

3. But consider, further, the personal as well as relative importance of these children, or their importance to *themselves*. You know how one's own state for time and for eternity is of more importance to themselves than anything else possibly can be. It is this fact which the words of our Lord imply, when He says: "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?—or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Not anything!—not the whole universe! To a man himself, his own soul—his own life and happiness, are more valuable than all else. Now, parents, weigh this matter well. Behold your children, or any one of them, and hear what I have to say about *that one child*.

(1.) *That child must live for ever*. Its existence is endless as the life of its Maker. There lies concealed in that frame, clasped to a mother's bosom, and so feeble that the evening breeze might seem sufficient to destroy it, a living spark which no created power can ever extinguish! Cities and empires shall rise and fall during coming centuries ; but that infant of yours will survive them all! The world and its works shall be burnt up, and the elements melt with fervent heat ;

new systems in the starry heavens may be created and pass away; but your child will live amidst the changes and revolutions of endless ages, which will no more touch or destroy it than the wild hurricane can touch the rainbow that reposes in the sky, though it may rage around its lovely form. When eras that no arithmetic can number have marked the life of your child, an eternity will still be before it, in which it shall live, move, and have its being! What think you, parents, of having such a creature as this under your roof, and under your charge, and that creature your own child? Consider,

(2.) *Your child must live for ever in bliss or woe.* It must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. It must be for ever lost or for ever saved. It must be with God and Christ, with the angels and saints, loving and beloved, a glorious and majestic being, or for ever wicked and unutterably miserable with Satan and lost spirits! I am assuming, of course, that it here attains such an age as makes it fully responsible to God; for if it die in infancy, I believe it will be saved through Jesus Christ. But to know that your babe, though dead, actually lives somewhere with Jesus; or that, if living here, it is yet capable of becoming one of God's high and holy family in His home above for ever—may well deepen within you a sense of its personal value! Now, whether your child—should it be spared some years on earth—shall live for ever in joy or sorrow, depends upon what it believes and does in this world. It is *how*

*it lives here, which must determine where and how it shall live hereafter.* Is that not a solemn consideration for you? And is it not more solemn still, when you remember, that *you, more than any other in this world, shall, under God, fix your children's fate for ever?* The reason is plain; inasmuch as their *character* for time, and therefore for eternity, is affected chiefly by the manner in which they are trained by you in their early years. By your words and life, by your example and your instruction, you are most assuredly every day making use of what is to them, for many a day, the greatest power on earth, to give their souls, when most easily impressed, that stamp which they will retain for ever. Have a care, then, how you train them up!

“Has any one,” says a late pious and eloquent minister of the Church of England, “ever stood on a pier, within which some vessel floated which no storm wave had yet tossed? But now it sails forth, its canvass spread, its crew alert, its freight secured, its destination registered. You marked its progress from the harbour to the open sea. It feels the helm, it ploughs the wave, it begins its course. The skies are chequered, the clouds gather, the winds are strong. You felt an interest in the voyage which that vessel was to make; you thought of the hazards of the sea, of the perils of her course; you thought of storm and struggle, of possible loss and shipwreck, or of a sunny and joyous entrance into the distant haven beyond the present flood, where the mariners were to find an expected home; you breathed a prayer that God would

be their guide, their guardian, and their friend. And what is each little child, though now inexperienced of life's changes, what but such a vessel bound on a long voyage, sailing across a wild sea, exposed to howling winds and rains, passing by many a reef, and in peril of rocks and breakers? How fearful the shipwreck of such a vessel! how blessed its calm arrival on the everlasting shore! Who would not pray, that of each such vessel, of each such child, God may be the guardian and the guide—His own eye be upon its course—His own pilotage at its helm?"

4. But I notice, lastly, that your children are of inestimable importance to *their Father in heaven*. Perhaps you are disposed at first to doubt this; but consider it, and you will see how true it is. God being so great and glorious, you think that probably a child is too small and insignificant a thing to be noticed or cared for by Him. But it is just because God is so great and glorious that He is able to know and consider every person and thing in the universe. "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings; yet not one of them is forgotten before God? Fear not; ye are of more *value* than many sparrows!"

It was perhaps this wrong impression of God's greatness, which, on one occasion, induced the disciples to prevent mothers bringing their children to the Saviour to obtain His blessing. How could the great Messiah, thought they, condescend to attend to such weak and insignificant creatures? But very different were His own feelings! "Suffer little child-

ren to come to me, and forbid them not!" and accordingly the good Shepherd took the lambs into His arms and blessed them.

Who gave the heartiest welcome to the King when He entered the temple? Not the priests, nor Sadducees, nor Pharisees, but the children who cried Hosanna! Those who pretended to great wisdom and piety rebuked them, and wished Christ to do the same; but He would not. He received the praises of the young; for God had ordained such to come from the mouths even of babes and sucklings.

Why should this astonish you, parents? "O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt?" For only reflect for a moment upon the relationship in which God stands to those children. *They belong to Him*, and are *His* property, not yours. He it is who has given them all the value which they possess. He it is who has created them, and endowed them with such wonderful powers and capacities, in order that, as the very end of their being, they might glorify Him, and enjoy Him for ever. And such immense value does He attach to those His own creatures, that He redeemed them, not with such corruptible things as silver and gold,—for these could not purchase the least and poorest of them,—but with the precious blood of His own Son!

What more is needed to shew the awful importance of a child, than the fact that Jesus Christ was himself a child!

Remember, then, parents, that God has given you this precious property of His *in trust*; and of each

child beneath your roof He says: "Nurse this child  
*for me!*"

"A Babe in a house is a well-spring of pleasure, a messenger of peace  
and love:

A resting-place for innocence on earth: a link between angels and  
men.

Yet is it a talent of trust; a loan to be rendered back with interest."

Have a care, then, I again say, how you train them  
up "in the nurture and admonition of *the Lord.*"

"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little  
ones: for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels  
do always behold the face of my Father which is in  
heaven."

## CHAPTER II.

## THE EARTHLY AND HEAVENLY PARENT.

“Our Father which art in heaven.”

“THE family” is God’s own institution; and was the first—unless we except the Sabbath—ordained by Him for the education of the children of men. He brought the woman unto the man, and Adam said: “This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh;” —“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife.”

Its importance to the well-being of the human race can hardly be exaggerated. It is the nursery of the state, of the Church, and of heaven.

So holy is the union of husband and wife, from which comes the relationship of parent and child, that it is likened to the union which subsists between Jesus the bridegroom, and His Church the bride. No lower measure, no lower kind of love, is set before the husband to his wife than the love of Christ to His Church; while her love and reverence, in return, is compared to the love and reverence which the Church owes her Lord.

When Jesus was dying on the cross, and thereby glorifying the government of God, He honoured in that hour the holy bonds of family when He considered His mother’s sufferings and wants, and said: “Son, behold thy mother! Woman, behold thy son!”



The socialist, who, with impious hand, would destroy this institute, displays greater ignorance, and, if successful, would produce more disorder in God's universe than if he attempted and succeeded in putting his hand among the stars, and disturbing the power that keeps them in the beautiful order which, to the ear of the understanding, is the music of the spheres.

Of all the names by which God has revealed himself, no one is so endearing to us, or more full of deep and tender meaning, than that of "our Father" in heaven.

Now, when He calls himself a Father, and desires—as the very sum and substance of religion—that we should be to Him as "sons and daughters," "children of God," He thereby intends us to learn something of the nature of the relationship subsisting between himself and His children, from what we know of the relationship subsisting between ourselves and our children. And so, upon the other hand, He would have parents learn how they should educate their children for heaven, by knowing how He educates themselves. Thus the true idea of Home Education is, to be in all things to our children as like as possible to what God is to us,—to be reflections of Him in the family,—to be living witnesses for Him,—to be, in one word, *godly* or *godlike* parents.

In some respects a parent cannot help being like God. He is so by nature; for what is so vivid a picture of God the Creator, Preserver, Provider, Comforter of His family, than the earthly parent, to whom

## EDUCATION.

who upholds and guides *its* supplies its daily returning I yearns over it with a loveathom, and, for a time, butry imperfectly return. Yetuntary on the part of thective, inasmuch as he doeshink of God at all, or desirelike Him; but reflects Hisas the beasts that perish, inreflect the glory of Him whoas so tender and beautiful. God,—when he is himself athe spirit of adoption hasof confidence and love, byaying: “Abba, Father!”—with the *character* of thatHe is educating himself foruly apprehended, in somewhich God imparts in Hisomise, by warning and enercies and severe chastise-ience or sudden inflictions,elf up in the way he shouldiscovered the true secret ofshould give his own child.that model of heavenly perll his home education in thedren will thus naturally riseto knowing the heavenly

parent. The one will be a reflection of the other, comparatively dim, no doubt, but still one of the truest on earth! The parent is a ladder, many a step of which will be broken, but still by it the child is enabled to climb *upwards*. The parent is the earthly pole around which it twines its early affections, and fastens its weak tendrils, and though it is perishing, and of itself unfit to be a permanent support, it may, nevertheless, lead the young plant towards heaven, and be its strength and stay until it finally reaches, and for ever clings to the "Rock of Ages!"

This is the high model, parents, which I would set before you!—to live before your children, to educate them, that you may train them up, and gradually prepare them to know God *from first knowing you*; and thus to understand God's ways to themselves in after life from first learning your lessons in the home school. You may not be able to lead them far; but as far as you go, let *it be in the right direction*. You may not be able to teach them many lessons; but such as they are let them be in harmony with, and a right introduction to, those deeper ones which God will afterwards impart. In what you are and in what you do; in your truthfulness, righteousness, kindness, firmness, forbearance, forgiveness, sympathy, watchfulness, justice, love; in your rewards and punishments; in your *education*, in short, be to them, as far as possible, what God is to you, and will be also to them.

All this assumes that the children have not reached those years of understanding and thought when they are, as it were, out of your hands, and dismissed from

your school, more directly to learn from God himself, and to act solely on their own personal responsibility, independent of your authority and immediate control. Until this time comes, they will look to you, and hear you, and understand you, as they can no one else; and you, the earthly parent, must be to them, for many a day, almost in the place of God. Oh! that they may be able, when they become acquainted with the great God as their Father in heaven, to recognize in His infinite glory the light which they saw truly reflected in that earthly form whom they first called by the same endearing name, and whom they first honoured and obeyed with reverential fear, believed and trusted with implicit confidence, and loved with heart, soul, and strength! Thus would the school of home be the school for heaven!

Parents! do consider this earnestly, and try to realize it. It is very true, that "the best men are but men at the best," and will come far short of this model of perfection. But it is Jesus who says: "Be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." Remember that those who aim high, while they may not come up to the mark that is higher, yet come very much nearer it than those who aim at the ground.

You know how very unlike the training is which those parents, who even profess godliness, give their children to that I have been speaking about; nay, how often is it quite of an opposite character! Let me ask you a few homely questions on this point, to illustrate more fully and plainly what I have said.

Do you ever break your word to your children?—

If so, is this being like God to them!—Does *He* ever fail to keep His word to you?

Do you give way to angry, unreasonable passion with your children?—If so, is this God's method with you?

Do you wish your children to be clever, wealthy, or prosperous, rather than to be *good*, and do you train them up accordingly?—Is it for such ends God is first educating you?

Are you hard, unfeeling, unsympathizing, unforgiving to your children?—Is God so to you?

Are you so indifferent as not to chastise your children when they require it?—Will God thus deal with you?

Do you chastise from hate, and not for good?—Does He so deal with you?

I need not enlarge my catechism. You see, I hope, clearly what is meant by educating your children in the spirit with which God, your own Father, educates yourselves.

But, perhaps, you ask me, *how* this can be accomplished? On this point I cannot here enter at any length. One or two hints, however, may help yourselves to obtain the truth more fully.

*Learn first to be good children to your own Father in heaven, and this will best teach you how to be good parents to your own children on earth.*

Would you, for instance, like your children to love you?—Love, then, your own Father. Would you like your children to obey you?—Obey your own

Father. Would you like your children to open their hearts to you in sweet confiding intercourse, pouring out their sorrows, confessing their faults, telling you their wants, expressing to you their joys, and revealing to you their love? Do all this to your own Father.

Follow out this train of thought for yourselves, and it will lead you to further light on your personal and parental duties.

And if you wish to have your affections, as children, kindled towards your heavenly Father, you may learn, even from your feelings towards your own children, much to help you. You know the love which you bear them; how deep and real it is; how it began before your children could understand it, or return it; how inseparable it is from your hatred to their sins; and how it longs to impart to them every possible blessing! Is there no love in God to you like this, though infinitely deeper and more lasting?

You know what you would do for your children's good: how much you would sacrifice to make them happy; how their cry of distress would awaken your pity; and their prayers for help, though uttered with the imperfect lisping of a babe, touch your heart, and make you put forth all your strength to relieve them! Is there nothing in this which God, who made your heart so to feel, wishes to be a witness for himself?

"What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" Would any of you,

parents, so treat a starving child? No! "If ye then, *being evil*, know how to give good gifts unto your children, *how much more* shall your *Father which is in heaven* give good things to them that ask Him?" He who so spake knew God His Father, and revealed Him to us.

"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" Mothers! you have no doubt of *such* love to *your* child; you only doubt of the reality of the love of God your Father to one of His own children! But what says He?—"She may forget; *yet will I not forget thee!*"

"They who love not, know not God; for God is love." "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Lift up your hearts in prayer, and say, "*Our Father, which art in heaven!*"

Yet I cannot close this chapter without beseeching you again and again to consider with deepest seriousness how essential it is that you should thus yourselves be good before you can possibly *do* good; and how, in addition to the great motive of saving your own soul, which should constrain every man to believe in Jesus, and to be personally holy, you, as parents, have the touching motive of saving the souls of your children, in as far as this can be accomplished by human instrumentality. Seldom do parents go single-handed to heaven or hell. Whatever mystery may be attached to the dispensation, so it is, that the good or evil in the parent has an incalculable influence for good or evil on the child. This fact I shall probably recur to in a subsequent

chapter, but I remind you of it here, and urge it upon you, to impress you more and more with the conviction, that the only way of acting towards your children by word and deed, as truly Christian parents, is to be Christian parents in very truth before your God !



## CHAPTER III.

## CHRISTIAN BAPTISM AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

I DO not here attempt to give anything like a full explanation of the sacrament of baptism, but to notice it very briefly merely as connected with Christian education.

Let me remind parents of some of those truths “signified and sealed” by baptism, which ought to guide and encourage them to train up their children in the way they should go.

1. In baptism, *God reveals himself as the covenant God of your child.*

At the very time when you cannot but feel how awful a gift this immortal being is; when, perhaps, you are wellnigh overwhelmed by a sense of the responsibility attached to the gift; when all that your child *may be* rises before your soul, and questionings regarding its future destiny force themselves upon you with trembling anxiety, and in rapid interchanges of hope and fear, —then does God reveal himself in baptism, as claiming this child as His own, teaching and assuring you that it is not related to you alone, but much more to Him; — that not to the bosom of its earthly parents only is all

love to it, and interest in it, confined; but that He who is thy God and Father, is also the God and Father of thy child.

This is, indeed, the blessed truth to which baptism witnesses, and which it confirms. To the individual child God thus says: "*I am thy God*;"—God thy Father, God thy Saviour, God thy Sanctifier. This is my NAME, and in it art thou baptized; as I am thy covenant God, so have I called thee by my name." Here, then, is a declaration, by a solemn ordinance, of a *fact*, not only of God's name as He is, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but also of the relationship in which this God stands to this individual child; and if so, then a clear answer is given by baptism to such questions as these: "What is the living God to my child? Is He indeed its Father, and, as such, does He love it? Is He indeed its Saviour, and, as such, is He willing to save it? Is He indeed its Sanctifier, and, as such, is He willing to make it holy?" Even so! as sure as this child is baptized into His name!

Such a teaching as this, on God's part, or such a revelation of himself, is the more instructive from the very unconsciousness of the babe;—for what knows this child of God's existence, or of His love! Nothing! but this very fact impresses only more deeply upon us the all-important truth, that God's love to us cannot, any more than His existence, be affected by our knowledge or belief. Behold that mother!—how she bends over her child, and clasps it to her bosom, to draw its nourishment from next her heart:—what knows her

child of the reality of that love? or how much it will endure and sacrifice for its good and happiness? Yet the love is there, though the child knows it not; and though, alas! it may never be appreciated or returned.

But why, it has been again asked, perform this ceremony upon an immortal and responsible being without its consent?—I reply, Because God is its God and Father, *whether it consents or not!*

2. But notice, further, that baptism teaches *the end of the child's existence*, or what it ought to be to God from what God is to it. By the *Name* of God is meant His revealed *character*. When God proclaimed His *Name* to Moses, He did so by describing His character. To be baptized in, or into the Name of God, indicates, that it is God's wish that this child should, as the very end of its being, share His character, or be made like himself; in other words, He thus declares it to be His revealed purpose that the child should be a spiritual child to *God the Father*, through faith in *God the Son*, as mediator, and in the possession of *God the Holy Ghost*, as sanctifier; and thus glorify His Name! This is practically the same truth as is expressed in the beautiful answer given to the question in the Shorter Catechism, "What is the chief end of man?" —"Man's chief end is *to glorify God*, and to enjoy Him for ever!"

Therefore, parents, learn from baptism what God would have your children be educated for,—for no end less glorious than this—**HIMSELF!**

A clear apprehension of this will necessarily affect your whole system of education ; for just as you keep it before you will you employ those means by which it can alone be attained. Low and unworthy aims produce low and unworthy labours. If you see in your children those whose only glory is to consist in riches, rank, or some other form of mere worldliness, you will train them up accordingly, as thus destined for time, and to enjoy and glorify *self*; but not as born for immortality, and to glorify and enjoy God. Let baptism remind you that they ought to be trained up in the way along which they should go for ever; and to hallow that Name which is written on their foreheads; and to walk worthy of God, who has thus called them to His kingdom and glory!

3. Baptism, moreover, *offers* to the child the two great blessings essentially necessary in order to its attaining the end of being made like God, and possessing His Name. These blessings are, the *pardon of sin* through the blood of Christ, and the *renewal and sanctification* of nature by the washing of regeneration, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The water used in baptism is a picture of those blessings. It "shews forth" the "blood of sprinkling," shed for the remission of the sins of many; and also "the washing of regeneration." It speaks of the disease and the remedy. It testifies of sin as being the moral defilement of the soul, which can be removed in its guilt only through the atonement of Christ for us; and in its power, only by the work of the Spirit of God

in us—even as the filth of the body is removed by water. It teaches, moreover, that these remedies must be *applied* to each individual soul before the blessings which they confer can be enjoyed, even as water must be applied to the soiled body before it can become the means of cleansing it; and, lastly, this sprinkling with water testifies to the certainty and freeness with which God *offers* those specific blessings to the individual child, even as He reveals Himself to be its God. The language of baptism is: “As sure as I baptize this child with water, so sure do I, its Father, offer to take away its guilt through the blood of my Son, and to purify its nature through the power of my Spirit, and so to make it like Myself!”

Now, these truths must, when believed in, have a marked practical bearing upon the aims and efforts of the Christian parent. For instance, the fact of such blessings being offered, and therefore needed by the child, implies, that its nature is *not* that holy and innocent thing which poets describe it as being. If it were so, then the great object of education should be to keep *the child as it is*. But if its nature is corrupt in this sense even, that it possesses such a tendency to do evil, that evil it will assuredly, *naturally*, and habitually do, the moment it comes to act as a responsible being; then must the parent ever desire for it, and seek to nourish in it, such a new and living principle of good, as God in Christ can alone bestow by the Spirit. *When* the child is born again, whether before baptism, at baptism, or in after

years, depends on that Holy Spirit who dispenses His gifts "as He will." But certain it is, that "unless a man be born of the Spirit, He cannot see the kingdom of God;" consequently, all efforts at *Christian* education, without practically recognizing the absolute necessity of the Almighty aid, obtained through *that Name* into which the child is baptized, must be vain, because it either overlooks the *end* or the *means*.

4. Finally, the Christian parent may be taught by the fact of his presenting his child for baptism, that he, of all on earth, is the person chiefly through whom God intends that child to obtain those blessings thus offered.

I will not be led, in such practical hints as I wish these to be, into discussions regarding the times and ways in which God *may* save a child, whether with or without baptism; at baptism, or before it; with or without the parents' piety or instruction. What I wish Christian parents to see is, not what God *may* do *without* their instrumentality, but what, as a rule, He generally does *by* it.

I ask, therefore, By what means shall this child ever ascertain that any promises or offers have been made to it in baptism? How shall it ever hear of that Name in which it has been baptized? How shall it be taught concerning God its Father, Saviour, and Sanctifier? For though it is true, "that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," and though this "promise is to us and our children," and has been sealed to each of them in baptism, yet "how

shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" And how, then, I may further ask, is the child to hear so as to believe and call on the Name of the Lord, and thus respond to the calling of itself by God? I reply, that it is God's design that this should come *through the Christian parent*. The parent is selected as God's teacher, missionary, witness, and representative in the family, and to his children, as I have already, in the last chapter, explained to you. Hence one reason why the ordinance of baptism is dispensed only in connexion with a believing Christian parent, because he (or, in the case of orphans, sponsors) will, through a Christian education, both impart to the child a knowledge of that Name—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in which the child has been baptized, and the import of those special blessings offered to it by its covenant God; and also *train it up*, so that it shall *believe* in God as He is thus revealed, *receive* the blessings thus offered, and himself *choose* God as his Father, Saviour, and Sanctifier. It was thus that God made certain precious promises to Abraham and his seed, *because* He knew that Abraham would so train up his children as that those promises would be realized:—"Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? *For I know, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judg-*

ment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him."

You thus perceive, that as personal faith on the part of the child, if it live to become responsible, is required before God's offers of mercy made at baptism can be of any avail; and as it must *choose* God as its portion before His Name can be glorified and enjoyed, it is the duty, the glorious privilege of the parent to convey that knowledge to his child, and to make it the very end and aim of all his labours, that God's gracious wishes shall be complied with.

What a cheering and strengthening thought is this to a parent, that in thus educating his child he is but "*a fellow labourer with God*"—he is not alone in his love or labours, for the Father is with him! Christian parents, in all their teaching and training to bring their children to God, and to induce them to choose Him as their portion, may thus truly say with Paul: "We are ambassadors for Christ, *as though God did beseech you* by us: we pray you *in Christ's stead*, be ye reconciled to God"—"*as workers together with Him*, we beseech you *not to receive the grace of God in vain!*"—and, oh! that children, just as they awaken and respond in riper years to that deep and true love in father or mother, which rested on them before they knew it, would also open their hearts to that deeper and truer love of their God, which has never ceased to shine upon them since they were born, and was solemnly testified to in their baptism! Nor need they, when the divine life is quickened in them, be baptized again! For what



truth or blessing can God signify or seal to them which He has not already done? or what can God be to them which He has not already declared himself to be? He is their Father—only let them know this so as to love and live as His children!

