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No. 124.

THE DUTY

OF GIVING

CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION

TO

CHILDREN.

A letter written by Iraha Chase ; addressed, in 1831, by the Boston Association, and now by the Tract Society, to parents and others connected with Baptist churches.



If there is any thing which should constrain us, at early dawn, when surrounded with midday cares, at evening hour, yes, and in the watches of the night, to enter into the closet ; if there is any thing which should lead us to God, with a fervor of supplication surpassing that with which we plead for our own souls, it is the early conversion of our children.

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Extract from a Sermon by Rev. Robert Hall, preached at Leicester, England, for the benefit of a Sunday School.

While we insist on the absolute necessity of an acquaintance with the word of God, we are equally convinced it is but an instrument which, like every other, requires a hand to wield it; and that important as it is in the order of means, the spirit of Christ only can make it effectual, which ought therefore to be earnestly and incessantly implored for that purpose. *Open mine eyes, saith the Psalmist, and I shall behold wonderful things out of thy law.* We trust it will be your care who have the conduct of the school we are recommending to the patronage of this audience to to impress on these children a deep conviction of their radical corruption, and of the necessity of the agency of the Spirit to render the knowledge they acquire practical and experimental. *In the morning sow your seed, in the evening withhold not your hand; but remember that neither he that soweth, nor he that watereth, is any thing; it is God that giveth the increase.* Be not satisfied with making them read a lesson or repeat a prayer. By every thing tender and solemn in religion, by a due admixture of the awful considerations drawn from the prospect of death and judgment, with others of a more pleasing nature, aim to fix serious impressions on their hearts. Aim to produce a religious concern, carefully watch its progress and endeavour to conduct it to a prosperous issue. Lead them to the footstool of the Saviour; teach them to rely, as guilty creatures, on his merits alone, and to commit their eternal interests entirely into his hands. Let the salvation of these children be the object to which every word of your instructions, every word of your authority is directed. Despise the profane clamour which would deter you from attempting to render them serious, from an apprehension of its making them melancholy, not doubting for a moment that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that the path to true happiness lies through purity, humility, and devotion. Meditate the worth of souls: meditate deeply the lessons the Scriptures afford on their inconceivable value and eternal duration. While the philosopher wearies himself with endless specula-

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A Letter written by IRAH CHASE; addressed, in 1831, by the Boston Association, and now by the Tract Society, to Parents and others connected with Baptist Churches.

Dear Brethren,—It is not to a novel subject, but to one which, nevertheless, must always possess a fresh and touching interest, that we now solicit your attention—THE DUTY OF GIVING CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION TO CHILDREN.

This duty is, in the first place, the dictate of reason and affection.

Reason requires that the ignorant be instructed. And the more important the knowledge, the stronger is the argument for its being communicated. And the greater our affection for the persons needing instruction, the more intense is our desire to have them instructed. Who does not pronounce it suitable that children be taught those things which may be useful to them in the present life? and who that loves his children does not desire to have them taught? Now, we take it for granted, that the knowledge of the Christian religion is more valuable than the knowledge of any other subject; for it fills the mind with the brightest conceptions of purity and benevolence; and it is connected with what has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. It is, then, most manifestly and most emphatically, the dictate of reason and affection, that Christian instruction be given to children

Besides, *this duty is clearly implied in the general direction to make the gospel known.*

In the command of our Saviour, *Preach the gospel to every creature*, it is clear that he would have Christian instruction given to all who are capable of being instructed. The common sense of every man understands the direction as having reference to moral agents only, and to all moral agents belonging to the human family. The gospel is to be preached to all; and we are to encourage its ministers to go forth to instruct the most distant nations. Surely then, our own children are not to be neglected; but as soon as they can understand, they are to be taught the simple and affecting story of our redemption, the first principles of the oracles of God.

But further, *the duty of giving Christian instruction to children, is expressly enjoined.* The sacred Scriptures exhibit this duty in the most direct and positive manner: *Provoke not your children to wrath*, says an apostle, *but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.** Nurture is the more general term, indicating the education, or training up of children, which, we know, comprehends instruction and example, rewards and punishments, and whatever may be necessary in this work. *Admonition*, as here used, directs our attention particularly to the mind of the child, as that with which we have especially to do; and we are here taught that this nurture and admonition, or instilling into the mind, must be conformable to the Spirit and instructions of our Lord.

So clear and prominent is the duty. It is the manifest dictate of reason and affection; it is implied in the general direction to make the gospel known; and it is expressly enjoined. It rests, therefore, on an immovable foundation; and we need no other.