When this beautiful and solemn rite of baptism is thus understood, what are we to think of those parents who ask and obtain it for their children, yet themselves either believe not in the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or, by their practical impiety, shew that they have disowned that Name in which they were themselves baptized? Can such mockery bring a blessing to themselves or children? What are we to think too of those parents who, while they are professed believers, and “seem to be religious,” and have “a form of godliness,” yet are ashamed even to confess God before their children, or to impart to them from their own lips any teaching regarding that great Name by which they are called? What would that parent deserve who concealed from a starving son the offer made to him in infancy, and to be communicated in riper years by the parent, of a property which should be his on terms easily complied with? But what would such neglect be when compared to the guilt incurred by the parent who conceals from his own child the knowledge of the glorious inheritance offered to him by his God! Yet is it not the case, that in many a family, this Name of God, and all the blessings offered by Him, are never breathed by the parent to his children, as if they were some awful secrets which he

was pledged to conceal! Would not many baptized children be able, at judgment, to testify against their parents, and say with truth, "They never told us of God our Father, of Jesus our Saviour, or of the Spirit our Sanctifier! We never heard from their lips a word to warn us of our danger as sinners, or to inform us of the mercies offered to us, and to be obtained by us as well as by others, through a Saviour! Never, never did they tell us either that we had been baptized, or what God had revealed to us in the ordinance!"

Parents! this must not, *dare* not be! While thus acting towards your children, the very ordinance of baptism which you ask for them, as a matter of form, or senseless superstition, condemns yourselves. It witnesses of a Name, written on your own foreheads, which you have denied; of a God long revealed, but yet unknown to you from wilful ignorance; and of mercies long offered to yourselves, but never yet received from stubborn unbelief! If such is your state, *repent!* "Return to the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Receive, though late, the remission of sins, and the gift of the Spirit signified and sealed in baptism to yourselves; — and then only, when you are right with your own Father, will you do right towards your own children!

## CHAPTER IV.

## A FEW WORDS ON TRAINING.

"TRAIN up a child in the way he should go."

TRAINING is not merely *teaching* a child what it ought to do ; it is this, and a *great deal more*.

There may be a right *teaching* which does no good ; because, along with it, there is a wrong *training* which does much harm.

"Give me some of *that*," said a peevish-looking boy of about seven or eight years of age to his mother, who was seated on the deck of a steamer in which I happened to be lately. The mother had some eatables in her hand. "Hold your tongue, Peter," replied the mother ; "you won't get it." "I want *that*," again demanded Peter, with increased earnestness. "I tell you," said the mother, looking at him, "you shall not get it. Is that not enough for you ? Go and play yourself, and be a good boy." "But I want *that*," reiterated Peter, beginning to sulk and look displeased. "What a laddie !" exclaimed the mother. "Have I not told you twenty times never to ask a thing when I say that you are not to get it ?" "I want *that*," cried Peter, more violently than ever, bursting into tears. "Here !" said the mother, "take it, and be quiet.

I am sure I never, in all my life, saw such a bad boy!"

Alas! poor boy, he had more reason, if he only knew it, to complain of his mother.

This same boy, Peter, grows up, probably to be a selfish and self-willed young man. His mother sees it, and suffers from it; but she wonders how such a temper or disposition should shew themselves in *her* Peter! and consoles herself with the thought, that whatever is the cause of so mysterious a dispensation, from no fault in her could it have come, nor "from *want of telling.*" That day in the steamer, for instance, Peter was probably taught many more lessons even than I heard;—such as, not to be selfish, or to ask things which, on a mother's word, he was assured would not be given. But while thus *taught* a number of duties, to what was he *trained*? To what, but to have no faith in a mother's word; or any regard to her wishes and commands; to hold out with dogged obstinacy, sure, that in the long run, he would have his own way; and, when all else failed, to be sulky and cry, and his mother would certainly reward him by giving him all he asked for? Do you not perceive that there is some difference between *teaching* and *training*? The one is Instruction, but the other is Education.

In another chapter I shall say something about *how* children should be trained. I only wish you, at present, to understand what training implies. Its object is to help the young to form good *habits*,—not only to

teach them what it is right to be or to do, but also to train them to be right, and do right, according to the teaching given them.

The training of the mind may be illustrated by the training of the body. You have heard of men being "*trained*" to perform some feat demanding great muscular strength and exertion, such as walking or running a certain number of miles within a certain given time. Such persons put themselves under what is termed "a course of training," in which the *trainer*, who prepares them for their intended display, does not content himself with "telling" them what to do, or merely prescribing rules to them; but he subjects them to a hard discipline day by day; and only after a long and severe course of self-denial, are they at last fitted to perform the task they have undertaken. The apostle Paul selects the runners in the famous races at Corinth, who sought to gain a corruptible crown of green leaves, as illustrations of the earnest striving which should characterize Christians who are called to run the race set before them, for "a crown which fadeth not away." The *training*, therefore, to which these Greeks were obliged to submit may also, in some respects, illustrate the less severe, indeed, but not less real, discipline which is required of the Christian youth. The apostle says of those preparing for the Corinthian race, that they were obliged to be "temperate in all things;" to quote the language of an able writer upon this point,—“They exerted an habitual self-command—they kept in check every desire—they

denied themselves every indulgence—they abstained from every employment—they rejected every luxury, which might tend to enervate their vigour, or clog their agility, or tame their courage; they observed a stated regimen—they trained themselves by laborious exercise—they used a thousand painful and distasteful arts to brace their nerves, sharpen their perceptions, and mature their skill; they kept their bodies under, and brought them into subjection; they parted with their freedom for a time, and resigned themselves as slaves to the direction and control of some master of athletic arts, under whose iron discipline they had many things to do, and many things to endure,—to become patient of cold, and heat, and hunger, and thirst, and watching, and painfulness, and weariness, and all but intolerable hardships. *To a training, thus toilsome and intense, the children of the noblest commonwealths of Greece, the kings and princes of her hundred colonies, were wont to submit themselves without repining, with all the activeness and alacrity of a voluntary choice.*” Yet all this was but the prelude, and the preparation for the race which was to gain a “corruptible crown!” Far be it from me to affirm, that Christian habits may not be formed without such an iron rule as this being imposed upon the child; or that the sunny Christian home must be converted into a hard and inexorable “house of correction!” But, nevertheless, every one who is, in truth, a *disciple* of Christ must be *disciplined* for His service, and such *habits* formed as require self-denial.

I have said that *training* has especial reference to the formation of *Habits*.

Now we all know what is meant by a habit. It is well described as being a *second nature*. It is called a *nature*, because the thing done is easily done, and comes as it were naturally to us; and it is a *second nature*, because the habit is not born with us, but acquired. The law of habit, as it is termed, is this, that what we do frequently, and with a good will, we learn to do easily. Every person is, more or less, "a bundle of habits." Most of those have been acquired so imperceptibly, or possessed for so many years, that they seem to belong to our first and not our second nature. Thus walking, speaking or reading a language, are obviously mere habits. We *learned* them; and, if we think they cost no trouble or effort, just let us watch children, and see what time they take, what difficulties they overcome, and what trouble it gives them before they learn to walk steadily, think intelligibly, or read tolerably. Every mechanic who learns a trade, has but acquired a habit of doing easily and well what, without repeated efforts for months and years, he could not do at all. The musician, who plays with ease and grace, filling our ears and soul with sweetest sounds and harmonies, while executing some difficult and intricate piece of music, is a remarkable and common instance of the power of habit. Innumerable illustrations will occur to yourselves, of this singular capacity in man to learn to do what would otherwise be impossible. It is more difficult to say what cannot, than what can, be acquired by this singular power with

which God has endowed us. It is true, that in Christian education we have to do more with mental and moral habits than mechanical ones,—such as habits of obedience, self-denial, perseverance, patience, and the like. But the same law applies equally to them; for the oftener we do what is right, with a good will to it, the easier the *being* and *doing* right become, and a second nature supersedes the first. The great object, therefore, of parental *training* is, as I have already remarked, to help the child, by the right use of all the powers and assistances God has given the parent, to acquire those good habits or *ways* which he will keep through life, and not depart from when he is old.

“The boy is father of the man.” Youth is the spring in which the seed sown determines the harvest of a later season. It is then that the young twig takes the twist which the old bough retains. Every one knows in his own experience, and to his joy or sorrow, how true it is—that youth, as well as “life,” is emphatically

“The season God hath given  
To fly from hell, and rise to heaven.”

It has been said with much truth by a well-known author:—

“Character groweth day by day, and all things aid it in unfolding;  
And the bent unto good or evil may be given in the hours of infancy.  
Scratch the green rind of a sapling, or wantonly twist it in the soil,  
The scarred and crooked oak will tell of thee for centuries to come;  
Even so may'st thou guide the mind to good, or lead it to the marrings  
of evil,

For disposition is builded up by the fashioning of first impressions—  
Wherefore, tho' the voice of instruction waiteth for the ear of reason,  
Yet with his mother's milk the young child drinketh Education.”



I do not dwell, however, upon this fact now, as it will fall to be considered in a subsequent chapter.

Nor shall I at present, for the same reason, remind my readers, except very briefly, of more than one condition which requires to be fulfilled in order that habits may be formed ;—and that is, a willing mind, a real hearty liking on the part of the child, or a *taking* to that good which the parent wishes should grow into a habit. Without this no moral habits can be formed. It is perfectly possible, perhaps, by mere outward authority or force, to insure the doing of certain acts again and again by the outward man, but never shall the inner man be thus made to *love* the right as well as do it. The *power* of doing a thing, and the *love* of doing it, are very different. The arts, for instance, of reading, writing, &c., may be taught from fear or compulsion, and be acquired with or without pleasure by the learner ; and in spite of the will, can be retained and practised in after years. But all this will not insure such *habits*, as would necessarily lead the child ever to put pen to paper, or read a volume through. The reason is that no habit of mind can ever be formed by a rational being, however frequently acts are repeated, unless these are voluntary. The *love* of good can alone displace the *love* of evil. This leads to a practical conclusion which must never be lost sight of in Home Education, viz., that the *happiness* or *cheerful* obedience of the child is essential to secure the formation of good habits. Without this, it may be *forced* up, but never *trained* up, in the way in which it should go.

There is one other point on which I may also hazard an opinion, and that is, the period of life in the child when parents should apply themselves with earnestness to this work of training.

Now, without presuming to decide so delicate a point, it is necessary for me to say, that I intend my few hints on Home Education to apply to the training up of the young after infancy, and from childhood till youth, or from about their fifth year till they reach twelve or fifteen. The ten years after early childhood I would specially characterize as *the habit season* of life.

I have no advice whatever to offer parents as to home education during infancy beyond this,—to interfere with their children as little as possible. There are few things in this world more wonderful to a thoughtful mind, or more delightful to a benevolent heart, than the joy of children. One of our greatest poets says, with much truth :—

“ In clouds of glory do we come  
From God who is our home ;  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy.”

We need not *do* any thing to make the child happy. It is naturally happy in itself. From the joy which God sheds within its soul like sunlight, joy shines upon everything without, and is reflected back from all. No poet ever had a more brilliant fancy, no philosopher busier thoughts ! It can create to itself an ocean from a cup of water, a ship from a bit of straw, and summon out of bits of paper, or out of nothing, men and women, kings and queens, to obey its commands

and contribute to its amusements. It is planning, contriving, and enjoying all day long. With all this God has placed it in His own school of providence, and in ten thousand ways, too many to number, and too deep to understand, He is educating this babe, and teaching it lessons innumerable. He is doing so chiefly through what you yourselves *are*; and by the constant influence which is unconsciously exercised in the household by your own personal character. No doubt, a very wise and judicious parent can, from its earliest dawn, by more direct efforts, help to mould the child gently and lovingly into many good habits, such as patience, obedience, kindness, &c. But this requires such tact and fine handling that few are fit for it. As a rule, I believe more harm will be done than good by attempting to apply any formal *system* of pruning and training to so tender a plant; beyond what is prompted by good common sense, guided by parental and Christian affection.

If you *must*, in short, give it something, confine your generosity to wholesome plain food from your hand, love in abundance from your heart, with as much light, liberty, and air, as every day beneath God's sky can afford; and it will educate itself better than you can do. Let these conditions be fulfilled as far as possible, even in one of our vile and horrid streets or lanes, and the child will thrive better in soul and body, than when confined like a hot-house plant in a splendid mansion, pampered with luxuries, or teased and fretted all day long by some injudicious parent or teacher, who

insists on training or teasing it up to become wonderfully clever or wonderfully well-behaved. Watch, control, lead, mould your children from infancy if you will, but, oh! let them be free and joyous! "Check not a child in his merriment; should not his morning be sunny?" Let them skip like the lambs on the hill-side, and sing all day long like the larks overhead in the sky! Let them be happy; and the light of their morning will make their day more bright and leave some golden touches on the clouds that may gather round them at evening!

And here I cannot but express my sympathy with those Christian parents who are compelled to live in the miserable tenements which crowd our large cities. It is not possible to conceive, in a civilized or Christian land, worse circumstances for the right upbringing of the young than those in which numbers of our respectable artizans are placed. The house is small and confined, because property is valuable and rents are exorbitant. There is little light and little air, order is hardly possible, cleanliness difficult, taste out of the question. All that meets the eye without is still more uncongenial. The common stair is coated with the mud of the crowded inhabitants of the various flats to which it leads. The street or lane is wet or dusty, and always filthy. The lark in the cage has some grass beneath his feet; but the children have none for theirs. The air is loaded with smoke and smells of every description, from what is contributed by the kennel below up to the tall chimney

which vomits its vapours and black stream above. The blue sky is seldom seen in the narrow interval of roofs overhead or through the canopy of smoke. Is this *a home* in which to enjoy life and rear a family! Yet even this home is, in most cases, uncertain. No attachment can be formed to its walls, such as even a prisoner forms, after years of confinement, to his cell. No attachment can be formed to its neighbourhood or its neighbours, for these are ever changing. The workman must follow his work, and if that fails in one place he must seek it in another. And thus, as the Arab who has to move his tent when the pasture is consumed, requires to have such a tent as is easily and rapidly moved; so, many of our workmen having to hire their house from month to month, never burthen themselves but with the scantiest supply of furniture; and wander hither and thither, from street to street, from city to city, having no feeling of rest or home anywhere, being strangers everywhere. Schools, churches, neighbours, employers, never two years the same! Why do I mention such things here? To awaken sympathy, with the difficulties which many of our working classes have to contend against; to make those who take an interest in them see what an important bearing steady work, and a fixed and comfortable home, have upon the education and character of our population; to turn the attention of every reader to the consideration of whatever feasible plan is proposed for combining the freedom and independence of the country with the social advantages of the town to the workman; to make intelligent arti-

zans careful what home they select, in which to rear their precious offspring to good and to happiness ; to implore every man to whom God has given the unspeakable blessing of a home among the green fields, and the sunny skies, and cheerful scenes of our beautiful country, to beware how he lightly gives it up and exchanges it for a filthy village, or a den in some dark corner of our crowded cities ; and, finally, to remind landlords, in town and country, that God has laid few more solemn responsibilities upon a man, than the power of assigning a home for the upbringing of immortal souls, and that they must take care how a spot so sacred is made suitable for such inmates. At all events, if ever our home education is to be improved among the masses, *we must also improve the homes* in which it is to be afforded ; while all parents would do well to remember how much, in every case, home education depends on the health and happiness of the children, and how these again are so much connected with a well-aired, clean, and cheerfully situated home !

Thus sings Allan Cunningham on the town and country child :—

“ Child of the country ! on the lawn  
I see thee like the bounding fawn,  
Blithe as the bird which tries its wing  
The first time on the winds of spring ;  
Bright as the sun, when from the cloud  
He comes as cocks are crowing loud ;  
Now running, shouting, 'mid sunbeams,  
Now groping trouts in lucid streams,  
Now spinning like a mill-wheel round,  
Now hunting echo's empty sound,

Now climbing up some old tall tree—  
 For climbing sake. 'Tis sweet to thee  
 To sit where birds can sit alone,  
 Or share with thee thy venturous throne."

"Child of the town and bustling street,  
 What wiles and snares await thy feet !  
 Thy paths are paved for five long miles,  
 Thy groves and hills are peaks and tiles ;  
 Thy fragrant air is yon thick smoke,  
 Which shrouds thee like a mourning cloak ;  
 And thou art cabin'd and confined,  
 At once from sun, and dew, and wind ;  
 Or set thy tottering feet but on  
 Thy lengthened walks of slippery stone ;  
 The coachman there careering reels  
 With goaded steeds and maddening wheels ;  
 And commerce pours each poring son  
 In pelf's pursuit and hollas' run :  
 The stream's too strong for thy frail bark,  
 There nought can sail, save what is stark.  
 Fly from the town, sweet child ! for health  
 Is happiness, and strength, and wealth !"

But thus "to fly from the town" is impossible for thousands of our children. Towns must exist, and if so, there also may Christian families be reared. But must towns exist as they are? Can nothing more be done to make them fitter habitations and fitter schools for health, happiness, and Christian nurture? Cannot the transitory and material be made to serve the eternal and spiritual, instead of working so sadly out of harmony with it? Could not more be done in this direction for the cause of Home Education and Home Missions than has ever yet been attempted or even thought of by our landlords, tenants, or police magistrates? And surely to build houses of comfort, and

even of beauty for those who deserve and could appreciate them, and to do so, not from the mere love of money, but from the love of men, would be a wise and worthy outgoing of Christian philanthropy. It is sometimes made a subject of complaint by certain parties against "cold Protestantism," but especially "frigid Presbyterianism," that they build churches so inferior in grandeur and ornament to those erected by the splendid gifts of our Popish "pious ancestors." But why should we not expend as a free gift on our Christian dwellings what we save from Christian temples? This would be, after all, in harmony with the genius of Protestantism. Romanism is chiefly the religion of the church, Protestantism of the family. The one erects a place of worship with many priests, for a whole city; the other aims at making every home a temple, every fireside an altar, and every head of a family a priest. If Papists, therefore, consecrate so much of their wealth merely to rear beautiful churches, why may not Protestants as generously rear beautiful homes, and expend upon the many private houses of prayer, and home schools of Christian education, what they deem as superfluous, when applied to rare and costly ornament on the public sanctuary? Goodly churches, erected by the rich for the poor, are a lovely spectacle in a Christian land, and monuments of that self-sacrifice in the builders, which is the grand lesson taught within their walls to the worshippers. But would not goodly houses, erected by the rich in love for the well-being of industrious Christian men, be spec-



tacles still more beautiful, and indicate a spirit of self-sacrifice as wise and as beneficent ?

In the meantime, let each man, according to his ability, set his own house in order, and labour to adorn it with at least the beauty of cleanliness ! To be clean is a part of God's will revealed in providence, and like every other law is attended by rewards and punishments. Cleanliness forms no small ingredient in the beauty of creation. Plants and animals wash or are washed. Nature betrays no filth. She is ever robed in spotless garments. Man is the only unclean animal in existence. He wages constant war against his best friends, fresh air and fresh water ; and that is a war in which, every year, more are slain than ever fell during the same period by shot or shell ! Oh ! if working men could reckon the money which it costs to breathe impure air, and to live at enmity with soap and water ! If they only knew the wealth and happiness which the family sacrifice for a bad drain or an ill-ventilated room ; and the enormous rent which is paid for a dark and unwholesome dwelling, they would unite themselves into one great House Reform Association ; or at least use all the means which God has already given them to secure for themselves one of the greatest earthly blessings,—a warm, yet clean, well-lighted, well-aired, and cheerful home, in which to rear their young ones ! The sparrow findeth out such a nest for herself ; are ye not of more value than many sparrows ?

Reader—pardon this digression, if indeed it is one.

## CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN RIGHT FEELINGS TOWARDS  
GOD.

*"Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth."*

As underlying all Christian education, and as essential to the formation of all right habits, parents ought to cultivate in their children's hearts right feelings towards God.

All true ideas of God are involved in the knowledge of the Name into which we have been baptized.

To know God is to know Him as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and as our God.

But I do not, at present, allude to those doctrinal lessons regarding the being and character of God imparted by Christian instruction, but rather to those apprehensions regarding Him which belong to the Christian education of an earlier period of life, when the child is taught chiefly through the feelings and affections.

If the sum and substance of religion is to "love the Lord our God with heart, and soul, and strength," this affection should be directed towards God from the earliest years in which it is possible to possess it.

A child's heart may reach heaven, and dwell there,

very long before the reasonings of its understanding can rise above the clouds of earth. From its father here it can ascend to its Father there; and love both, when it cannot tell why.

“When I was a child,” says St. Paul, “I spake as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things.” But he also had *loved* as a child; and, as a man, he would not put away, but retain and cherish that beautiful feature of childhood, in its simplicity, purity, and devotion.

“Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth!” Let not thoughts of Him be deferred till maturer years come. Let Him not be the light of thy winter only, but also the life and beauty of thy spring!

1. The young should be trained to “Remember their Creator” as their *Father*; as one who knows them individually, and loves them. Oh! never let the impression be given that He is some dread being, possessing irresistible power; with a severe and angry look, always watching people—especially children who are not supposed to be so good as their seniors—in order only to detect their faults, and to punish them to the utmost capacity of endurance, here or hereafter; a being for whom they ought to be frightened, or for whom they cannot help being frightened, whether they ought to be so or not! It seems to me that the devil could not select better teachers for *his* scholars, than nurses or parents who habitually impress such an image of God as this on the young and tender heart! “The

*fear of the Lord*" is indeed "the beginning of wisdom"—but not *terror* for the Lord, which is the beginning of wickedness and misery; for such "fear hath torment." "He who loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love;" and "there is no fear in love."

Let me not be misunderstood. I believe that God hates and punishes sin both here and hereafter; that there is a hell now, and a worse coming for the wicked. Nor do I mean to affirm that God's counsel in this, as in every other matter pertaining to our faith or duty, should not be taught at fitting seasons to the young; but not *this* counsel chiefly, far less separated from the fact of His love; for surely this is not what is characteristic of God! His "Name," or that by which He reveals himself, is not "Punisher," but "Father." It is not "vengeance," but "love." "He doth not willingly afflict the children of men." "God sent not His Son to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." It is equally true that the most holy and loving father on earth will hate evil in his child, and will punish it too, and that just because he is holy and loving, and not selfish, unrighteous, and indifferent. But would any parent, therefore, wish his child to think of him as one who lived only to punish him? or would he wish himself to be an object of terror and alarm to his family? Let a parent remember this as he says to those around his fireside: "Come, children, listen unto me, and I will teach you *the fear of the Lord!*"

Accustom your children, then, to remember their Creator as a Father who indeed loves them, and who

hates only what they should also hate with all their hearts—SIN; and that of all sins this is the chief, not to love God who so loves them.