In view of these considerations, it is to be hoped that we shall all feel the force of the obligations that rest upon us. But it may be useful to mention some additional considerations by which also we should be urged to the performance of this duty.

*Eph 6: 4.

Consider *the susceptibility of the mind in childhood.*

This has always been proverbial. In childhood the mind has not the prejudices with which it is likely to be filled at a later period. It is more candid; and the impressions which it then receives, are the most likely to be permanent. The evil propensity has not become strengthened by long habits of thinking and acting in an unworthy and unchristian manner. The child exhibits a frankness, and deference, and docility, the most encouraging. And we know that if his mind be not early imbued with correct sentiments, it will be with false and pernicious ones.

Consider *the effect on the community.*

Children will be either blessings or curses to their parents and to the community. Think of a child brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. You may hope to see him dutiful to his parents, their delight and their glory. Follow him through the periods of youth and of manhood. What a salutary influence he exerts on all his companions! and what a profusion of benefits does he scatter around him, in whatever sphere he may move. 'Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.'*

But, on the other hand, think of the unhappy child, that has not received Christian instruction. What can you expect but that he will be the *grief of his mother?* Destitute of Christian principle, he will be the easy victim of temptation. He corrupts the principles and habits of others. Or, if he does not absolutely become a pest in society, he at least fails of doing that amount of good which he might have been the honored instrument of accomplishing. Should he, at mature age, through the riches of divine grace, become truly religious, how will he deplore, that in childhood his Christian education was neglected, and that from a child he had *not* known the holy scriptures.

In a few years, the dearest interests of the community will be in the hands of those who are now children. How important that we do what we can to

* Prov. 22 3.

cause that the generation which shall arise, may be a generation to praise the Lord, and to diffuse throughout all the walks of life, a pure and happy influence.

Consider *the consequences beyond the grave.*

If a child be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, there is reason to trust not only that this Christian instruction will have a good influence upon him in the present life, but also that it will be so blessed as to make him 'wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*' But if a child grow up in ignorance and contempt of Christian truth and duty, there is an alarming probability not only that he will be worse than useless in this life, but also that he will die in his sins, and fall under the solemn declaration of the Saviour, *Whither I go, ye cannot come.* †

Most of those in a Christian land who have given evidence of having become truly pious, we have reason to believe, had some truths of the gospel deeply impressed on their minds at an early age. The seed of divine truth sown in the tender mind, may lie buried long, but we may hope it will not be lost.

Yes, for this we may hope and pray. How often has the recollection of truths affectionately inculcated in childhood, been brought afresh to the mind at a later period, with an overwhelming power. The tongue of the faithful parent may now be silent in the grave; and the eye that once beamed on the child with parental and Christian love, may now be seen no more; but the instruction, and the patience, and tender solicitude with which it was imparted, fill the soul of the hitherto careless wanderer with deep emotion, and become the most prominent among the means of his conversion to God.

In this view of the matter, there is, certainly, great encouragement, but there is still greater in another view which we are permitted to take. As connected with the truly Christian instruction of our children, we may hope, and we should hope, for their early conversion,—for their being brought even in early childhood, to a saving acquaintance with religion, to

* 2 Tim. 3: 15.

† John 8: 21, 22.

repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Why should we not? The gospel is remarkable for its simplicity, a child may understand it; many a young child has understood it, so far as its first principles are concerned, and has felt its heavenly power, and given ample evidence of being truly regenerate.

In the time of our Saviour, there were such children. And it is not improbable that he selected one of these, when he rebuked the ambitious contention of his disciples. On this occasion, according to the record of Matthew, 'Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.*' In Luke, this last declaration is expressed thus: 'Whosoever shall receive *this child* in my name, receiveth me.†' And Matthew immediately adds the words of the Saviour, 'But whoso shall offend, or cause to sin, *one of these little ones that believe in me*, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.'

On another occasion, there were brought unto our Lord little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, 'Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.‡' 'Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, he shall not enter therein.§'

In these passages and the parallel ones, the original words rendered child, little ones, little children, and infants, may indicate children of such an age as to be capable of receiving religious instruction. This every one acquainted with the Greek, must know; and it has been abundantly shown by the ablest interpreters. Even the word which at first sight would here seem

* Matt. 18: 2-5. † Luke 9: 48. ‡ Matt. 19: 13, 14. § Mark 10: 15.

to be the most unfavorable to this representation, (the word in Luke rendered *infants*,) is the very word which the apostle Paul uses when he says to Timothy, 'From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures.'