2. The young ought also habitually to “remember” *the presence* of their Creator and Father, and not to think of Him as one far away in some mysterious distant place called heaven; nor as one who is specially present on Sabbath-days, or in churches only, but as one who is ever with them, “laying His hand upon them, besetting them before and behind, and seeing their thoughts when they are afar off.” Such thoughts of God, however, can never be welcomed by young or old until they first know this God as their Father. How can we be else than terrified at the thought of the presence of an unseen and powerful enemy? If by any means we can get quit of so terrible an apparition, we shall certainly do so as speedily as possible. But far otherwise will it be with those who know God, and who, not forgetting His holiness and power, associate with His name loving-kindness and tender mercy.

In order thus to realize the love of God, and the blessedness of His presence, they ought to be accustomed always to think of Jesus as one with God, or as God. For it is not difficult to picture to the mind and heart, through the words of the Gospel history, the reality of the presence and love of Jesus as a living person, journeying with and teaching His disciples; doing good in every possible way to all who came to Him; living in the house of Martha, Mary, and La-

zarus, and weeping with His friends in their sorrow ; taking little children into His arms and blessing them ; and restoring to their parents those who were sick or even dead. The transition is not difficult from thus knowing about such a person, to believing that it is this same God who loves us and is with us still, and who says to every disciple, old and young, "*It is I, be not afraid!*"

It will also help to make children welcome the thoughts of His presence, by leading them to associate their daily common mercies with God in Christ. Most people do not forget to speak of Him, in connexion with sickness or death in the family, or any sudden accident which may occur, until the young are apt to become impressed with the idea, that only on such sad occasions does He ever enter their dwelling. Instead of this, let them be habituated to remember Him as the Giver of every good and perfect gift ; as giving us "*all things richly to enjoy ;*" as opening His hand, and liberally supplying the wants of every living thing. Let them remember that it is God who gives to themselves their days of sunshine and health ; their joyous sports, their innocent songs of glee, and loving companionships,—all, in short, that is good and worth having. Let them learn that He not only *permits* such happiness on earth, but *gives* it to them, and that He withholds nothing, or forbids anything, but what is bad, or would injure them ; or in order that He should, in some other way, do them more good, and make them better and happier. The very joyousness of the birds that have

been safely brought through the cold and stormy winter, and now sing among the branches ; and of the young lambs that sport themselves in the lights and shadows of the green pastures ; and all such proofs of God's goodness should be presented to the child's heart to draw it to God, even when it cannot take in those proofs of love through Jesus which amaze angels.

Such training as this will be in harmony with the teaching of God's Spirit. It will help to fan the flame of love from their infancy, so that, with increasing years, they may be able, with increasing intelligence and affection, to say, "Our Father;" and, like David in the 139th Psalm, to sing with joy at the thoughts of His presence.

3. Children ought also to be habituated to "Remember" the *authority* of God their Creator and Father. Any system of education which tends to exclude thoughts of God as One to whom we owe *obedience*, is an ungodly system. It is quite possible, and nothing more common, to accustom children to regulate their conduct by motives quite irrespective of God's being, presence, or authority, and by what is agreeable or pleasing to themselves; by what gratifies their senses, pride, vanity, ambition, love of ease, and self-indulgence. Now, without despising, or treating as valueless, innumerable inducements to encourage young and old in their obedience, and to cheer them on their journey, yet the *habit* should be fostered of their doing *what is right*, just because it is right, irrespective of all present consequences. Let them be

accustomed to thoughts of *duty*, and to what *ought* to be done, come what may; but believing that all must come well in the end. And if they are to learn this all-important lesson, the best and truest method of teaching it is to connect their life with an ever-present Person, God in Christ; to lead them to remember Him as One who is really personally concerned, so to speak, with their well-doing and happiness; who, because He is their Creator and Redeemer, loves them as His own dear children; who is delighted with them when they try sincerely to do what is right; who is ready to forgive their many faults when they forsake them; who is always with them to help them and strengthen them to be good; and who is displeased with them only when they wilfully and obstinately continue to love and to do what they know He hates and has forbidden.

Such habitual thoughts of God—of His love, presence, and authority—will produce habits of *conscientiousness* in the young, a living “before God” as One who knows the heart. Such a “seeing of Him who is invisible” will thus root out hypocrisy and eyeservice, and produce sincerity and truth.

4. Once more, I would suggest that children should be trained to remember God as *the Hearer and Answerer of prayer*.

This thought of God will naturally spring out of those which I have been inculcating, and the child cannot but feel how an ever-present Father must be a hearer and answerer of prayer. I have yet to



address parents upon the subject of family prayer, and shall not therefore here point out how intimately it is connected with the cultivation of the habit of prayer in each child. But in whatever way it is attained, children, from the time in which it is possible for them to possess right thoughts of God; however imperfect these may be, should be habituated to *speak to himself* directly in prayer.

“ Hold the little hands in prayer, teach the weak knees their kneeling.”

A form of prayer may be taught the young, with words and thoughts suitable to their age. But with or without this, it would be well to cultivate in them the habit of uttering their own thoughts to God, thanking Him for what they have received from Him, confessing to Him the faults for which they have been corrected, and asking from Him what they wish for themselves and others. In all this there will be no doubt the thoughts, reasoning, and speech of a child; but there may be also a child's faith, simplicity, and love. And oh, that angels may hear from them in riper years, so acceptable a prayer at a throne of grace!

One other hint on the cultivation of right habits of thought regarding God, and it is this,—check all irreverence;—all words and conduct positively inconsistent with faith in God's presence or authority, especially in connexion with whatever is intimately associated with thoughts of Him, such as any of His names, titles, sacraments, or Word, by which He reveals himself; His sanctuary where He is worshipped; or His holy day, which He has set apart for Himself.

A child should be early led to connect those holy things with the living God, and to treat them with respect and not with levity, just because they are in a peculiar sense sacred, and speak of the Holy One. But do not suppose that a child, however truly it possesses this reverential feeling; will ever express it in its outward conduct as an advanced Christian will do. The child will still speak and think as a child, and cannot, till it becomes a man, put away childish things. Do not then force it into an unnatural or premature growth of feeling and behaviour, or compel it to appear without, what it cannot possibly, from its years, be or feel within; lest all genuine truthful feeling should be obliterated, and mere cant or unreality take its place. In one word, train it to feel aright and to act aright, in reading the Bible, attending church, or keeping the Sabbath holy; but oh! do not demand in all this the self-control, the thought, the relish for good, characteristic of more advanced years. As it is in the days of our *youth*, so must it be with the feelings of such days, that our Creator can be remembered and revered; and He who remembers that we are dust; and that "childhood and youth are vanity," will accept of a child's heart, and a child's services, though these may be expressed in a form which in manhood would indicate thoughtlessness, indifference, or irreverence. Only cherish right thoughts and feelings towards God, and these being the spirit, will, as they grow stronger, more and more express themselves according to the letter, of the Law.

## CHAPTER VI.

## HABITS.

RIGHT FEELINGS TOWARD PARENTS—OBEDIENCE—SELF-SACRIFICE—INDUSTRY—PERSEVERANCE—TRUTH—HONESTY. MRS. WESLEY'S TRAINING OF HER FAMILY.

"Even a child is known by his doings."

If right feelings towards God lie at the foundation of all good habits, and must accompany their growth, so also do right feelings towards parents. Indeed, as we have already tried to explain in a former chapter, by the earthly parent must the child's heart first ascend to the heavenly.

I do not, however, mean in this place to do more than briefly allude to those feelings which should be fostered in children towards their parents. They are summed up in one word—*love*; which is confidence in them, companionship with them, obedience to them. The result of all will be a good and happy home. Without this love, there cannot be Christian education. *How* the child's heart can best be gained, or any other good habit cultivated, is yet to be considered; what I wish to remind parents of now, and before specifying other habits to which their children should be

trained, is the absolute necessity of their inspiring such perfect and hearty confidence in their family, as shall expand under God's blessing, to that trust in himself, which is the essence of true religion. Be assured that the life of education is perfect confidence in him who educates. To teach the head, a head alone is needed; but to educate the spirit and heart, spirit and heart to do so are essential. With perfect childlike confidence in your affections and character, education of the childlike affections and character will be comparatively easy. Without this, it will, on your part at least, be impossible. Your daguerreotype likeness cannot be produced in your child's soul, however often he gazes into your countenance, unless you shine in the light and life of love!

Your children must love you; and you must allow their love to express itself in any way which their heart prompts. Never repel, never chill them. Let them feel that there are on earth bosoms where every sorrow may be poured out, every error confessed, and every trifle which interests them told. Carefully encourage in your children this transparent confiding frankness, which is the best evidence and best guardian of genuine affection. Let them feel that you love them, and that in every thing which concerns them they may trust you implicitly at all times, as those who can never fail them, never deceive them, never act but as their truest, wisest, and most loving friends. Such simple faith and love will suffice for a thousand rules of action, and become eyes quick to dis-

cern the good and bad, hands prompt to act, feet swift to run, and ears that will hear music in command, and melting notes of sorrow in rebuke!

With these general remarks, let me now mention a few other habits in detail. I may state that I do not arrange these in any order indicative of their relative importance, nor do I attempt to enumerate all which it is desirable to foster, but those only which seem to me to be most essential to the formation of a manly Christian character.

The first I notice is—

#### OBEDIENCE.

Obedience in its lowest form is submission to mere authority, because it has a right to command; in its highest and truest it is submission to authority, because it commands what is right. Disobedience in either case is that essential evil in us, which consists in setting up our own will as the supreme will, and self-worship in the place of God. "My own way!" and not *the way* which we should go, is the motto upon man's treason banner. "Let me alone—give me my own way" is the child's first petition to its parents, though only expressed by tears and fretfulness, when its self-will is thwarted. "My own way!" cries the rebellious young man, as in the pride of fancied independence, he spurns the control of all authority, and despises the laws of God and man. "My own way!" is the last prayer which rises from the heart of the hoary-headed sinner, as he totters on the brink of eter-

nity, to the very last the slave of his own lawless desires, and rebellious will.

Self-will in childhood is the leprous spot, which, unless cured by the reception of "the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus," will surely spread itself over, and consume the whole body. It is the spark which, unless extinguished by the fire of Divine love, will kindle itself to "everlasting burning." It is the birth of a demon, who, unless destroyed by the birth of a new man in Christ Jesus, will live for ever an enemy to the living God. Self-will is enmity to God. It desires to reign without Him, and would, if it could, hurl Him from His throne of supreme authority. It is hell begun!

Parents! do not think lightly of, or trifle with, such evil as this. Earnestly contend against it. Pray God to master it. Let all the power of love and authority which He has given you be put forth to accomplish its destruction, by establishing in its place the reign of principle, and the habit of yielding obedience to what is right. Unless this is done in early, it cannot be done by you in riper years. If the tiger cannot be tamed or overcome when young, how shall you expect to subdue it when it has reached its strength? Habitually check, control, this wilful rebelliousness; and mould the infant mind into obedient submission. Let the child be accustomed always to yield its will to yours—at first, if necessary, simply because it is *your* will,—until it is able to see its righteousness. Thus will you train them up to obey God, so that, in after

life, they may be able to say, "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave *them* reverence, shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of our spirits, and live?"

It is remarkable, the connexion traced everywhere in the Bible between obedience to parents and obedience to God. In point of time, the heavenly is rooted in the earthly. The first curse after the flood was occasioned by irreverence to a parent. When God promised to bless all nations through Abraham, which was the bringing all nations into obedience with himself, He connected this with the fact of obedience to parents, "all nations shall be blessed in him, (Abraham,) *for* I know that he *will command his children,*" &c. "Children," says Paul, "obey your parents in the Lord, *for this is right.* Honour thy father and mother; *which is the first commandment with promise*; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth." It is "the first commandment" of the second table of the law; thus forming a link, as it were, between our duties to God and man, or the two great commandments to love God and our neighbours as ourselves. Our blessed Lord magnified this law of obedience, and made it honourable, by having been "subject to His parents." This was the feature in childhood of His life, whose meat and drink it ever was to do the will of His Father in heaven, and those things always which pleased Him.

It is good for parents to be reminded of God's judgments pronounced upon rebellious children, as recorded

again and again in the Old Testament. How solemn are those!

“He that smiteth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death.”

“He that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.”

“If a man have a *stubborn* and *rebellious* son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and his mother lay hold upon him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place: and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die. So shalt thou put evil away from among you.”

Though God does not punish this evil now as he did then—a far worse punishment being in reserve—the evil is still the same in His sight. See, then, that it is evil—very evil itself—and beware, lest, by your *own* disobedience to God’s will, you bring upon yourselves such heavy punishments as He sent Eli, who, though God’s High Priest, and, in the main, a religious man, nevertheless, through easiness of temper, permitted his children to have their own way; and while He trembled for the Ark of God, trembled not for the sins of his own household. “I have told him,” said the Lord, “I will judge his



house for ever, for the iniquity which *he knoweth*, because his sons made themselves vile, and *he restrained them not.*"

## SELF-SACRIFICE.

Obedience might be included under this head, inasmuch as it is the sacrifice of our own will to a higher will; but I prefer to treat it separately. By self-sacrifice, I here chiefly mean, the habit of giving up self for the good and happiness of others, and as opposed to that absorbing selfishness, which would sacrifice *to self* the good and happiness of all. How early in life does this unjust, and unloving spirit manifest itself! How soon do children whom it governs, become greedy, grasping, and the little tyrants of parents, brothers, sisters, and servants! Everybody and everything must minister to their amusement and pleasure; while they themselves, in their love of ease and slothful indulgence, "will not," as the phrase is, "put themselves about" to please others;—"they cannot be troubled;" "they have something of their own to attend to," &c. "What else can you expect from the child?" cries the indulgent parent, who feeds this selfishness by a compliance with every wish. But the child, as he becomes older, becomes the very pest of the household, and the petty tyrant of the play-ground. What say the parents now? "Oh! you cannot put old heads on young shoulders!" But childhood ripens to youth—the old evil exists, and shews itself in a thousand forms. The

shoulders, which have not carried the yoke of self-sacrifice in youth, dislike the cross of Christ in advanced age. And now the complaint is heard from father and mother, whose own happiness has probably been sacrificed by their children:—"They are gone from our control altogether; and, indeed, for some years our words have been as idle tales. They have given us great pain and annoyance. But the young people would have their own way; and what can we do now?" Now, indeed, very little! but what might you *not have* done, but for your *own* selfishness!

Parents, remember that this habit of self-sacrifice is the soul of all that is good and great,—of all that is loveable and heroic. It is the spirit of Christianity; for it is the spirit of Christ. Let your children, therefore, be trained up to consider the feelings, the happiness, the good, the rights of others. Let them be taught to regard selfishness in every form as unworthy and sinful, and self-sacrifice in every form as beautiful and good, because it is love. Let them be trained to *think* of others, and to share what they have with others; and to know that *such* sacrifice is the only real gain; that to give all we can to others, is to possess the richest inheritance ourselves; that to love ourselves, we must truly love others; and that the more we *are* all this, the more shall we resemble the God of Love, who "spared not His own Son," but gave Him a sacrifice for sinners, in order to make them partakers of His own character and joy; and be like that Saviour

who "pleased not himself," but gave His own life for us, and who possessed, in perfection, the "love which seeketh not her own." And let me add, that this self-sacrificing spirit has hourly opportunities, both of proving and improving itself, in the innumerable acts and varied scenes of household life. There is no better school on earth in which to form the habit than that of home; in the nursery among brothers and sisters; in the playground among companions; or in the house among servants and dependents. Thus at the fireside, and in the so-called *trifles* which fill up daily life, may be cultivated the spirit which is the very light and joy of earth and heaven!

It may not be out of place to remind parents how this great law of love—which is the opposite of the law of self—ought to embrace even the lower animals. These creatures belong to God. We dare not use them, except consistently with the will of their Maker and possessor; they have their *rights* as well as we, and they are secured to them by the same charter—God's will. He who "takes care of oxen," and who commanded that they should not be muzzled when treading out the corn,—He who designed the Sabbath as a day of rest for the labouring brute, as well as for the labouring man,—He who, in sparing Nineveh, considered the "much cattle" which were in it,—He who feeds the wild beasts of the desert, and hears the ravens when they cry, and marks the sparrow when it falls;—He, the living God, desires us to have a like mind with himself, and to protect the weakest of His creatures

with the arm of love, and not to sacrifice them to cruelty, or heartless selfishness. Cultivate, then, in your children, habits of kindness and self-sacrifice, even to these. The boy or girl who is habitually cruel to a fly, may end in being habitually cruel to a father,—

“ He prayeth best who loveth best  
All creatures great and small ;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all ! ”

If such habits of kindness are right and beautiful when exercised towards the dumb animals which depend upon us for their enjoyment ; how much more necessary are they in relation to defenceless human beings, such as younger children, the old, the blind, the fatuous, or the deformed ? Yet, alas ! with what tyranny and cruelty are such often treated by the young when they happen to be in their power, and interfere with, or can be made to minister to their amusement. It is no excuse for such conduct to deny that it is occasioned by any innate cruelty of disposition, or to allege that it proceeds from thoughtlessness, or love of excitement. The evil is this very want of thoughtfulness about others, and the utter selfishness which sacrifices the happiness of others to their own impulses. Instead of this, the young should be educated to habits of positive kindness and considerateness towards the weak, the afflicted, and the defenceless. They should be imbued with a generous, chivalrous feeling towards such, and led to admire the love that will not

“ Mingle our pleasure or our pride  
With sorrow of the meanest thing that lives ! ”

## INDUSTRY.

The necessity of labour is a great blessing in our present state. It is good for fallen man, that he should eat his bread in the sweat of his brow. God has annexed labour to the possession of all that is really worth possessing. In temporal and in spiritual things it holds true, that "the hand of the diligent maketh rich." The children of the poor need not have enforced upon them as much as others this necessity of labour; they know that idleness will be immediately punished by starvation and disgrace. The rich require the lesson, perhaps, more than others, for they have greater temptations to idleness; and with them, as with their poorer brethren, "idle days are the devil's busy ones;" for most of their vices and their misery arise out of their idleness. How many young men, I may here remark, in the upper ranks of society, would be saved from the extravagances and follies which have embittered their life, had they been trained up only to some trade or profession; or felt their responsibility to God for the use they made of these great talents,—time, money, and influence! What blessings might such capital, if improved, bring to themselves and to society! What unspeakable enjoyment might they derive from the field of *duty*! Instead of seeking to "kill time," (which is all the while killing them!) they would redeem it, and gather treasures from it for life eternal. Let the rich, as well as the poor, then, train up their children to *habits of industry*. Let them be

taught to improve their time; and not to labour merely to amuse themselves, but to amuse themselves in order to labour.

But industry in mere labour to support life is not all that is required of even the common labourer. Every man is bound to improve whatever talents God commits to him to the very utmost, whether he is poor or rich, for his own good and the good of the world. He dare not with impunity hide any in the earth. How much, for example, is lost to many of our working classes by the selfishness of their parents, in having taken them early from school to earn wages, which might well be spared for some years, and whose loss, for a time, would be made up again a hundred-fold in the blessings conferred by a good education. Let those who have thus suffered save their children from a like fate. The uneducated workman seldom rises above a mere drudge. He cannot undertake work which requires more than ordinary skill and information nor acquire the knowledge from reading and thought, which would enable him to undertake it at a future period. For the few pence he gained by leaving school early he thus loses many pounds, which would have been his had he remained as an industrious learner. But this is not all, nor the most important item of his loss. Of what enjoyment is he deprived because he cannot read with ease, and has never been trained to derive pleasure from the employment of his mental faculties. In our day any one can, for a few shillings, command such a library as a sovereign could hardly

possess a few centuries ago. He can now, through the magic power of the press, summon the great poets of all ages to sing to him their songs, and historians to narrate all the results of their researches into the origin and rise of nations. Astronomers will appear and point out the glories of the heavens, and geologists the wonders of the thick-ribbed earth. Travellers will sit at his fireside and tell their stories of all they saw by land and sea. Divines will repeat to him their most eloquent sermons; and orators the speeches which electrified the senate or the bar. Oh! what treasures lie in books for the poorest men, which, if they were only trained to search for them, by early acquiring habits of mental industry, would fill up with delight countless hours now lost and wasted in listless languor, frittered away by dull and uninteresting talk, or abused by debasing dissipation; and our young money-making merchants require to be trained up as much as the commonest labourer, to manly habits of mental industry beyond those needed merely to become more wealthy, which, without such cultivation, will but enable them to become more gross.

I refer my readers for lessons upon industry, to such passages as the following from the book of Proverbs:—

“Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the

hands to sleep : so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man."

"He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand : but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. He that gathereth in summer is a wise son : but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame."

"The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing : but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished : but he that gathereth by labour shall increase."

"In all labour there is profit : but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury."

"He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster."

"Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep ; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger."

"The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets."

"For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty ; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags."

"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding ; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well ; I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep : So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth ; and thy want as an armed man."



## PERSEVERANCE.

This habit—which is continued industry—is an honouring of God's wisdom, for it honours those right *means* by which, according to His wise appointment, the right *end* can be alone attained. Men are prone to reach their objects by *short cuts*. They would, if possible, by a single leap, attain the mountain-top; rather than pursue, step by step, the long and fatiguing upward journey. In other words, men are prone to forget God's method of attaining *all* good by patience and perseverance, and to expect rewards for ignorance and sloth. This want of perseverance is the real secret of most of the beggary, in pocket and in soul, which exists in the world. What *could* men possess, if they only would persevere! This same disposition is the source of all that is termed *quackery*,—a common and a sore evil! The *medical* quack promises to cure any disease without trouble or expense (!) to the patient, and despises colleges and diplomas. The *speculating* quack promises a fortune to any man who is wearied of the slow routine of patient industry, and who wishes to get rich at once, if he will only invest his means in this new bubble, and purchase stock in this new railroad. The *teaching* quack professes to give a knowledge of any language in a few lessons, and, by "short and easy methods," to make education a short and an easy process. The *preaching* quack professes to explain the

Holy Scriptures much better, and much more *cheaply*, than "the college-bred," and without the aid of that learning and patient study, which "the regular clergy" require; and to make temporary excitement, and fluent talk, do the work in a single day, which others are seeking to obtain by silent meditation, earnest prayer, diligent reading and hearing, and a careful walking with God. All such quackery is to the slothful a very California, in which riches are to be had without labour or perseverance. If men did not hate both, they would hate quackery. But believe it not, that God has so made the world that fools shall be blessed when wise men fail; and that the slothful shall be rich in head and hand, while the patient and diligent starve! If you parents, then, would save your children in after years from a disposition which saps the foundation of all that is manly and Christian; which will make the life of godliness intolerable; and the patient, self-denying exercises—the fighting, running, striving—of the Christian life impossible: train them early to the habit of overcoming *difficulties*; of never vainly seeking anything by a short cut of their own devising, but by the path, though long and steep, of God's planning; of attending to the *details*, if they would grasp the results; of being faithful in the *least*, in order to gain the *much*: in short, to use a familiar, but most expressive proverb, in everything as well as money, to "attend to the *pence*, and the *pounds* will take care of themselves." In so doing, they only

honour the wisdom of God, and are acquiring such habits as alone can enable them to follow Christ, and to "endure unto the end."

## TRUTH.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the importance of truth. Our Lord, speaking of the devil—"the deceiver"—says, "he abode not in *the truth*, because there is *no truth* in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of *his own*: for he is a liar, and the father of it." Accordingly, among those who are excluded from the presence of God, we find mentioned, "whosoever maketh a lie;" and "all liars have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." A lie is therefore begotten of the devil. It is despised upon earth by all but the worthless. It never was heard in heaven. It can find a lasting dwelling-place only with its first parent, in outer darkness!

Yet, this dreadful thing is among the first fruits which are brought forth by the natural "heart, which is *deceitful* above all things, and desperately wicked." How prone are many children "to love, and to make a lie!" And let this disposition be left unchecked or unchanged in them, how early in life may they become brazen-faced, unblushing liars! until, as age advances, the habit of deceit so hardens the heart, and blinds the conscience, that, as it is often remarked of such, "they hardly know when they speak untruly;"—"they do not know they are deceiving;"—"they are so deceived themselves, that they believe the lie!" There are few

vices more common than this, and none which more effectually bars the heart against the God of truth, and separates from the fellowship of all that are "in Him who is true;" and so seals the soul up to a sure destruction. What language strong enough can I use against this false disposition—this spirit of all cunning, hypocrisy, cheating, and dishonesty—this enemy of all that is lovely and of good report—this disturber of all peace—this destroyer of all the bonds of friendship—this pest of life—this curse of society—this child of hell! Parents! cultivate in your children a deep reverence for truth, and a deep abhorrence of everything like deceit. Beware how you suspect, far more accuse unjustly, or, by fear, harden against confession; but where untruth certainly exists, then trace it out, should it take weeks to do so, and hunt it down to the very death, should it be with pains and tears! All pretence, sham, or double-dealing,—all equivocation and concealment,—whatever pertains to falsehood, do not *tolerate*. Let your children understand that you consider *nothing more vile or base, nothing more criminal*, than lying. Let the entrance of a lie into the house be to the family as a sore affliction and disgrace. Whatever your children do or say, train them up that they shall do it and say it *truly*. Do not praise any actions which are even in themselves apparently good, but which, you have sufficient reason to believe, are falsely done, from a motive, and for an end, different from what is professed. Beware, how, in seeking to cultivate other good habits

you may sap the love of truth, which is essential to all. In your zeal, for instance, that they should form the habit of giving to missions, and take an interest in such work, you may insensibly cultivate vanity in giving; impudence and forwardness in collecting; or, worse than all, a *pretended* love for a good work, which they may not, from their early age, be able *truly* to sympathize with. Beware, in short, lest, under the appearance of training to good, you may not in this, and in many similar instances, train to mere hypocrisy and pretence.

There is a very common feature of untruth which you must also watch and expose, and that is prevarication, and using words with a double meaning. A shocking instance of this was brought to light, before a court of justice in Glasgow, a few years ago. A husband and his wife, in order to obtain some property which belonged to an orphan boy left under their charge, and which they inherited in the event of his death, both gave their oaths before a magistrate, that they had seen the boy "die." It turned out that those miserable perjurers and robbers had got the boy to dip a bit of rag in some *dye*-stuff, and sent him out of the way to a relation in a distant part of the country. They then thought that with a safe conscience they could swear when asked if he was dead, that they both had seen him *dye* ! (die.) This is a gross instance of a common kind of lying; and it shews the necessity of training the young to habits of simple unadorned truth, transparent dealing, and open candour, in all their words and ac-

tions; so that they may hate and fear a lie in every form, as they would the father of it; and love the truth, as they would love God, of whom it is. Your children may have neither learning, genius, rank, or riches; but, oh! for the sake of all that is honourable, good, and lovely, in time and eternity—let them have, what is better than these, *the love of truth!* Let them know, that it is better far to tell the truth, and die in consequence of doing so; than to live for ages in a palace and on a throne, by telling one lie! Nor are those advices needed only for the working-classes. In every rank of life does this brood of Satan shew itself. There are lies which fashion licenses, as base in God's sight as their more vulgar relations; insincere professions, false excuses, hollow pretences, promises never intended to be fulfilled. In many such ways may the lying spirit manifest itself, as really as in the grosser form of what is termed "cool and deliberate lying." The liar may never be detected in this world,—*though he is generally better known than he suspects himself to be,* "but there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed on the housetops." Then "all that speak lies shall not escape, but shall be cut off." Let our prayer be:—"Lord! Thou who desirest truth in the inward parts," who "hatest the false witness that speaketh lies," "lead us in truth," and "remove from us the way of lying!"

Inseparably connected with truth is

HONESTY.

These both stand and fall together. A false tongue will always have a false hand; and false words differ little from false coin. Parents are very apt to overlook little acts of dishonesty in their children; but let them remember, that it is not the value of what they may take from the press or from the parcel which should concern them; but the value of their child's character. The dishonest clerk has generally learned his lessons as a dishonest child; and the faithless servant has often begun her faithlessness under her mother's roof.

Honesty is also intimately connected with habits of industry and self-sacrifice. The lazy man would rather steal money, than rise early and work late for it. It is easier also to *speculate* merely and run the risk of ruining industrious families, if a fortune can *possibly* be thus made without trouble, than to seek a competency by means of persevering industry. The selfish man must have his indulgences, let who may suffer; and to supply these, he will, under honest names, be guilty of mean and dishonest practices. "Let ours," says Paul, writing of how Christians ought to live, "learn to maintain good works," or, as it is more correctly translated, "*profess honest trades* for necessary purposes, that they be not unfruitful." An honest trade, and industry in it, are great safeguards against dishonesty.

Dishonesty is one of the most alarming signs of our times. It may be, that the evil is now more rigidly

investigated, or more frequently exposed in public than heretofore ; but its prevalence is unquestionable to an extent which seems to evidence a frightful corruption of morals. It is found in every class, and in every business. There is no rank, trade, or profession, in the honour of which implicit confidence has not been shaken. Dishonesty adulterates almost every article which we eat or drink. It drugs our wine and beer ; chalks or waters our milk ; steeps our loaves in alum ; infuses our tea with earth ; dusts our spices, and poisons our very medicines. There is nothing we put on, from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, which does not bear the marks of dishonest handling. It defrauds the revenue of millions, and the confiding consumer of millions more. Tradesmen, small and great, in the country village and great metropolis, cheat their customers, whether peer or peasant ; and peer and peasant are equally found defaulters in the books of the tradesman. The bankrupt this year ruins thousands by his reckless and unprincipled speculations ; and next year, lolls in his easy carriage, and criticises the champagne which he pours out in liberal potations to his admiring guests. Dishonesty is the chief complaint of employers and employed. In the family, the shop, the factory, the exchange, it is all the same. Men ask where is the trustworthy servant, so common in the olden time ?— or where the high-toned British merchant, whose spirit ruled the mart, and whose goods and word were trusted in the remotest island or desert ? There are



many noble exceptions to this state of things. Of course there are—tens of thousands; and these are the salt of the land, that keep it from becoming wholly corrupt.

“There are in this loud stunning tide  
Of human care and crime,  
With whom the melodies abide  
Of th’ everlasting chime;  
Who carry music in their heart  
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,  
Plying their daily task with busier feet,  
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.”

But whence the prevalence among professing Christians even, of a spirit very different from this? Whence this sore evil of dishonesty? Is it the necessary result of the worship of mammon,—of this mania to become rich, and this monstrous and false exaggeration of the advantages of being so? We know “that they that *will* be rich,” who insist upon it, “fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition; for *the love* of money is the root of all evil.” Such a love is surely singularly prevalent in our day, and the growth of evil from this root exceeding rank; dishonesty being one of its most vigorous stems.

But may not teachers and trainers in the school, the family, and pulpit, take blame to themselves for not being more specific and earnest in their instructions upon the Christian *life*? Do they give that prominence to its details which Scripture gives; but especi-

ally the teaching of our Lord? Is the moral atmosphere breathed by society, or even by those who are professedly members of the Church of Christ, at all saturated as it might be with right apprehensions of what the living God loves and abhors; and of what a Christian is, and cannot, as a Christian, otherwise be?

See to it, then, that in the Home school the subject of honesty is made a chief lesson of instruction by word and life, as that which God loves; and dishonesty, practised under any name, however fair, or for any cause, however specious or profitable, as that which He hates. Hear His words:—

“The righteous God loveth righteousness.”

“Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another. Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in mete-yard, in weight, or in measure.”

“Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord.”

“To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.”

“Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work.”

“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man any

thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

I shall conclude this chapter by quoting the experience of Mrs. Wesley in training her family:—

"In order to form the mind of children," observes this excellent mother and teacher, in a letter to her son, (Wesley,) in after years, explanatory of her method of procedure, "the first thing to be done, is to *conquer their will*. To inform the understanding, is the work of time, and must, with children, proceed by slow degrees, as they are able to bear it; but the subjecting the will is a thing that must be done at once, and the *sooner the better*; for, by neglecting timely correction, they will contract a stubbornness and obstinacy which are hardly ever after conquered, and never without using such severity as would be as painful to me as the child. In the esteem of the world they pass for kind and indulgent, whom I call *cruel* parents, who permit their children to get habits which they know must be afterwards broken. When the will of a child is subdued, and it is brought to revere and stand in awe of its parents, then a great many childish follies and inadvertencies may be passed by. Some should be overlooked, and others reprov'd; but no *wilful* transgression ought to be forgiven children, without chastisement, less or more, as the nature and circumstances of the offence may require. I insist upon conquering the *will* of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which, both precept and example will

be ineffectual. But when this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind.

“I cannot dismiss this subject yet. As *self-will* is the root of all sin and misery, so whatever cherishes this in children, ensures their wretchedness and irreligion; whatever checks and mortifies it, promotes their future happiness and piety. This is still more evident, if we consider that religion is nothing else than doing the *will of God*, and not our own; that the one grand impediment to our temporal and eternal happiness being this *self-will*, no indulgence of it can be trivial, no denial of it unprofitable. Heaven or hell depends on this alone; so that the parent who studies to subdue it in his child, works together with God in the renewing and saving a soul. The parent who indulges it, does the devil’s work, makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable, and does all that in him lies to damn his child, soul and body, for ever.

“Our children were taught, as soon as they could speak, the Lord’s prayer, which they were made to say at rising and bed-time constantly; to which, as they grew older, were added a short prayer for their parents, and some portion of Scripture, as their memories could bear. They were very early made to distinguish the Sabbath from other days. They were taught to be still at family prayers, and to ask a blessing immediately after meals, which they used to do by

*signs*, before they could speak, or kneel. They were quickly made to understand that they should have nothing they *cried for*, and instructed to speak respectfully for what they wanted." We cannot read without interest the principles of the home school, in which such men as John and Charles Wesley were trained up in their youth.

## CHAPTER VII.

## TRAINING.

## BY EXAMPLE AND PRECEPT.

"I will strait conduct you to a hill-side, where I will point ye out the right path of a virtuous education ; laborious indeed at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect, and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming."—*Milton on Education.*

THE important question is now presented more directly for our consideration :—*How*, or *by what means*, is a child to be trained up in the way he should go ? This question primarily affects the character and conduct of parents,—What shall they be or do, in order that their children shall acquire good habits, and grow up from strength to strength under their roof as children of God ripening for immortality ? A momentous question, verily, for it concerns the root of the domestic tree.

I reply, in the first place, train them up by

## EXAMPLE.

The common proverb says truly, that "example is better than precept." It is the precept embodied in practice,—the dead word translated into actual life.

In vain is the precept given, when the example of the parent proves that what he would have his children receive as good, is rejected as being unworthy of his own faith or practice. Of what avail is it for a parent to tell his children to pray, if he himself never bends the knee?—to be sober, if he comes reeling home?—to be industrious, kind, truthful, if he is idle, cruel, false? But this is really such a wicked mockery that no parent can habitually be guilty of it. The worst conscience revolts at it, and accordingly the precept is soon given up, and the example allowed to do its own terrible work of leading the children, by the most powerful means which the parent can employ, to follow himself to destruction.

Men shudder as they read of some maniac father or mother destroying their babes along with themselves in some sudden fit of frenzy. What is this to the moral mania which daily and hourly trains up a family to become devils? If they escape this dreadful consummation of a wicked character, no thanks to the parents. But though the parental teaching by word, and the training by life, may not be so palpably and grossly inconsistent as this, yet if they do not tally, if the one is not on the whole a comment upon the other, and there is wanting the positive influence of a good example, never can those results be looked for in the family which it alone is capable of producing, and will as a rule produce wherever it exists.

Now there is a form in which the example of a parent tells upon the character of his children which is apt to

be overlooked, and that is its marvellous power beyond the *intention* of him who shows it. Example must not be associated merely with such positive efforts as a parent may put forth to be and do what is right in the presence of his children, even though perhaps disposed to act otherwise. I would have you think of it rather as made up of that whole influence which he necessarily exercises in his family by what he *is*: for depend upon it, the real spirit of a man's life, his inner character, that which God knows him to be, will show itself in ways innumerable, whether he wishes it or not, thinks about it or not—out it *must* come! It will shine through chinks and crannies of the outer man, which no skill, foresight, or prudence can close up. It will ooze out by the look of the eye, the words of the mouth, the movements of foot and hand, by what is done or left undone. It will go forth from a man as unconsciously and unwittingly as mysterious emanations of contagious disease from a sick body, or refreshing fragrance from an odoriferous plant under the dew of evening.

It is this kind of influence which constitutes the spirit of the family,—the atmosphere which they breathe, the food by which their souls are daily fed. It is this influence of example, of what parents actually *are*, which is the greatest of all powers, the most essential of all means, in training up the child in the way he should go. "We begin our mortal experience," says a distinguished American writer, "not with acts grounded in judgment or reason, or with ideas received



through language, but by simple imitation, and, under the guidance of this, we lay our foundations. The child looks and listens, and whatsoever tone of feeling or manner of conduct is displayed around him, sinks into his plastic, passive soul, and becomes a mould of his being ever after. The very handling of the nursery is significant, and the petulance, the passion, the gentleness, the tranquillity indicated by it, are all reproduced in the child. His soul is a purely receptive nature, and that, for a considerable period, without choice or selection. A little farther on, he begins voluntarily to copy everything he sees. Voice, manner, gait, everything which the eye sees, the mimic instinct delights to act over. And thus we have a whole generation of future men, receiving from us their very beginnings, and the deepest impulses of their life and immortality. They watch us every moment—in the family, before the hearth, and at the table; and when we are meaning them no good or evil, when we are conscious of exerting no influence over them, they are drawing from us impressions and moulds of habit, which, if wrong, no patience of discipline can wholly remove; or, if right, no future exposure utterly dissipate. Now it may be doubted, I think, whether, in all the active influence of our lives, we do as much to shape the destiny of our fellowmen, as we do in this single article of unconscious influence over children.”

“The child sees the world through the parents’ eyes. Their objects become his; their life and spirit mould him. If they are carnal, coarse, passionate, profane,

sensual, devilish, his little plastic nature takes the poison of course. He lives, moves, and has his being in them." And again, "Few parents are so base, or so lost to natural affection, as really to *intend* the injury of their children. However irreligious or immoral, they more commonly desire a worthy and correct character for their children, often even a Christian character. But it is not what you *intend* for your children so much as what you *are* that is to have this effect. They are connected, by an organic unity, not with your instructions but with your *life*; and your life is more powerful than your instructions can be. . . . There are Christians who intend and do many things for their children, and thus acquit themselves of all blame for their character. Here, alas! is the perpetual error of Christian parents, so called, that they endeavour to make up, by direct efforts, for the mischiefs of a loose and neglectful life. They convince themselves that teaching, lecturing, watching, discipline, and things done with a purpose, are the sum of duty, as if mere affectations and will-works could cheat the laws of life and character ordained by God! Your character is a stream, a river, flowing down upon your children hour by hour. What you do here and there to carry an opposing influence is, at best, only a ripple that you make on the surface of the stream. It reveals the sweep of the current, nothing more. If you expect your children to go with the ripple instead of the stream you will be disappointed. Understand that it is the family spirit, that which works by an uncon-

scious, unseen power, and perpetually—the *silent power of a domestic godliness*—this it is which forms your children to God. And if this be wanting, all that you may do beside will be as likely to annoy and harden as to bless.”

It is the want of this life in the parents, this kind of example, which chiefly accounts for the apparent fruitlessness of what seemed to be a home Christian education. It was *not* Christian. The Christian words, and phrases, and forms, may possibly have been there, but, nevertheless, death reigned. There was no Christian *life*. On the other hand, there has often been wanting in families anything like good religious *teaching* by word or book; for the parents had not in early life the advantages of good education, or they did not possess the art of imparting what they know, or had possibly a painful difficulty in expressing their thoughts or feelings. But they were nevertheless really loving and pious. The children *felt* their influence, like light and warmth which came, they hardly knew from whence, whether in the mother's look or smile, or in the father's voice and fireside life; yet everywhere diffused in the house, and which accompanied them like a presence when they left home and while they lived. “I do not know,” said a young person once to me, “what there was about my father, but without speaking a word his influence upon me was like magic. He always seemed to me to be in the presence of some one whom others did not see, and to possess in his mind and heart what gave him a peace and patience different altogether

from what I saw in others, or found in myself. I felt him awing me, yet drawing me to him, and drawing me out of myself to God. I cannot remember distinctly any one thing he ever said, or any particular conversation, as having been the special means of doing me good. But what he *was* moulded me, under God, from childhood, to what I am."

There are one or two practical applications of this truth which I would press upon the earnest attention of parents.

1. Let them carefully weigh their personal responsibility for what they themselves *are*, and therefore for the influence which thus they cannot choose but exercise upon the character of their children. It is quite true that they "cannot answer for their children," as the phrase is; but they must do so for themselves, and thus indirectly answer for them also.

2. See how much easier, simpler, as well as absolutely essential, it is to *be* good, by giving the heart to God, than trying to speak and act only *like* one who is good. How different is life from every imitation of it! How much better it is to open the eye and see all things; than with shut eyes to endeavour to walk and work as if in light!

3. Consider the dreadful selfishness of sin, when, rather than be decided in religion to know God, to do His will in all things, parents will run the risk even, and bear the thought, not only of losing their own souls, but of losing the souls of their children!

In the second place, train up your children by

## PRECEPT.

Example, though higher and better than precept, is not to exclude it. Children, to be well trained, require to be well instructed. They are to be brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The instruction I speak of is that measure of religious teaching which intelligent parents ought to impart to their children at home, whatever they may receive in school.

In providing for the religious teaching of the early Church, children were especially cared for. The Lord said unto Moses, "Gather the people together, men, and women, and *children*, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may *hear*, and that they may *learn*, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their *children*, which have not known any thing, may *hear* and *learn* to fear the Lord your God." Such *hearing* and *learning* as this is required now as well as then.

Much instruction, as I have already hinted, may be given to the child before it is able to read, regarding God the Father; Jesus the Saviour; prayer; the beauty and excellency of truth; kindness, obedience, conscientiousness; love to God and man; and also the baseness and danger of sin in every form.

As the child advances in years, the Bible will be found the best direct source of religious instruction. The Bible is a map of the way, with the dangers and difficulties which beset the "pilgrim's progress." The

Bible is a *treasury*, from which he may obtain riches to last during the whole journey,—for heavenly Wisdom says, “I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me. *Riches* and honour are with me,—yea, durable riches and righteousness.” The Bible is an infallible *guide*, who will never lead him astray: “I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment.” And, again, “I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go.” The Bible is an *armoury*, from which he can be furnished with “the whole armour of God,” to defend him from every foe that may beset his path. In one word, “the law of the Lord is *perfect*, converting the soul.”

It is not the least striking feature of this marvellous book, that the old and young can read it together; with different degrees, indeed, but with the same kind of delight and edification. The grey-haired philosopher, and the Sabbath school child, may together drop their tears over its pathetic narratives, and with breathless interest peruse its solemn pictures of God's judgments. Children are fond of facts. They apprehend and relish truth conveyed to them by a story or in a history, more than in an abstract form. The Bible is almost a volume of facts; being a revelation of God in history. It relates the rise and fall of mighty nations and great cities; and alone records the origin and early progress of the human race, with special reference to the origin and progress of the Church, from the days of Adam, to the time of Christ. It is full of the most interesting biographies

of pious men and women—of prophets, priests, patriarchs, judges, kings, and queens—who lived thousands of years ago; bringing their whole lives before us with the vividness of recent events. It abounds in examples for our encouragement, of those who, in every variety of circumstances,—on the throne and in the dungeon—in health and in sickness—among friends or foes—in a land of ordinances, or among idolaters—in youth or in old age—in times of outward peace, or at the risk of their lives,—lived by faith in the living God, and were not put to shame! It abounds, also, in examples for our warning, of men who, in the same circumstances, disobeyed God, and were punished by His righteous judgments. The ten commandments form a compendium of duty, which a child may in early years commit to memory; while the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are full of instruction for every-day life, suited specially to the young. There are Psalms of David which a child may repeat at its mother's knee, and which an angel might sing before the throne of God.

We have no sympathy whatever with those who have scruples in putting the whole of the Old Testament into the hands of the young. By God's own express command, the children as well as adults were to hear read aloud in public; and learn at home the statutes and judgments delivered to Moses. We have already quoted one passage shewing this: here is another,—“These words I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy *children*, and shalt talk of them when thou

sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." We are more and more convinced of the profound wisdom of this arrangement, and believe that the discovery of evil, through the foul and subtile instruction of the wicked, is what injures the young, and not holy and solemn warning by parents as to what evil is, and what men may become and do, as recorded by God, the wise, the pure, the holy, in His Word. Thus to impart with reverence and awe to the young, before they enter the world, and leave the parental roof, such knowledge of evil as will enable them to avoid the pits into which they are prone to fall, is, I humbly think, with God's blessing, the most effectual means of saving them. But not to dwell on this, I remark further that the New Testament is specially suited to interest, as well as edify a child. Here we have the history of Jesus Christ from his very childhood; with His simple teaching, which the common people heard gladly; His marvellous miracles, each a picture on which a child can gaze with delight; His wonderful parables, from whose clear and placid stream a child can drink, and which those who thirst most after righteousness cannot exhaust:—all ended by the unparalleled wonders of His trial, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension. In the Acts of the Apostles, we have the history of the planting of the Christian Church, with its early sufferings and triumphs,—the conversion, labours, travels, miracles, and teaching of St. Paul and his fellow-apostles;—while, in each of



the Epistles, there is much personal history to interest, and also such concise and simple statements of Christian doctrine, privilege, and duty, as may be milk to babes, as well as strong meat for men. This, then, is the duty of parents: to impart to their children religious instruction directly from, and grounded upon, the Word of God; so that it may with truth be said, in riper years, to each of them, what Paul said to Timothy, "*From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*"

Christian parents have, in this highly-favoured country, much to assist them in the work of religious teaching. In every parish school, at least, and in most others, the Bible is daily read, and the Shorter Catechism taught. God grant that it may ever continue to be so in our public schools, for although this may not necessarily be religious training, yet it is such religious teaching of the *facts* of revelation as neither the parent nor the pastor could otherwise overtake, and without which the higher training is impossible. Besides, there are few parishes without one or more Sabbath schools. It is unnecessary that I should here attempt to estimate the moral value of the religious instruction afforded to the rising generation by teachers, either in week-day, or Sabbath schools. Whatever

defects may cling to them, it is not too much to assert, that, but for them, the vast majority of our people would be comparatively ignorant of the facts and first principles of religion. At the same time, I must warn parents against the danger of making either, even the Sabbath school, a substitute for all home-instruction in religion.

In the numerous cases, alas! which occur in every parish, of careless, ignorant, or wicked parents, who cannot, or will not thus instruct their children,—almost any school is a blessing, and any Sabbath class a gain. But in the case of pious, intelligent parents, it is otherwise. The *best* Sabbath class can be an aid only, never a substitute, for the lessons of such a teacher; while the danger must not be overlooked, of the well brought up child being positively injured in a Sabbath school. For, let a Sabbath class be first ill-arranged, and the children who are ill-taught and ill-trained at home mingled with the well-taught and well-trained; then let this class have a teacher wanting in piety, information, common sense, or the power of command; and it is very certain that, in such a class, children may be every Sabbath *trained* up to habits of inattention, irreverence, disobedience, rudeness; even though *taught* to learn lessons, and repeat verses from the Bible, or answers from the Catechism.

Parents should feel their responsibility when they give their children, even for an hour, to be taught by any one on earth. They should make it a point of duty to know *how, where, what, by whom, and among*

whom, they are taught. God has laid the burden of training up the young upon the shoulders of the parent first. He may make use of every aid,—good Sabbath classes among the rest, to enable him to carry this burden,—but he dare not transfer it wholly to another; because God has given to himself an authority, influence, and power, over his child, which no one else can possess. There is a magic influence in a parent's voice and words, and in a loving parent's eye, which belongs to no other teacher in this world! Holy and blissful is the hour—sweet at the time, and sweeter still in memory—when a child is taught to know its loving Father in heaven, by the lips of its beloved parent upon earth! And what parent, knowing himself the blessings of salvation, will not esteem it one of his highest privileges, to be made the instrument of uniting his own dear child to himself for ever in the indissoluble bonds of Christ?

I cannot, then, help expressing my fears lest, with much incalculable good, the Sabbath school may be the occasion of doing incalculable evil, by tempting Christian parents, to substitute wholly for their own instruction in the things of God, the instruction of the school. My firm belief is, that very ordinary religious instruction, such as an intelligent and pious artizan can impart to his children, easily, cheerfully, and naturally, at his own fireside on Sabbath evening, is incomparably superior in its results upon character to what the best Sabbath school that exists can impart—and many exist that are very far from being

the best. The Sabbath school, as at present constituted, ought to be recognised chiefly as a home mission to the children of the ignorant and godless, and the more it is kept to this sphere the better for the piety of our people.

The instruction given by a minister to his catechumens, or to the younger members of his flock, does not properly belong to ordinary Sabbath school teaching.

But when is this home instruction to be afforded by the Christian parent? Now, without entering upon a discussion as to the possibility of a working-man, who is hard wrought from morning to night, being able to devote any portion of a week-day to the teaching of his family—beyond what they must indirectly receive from the reading of the Word and prayer during domestic worship,—let me rather remind such of the privilege of their having one day of rest, when this duty may be, and ought to be, specially attended to;—when parents and children may together prepare to join the family of God and the household of heaven. Upon the Sabbath evening they should be all assembled together, and some time devoted to cheerful religious examination and instruction. I say *cheerful*, not sour and harsh, not cold and heartless, not such as must turn the Sabbath evening into an object of dislike or terror. Conversation on the sermons they have heard during the day, or on the Scripture lessons they have been taught during the week in school, or on the books which they have been reading;

along with a few questions from the Catechism, and the reading of the Scriptures, accompanied by short examination on what is read,—all concluded by prayer,—may form suitable exercises for the Sabbath evening. There are also many admirable cheap periodicals published, calculated to instruct and interest old and young upon Sabbath evening; and one or more of which ought to form a part of the household library, along with other works of a more permanent character.\* In order that the whole members of the family should, upon this hallowed evening at least, assemble together in peace and love; and that nothing should break in upon time so precious, it is desirable that those who have had the privilege of attending worship during the day, should remain at home and attend to their domestic duties during the evening, rather than spend it in hearing an additional sermon. There are special occasions when a departure from this rule may be allowable; but, as an ordinary habit, I believe it to be most pernicious, because interfering with much more important duties. For it is surely of far greater consequence to the best interests of the family, that the evening should be spent in some such way as I have indicated, and in cultivating those affections between parents and children, brothers and sisters,

\* Such periodicals as the *Christian Treasury*, *Leisure Hour*, *Sunday at Home*, &c., and serials like "The Fireside Library," with select volumes published by the Religious and other Tract Societies; Biographies of the good; and narratives of the labours of missionaries at home and abroad. The "Peep of Day" is the best introduction for the young extant to their study of the Scriptures.

which are very apt to be weakened by the constant labours of a scattered family during the week, than, for the third time, to worship in church or chapel. I am persuaded that many parents attend evening sermons, not so much from their love of good as from their love of idleness; finding that it requires far less painstaking and self-denial to spend two hours in public, while their children may be idle at home, playing about the streets, or handed over to a Sabbath school teacher, than to visit with Christian sympathy a poor or sick neighbour, and to devote some portion of the evening to pious exercises and cheerful Christian intercourse with their own family.

Such Sabbath evening instruction as this is quite compatible with that measure of out-door enjoyment with wife and children, or friend, which those know best how to relish who have been pent up during the week in "the dusky lane and wrangling mart." Sabbath "amusements" and "excursions" we abominate as inconsistent with the whole spirit of the Sabbath, because inimical to the true good and highest happiness of man. But how consistent with and helpful to both, is the quiet, peaceful walk, where it can be had, amidst the refreshing scenes of God's own lovely world:—"in those vernal seasons of the year," as Milton says, "when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and a sullenness against Nature not to go out and see her richness and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth."

There is another view, which I would suggest for

consideration, of the importance and advantage of the Home school for such religious instruction as I have indicated above, and that is its indirect but powerful influence upon the parents themselves. Much of the religious knowledge and clear apprehension of Divine truth, which unquestionably distinguished our Scotch peasantry at one time above all people on earth, was owing not merely to the prominence given to teaching from the pulpit, but chiefly, and perhaps as a result of the double influence of the parish school and the parish church, to the teaching given by themselves to their children and domestics at home. Each home was a Sabbath school, of which the head of the house was the teacher. An immense stimulus was thus created by the call of a universally acknowledged duty prompting the parent to become well-informed. Sabbath schools originated in England, where such habits were unknown. They have, since then, become important aids everywhere to weak congregations as a means of recruiting their numbers. They are immense blessings, when properly organized, in densely peopled districts which have sunk down into ignorance, and where pastoral teaching and superintendence are impossible. But again I say, let them ever be made to foster and encourage, and never to interfere with the better and more advanced state of things—that of the Home Sabbath school, taught by Christian parents.

It may be expected that I shall say something here upon the kind of books by which parents may indirectly instruct or amuse their children

on week-days. As the question, which is a very common one, is generally put with reference to the propriety of giving them what are called "story-books," I can only say, with great deference to wiser heads who may differ from me, that I see no reason for banishing from, but many for keeping in, the children's library, the old classics of Blue Beard, Jack the Giant Killer, Beauty and the Beast, &c., which were, I doubt not, the first to delight ourselves, and the perusal of which, as far as I have ever heard, has never been looked back to with regret by any Christian when he became a man, and put away childish things. There are many "religious" books for the young now published, whose tendency, in spite of the best intentions of their writers, is anything but healthy,—books in which children are made to think like old and matured Christians, to recount their experiences in a way which even they would shrink from, and who, in short, are utterly unlike any we ever meet with in real life, or perhaps would like to meet with, so false and unnatural do they seem. Moreover, they are always sure to die when young. Thus the impression is given that all good children must be like those in the book, and must think like them, and, alas ! die like them ;—and if so, then the conclusion is inevitable that piety in childhood is not to be desired !

But there are very many "religious" books, however, of unexceptionable character, whose whole tendency is to foster in the juvenile reader all that is right and true



in heart and life, and which are precious aids to home education. There are also delightful volumes on natural history calculated to cultivate in children the most wholesome of all tastes, the love of nature, and to make them notice and search for the glorious and inexhaustible treasures which God has poured out for the eye and ear, for the heart and head, in the magnificent world around them,—on the sea-shore, and open field, in wood and stream, on mountain and moorland, by day and night,—all affording a quiet joy that will never grow old, but which the patriarch can share with the child, and angels with men.

Then, again, there are books of another kind,—histories of men and nations, especially those of our own country, and of its deeds on land and sea, in church and state; true stories of the great and brave, the generous, self-sacrificing, and patriotic; narratives of the difficulties overcome in the pursuit of knowledge, or in the discharge of duty; actual adventures by field and flood, shewing what firmness, courage, and perseverance can accomplish and endure;—books which are fitted to inspire the young with an admiration of what is manly and heroic. These ought to have their place and right value attached to them in the home library. “And,” as Milton says, “what glorious and magnificent use might be made of poetry both in human and divine things!”

And why should I be silent about song, as a means of linking pure and lofty sentiments with the imagin-

ation and the feelings? Milton, in his well-known Letter on Education, already quoted, speaking of music, and of "elegant voices, tuned to religious, martial, or civic ditties," adds, "which, if wise men and prophets be not extremely out, have a great power over dispositions and manners, to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions." It cannot be denied that music in families, with or without any instrument but the voice, might be made a source of immense enjoyment, and make the fireside in the evening a scene of greater attraction to children, and a better school for education. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings has God ordained praise. We advocate, therefore, the singing of well-selected hymns, which express such sentiments as the young can *truly* express, as well as the old. But we would not exclude from the family circle any song which embodied a feeling right for a good man to cherish or indulge. Many of our dear old Scotch songs, embalmed in the hearts and memories of our countrymen throughout the world, with others which commemorate the great and brave deeds of those who have fought for our hearths and homes, should be taught our children as well as hymns that sing of loftier and eternal themes. It is remarkable how the children of the pious Jew possessed the singular advantage of having, as the theme of his songs, the history of his own country and kindred. He could sing praises to Him "who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings; Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king

of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan: and gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel His people." And why should not the Christian child be taught to connect with God the varied gifts both of His providence and His grace, and to sing about common mercies, and the blessings bestowed by Him upon his country and his home!

## CHAPTER VIII.

TRAINING—WITH LOVE—FIRMNESS—PERSEVERANCE—  
AND WATCHFULNESS.

“Consider what a religious education in the wide sense of the word is:—it is no other than a training of children to life eternal; no other than the making them know and love God, know and abhor evil; no other than the fashioning all the parts from nature, for the very ends which God designed for them; the teaching our understandings to know the highest truth, the teaching our affections to love the highest good.”—*Arnold*.

## LOVE.

I HAVE so frequently expressed, and so constantly assumed the necessity of love being the most essential element in all home education worthy of the name, that I need not here at any length inculcate its value.

Love is the sheet-anchor of education. It is God's grand argument, so to speak, in educating His own family. As love to Him is all in all,—the substance of obedience, and the source of joy,—so His love to us is the fountain of that light which is reflected from our hearts to Him again. In the possession of this affection, especially, is the parent God's image in the family. His power, influence, authority, must be *loving*. Chastisement may be necessary to establish

outward authority and banish rebellion; but love is more so to obtain and maintain authority over the spirit, and to prevent rebellion. Love, so far from being inconsistent with inflexible firmness, is rather inseparable from it. For this sublime affection is not mere parental instinct, such as the lower animals manifest to their offspring; nor is it wayward impulsive feeling. True love is God's love in us, and therefore one with holiness, truth, and justice. When it is what may be termed an unprincipled or unwise affection, it will be manifested in every way most hurtful to the best interests of the family—by an easy self-indulgence, and a yielding to their wishes, whether right or wrong, reasonable or unreasonable; by partiality and favouritism, from senseless whim or caprice displayed to one or more members of the family, and giving rise to jealousies and evils which may last for life. Such a temper as this is not love, but sheer selfishness, or a love of our own capricious likings and ill-regulated impulses, but not that holy self-sacrificing affection which seeks, above all things, the good, and by this the happiness, of its object. Hence the real *good* of, and real *love* to, the child, can never be separated. The memorable description of love, given by Paul, should find its reality in that of a Christian parent, more, perhaps, than in any other heart on earth:—"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth

not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." It is difficult to say which is the greater defect in a parent,—strictness and firmness in his family without feeling and affection ; or, feeling and affection without strictness and firmness. Under the one bad system the children are apt to become slaves or hypocrites ; under the other, tyrants or rebels. But true love is always firm, and true firmness is always love.

In speaking of the law of habit, I pointed out how no moral habit could be formed by a mere repetition of outward doings, without an inward liking to the things done. The oftener we are compelled to do what we dislike, the stronger does our dislike grow, until that dislike becomes itself a habit of ill-doing. On the other hand, the more we are led to *love* the right, and to do the right which we love, the more is the habit of good formed and strengthened. But how can this love of well-doing be kindled in the child by mere parental *authority*, without parental *love* ? And, as I have already noticed, it is doubtless owing to the absence of such love, that the children of many apparently good men have turned out ill. There may have been that parental fondness which was but an easy self-indulgence, or seeking to please the child at the expense of principle, and to make him happy through selfishness ; or there were rules without number, and unbending firmness in carrying them out ; but the parent maintained a stern distance from his children ; his words

were generally threats or commands; punishment never failed to follow transgression; he was "a very strict man," and "not to be trifled with;" yet there was the absence of that tenderness and attractiveness of love which kindles a corresponding emotion in the child's bosom, and moves it to willing and cordial obedience, bringing not his outward acts only, but his inward spirit also into harmony with what is good. The bow of obedience was bent by the external force of authority merely; do we wonder that when the force which bent it was removed, it should spring back violently in an opposite direction? Are we astonished that a child—terrified for his father's frown, and never gladdened by a father's love—when freed from all the outward restraint to which he was alone accustomed, and destitute of internal principle, which was never cultivated in him, should break loose in wild and reckless dissipation, and, like a stream which has burst the barriers that pent it up, rush along an impetuous and desolating torrent?

"If we would govern a child," says a late writer, "and make a hero of him, we must meet him with simple love like his own, for then he will be a child at heart in sternest manhood, and hope, believe, and endure from an indwelling consciousness that there is nothing to fear in God, except when we forget His love, and refuse to bring our cares and our sorrows to Him, and trust Him as the author of a mother's heart, the giver of that affection which drew us to its bosom, there to drink in life, there to conceal our tears, there to

nestle in the warmth of hope, and faith, and charity, for all the graces are nurtured there. The parent must rule, and, if needs be, with the rod ; but still that rod should be as the sceptre of love, budding as with almond blossoms, to demonstrate that the power of God is kindness. The contrast, in personal appearance and manner, between a child trained under the winning management of a wise, firm, commanding love, and another subjected to the despotic control of fear, is very striking. In the former, we observe a sprightly eye and open countenance, with a genial vivacity and trustfulness in the general expression of the body ; a mixture of confiding sociality with intelligence ; an alacrity of movement, and a healthiness of soul, evinced in generous activity and smiles. Even if the body be enfeebled, still a bright halo surrounds, so to speak, the mental constitution. But physical as well as intellectual vigour and enjoyment are usually the happy results of that freedom of heart and generosity of spirit which skilful affection endeavours to encourage. Then in youth and manhood, a noble intelligence confirms the propriety of such early training ; but the child who finds a tyrant instead of a fostering parent, if naturally delicate, acquires a timid bearing, a languid gait, a sallow cheek, a pouting lip, a stupid torpidity, or a sullen defiance ; for nature's defence from tyranny is either hard stupidity or cunning daring. \* If, then, we would know how to manage a little child, let us imagine how Jesus would have treated it. Would He not have engaged



its happiest feelings and affections, won its heart, and blessed it? While sitting on His knee, would not the child have gazed into that 'human face divine,' and learned the gentleness and power of its heavenly Father? \* Piety itself is not unfrequently rendered terrible by a perverted application of memory to descriptions in which Omnipotence is associated with the final judgment and the terrors of guilt. Many a little child, whose susceptible heart is as ready to yield to the gentlest breath of affection as an aspen leaf to the zephyr, and whose spirit sparkles with love as the dew-drop to the light, acquires the habit of terror, and scarcely dares to look up, because he is taught as soon as he can speak to repeat—

' There 's not a sin that we commit,  
Nor wicked word we say,  
But in the dreadful book 'tis writ  
Against the judgment day.'

And the thoughtless and fond parent too frequently makes that appear to be wickedness and sin which, however proper to childhood, is inconvenient to those who should tenderly train it. Surely that is a dangerous expedient for the correction of a child conscious of having offended the only being he has learned to love, and while, perhaps in agony of heart, begging pardon from a mother, to be told to remember

' There is a dreadful hell  
And everlasting pains,  
Where sinners must for ever dwell  
In darkness, fire, and chains.  
And can a wretch as I  
Escape this cursed end,' &c., &c.

There is reason to believe that insane despondency, and a disposition to commit suicide, may often be traced to abuse of religious discipline, if religious it may be called, especially that form of it just alluded to.”\*

I have already said that firmness is inseparable from love. They so run into each other that they may be considered together, yet let me examine them separately, and say a few words on

#### FIRMNESS.

Firmness is but steadfastness of purpose. It expresses in the godly parent the unchangeableness of truth, the permanence of principle, and the constancy of love. He owes it to himself—to his child—to God for whom he acts—to carry out all his lawful and righteous purposes. Let him be *very careful* what promises he makes to encourage his children; what threats he holds out to warn them; or what commands he gives them to obey. Let him take heed lest he rashly acts, or speaks unadvisedly with his lips. He is dealing with an immortal soul; immense interests are at stake, and he is responsible to God! But if he has, to the best of his judgment, adopted a certain course of procedure towards his child, *that must be carried out*. Self-will, accompanied not unfrequently, by stubbornness and obstinacy, I have already noticed as a characteristic of the fallen race of Adam from their earliest years. This must be met by firmness on the part of the parent. The parent's will *must* be supreme. To be

\* *Power of the Soul*. By G. Moore. P. 221.

subject to his child, and to yield to his wilfulness, however expressed—whether by little cunning acts of outward kindness and flattery, or by violent fits of passion, persevered in almost to the danger of the child's health—is wickedness and rebellion against God. To give way to the will of the child, if the will of the parent is *right*, is a crime, a cruelty; and its evil consequences can hardly be exaggerated. Let a child once understand that a parent's word is *unalterable* by anything it can do or say, and every *attempt* to alter it will soon be given up. On the other hand, let a child gain the battle once, and he is, probably, a conqueror for life, and becomes a despot, who will rule father and mother with the rod which should have ruled himself. Oh! what cruel parents are those who are so fond, forsooth, of their children, as always to comply with their wishes! Sorely, yet righteously, have such parents been punished in after years.

I know that anything like corporal punishment is banished from many systems of modern education, as a remnant of a barbarous age. It is quite true that it is not unfrequently made a short substitute for those more laborious means of godly upbringing which I have been considering—for it is much easier to punish a child daily for bad habits, than to train him up daily to good ones; and to visit the consequences of ill-doing by arbitrary stripes, rather than encourage well-doing by wise and holy love. Such punishment, however, is often deserved much more by the undutiful parents than by the undutiful children. But not over-

looking the *abuse* of corporal punishment, we should also remember its *use*. Without at all advocating it as a frequent means of establishing authority or punishing transgression,—nay, admitting that in many families and with many children it is unnecessary, and that with all it should be the rare and the last resort,—yet let it not be *excluded* as if in every case unrighteous and unwise. “What son is he whom his father chasteneth not?” asks the apostle: and he recognises the lawfulness and value of such discipline when he says,—“We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence!” And when he adds, “shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?”—the principle on which chastisement should be administered is indirectly pointed out—that it should be like what our Father in heaven inflicts upon “every son whom He receiveth;” which is indeed “a strange work,” not the rule, but the exception; yet a work of love in its deepest working, when the object of love will be made to “endure chastening” “for his profit,” because the loving Father will not endure in him any sin;—when “a son” will be made a partaker of suffering, that he should thereby be made “a partaker of holiness.” Such chastisement, not cruel and unrighteous, but wise and holy, administered with hate to the evil, and with love to the child, will prepare him to understand and receive that instruction which God may see fit to impart in after life by the discipline of His rod. Hear what that Parent, whose

name is Love, has recorded in the Bible upon this form of correcting the young,—“Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.” “Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.” “Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.” “He that spareth the rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” To do all this *firmness* is necessary.

Having said so much upon this severer form of home education, to meet some cases which I cannot doubt would be greatly improved by its wise administration, I will conclude this paragraph by an extract from a writer already quoted, who incidentally touches in one of his volumes upon the same topic, and takes a milder view of family discipline than even Mrs. Wesley:—“Above all things,” he says, “make a child believe you, because he has reason to love you. Let him feel and fear your authority, because you obey and are bound to obey God. Let him know who holds the absolute right to rule without being doubted, and that as Christ has commanded you to train the child for Him, you do so because the source of power is the source of good. A child needs not much reasoning, he is convinced intuitively. Let him feel that you *have* right, by feeling that you *are* right. Love itself may abuse power. Howard was, as a philanthropist, a blessing to the world, but as a father, however affectionate, he seems to have been unwise; a mistaken sense of duty caused him to pierce his own heart. He

thought it his duty to insist on obedience merely to the authority of parental power, instead of enforcing it by the attractiveness of fatherly feeling and consistency. Natural faith and affection are not blind, but will be able to distinguish their proper objects. He taught his child, while still an infant, not to cry, and never in all its childhood permitted it to have what it demanded with tears! God forbid that we should be thus taught. Our Father in heaven does not thus treat us. He expects us to be in earnest. But, said Howard, the government of a being that cannot reason about the fitness of things, should be only coercive and in fear. He overlooked the discernment that is keener than reason; he forgot that the heart has to be educated as well as the head, and that it is ruled aright only so long as love is visible in power. A child that must always govern its feelings from fear of others, will soon be a hypocrite and a tyrant. When the fetters upon it are removed, the soul will rush into selfish extravagance, and, perhaps, perish; like a bird from a cage, unfit to use its wings, and aiming only at pleasure, while incapable of providing for its own wants. Thus Howard's son was in infancy coerced, without fondness; in youth *commanded* to be moral; but in manhood he became debauched, and then mad. Even John Wesley would have driven little children to heaven with a scourge. 'Break their wills betimes,' he says; 'begin before they can run alone. Whatever pain it costs, break the will if you would not damn the child. Let a child from a year old be taught to fear the rod and

learn to cry softly; from that age make him do as he is bid if you whip him ten times.' A man that would attempt to educate a dog on such principles, would deserve to be indicted on the law against cruelty to animals. He also exhorts parents 'never to commend children for anything.' This is not like St. Paul's gospel, '*Provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*' The nurture and admonition of the Lord is not the bastinado." \*

## PERSEVERANCE.

Parents, more than any persons on earth engaged in the prosecution of arduous enterprises, should adopt as their motto, "*Never despair.*" Be not discouraged by slow progress, or by oft-repeated failures. Do not lose faith, and, in despondency, say, like the aged patriarch, "All these things are against me;" nor ever cease to obey *your* Father in heaven, who bids you do what is right, although your children have ceased to obey their father on earth, and are doing what is wrong. Results are with God—duty with you. In no circumstance whatever are you entitled to hand over a child to Satan, saying, "I give my child to thee, I can do no more; he is incorrigible—lost!" As long as he is under the parental roof, you must, to the best of your ability, train him *up*; and, when he leaves your roof, you must still follow him, if possible, with your advices, and certainly with your prayers. Here, again, should a parent endeavour in

\* *Man and his Motives.* By G. Moore. P. 295.

his conduct towards his children to act as God does towards himself; and how long-suffering and patient has the Lord been! Has He not borne with manifold shortcomings, provocations, and rebellions; yearning over us with a depth of compassion of which a mother's enduring love is but a faint reflection; crying, "How shall I give thee up, Israel!" ever wishing us to return, and promising, if we do so, to receive us graciously, love us freely, and heal all our backslidings. And thus, parents, must you in "patience possess your souls," and labour on with long-suffering and compassion; trusting God; seeking to save your dear children; to "pluck them as brands from the burning;" to "stablish, strengthen, settle," and "build them up in their most holy faith." Continue steadfastly, as they grow up in years, to train them up to godliness, "*praying always*, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all *perseverance*." "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand," and be assured that "your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." If you are "not weary in well-doing," then, certainly, "*in due season* you will reap if you faint not." For the Lord hath said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, *and when he is old he will not depart from it!*"

I notice once more, briefly, that parents should train up their children with



## WATCHFULNESS.

This is required to know the character of the child, and its peculiar tendencies and difficulties, so as to train it up wisely. A timid gentle child requires a different treatment from a bold impetuous one,—the open and candid, from the shut-up and cunning. Altered circumstances, such as going from country to town, or from the nursery to school; the choice of companions; increasing years, and with them new duties, new trials, new temptations;—all require watchfulness on the parents' part, so as to know and to meet the child's varied necessities. Watchfulness is necessary also for the detection of evil habits, in their first beginnings, when they are more easily checked; and for the perception, too, of that growth in grace for which the parent labours and prays, and which, when perceived, will be at once a reward for the past, and a blessed encouragement to persevere for the future. There is no reason, however, why this careful scrutiny upon the parents' part should be known directly by the child, but every reason why it should be concealed, that it may not act as an unwholesome and unnatural restraint.

## CHAPTER IX.

## PRAYER.

“ Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you : for every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ? IF YE THEN, BEING EVIL, KNOW HOW TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS UNTO YOUR CHILDREN, HOW MUCH MORE SHALL YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN GIVE GOOD THINGS TO THEM THAT ASK HIM ? ”

I MENTION prayer last, because without it all other means of education are mere dead instrumentalities, in so far as the grand end is concerned,—that of training the young for heaven and for God.

Prayer is an acknowledgment of the absolute dependence of parent and child upon the aid and blessing of that eternal Spirit without whom neither can be children of God, nor the one train nor the other be trained in the way to glory.

It is impossible for a parent to feel habitually enough, or to acknowledge with an adequate sense of its truth, how all his plans and efforts, in order to be successful, must be formed and carried out in humble and constant childlike reliance upon God's Holy Spirit. Without this he has no good ground for hoping that his home education, however other-

wise apparently efficient, will not utterly fail, and all his fondest anticipations be blasted. "Without me," saith our Lord, "ye can do *nothing*,"—a truth never to be forgotten by the Christian parent, which he indeed acknowledges every time he bows his knees in prayer, but practically denies when he neglects to do so—assuming rather that he can, by his own unaided wisdom and power, train up his family for heaven. Oh! parents, do not attempt anything so wicked, and what, unless God prevent, must prove so disastrous in the end! You cannot save your own souls, far less the souls of your children! "The Spirit of Life which is in Christ Jesus" alone can do both. Surely to train up your children to be *like Jesus Christ* requires the constant aid of Him whose very work it is to renew us in the spirit of our minds, and to make us "conformable to His Son." But, on the other hand, with the promise, "to them who ask Him," of the Holy Spirit to convince, enlighten, renew, sanctify, strengthen, with what hope and joy may not parents labour in the work of home education—for they are then fellow-workers with God!

Let me remark more particularly that—

1. *Parents should pray for themselves.* The prayer "without ceasing," is the life without ceasing of that holy influence I have already spoken of, which is unconsciously exercised in mind, look, and action, and which *tells* upon the family, like the gladdening and quickening light and heat of the sun upon the green earth. From personal intercourse with God it

is alone possible to sustain the sublime position of being God's representative in the household. To be in any degree "like God," or "renewed after His image," requires, indeed, omnipotent grace. But omnipotent, all-sufficient grace, is ours; and ours daily, hourly, if we seek it in faith.

But not only is this sanctity of character in the parent maintained by prayer, and with it all those graces of patience, meekness, fortitude, perseverance, self-denial, love, &c., which play such a part in the work of home education, but there is also obtained from God that special "wisdom from above" which he who guides a family so much requires, amidst the trials, temptations, and duties of everyday life, and more particularly in those critical periods which occur in a family's history, when the advice given, or the decision come to, or even the temper and disposition manifested by the parent, may involve the good and happiness of a beloved child, not for time only, but also for eternity! Oh! the blessedness of knowing God in such seasons, as One who will surely guide us by His counsel, and instruct us in the way we should go!

2. *Parents should pray for their children.* They should, in their own private devotions, mention them *by name* to God, confessing to Him that sinfulness and those sins in them which are so much bound up in the sinfulness and sins of the parent; spreading before God all their cares and anxieties about them, and *leaving* these at the footstool of

His throne of grace ; asking also from God such things as they need for body and soul ; and, in one word, as regards their children, " being careful for nothing, but *in everything* making their requests known by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving ; and then the peace of God which passeth understanding will keep their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

And how many encouragements have parents, both from the promises and examples contained in the Word of God, for thus praying in faith and hope !

The very name " Father," with which, in " the spirit of adoption," they are privileged to address God, carries with it, as I have noticed more fully in a previous chapter, an argument for believing prayer to every parent's heart, and contains in it the promise of every needful blessing.

Most strengthening, also, to his faith, are those instances recorded in the New Testament, of parents interceding with Christ for their children, and never doing so in vain : such as when the afflicted Jairus besought Him for " an only daughter, twelve years old, who lay a-dying ;" and the woman of Canaan pled with Him for her " daughter grievously vexed with a devil ;" and the afflicted father in anguish cried, " I beseech Thee, look upon my son, for he is mine only child !" In all such cases our Lord heard and answered parental prayer. When even the disciples would keep back those mothers who brought their babes to Him, He who, as the Good Shepherd, " carries the lambs in His bosom," gladly received the infants " into

His arms, and blessed them." How comforting are such instances of a Saviour's sympathy with a parent's love and care! Nay, that sympathy often anticipated prayer, and was promptly shewn when all hope had perished, giving exceeding abundantly above all the needy could ask or think—as when He raised the widow's son at the gate of Nain, and "delivered him to his mother." This Saviour is unchanged. He is the same now as then. By His life on earth we are enabled to know "the *Ever Living!*" Though He may not work miracles now in behalf of children which the fleshly eye can discover, He can, before the eye of faith, that has "watched unto prayer with all perseverance," do "greater works than these, that we may marvel." He can enlighten the blind mind; cast out the unclean devil from the defiled soul; heal the sick and wounded spirit; give life from the very dead; and restore a child to its mother, when, in almost despair, she looks for nothing but that moral and total corruption which makes her exclaim, "Trouble not the Master!" Let parents "only believe," and *bring their children to Christ himself*, assured that He is as really present now as then, to hear and answer such prayers as those!

Prayer has one advantage which is not possessed by any of the other means of home education which I have specified. It is powerful in absence!—where precept may not reach, nor example be afforded. In the silent hours of night, when all the house is lying still, and every babe wrapped in unconscious repose,

parents may lift their wakeful hearts to Him who slumbereth not nor sleepeth, in behalf of their beloved offspring,—the very silence around them sending their thoughts to the family resting-place in the churchyard; and the hopes of the coming day, to the family resurrection on the last morning; all prompting the earnest prayer that the rest may be a sleeping *together* in Jesus, and the waking a living *together* with Him! But the children leave the parental roof. The fireside group is scattered to distant shores. One becomes a soldier, fighting amidst the din of battle; another a sailor boy, voyaging over the boisterous deep; or an emigrant, labouring in a distant colony; or a merchant, buying and selling amidst the temptations of a great city. But wherever they are, and in whatever circumstances, still for them the earnest prayer may ascend at home, and be heard and answered by that Father who is everywhere a present help! Not until the revelation of the great day will children or parents be able to discover the connexion which God thus established between the blessings received by the one, and the prayer offered up by the other! That sudden gleam of light, for instance, which, in a distant land, breaks in, he knows not how, upon the young man's soul, amidst the gathering darkness of evil passion or unbelief; those gracious visitings to his parched heart, refreshing and quickening as morning dew; this deliverance from danger or temptation; that singular providence which has affected his

whole life; those pious acquaintanceships, formed apparently by accident, but which have so much helped to bring him to God, and keep him in the path of righteousness; these unnumbered comforts of sanctified affliction which soothed, even amidst strangers, his bed of suffering:—oh! how many such blessings may be sent to the absent child from a gracious God, in answer to the prayers poured forth by His aged servants in their deserted home! A true prayer never dies. It lives before God when the mortal lips which gave it utterance are silent in the grave.

3. *Parents should pray with, as well as for, their children.* There are occasions when many Christian parents make it a rule to bring their child alone with themselves into the presence of God; as, for example, when a peculiarly serious admonition has been given; or a grave offence committed; or chastisement administered; or the child is about to enter into some new circumstances, involving new duties and trials,—at such times as these, it must indeed impress his heart to kneel beside a parent at a throne of grace; to hear, from a parent's lips, his sins confessed, and his whole wants and circumstances spread out before God. How calculated is this to make him feel his personal responsibility to *God*, and not to his parent only—to make him sympathize with a parent's difficulties and anxieties—realize the vast importance of his words and actions—and recognise God as a *living* God, who is ever present, seeing the evil and the good, and ready to visit iniquity with stripes, and to



grant mercy to pardon, and grace to help in the time of need!

4. *Parents should pray with their children in united family prayer.\** This is the main support of family religion. In this exercise, more than in any other, the piety and simplicity of patriarchal times survive, when the parent, as the priest, offers up, amidst his children and domestics, the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise. Then, if ever, is there impressed upon the hearts of parents and children, masters and servants, a sense of common responsibility to God for the discharge of their relative duties. Then are those mercies acknowledged which the family enjoy—those things asked which the family require—those sins confessed of which the family are guilty—and that outpouring of the Spirit of holiness and love obtained, in the possession of which the family of earth becomes one with the family in heaven. I would earnestly urge upon all parents the immense importance of family prayer. The members of a working man's family especially, have seldom a place in his small house where they can each retire for private devotion. If an opportunity is not afforded by family prayer for reading the Bible, and kneeling at a throne of grace, the temptations to omit such exercises are so great, that few have the principle and fortitude to resist them. I can here do little more than touch upon this duty; yet, let me ask, why is it so much

\* See the excellent "Directory for Family Worship" appended to the Confession of Faith.

neglected? Why is this family link so often wantonly broken?

Is it from want of *time*? Surely one half-hour—one quarter even—in the twenty-four, may be snatched from the time required to labour for the body, in order to “labour together in prayer” for the soul. “What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” “Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting.” “Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.” But how can want of time be pleaded by those who never worship with their families even on Sabbath? Is it, then, from want of *ability* to pray? Often are such excuses heard as:—“We have not the gift;” “we could not find words.” Yet those who make such excuses seldom lose any earthly benefit from want of words wherewith to ask it. How accurately do men remember things in which they feel interested; and how full of words are they, when arguing or pleading for fortune, or life, or anything which they esteem a great good! There is not an old woman in the country, who will not narrate the most intricate story about a legacy she expects, or who will not tell that story well before a crowded court, if she hopes, by so doing, to gain her case! And so would it be in prayer to God, if people had as much heart in seeking spiritual, as in seeking temporal things. “Blessed are they who *hunger and thirst* after righteousness, for *they* shall be filled.” “Thou hast filled the *needy* with good things, but the

rich thou hast sent empty away." Remember, it is neither long prayers, far less "learned" prayers, that the Lord desires. Prayer is the language of the heart. What is essential to it is to "believe that God is, and that He is the rewarder of all who diligently seek Him." Peter offered up a prayer having only three words,—“Lord, save me!” It was sufficient. Be only as sincere and believing as he was, and you will find it very difficult, were it even necessary, to be as short. Begin by asking the Spirit of prayer to teach you how to pray, (Rom. viii. 26.) Then tell God the *mercies* you have received from Him—for your body and soul—for yourself and family. When you cannot remember another mercy, pass to your *sins*, and spread them out as they come to your mind. Having confessed these, make your *requests* known to Him, asking such things as you and your family really stand in need of, and as God has promised to give, for time and for eternity. Your friends, neighbours, the world, and the Church of Christ, might also be remembered. *Try* to do this, and I think you will find that you have more to say at a throne of grace than you were aware of.

But should you still be afraid to express yourself in words before the family, and if you really wish to do your duty, you may begin by reading a portion of the Word of God, or making your children do so; then kneel down and repeat the Lord's Prayer, or read any other form of prayer suited to a family. Even when a parent cannot read, or has not got over the

difficulty of expressing himself in prayer, I would recommend, that after kneeling down, solemn silence should be maintained for a few minutes, until each person has had an opportunity of praying. The Lord's Prayer might then be repeated aloud by the head of the house, as a conclusion to the devotions. I am persuaded, that unless some arrangement like this is adopted, prayer will be entirely banished from the family. And where is the working man who cannot do so, if he is in earnest, and resolves, like Joshua, that he and his house should serve the Lord? Beware of incurring the condemnation pronounced (Luke xii. 47) on the servant who neither did, nor *prepared* himself to do, his Lord's will. For in this, as in every other incumbent duty, the proverb holds true, "Where there is a will, there is a way." Any man who *wishes* to worship God in his family, will soon find means of doing so. I have known family-worship kept up by the widow of a working man, and by the eldest son when only fourteen years of age. I have known a poor bed-ridden paralytic parent assemble his children for years around him, causing them daily to read aloud God's Word, and to repeat aloud the Lord's Prayer, while he added a few words of his own. After his death his sons and daughters, each in their own households, followed his pious example. I fear, however, that many of those who urge one excuse after another for their neglect of secret or family prayer, really *dislike* the duty, because they dislike God. Their daily walk before their family is

inconsistent with such a profession of religion ; and so they rather give up religion itself and its profession, than give up their sins. They prefer being consistently bad to being consistently good. Or they are "ashamed of Christ ;" and so He will be ashamed of them. Parents ! if you would banish Satan from your households, and with him all the train of sins that bring misery and desolation into many a home, and convert into a wilderness with wild beasts, what might be a family paradise, where every human affection bloomed in beauty, grew in grace, and brought forth fruit to God's glory—seek the constant presence of Jesus Christ ; and covet, above all earthly honour or renown, that your family should be like that one of old in Bethany, which "Jesus loved." *His* presence will be your true prosperity ; making your daily mercies true mercies, and your seasons of bereavement seasons of richest blessing and deepest peace. Jesus will be the living bond of family union in life ; the rod and staff of each, as he successively journies through the valley of death ; and your common life and joy for ever !

And what can be more soothing to a parent, when he is about to be removed from his children by death, or when they are scattered over the wide world never more to meet together around the family altar, than the memory of those holy times when "prayer was wont to be made" in the once united and happy home ? On the other hand, how bitter is the memory of such opportunities neglected ! Many a parent would gladly

give up what might yet remain of his life, could he only recal from the grave, and bring beside him in earnest prayer, those dear children with whom he never worshipped, because he was too slothful, too proud, too procrastinating, or too godless to do so. I shall never forget the bitter anguish with which a working man, many years ago, announced to me the unexpected death of his only child, an interesting girl of fifteen years of age:—"She is gone! and oh, sir, there is one thing for which I shall not forgive myself, though I hope God may yet in mercy forgive me—she never heard a prayer from my lips, nor from beneath my roof!"

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Having thus said all I intended upon the end and the means of Home Education, I shall conclude this portion of my subject by a quotation from the wise and graceful pen of Mr. Tupper. Those who are familiar with his *Proverbial Philosophy* will pardon me; those who know it not will thank me for the passage.

A babe in a house is a well-spring of pleasure, a messenger of peace and love :

A resting place for innocence on earth ; a link between angels and men :  
 Yet is it a talent of trust, a loan to be rendered back with interest ;  
 A delight, but redolent of care ; honey-sweet, but lacking not the bitter.  
 For character groweth day by day, and all things aid it in unfolding.  
 And the bent unto good or evil may be given in the hours of infancy :  
 Scratch the green rind of a sapling, or wantonly twist it in the soil,  
 The scurred and crooked oak will tell of thee for centuries to come ;

Even so mayst thou guide the mind to good, or lead it to the marrings of evil,

For disposition is builded up by the fashioning of first impressions :  
Wherefore, though the voice of Instruction waiteth for the ear of Reason,  
Yet with his mother's milk the young child drinketh Education.  
Patience is the first great lesson ; he may learn it at the breast ;  
And the habit of obedience and trust may be grafted on his mind in the cradle :

Hold the little hands in prayer, teach the weak knees their kneeling ;  
Let him see thee speaking to thy God ; he will not forget it afterward :  
When old and grey will he feelingly remember a mother's tender piety,  
And the touching recollection of her prayers shall arrest the strong man in his sin.

Select not to nurse thy darling one that may taint his innocence,  
For example is a constant monitor, and good seed will die among the tares.  
The arts of a strange servant have spoiled a gentle disposition :  
Mother, let him learn of thy lips, and be nourished at thy breast.  
Character is mainly moulded by the cast of the minds that surround it :  
Let then the playmates of thy little one be not other than thy judgment shall approve :

For a child is in a new world, and learneth somewhat every moment,  
His eye is quick to observe, his memory storeth in secret,  
His ear is greedy of knowledge, and his mind is plastic as soft wax.  
Beware then that he heareth what is good, that he feedeth not on evil maxims,

For the seeds of first instructions are dropt into the deepest furrows.  
That which immemorial use hath sanctioned, seemeth to be right and true ;  
Therefore, let him never have to recollect the time when good things were strangers to his thought.

Strive not to centre in thyself, fond mother, all his love ;  
Nay, do not thou so selfishly, but enlarge his heart for others :  
Use him to sympathy betimes, that he learn to be sad with the afflicted ;  
And check not a child in his merriment,—should not his morning be sunny ?

Give him not all his desire, so shalt thou strengthen him in hope ;  
Neither stop with indulgence the fountain of his tears, so shall he fear thy firmness.

Above all things graft on him subjection, yea in the veriest trifle ;  
Courtesy to all, reverence to some, and to thee unanswering obedience.  
Read thou first, and well approve, the books thou givest to thy child ;  
But remember the weakness of his thought, and that wisdom for him must be diluted :

In the honied waters of infant tales, let him taste the strong wine of truth :  
Pathetic stories soften the heart ; but legends of terror breed midnight misery ;

Fairy fictions cram the mind with folly, and knowledge of evil tempteth to like evil :

Be not loath to curb imagination, nor be fearful that truths will depress it ;  
 And for evil, he will learn it soon enough ; be not thou the devil's envoy.  
 Induce not precocity of intellect, for so shouldst thou nourish vanity ;  
 Neither can a plant, forced in the hot-bed, stand against the frozen breath  
 of winter.

The mind is made wealthy by ideas, but the multitude of words is a clog-  
 ging weight :

Therefore be understood in thy teaching, and instruct to the measure of  
 capacity.

Analogy is milk for babes, but abstract truths are strong meat :

Precepts and rules are repulsive to a child, but happy illustration winneth  
 him :

In vain shalt thou preach of industry and prudence, till he learn of the bee  
 and the ant ;

Dimly will he think of his soul, till the acorn and the chrysalis have taught  
 him ;

He will fear God in thunder, and worship His loveliness in flowers ;  
 And parable shall charm his heart, while doctrines seem dead mystery ;  
 Faith shall he learn of the husbandman casting good corn into the soil ;  
 And if thou train him to trust thee, he will not withhold his reliance from  
 the Lord.

Fearst thou the dark, poor child ? I would not have thee left to thy ter-  
 rors ;

Darkness is the semblance of evil, and nature regardeth it with dread :  
 Yet know thy father's God is with thee still, to guard thee :

It is a simple lesson of dependance ; let thy tost mind anchor upon Him.

Did a sudden noise affright thee ? lo, this or that hath caused it :

Things undefined are full of dread, and stagger stouter nerves.

The seeds of misery and madness have been sowed in the nights of infancy ;  
 Therefore be careful that ghastly fears be not the night companions of  
 thy child.

Lo, thou art a land-mark on a hill ; thy little ones copy thee in all things ;  
 Let, then, thy religion be perfect : so shalt thou be honoured in thy house.

Be instructed in all wisdom, and communicate that thou knowest,

Otherwise thy learning is hidden, and thus thou seemest unwise.

A sluggard hath no respect ; an epicure commandeth not reverence :

Meanness is always despicable, and folly provoketh contempt.

Those parents are best honoured whose characters best deserve it ;

Show me a child undutiful, I shall know where to look for a foolish father :

Never hath a father done his duty, and lived to be despised of his son.

But how can that son reverence an example he dare not follow ?

Should he imitate thee in thine evil ? his scorn is thy rebuke.

Nay, but bring him up aright, in obedience to God and to thee ;



Begin betimes, lest thou fall of his fear ; and with judgment, that thou lose not his love :

Herein use good discretion, and govern not all alike,

Yet, perhaps, the fault will be in thee, if kindness prove not all sufficient ;  
By kindness, the wolf and the zebra become docile as the spaniel and the horse ;

The kite feedeth with the starling, under the law of kindness :

That law shall tame the fiercest, bring down the battlements of pride,  
Cherish the weak, control the strong, and win the fearful spirit.

Be obeyed when thou commandest : but command not often :

Let thy carriage be the gentleness of love, not the stern front of tyranny.

Make not one child a warning to another ; but chide the offender apart :

For self-conceit and wounded pride rankle like poisons in the soul.

A mild rebuke in the season of calmness, is better than a rod in the heat of passion,

Nevertheless, spare not, if thy word hath passed for punishment ;

Let not thy child see thee humbled, nor learn to think thee false ;

Suffer none to reprove thee before him, and reprove not thine own purposes by change ;

Yet speedily turn thou again, and reward him where thou canst,

For kind encouragement in good cutteth at the roots of evil.

When his reason yieldeth fruit, make thy child thy friend ;

For a filial friend is a double gain, a diamond set in gold.

As an infant, thy mandate was enough, but now let him see thy reasons ;

Confide in him, but with discretion : and bend a willing ear to his questions.

More to thee than to all beside, let him owe good counsel and good guidance ;

Let him feel his pursuits have an interest, more to thee than to all beside.

Watch his native capacities : nourish that which suiteth him the readiest ;

And cultivate early those good inclinations wherein thou fearest he is most lacking :

Is he phlegmatic and desponding ? let small successes comfort his hope :

Is he obstinate and sanguine ? let petty crosses accustom him to life :

Showeth he a sordid spirit ? be quick, and teach him generosity ;

Inclineth he to liberal excess ? prove to him how hard it is to earn.

Gather to thy hearth such friends as are worthy of honour and attention :

For the company a man chooseth is a visible index of his heart :

But let not the pastor whom thou hearest be too much a familiar in thy house,

For thy children may see his infirmities, and learn to cavil at his teaching.

It is well to take hold on occasions, and render indirect instruction ;

It is better to teach upon a system, and reap the wisdom of books :

The history of nations yieldeth grand outlines : of persons, minute details :

Poetry is polish to the mind, and high abstractions cleanse it.

Consider the station of thy son, and breed him to his fortune with judgment :

The rich may profit in much which would bring small advantage to the poor.

But with all thy care for thy son, with all thy strivings for his welfare, Expect disappointment, and look for pain; for he is of an evil stock, and will grieve thee.

## CHAPTER X.

## RESULTS.

## ENCOURAGEMENTS TO CHRISTIAN PARENTS—DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS—CONCLUSION.

“Train up a child in the way he should go,  
and WHEN HE IS OLD HE WILL NOT DEPART FROM IT.”

Do these words—so often quoted as the weighty text of all my remarks—express a law in God’s orderly kingdom, upon the steady operation of which a parent may rely with perfect confidence? Are we warranted in looking for piety in after years as the result of Christian training in youth, with the same calm assurance in the plan of God’s providence which, in spite of certain variations, inspires the hope of reaping a good crop in autumn, from a field which has been sown with good seed, and tilled by a wise husbandry in spring? In one word, is it possible to train up children so that, as a rule, they shall *grow up* Christians?

There are pious parents who may be disposed, perhaps, to answer these questions in the negative, though what their views actually are as to the connexion

established by God between a training in the way when young, and a walking in the same way when old, it might be hazardous in me to define, lest I should misinterpret what others believe, or be misinterpreted in what I believe myself. But as far as I have been able to gather from conversation the views held by many upon this very important point, they may be thus expressed:—"It is, doubtless, the duty and privilege of Christian parents to train up their children in the way they should go, but it by no means follows, as a general rule, that they will therefore walk in this way either in youth or in old age, because to do so implies conversion. Now, conversion can take place only when they are old enough to understand and believe the Gospel. Besides, it is not dependent on education, or anything man can do, but solely on the sovereignty of God, who gives or withholds His grace as He pleases. While, therefore, our duty as parents is clear, results are with God; and what these shall be no one can predict, for no one can know the hidden counsels of the Most High, or read the names written from eternity in the Lamb's book of life." If this at all expresses, however imperfectly, the convictions or opinions with which any parent engages in the work of home education, I do not wonder that it should be sad and spiritless, because, as regards results, it is necessarily so very uncertain and hopeless; for how can we labour with good-will unless we can do so in the faith that we are not alone, but *fellow-labourers* with God?

Now, we know indeed, and rejoice in believing, that all true life, all that is according to God's will, whether in youth or in old age, in the child or in the patriarch, must proceed from the grace of God; that unless born again, and our corrupt nature regenerated by His Spirit, we cannot be His "dear children;" and that, in bestowing His gifts, He does what seemeth good to himself. But the question still remains, whether God has not been pleased to establish in His moral, as well as in His physical kingdom, such an orderly arrangement, that certain things follow other things according to laws discoverable by us, on which we are entitled to rely, and of which we can take such advantage as shall secure to us wished-for blessings? In the physical world, certainly our heavenly Master does not give His servants "labour in vain" to execute. The husbandman is not appointed to sow his seed at a venture. In spite of bad seasons and occasional disappointment, he knows he can still rely upon God's beautiful and orderly plan, secured to him by promise, that "as long as the earth remains, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease;" and, accordingly, being sure to reap in due season, if he faints not, he "*waits* for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain." And is the Christian parent doomed to labour in vain in the spiritual kingdom when engaged in the nobler work of training up his children? Must he wait hopelessly

and despondingly for the precious fruit—precious in the sight of God—from what he has sown in his child's soul with many prayers and tears? Shall *he* never receive the early or the latter rain, and is his long patience in waiting only presumption in hoping? Impossible! They who best know God and His ways will most recoil from such views of His fatherly love and wisdom! There are laws in the moral as well as in the physical world, and more fixed and unalterable, too, because based upon what is morally fitting and eternally right:—and this is God's general law affecting education: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

And surely such a text as this assumes, as a matter of fact, that a child may, from infancy to old age, walk in the way it should go? There is no interval of time, not a year or month, allowed for its walking in any other way than the right one. The words do not mean anything like this: "Train up your child as you best can; yet remember that for years it will, as a matter of course, walk in the way it should *not* go, remain dead in sin, and a child of wrath, though perhaps it may be converted in manhood, and at last enter upon that right path which will not be departed from in old age." On the contrary, the words imply that the child may and ought to be so trained as that he will walk in the right way all his life. Thus, too, when the apostle says, "Fathers, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," does

he not also assume that their children may, in their earliest as well as in their riper years be, "in the Lord," and receive His nurture ?

That children, from their infancy, may possess God's Spirit, and grow up as trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord ; and that Christian parents are entitled to look for what they cannot but earnestly desire, is, moreover, implied in the ordinance of baptism. That rite is administered to the children of believing parents ; it is to them the sign and seal of the precious promise made to the families of God's people ever since it was first made to Abraham, viz., that He will be their God, and they shall be His people. "By the right use of this ordinance," says the Confession of Faith, "the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and *conferred* by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or *infants*) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, and in His appointed time." And does not every parent, who knows the relationship of himself and his offspring to the covenant God, rejoice in this promise, and lay hold of it, and plead it, praying that his child may enjoy the spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace from its birth, and be sanctified, like John the Baptist, from its mother's womb ? And what parent would be satisfied with a measure of good less than this, or experience any other feeling than that of deepest sorrow, if he thought his beloved child was doomed to remain unconverted for some years, and to be under the curse, without God or Christ in the world ?

But I do not think any Christian parent believes this, but, on the contrary, assumes, and acts upon the assumption, that if he really trains up his child in the way it should go, God will so bless his efforts that when "old he will not depart from it."

"Ungodly parents," says Baxter, "do serve the devil so effectually in the first impressions on their children's minds, that it is more than magistrates, and ministers, and all reforming means can afterwards do, to recover them from that sin to God. Whereas, if you would first engage their hearts to God by a religious education, *piety would then have all those advantages that sin hath now.* The *language* which you teach them to speak when they are children, they will use all their life after, if they live with those that use it. And so the *opinions* which they first receive, and the *customs* which they are used to at first, are very hardly changed afterward. I doubt not to affirm, that a *godly education is God's first and ordinary appointed means for the begetting of actual faith and other graces in the children of believers.* Many may have seminal grace before, but they cannot sooner have actual faith, repentance, love, or any grace, than they have reason itself in act and exercise. And the preaching of the Word by public ministers is not the first ordinary means of grace to any but those that are graceless till they come to hear such preaching; that is, to those on whom the first appointed means hath been neglected or proved in vain; that is, it is but the second means to do that which was not done by the first. The proof is undeni-



able, because God appointeth parents diligently to teach their children the doctrine of His holy Word before they come to the public ministry. Parents' teaching is the first teaching, and parents' teaching is for this end, as well as public teaching, even to beget faith, love, and holiness. *And God appointeth no means to be used by us on which we may not expect His blessing.* Therefore, it is apparent that *the ordinary appointed means for the first actual grace is parents' godly instruction and education of their children.* And public preaching is appointed for the conversion of those only that have missed the blessing of the first appointed means. Therefore, if you deny your children religious education, you deny them the first appointed means of their actual faith and sanctification, and then the second cometh upon disadvantage.\*

Dwight remarks: "If we train up our children in the way they should go, they will enter it *almost of course, follow us to heaven, and be our companions for ever.*"†

Jonathan Edwards says that "family education and order are some of the chief means of grace. If these fail, all other means are likely to prove ineffectual."

An eloquent American writer, already quoted, remarks:—"The aim, effort, and expectation of the parent should be, not, as is commonly assumed, that the child is to grow up in sin, to be converted after he comes to a mature age: but that he is to open

\* *Christian Economics*, chap. vi, p. 109. (Vol. IV, 8vo.)

† Sermon cxlviii.

on the world as one that is spiritually renewed, not remembering the time when he went through a technical experience, but seeming rather to have loved what is good from his earliest years. \* You will never practically aim at what you practically despair of, and if you do not practically aim to unite your child to God, you will aim at something less, that is, something unchristian, wrong, sinful. \* What opinion is more monstrous, in fact, than that which regards the Holy Spirit as having no agency in the immature souls of children who are growing up, helpless and unconscious, into the perils of time? \* The child cannot understand, of course, in the earliest stage of childhood, the philosophy of religion as a renovated experience, and that is not the form of the first lesson he is to receive. We are to understand that a right spirit may be virtually exercised in children, when, as yet, it is not intellectually received, or as a form of doctrine. Thus, if they are put upon an effort to be good, connecting the fact that God desires it, and will help them in the endeavour, this is all which, in a very early age, they can receive, and that includes everything—repentance, love, duty, dependence, faith. Nay, the operative truth necessary to a new life, may possibly be communicated through and from the parent, being revealed in his looks, manners, and ways of life, before they are of an age to understand the teaching of words: for the Christian scheme, the Gospel, is really wrapped up in the life of every Christian parent, and beams out from him as a living epistle, before it escapes from the lips,

or is taught in words. And the Spirit of truth may as well make this living truth effectual, as the preaching of the Gospel itself. Never is it too early for good to be communicated. Infancy and childhood are the ages most pliant to good. And who can think it necessary that the plastic nature of childhood must first be hardened into stone, and stiffened into enmity towards God and all duty, before it can become a candidate for Christian character? There could not be a more unnecessary mistake, and it is as unnatural and pernicious, I fear, as it is unnecessary."\*

These statements are all confirmed by observing the loving kindness of the Lord in His actual dealings towards His Church. It is remarkable, in the Old Testament, how frequently we see piety following a line of succession, as in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph; or appearing early, if at all, as in Samuel, David, Josiah, and Daniel. Yet polygamy, which was contrary to the wise appointment of God, was almost destructive of true family life, and made the holy school of *home* impossible. We have similar traces, in the New Testament, of piety continuing in the line of families—as when we read of a Timothy knowing the Holy Scriptures “from a child,” and possessing an “unfeigned faith” which “first dwelt” in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. The same fact, we are persuaded, is still more frequently seen in the Church now. “It was long ago observed,” says a wise and judicious writer, “and the observation

\* Bushnell on *Christian Nurture*, p. 13.

ought to sink deep into our hearts, of both the old and young professors, that where the Gospel is enjoyed in its purity, it is the ordinary method of Providence to call sinners into the fellowship of Jesus Christ in the days of their youth. Among those who have enjoyed from their childhood the benefit of religious instruction, of holy example, of sound and faithful ministrations, the instances of conversion after middle life are, for the most part, extremely rare. Let the aged Christian run over in his mind such of these instances as have come within his own knowledge, and we shall be much deceived if his list be not very short.”\*

To the same effect Mr. Barnes of Philadelphia writes, when commenting on the well known and beautiful verse:—“As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.” “There is no promise,” he says, “of the Bible that is more full of consolation to the pious, or that has been more strikingly fulfilled than this. And though it is true, that not *all* the children of holy parents become truly pious; though there are instances where they are signally wicked and abandoned, yet it is also true, that rich spiritual blessings *are* imparted to the posterity of those who serve God, and who keep His commandments. The great majority of those who be-

\* Dr Mason’s (New York) *Essays on the Church*, p. 194.

come religious, are the descendants of those who were themselves the friends of God. Those who now compose the Christian churches the world over, are not those generally who have been taken from the ways of open vice and profligacy, from the ranks of infidelity, or from the immediate descendants of scoffers, drunkards, or blasphemers. Such men usually tread, for a few generations at least, in the footsteps of their fathers. The Church is composed mainly of the descendants of those who have been true Christians, *and who trained their children to walk in the ways of pure religion.* It is also a fact, that comparatively a large proportion of the descendants of the pious themselves, for many generations, become true Christians."

And why should this surprise us? Why should a Christian parent have such weak faith in these blessings being realized in his own family, when he considers for a moment on what his hopes are based. There is, first of all, the *law of habit*, already so frequently alluded to—that marvellous power which, once it possesses the soul, holds it fast and strong with an almost irresistible despotism of good or evil. For we all know how the circumstances of our early life mould our later years; how the impressions then made can never be wholly effaced; and how, though in many respects we become different persons, yet in many more we remain essentially the same. The kind of music which delighted us in our youth, or the songs that lulled us in our infancy to repose; the character of the scenery which daily spread

itself before our eye; the ideas and manners of the people with whom we mingled; the habits of the companions who shared our early sports and our fresh affections; the leading features of our family history, whether these were poor or prosperous, glad or sorrowful; and, though last not least, the character of our school teachers, their words and looks, their smiles or frowns—these and such like influences combine to make up a power which acts and tells upon us for ever. Yet far more powerful than all, to shape the fashion of our lives, and fix our future destiny, is that home training to good habits which I have tried to sketch in the preceding pages!

But in estimating the causes which early tend to produce the happy result of a pious life, we must add to that of religious training others, which I merely suggest for consideration, but do not explain at length, or make the basis of my argument. Consider, for instance, the *direct* influence of the Christian parent, through that inscrutable and mysterious connexion which exists between him and his child, in virtue of which, and by what has been termed a law of "organic unity," there is transmitted much of disposition, mental temperament, and tendencies that are favourable to good, by healthy-minded as well as by healthy-bodied parents to their offspring. There is also the *indirect* power of a parent's prayers following the child through life, fruitful in many answers from that Father who ever lives and ever loves. There are the precious *promises* made by God to His people

and to their children, "beloved for their fathers' sakes." There are, again, the holy influences which more or less surround the child of Christian parents, because of his or their connexion with the Christian Church;—the blessings of Christian friendships and that training which the Church, as a society, ought to secure, and sometimes does secure, to its baptized members over and above what is afforded to them by the church in the house;—such causes, *in addition* to systematic religious training, help the growth of the Christian life from childhood to old age.

Yet, in spite of all that has been advanced to strengthen faith in the excellence of the home school, and in the certainty of the blessings which accompany or flow from the education it imparts, does not the anxious parent hear "a timid voice that asks in whispers" many questions whose answers, prompted by a painful experience, sadden his heart as he gazes around the family circle of young and happy spirits; ignorant as yet of any world beyond the joyous heaven of their own Christian home! He remembers other scenes of as sweet domestic peace, with promises as fair of future good, yet followed by desolation and woe. He can recal parents who seemed to him to have been wise and loving to their family, but whose hearts were broken by their conduct, while others of a grosser mould beheld with complacency and pride the eminent success in this world of children who never were trained at home to prepare for another. And visions dim the eye of memory of those who began a

life so pure and lovely, but ending, alas! with some sad tragedy of sin. "So," as Jeremy Taylor says, "have I seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood, and at first it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven as a lamb's fleece; but when a ruder breath had forced open its virgin modesty, it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age; it bowed the head, and broke the stalk; and at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces!" And why may it not be so with our own?

Thus, in spite of all that may be said regarding home education and its power, it does, nevertheless, sometimes, in hours of despondency, seem to one to be a theory well built up with words, but not able to prove itself true in practical life, just as life is; unfit, in short, to "teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in *this present world*." Or, to put a parent's objections and difficulties in a more definite shape, and to express the thoughts which may arise in his heart with a force proportioned to his wish to be relieved from them by getting a firm hold of truth, "Is not your plan," he may ask, "of home education too ideal? Is not a growing up in Christianity a mere possibility, not a likelihood? Do not all children prove that conversion is needed in after years? Do not the ill brought up children of many irreligious families often turn out well? Do not the children of pious parents as often turn out ill? Are



not all these things against us?" With the risk of taxing the patience of my reader, but with the eager desire of being able still more to strengthen the faith and hope of Christian parents, I shall, as shortly as possible, notice in detail those

#### DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS.

1. "*The system of home education suggested is ideal.*" In what respect? Not in the end which it proposes, for that is piety; surely not in the means by which this end is to be attained, for these are parental and pious education; nor in daring to expect a good result, for that, we maintain, is secured by the arrangements of God's moral government. Remember that, although in the pursuit of this as well as of every other high and great good, we may never be able fully to realize our ideal, yet woe be to us if we have no ideal to realize, or hopelessly give it up altogether! God in every thing sets perfection before us, because He is in all things himself perfect, and desires that we should be like himself in all things. Noble aims create noble efforts. He alone who believes in the high calling of God to his children, will earnestly labour that they may walk worthily of that calling. And if he does not realize all that is desirable—for perfection is not attained in this world—he may yet realize all that, in this world, and in his circumstances, is possible; and his children consequently will be found walking along the road that leads to increasing degrees of good here and to perfection hereafter, always accepted

in Christ and blessed by God. The man whose aim is high, may fail, indeed, in his attempts to reach it, yet how far higher will his lowest be than the highest of the man who has no aim at all! The wisest husbandman may never see his ideal farm realized; nor the greatest artist his ideal picture upon canvass; nor the greatest patriots and ablest statesmen their ideal government established; far less can the most earnest minded Christian reach that moral perfection, the stature of the perfect man, to which he is nevertheless growing, nor the best parent see his children, any more than himself, fully realize all that God would have them be; but, oh! how much more will each of those possess of what they thus skilfully and patiently labour for, than all others who have no such ideal future to stimulate their labours! How much better will the farm be than if an ignorant sluggard tilled it; the government than if savages constructed it; the earnest though sinful man, than if evil ruled him; and the children than if their parents had no wise plan, no definite object to guide them, nor took any pains in their upbringing!

The home education suggested in this volume does not, therefore, seem to me to be ideal, but practical, and such as good common sense, guided by Christian principles, is calculated, in ordinary circumstances, of affording, through the parents, to every member of a family.

It is asked again as an objection,—

2. "*Is not the growing up in Christianity only a possibility, not a likelihood?*" I have little to say upon

this point in addition to what has been already advanced to prove the truth objected to. If children, as they grow up, really prove by their actions that they are unprincipled and governed by evil;—if they habitually act contrary to conscience and have no fear of God before their eyes, then out of this state they must assuredly be brought, and by God's help trained to a better, for "whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God." But take heed, lest, while you expect more than this from a child, you may not also expect too much, and demand the same kind of evidences of piety and principle from him as from a strong man in Christ. What would be true to the one would be false in the other; and the life may in both exist, while the forms in which it manifests itself in each may be very different. Remember the young and tender plant is growing, not grown. It may have hardly risen above the earth. It is but *preparing* to blossom and bring forth fruit, while a night's frost can so nip its buds, and suddenly retard its progress, that it may seem to be quite withered and dead, though it still lives and is ready soon again to rise and struggle onwards to attain its full strength and beauty. When, however, as the result of Christian education, there is seen in a child even such features of character as a loving heart, a disposition to follow its sense of right, an habitual endeavour to obey its parents and the like, one may hope that such streams may flow from a fountain higher and deeper than the child can yet know or ever fathom; and that its future progress will not so much be from death to life, as

from some real life to life more abundantly,—not so much from darkness to light, as from early dawn to a brighter sunshine. Forbid that I should appear to be contented with the day of small things, but neither would I despise it or be ungrateful for it. To call good evil is as untrue and hurtful to us as to call evil good. There is one rule, however, which we may safely follow, and that is, to endeavour in every case to make a child better, but in no case to make him worse than he really is!

3. “*Do not the ill brought up children of many irreligious families often turn out well?*” Here, again, I must caution observers to be careful as to their facts. Are you sure that those families were irreligious? May not an education substantially sound in principle, and with many marks of wisdom in it, have been afforded, though wanting some features which you erroneously deem *essential*, or others which, it is granted by all, would have made it much more satisfactory. How do you know what influences from some relation or friend may have been brought to bear upon the children, sufficient to counteract the evil in their education which was visible to all? And how, apart from those in the family, can the innumerable Christian forces that dwell in every Christian land be estimated, which tend to mould the mind and bend the will to good? But even admitting all that I have alleged to be true, it is not asserted that a child of wicked parents is doomed, so that he cannot become pious; forbid such a thought! God says, “If he,” the wicked parent,

“left a son that seeth all his father’s sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, he shall not die for the iniquity of his father; he shall surely live. Yet say ye why? Doth not the son bear the iniquity of his father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes and done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die!” And few things, I may say in passing, evidence more strikingly and touchingly the power of Christian principle, than when it thus elevates a child above the evil influences of home; nor does anything exhibit in more dreadful colours the confusion and the selfishness of sin, than when home itself becomes a hotbed of vice, and a school for iniquity; when this refuge is changed into a prison, and the house of prayer into a den of thieves; when the parent, who should be revered as God’s image in the family, becomes so lowered, even in his own eyes, that he fears the rebuke of his child’s look, and, Saul like, is jealous of the superior excellence of his life, which he will not imitate, and cannot, though he would, destroy!

Such escapes, however, by children are comparatively rare, though we may notice it as an evidence of God’s merciful providence that there are many more arrests of the natural and legitimate consequences of bad than of pious training, and more failures in the evil which the one, than in the good which the other, tends to produce.

But, keeping all this in view, it still holds true as a

rule that wicked upbringing produces wicked upgrowing. Shew me a child reared amidst scenes of profligacy, whose ears never heard a prayer ascend from beneath the parental roof, or the name of God or of Jesus uttered except in oaths; whose eyes never saw in its parent an example, but such as it was iniquity to admire, and a virtue to abhor; who was daily trained up in habits of disobedience, lying, irreverence, idleness, and dishonesty,—and in that child it is not difficult to see a wicked manhood, followed by a wicked old age! This is a result which all who are acquainted with the family look for. When it happens, no one is surprised. Does any one express their wonder at the godlessness of the children?—"What else could you expect!" say all who knew the godlessness of the parents.

But this you say is an extreme case; and you point to very many, perhaps the great majority of those met with in everyday life, who belong neither to the pious nor to the depraved; who have not received anything *like* godly upbringing; but who, nevertheless, are useful and honourable citizens; amiable and beloved members of their own families; kind and considerate neighbours; staunch and loyal friends! There are, I admit, many such in the world, whom to know is to love and value. And of those there are not a few who may be possessed of a deeper and more enduring life, which they have received through a home education, conducted, we repeat it, in a very imperfect, unsystematic, and peculiar, yet, in the main, *Christian*

form—but who are rashly condemned by those who have had greater advantages, and are set down as “worldly,” “godless”—because they do not come up to *their* standard, and pronounce their “shibboleth,” nor express their inner life with the words, nor in the fashion, which a particular time or school may sanction. But not overlooking such cases, others undoubtedly occur, in which there *has* been in youth a home education conducted without religion, and consequently there is now a manhood spent without piety; yet a manhood characterized by all the amiable, honourable, and attractive traits of character which have been already alluded to. Such cases, however, only illustrate the principles we have urged. They prove that the character of the family, in after life, generally corresponds to the character impressed upon it in youth,—that parents, according to the end they aim at, and the labour they bestow in attaining it, will have “their reward.” Accordingly, they who seek for their children honour, industry, prudence, kindness, usefulness in society, and the like, may be rewarded by their possession of those blessings; but as they did not desire that *God*, above all, should be loved, and His favour, above all, enjoyed by their children, they are, consequently, not surprised or disappointed though He is not in all their thoughts. Yet let me say to parents who thus act, What *security* have you, except in real Christian principle, that all the weak defences of natural character, however strong, shall not, at any moment, give way before temptation to the flood of

evil passion, and your child, in whom you boast, and on whom you rely with such confidence, be at last drowned in his own iniquities? But should no such *visible* destruction of natural character take place here, and should the life of the child so brought up by you pass away in the unbroken sunshine of worldly favour and prosperity, gladdened every day by the deserved respect of society, the intercourse of loving friends, and the enjoyment of those rewards which an affectionate, generous, and honourable man can never fail to receive,—can such a result as this, I ask, satisfy those who believe that true love to Jesus Christ is alone true religion, or that life eternal is to *know God* and Jesus Christ whom He has sent? If not, then it follows that no amount of success in life, no mere worldly respectability or morality, which a heathen or confessed atheist might possess, prove that the godless education has failed in producing its godless fruits. I care not what may be said in favour of the peculiar “way” in which the child has been trained up. It is a wrong way—one that leads from life to death, if it leads not to Jesus Christ, or makes a man idolize himself rather than humbly follow his Saviour. It is a godless way if God is not its end.

Home education had, in a very remarkable instance, been so successful in its results, that the child, when he became a young man, grew rich, and had great possessions, and withal was so sincere and earnest, that he went to Christ, and, kneeling before Him, asked the way to life eternal; nay more, that young man was so



pure and excellent in his outward conduct, that he walked in the commandments of the law blameless, and was in all respects so good, that Jesus, looking on him, loved him! Now, how few parents aim at producing such results as these even? How many would think it only "ideal" to expect them in *their* children? How few would ever think it necessary to pray and strive for more, and rest satisfied with nothing short of their beloved child advancing farther still, and never halting until he resigned himself wholly to Christ, forsook all that hindered him from taking up his cross and following his Lord in mind and spirit for ever! Yet, mark it well! such a young man as I have described above was he of whom we read in the Gospel, who with this very character and these hopes came to Jesus, yet went away sorrowful from Him! And would any parent take comfort to himself if he beheld his own child thus depart from his Saviour? Would any amount of real or supposed excellence console him for that sad and solemn turning away? Whatever else had been accomplished, would he not experience an unutterable sense of future danger as he watched his beloved one going away with a sorrowful countenance from his Lord, although he returned to a splendid home which he had never dishonoured, and in the acknowledged possession of a character which was unimpeachable for its moral worth, viewed merely in relation to the claims of men? Oh, surely the narrative which has been recorded by the Judge of all the earth for our warning and instruction in righteous-

ness, teaches us this at least, that whatever else a man may turn to, yet in God's sight "he turns out ill" when he turns away from the Saviour! Parents, therefore, should not take comfort to themselves until they have good hope that their children practically resolve to carry their cross, and thus follow Christ, in mind and spirit, wherever He goeth.

8. Finally, it is alleged as another difficulty and discouragement, that *children who have been trained up by pious parents in the way they should go, depart from that way in after years as frequently as those who have not had these advantages.* I would, first of all, again suggest doubts as to the truth of the facts which are so frequently assumed as true, when such assertions are confidently made. It might be asked, for instance, *Were the parents indeed pious? Were they really well-principled, sound-hearted Christians, or mere loud talkers, noisy zealots, or the prim and scrupulous adherents of some sect? Was their domestic life in harmony with their public profession? Again, if truly pious, did they train up their children wisely? In spite of the many shortcomings, which more or less belong to the best family government on earth, was theirs, on the whole, firm, loving, and Christian? Were there not such palpable defects in father, mother, or in the general spirit of the family, as sadly marred the home education? Was there no mental defect in the children themselves? In what circumstances were they launched into the world? Under whose auspices? Are you quite sure, in short, that*

the home school had a *fair trial* in these instances which you point out as proofs of its inefficiency? I deny the truth of the alleged fact that the children of pious parents turn out ill, and maintain, on the contrary, that we are warranted from observation in coming to the very opposite conclusion, and can point everywhere to the children of Christian parents whose lives vindicate the high claims of a right home education.

As an interesting proof of this, I must again largely quote from Barnes's comment on Isaiah lix. 21. He says: "I know that it is often thought, and especially that it is often said, that the children of clergymen are less virtuous and religious than others. But it should be remembered, that such cases are more prominent than others—that they attract attention—and especially that the profane and the wicked have a malicious pleasure in making them the subject of remark. The son of a drunkard will be intemperate without attracting notice, for such a result is expected; the son of an infidel will be an infidel; the son of a scoffer will be a scoffer; of a thief, a thief; of a licentious man, licentious, without being the subject of special remark. It is expected, and is regarded as a matter of course. But when the son of an eminent Christian is profane, licentious, or an infidel—when he treads the path of open profligacy, it at once excites remark, because *such is not the usual course, and is not usually expected*; and because a wicked world has pleasure in marking the case, and calumniating religion through the prominent instance of imperfection and sin. But such is not the common

result of religious training. Some of the most devotedly pious people of this land, (America,) are the descendants of the Hugonots who were expelled from France. A very large proportion of all the piety in this country has been derived from the 'Pilgrims' who landed on the rock of Plymouth, and God has blessed their descendants in New England and elsewhere with numerous revivals of religion. I am acquainted with the descendants of John Rogers, the first martyr in Queen Mary's reign, of the tenth and eleventh generations. With a single exception, the eldest son in the family has been a clergyman; some of them eminently distinguished for learning and piety; and there are few families now in this land a greater proportion of whom are pious, than of that family. The following statistical account, made of a limited section of the country, not more favoured or more distinguished for piety than many others, accords undoubtedly with similar facts which are constantly occurring in the families of those who are the friends of religion. The Secretary of the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society made a limited investigation this year, (1838) for the purpose of ascertaining the facts about the religious character of the families of ministers and deacons, with reference to the charge so often urged, that the 'sons and daughters of ministers and deacons were worse than common children.' The following is the result:—In 268 families which he canvassed, he found 1290 children over fifteen years of age. Of these children, 884, *almost three-fourths, are hope-*

*fully pious*; 794 have united with the churches; sixty-one entered the ministry; only seventeen are dissipated, and about half only of these became so while with their parents. In eleven of these families, there are 123 children, and *all but seven pious*. In fifty-six of these families, there are 249 children over fifteen, and all hopefully pious. When and where can any such result be found in the families of infidels, of the vicious, or of irreligious men? Indeed, it is the great law by which religion and virtue are spread and perpetuated in the world, that God is faithful to this covenant, and that He blesses the efforts of His friends in endeavouring to train up generations for His service. All pious persons should repose on this promise of a faithful God. They may and should believe, that it is His *design to perpetuate religion in the families of those who truly serve and obey Him*. They should be faithful in imparting religious truth—faithful in prayer—faithful in a meek, holy, pure, and benevolent example; they should so live, that their children might safely tread in their footsteps; they should look to God for His blessing on their efforts, and their efforts will not be in vain. They shall see their children walk in the ways of virtue; and when they die, they may leave the world with unwavering confidence, that God will not suffer His faithfulness to fail—that He will not break His covenant, nor alter the thing that is gone out of His lips.”

This is surely most cheering to Christian parents!

But, notwithstanding all that has been said to the

same effect, exceptional cases, I admit, will occur to the general rule—never, I believe, that of a whole family, but sometimes of one, or may be more, stray members of it, in whom an early training, signally blessed to the others, has apparently failed in saving them from the service of sin. These, alas! are the dead branches in an otherwise fair and comely tree; these are the family blots, its only shame, its heaviest burthen, and sorest chastisement. Their names cast a shadow around the fireside, and are followed by expressive silence, a drooping head, a sigh or tear. God hears them mentioned every day in secret, and accompanied often by groans of anguish from a parent's anxious and troubled heart, as in prayer are bowed down the grey hairs which the selfish prodigal is bringing with sorrow to the grave. These are the sinners whose deaths make "sorrow's crown of sorrow," and cause a wail of agony to ascend to heaven, the most terrible which a parent can ever experience in this world, when, without hope, he cries, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Oh horrible ingratitude! Oh cursed and cruel selfishness! when, to gratify some passion, and seize the wages of iniquity, a child can thus break through the holy charities of home, wither the most beautiful affections of a sister or brother's heart, and trample with an iron heel on a parent's crushed and broken spirit! But such is the demon power of sin! It can thus separate from the holiest and most loving family on earth,

disown and dishonour parents, because it can disown and dishonour God. Without remorse, it can hear our Father in heaven say, "I have nourished and brought you up as children, but ye have rebelled against me!"—how can it then be concerned for a father on earth? Without emotion it can behold Jesus weep, and hear Him exclaim, "How often would I have gathered you, but you would not!"—how can it feel more for any other brother who mourns for and could die to save the impenitent one! The mystery of iniquity is indeed great! The individual being can assert the awful power which God has given him as a responsible being, and may refuse to be subject to God or man. But verily there is a God that judgeth the earth!—and if there be one man who more than another is heaping up to himself wrath against the day of wrath, it is the perverse and rebellious child of pious parents,—the selfish, unprincipled wanderer from a Christian home!

A great dramatist\* has described with terrible vividness the terrors of conscience, creating, and created by, a dream, in which a son, who had murdered a father, beholds the day of judgment, with all its dread accompaniments. The trumpet sounds; the elements melt with fervent heat; the dead are raised; the Judge appears; the murderer's name at last is called; and, with fear and trembling, he obeys the summons. The Judge holds in his hand a mighty balance that swings between earth and heaven. In

\* Schiller, in the well-known scene between Franz and Daniel, in the last act of "The Robbers."

one scale the deadly sins of the wretched criminal are placed, until they are mountains in bulk; but the blood of atonement in the other scale, meanwhile, outweighs them all. At last an old man appears, bowed down with signs of grief; all eyes are turned upon him; the murderer knows him well, and sees him with horror approach the balance. The old man *cuts one lock from his grey hairs, and casts it into the scale full of crime*; and, lo! it sinks to the earth, and a voice is heard saying, "There is mercy for all other sinners, but none for thee!"

But we dare not lose hope, on this side of the grave, even of the prodigal who has gone to a far country, and is cared for only by those parents whom he has most deeply injured, but whose undying love for him can never grow cold but in the grave. While life lasts we cannot fix a limit, beyond which his early training may not be blessed by God as the means of restoring his soul, and causing him again to walk in a path of righteousness. The touching memories and early influences of the holy past are seldom obliterated from the hardest heart. Its "old familiar faces" never cease to gaze upon him, and to beckon him with affectionate entreaty to return. He cannot, if he would, forget the

" Kind looks, kind words, and tender greetings,  
From clasping hands whose pulses beat no more."

The Christian home of his youth ever and anon comes back like a holy religion of the heart, and seems a green oasis of rest amidst the weary wilderness of sin. The re-



membrances of a father's worth and of a mother's love,—of prayers poured forth around the family altar,—of praises once heard from lips long ago silent in the grave,—of parental advices and instructions,—of days of bereavement, when around the bed of death hearts now alienated were knit together by a sense of a common sorrow,—of days of sunshine, when faith and love, from that calm retreat, made the future glorious which has become through sin a dark and dreary past;—Ah! these are influences that

Perish never;  
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,  
Nor man nor boy,  
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,  
Can utterly abolish or destroy!

Like those brilliant coruscations which flash across the midnight of a wintry sky, these holy recollections may suddenly rush across the wanderer's soul, and illumine it with a heavenly and more enduring light! The seed sown by the parents' hands, with many desponding tears, may be covered by the snows of an inclement season, and seem dead and lost for ever; but a spring-time may yet come from the quickening Spirit of God, when the seed shall at last appear, first the blade, then the ear, and soon the full corn in the ear! And it may be in a distant land—on a dying bed—or even in a prison's darkest cell, that a parent's prayers may at last be answered, as his long-lost child cries out, in the anguish of his own penitent soul, but to the joy of ministering angels, "I will arise and go to my Father!" Again we say, with un-

shaken conviction in its truth, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it!"

We would cherish the hope, that even Solomon, who spoke these words, lived to know their truth in his own latest experience:—that he who thought, during a long life, one of the wisest of men, was at last led into grievous sin, did not in the end die a fool; but was brought back to the path in which he was trained up in his early years, when he was "taught by his father," and was "tender and only beloved of his mother." Did not the sorrows, the confessions, and lofty aspirations of "the Preacher," survive the sins and follies of the king? Did not the stream, lost for a time in the sand, reappear? Was there not some connexion between his early training and that remarkable utterance of his latest and deepest convictions, in which he sums up the varied experience of his whole life—"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

But I must bring these Hints to a conclusion, lest I should weary my readers by "much speaking;" yet I feel it difficult to part company with those whom I wish to aid as a brother with words of warning and of cheer, ere we each pursue our respective journeys, to practise by God's help what we believe to be His will. One or two stray thoughts occur to me, which

I will utter as they come, before saying farewell, and, as a

## CONCLUSION.

Do not, I beseech of you, ever look on duty, however difficult, as work assigned by a hard master, but as blessed labour which Jesus calls us to perform as *fellow-labourers* with himself;—labour in, and from which, when done in His Spirit, we shall assuredly share His joy, not only by ourselves being made more perfect and more able to receive larger measures of blessedness, but also by our aiding others to share our own good and happiness in God.

But of all labour, esteem most highly that of training your own dear children for time and eternity! It is recognised by Jesus as a source of true joy, when “a man is born into the world!” It ought to be so to every parent, when it is such a world, that our children, in entering it, may be baptized into the name of God as their Father, Jesus as their Saviour, and the Holy Ghost as their Sanctifier! Life has sufficient charms for a Christian parent to make him bless God for its existence and continuance, had he no other work to do, or joy to experience, than that of training his children for glory, and doing so as a *fellow-labourer* with the Godhead!

But *no time must be lost*. The Master gives every servant time sufficient, but not too much, for his work. If the “twelve hours in the day” are not too few, neither are they too many. “*The night cometh*” should not be forgotten by the parent, especially when

twilight shadows may be sombering his path. Earnestness and immediate action are the more necessary, when it is remembered that other influences are constantly at work training the child up in the way he should *not* go. His ear will hear bad instructions, his eye catch bad examples. The world without will find a soil in the heart within prepared to receive all the bad seed which it sows day and night. Satan is educating, in a thousand ways, with all his subtlety and wiles. Evil is busy; therefore, "what thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

Does any parent who reads these words experience the revival of an old grief caused by the memory of beloved children whose education was looked forward to as a delightful task, and whose infancy was watched with anxious longing as the new and beautiful morning of what was hoped to be a long and happy day, but whose sun, "trailing clouds of glory," had hardly gilded the horizon with its beams, ere it set for ever in darkness! Sad, indeed, are those gaps in the family circle; bitter is the parent's cry, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not;" and bitter are his fears lest Benjamin also should be taken away. But there is a comfort for such mourners, because there is hope in such deaths! These children live. Dying in infancy they are,—who dare doubt it?—saved for ever. They have passed to the better home school above in their Father's house, and they are educating there by the Great Teacher, who has brought them to himself. Not in vain have parents lived who have contributed glori-

fied spirits to live for ever with God! Not in vain have their prayers for these lambs been offered to the Good Shepherd, when He took them to His bosom and brought them into the fold above, to be there kept secure until the old sheep should follow. Beautifully has the poet said,—

There is no flock, however watched and tended,  
But one dead lamb is there!

There is no fireside howsoever defended,  
But has a vacant chair.

She is not dead—the child of our affection—  
But gone unto that school

Where she no longer needs our poor protection,  
And Christ himself doth rule.

Not as a child shall we again behold her,  
For when, with raptures wild,  
In our embraces we again enfold her,  
She will not be a child,

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,  
Clothed with celestial peace;  
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion  
Shall we behold her face!

And now what more can I say, Christian parents, to comfort you regarding the dead, or to cheer you on to train up the living, than by directing your eyes, ere we part, to the eternal future. For when this earthly life is ended, the blessed results of home education have not ended with it! These remain for ever. Brighter rewards than were ever reaped upon earth await Christian parents beyond the grave. They and their children must again meet. The whole family will appear together before the judgment-seat. Then will be fully traced out, what can be perceived but

dimly here,—the moral connexion between one generation and another, and the wide-spread and long-enduring effects of home education. Who can conceive the rewards which pious parents will receive upon that day! Whatever success attended their labours here—though all may apparently have been in vain—they will still have the inexpressible consolation of hearing their Lord commend them as “good and faithful servants.” But should their labours have been owned by God as a means of saving the souls of their children; should they be then able to adopt their Master’s words, and say to Him in peace, “Behold us and the children whom thou hast given us,”—if every child is there, not one missing, but all saved,—each, too, pointing to those joyful parents as having been the honoured instruments in bringing them to Christ, and through Christ to glory;—if, moreover, several generations appear linked together as a golden chain, each link at once a godly parent and a godly child,—oh! who can imagine the greatness of such a reward! Yet this day of solemn judgment, which finishes our earthly dispensation, only begins the endless life of God’s united family in His house above. What shall we say to the vision which flits before the cloudy eye of our faith—a family in heaven! Every danger past; the days of temptation or of suffering vanished away; the sick-bed, with its weary watchings and partings, never more to be repeated; every grave emptied of its holy sleeper, and the sea of its dead; all are here! here together; here acquainted with each other as

they never were on earth; here loving each other as they never could love on earth; here rejoicing in the fellowship of Christ, and of His saints—and that *for ever!* Surely, parents, the very thought of such rewards as those might cast you on your knees before the Saviour, for grace to enable you to labour until death, if by any means they might be obtained! “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

I conclude by a final appeal to careless parents, in the words of the wise, loving, and holy Baxter:—

“And now let me seriously speak to the hearts of those careless and ungodly parents that neglect the holy education of their children, yea, and to those professors of godliness that slubber over so great a work with a few customary formal duties and words, that are next to a total omission of it. Oh, be not so unmerciful to the souls that you have helped to bring into the world! Think not so basely of them, as if they were not worth your labour. Make not your children so like your beasts, as to make no provision but only for their flesh. Remember still that it is not beasts but men that you have begotten and brought forth; educate them, then, and use them as men, for the love and obedience of their Maker. Oh, pity and help the souls that you have defiled and undone! Have mercy on the souls that must perish in hell if they be not saved in this day of salvation! Oh, help them that

have so many enemies to assault them! Help them that have so many temptations to pass through, and so many difficulties to overcome, and so severe a judgment to undergo! Help them that are so weak, and so easily deceived and overthrown! Help them speedily while your advantages continue; before sin have hardened them, and grace have forsaken them, and Satan place a stronger garrison in their hearts. Help them while they are tractable, before they are grown up to despise your help, before you and they are separated asunder, and your opportunities be at an end. You think not your pains from year to year too much to make provision for their bodies: O be not cruel to their souls! Sell them not to Satan, and that for naught! Betray them not by your ungodly negligence to hell. Or, if any of them will perish, let it not be by you, who are so much bound to do them good. The undoing of your children's souls is a work much fitter for Satan than for their parents.

“ Oh, then, deny not this necessary diligence to your necessitous children, as you love their souls, as you love the happiness of the Church or commonwealth, as you love the honour and interest of Christ, and as you love your present and everlasting peace. Do not see your children the slaves of Satan here, and the firebrands of hell for ever, if any diligence of yours may contribute to prevent it. Do not give conscience such matter of accusation against you as to say, ‘ All this was long of thee! If thou hadst instructed them diligently, and watched over them, and corrected them, and done thy



part, it is like they had never come to this!' You till your fields, you weed your gardens; what pains take you about your grounds and cattle! And will you not take more for your children's souls? Alas! what creatures will they be if you leave them to themselves! How ignorant, careless, rude, and beastly! Oh, what a lamentable case have ungodly parents brought the world into! Ignorance and selfishness, beastly sensuality and devilish malignity, have covered the face of the earth as a deluge, and driven away wisdom, and self-denial, and piety, and charity, and justice, and temperance almost out of the world, confining them to the breasts of a few obscure, humble souls, that love virtue for virtue's sake, and look for their reward from God alone, and expect that, by abstaining from iniquity, they make themselves a prey to wolves. Wicked education hath unmanned the world, and subdued it to Satan, and made it almost like to hell. Oh, do not join with the sons of Belial in this unnatural wickedness."

May the God of all the families of the earth be pleased to bless what has been written in this little book, for the advancement of His "kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost," by establishing everywhere the Home Mission of Christian Parents, and by rearing everywhere the holy temples of Christian families!