If, on these occasions of teaching humility to his disciples, our Lord directed their attention to children, on account merely of the simplicity and meekness which belong, in a remarkable degree, to children generally, his teaching was beautiful and impressive, and if he directed their attention to children, who besides possessing these qualities in common with other children, had received the truth in the love of it, his teaching was, certainly, still more beautiful and impressive.

That there were such children in his time, is evident from the 21st chapter of Matthew,* where it is stated: 'When the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, hosanna to the son of David, they were displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise?'

This is a quotation from the eighth Psalm, and, it being poetry, it is somewhat hyperbolic, according to the poetic manner; but the idea intended to be exhibited is perfectly manifest, namely, that God is pleased when young children feel his love, and utter his praise.

Instances of early piety have occurred in almost every age of the world; and they are not rare in our own country at the present time. Within the circle of our own observation, and particularly in those places where special attention has been paid to the subject of religion, many a striking and lovely example of this kind has presented itself; and we have been most happily taught the force of the passage which has just been repeated: *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise.* Indeed, there is abundant proof that genuine conversions may

* Verses 15, 16.

occur, and that they have occurred, at a very early period.

Why, then, we ask again, why should we not hope and labor, and pray for such a blessing in respect to our own children? And who can refuse thus to exert himself, when he thinks of the consequences which may ensue beyond the grave?

Consider *the uncertainty of life.*

There is uncertainty in respect to our *own* lives. Soon our children may be called to weep over our lifeless remains, and be left amidst the dangers of an ensnaring and sinful world. Ah! how can we answer for it, if we neglect the precious opportunities which we now enjoy for bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

There is uncertainty in respect to *their* lives. How often does the loveliest blossom droop and fade away before our eyes! Shall not we do without delay what God himself has commanded us to do, in order that each, whenever removed, may be transplanted to his own garden on high?

We must remember, that, dear and lovely as our children may be, they need to be regenerated and saved through Jesus Christ; that *all have sinned*, and that, just so far as they are sinners, they need to repent, and to receive forgiveness through a child-like reliance on our condescending Lord. The time allotted them may be short. Death is almost daily entering some of our families; and none can tell either how soon, or how suddenly, any one of the dear children committed to our care may be torn away. Now is the precious opportunity of instructing their tender minds, and pointing them to the Lamb of God. The opportunity may soon be gone. How bitter must then be the remembrance of having neglected our duty! How sweet, the consolation of having faithfully performed it!

Christian instruction, as we have seen, must not only be given to children; but it must also be given *in an affectionate and engaging manner.*

‘Provoke not,’ says the apostle, ‘provoke not your

children to wrath.' This is, indeed, a general direction; and it is a most important admonition in respect to all our intercourse with children; but it applies, with peculiar force, to our efforts for their spiritual and eternal benefit. It teaches us to guard against a repulsive austerity and moroseness, and to let our whole manner of communicating instruction and admonition be the manifest dictate of love. While we present unadulterated Christian truth, we must endeavor to present it so affectionately as, if possible, to disarm the enmity of the natural heart. And we must let our little listeners clearly perceive not only that *we* love them, but that *God* loves them, and requires of them only what is necessary to their highest happiness. We must show them that it is *the way of transgressors that is hard*; but that 'the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'

We must do our utmost to excite and keep up in the tender mind, a cheerful attention to the various things involved in a religious education. This is evident from a parallel passage, in the epistle to the Colossians,* where the apostle says expressly, 'Provoke not your children to anger, *lest they be discouraged.*' Clearly, then, we must, according to the circumstances in which we are placed, take those measures which are the best adapted to encourage our children in all that is right and useful, and especially in receiving Christian instruction.

The duty of giving such instruction is directly and explicitly enjoined upon parents; and they cannot be exonerated from performing it, so far as it may be in their power. Parents, it is most obvious, have peculiar advantages for influencing the minds of their children. And who that has the heart of a parent, does not ardently desire to be qualified for performing, in the happiest manner, so endearing and responsible a work? Who that has the heart of a parent, does not hear a voice from heaven, saying, 'These words shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when

* 3: 21.

thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

But while parents cannot be released from the obligation to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, they may find that one of the best means of doing this, is to employ the aid of others. It may greatly contribute to the attainment of the grand object, and yet leave much for parents themselves to perform. It may, in our circumstances, possess various manifest advantages. And it may be admirably adapted to encourage our children, and to extend to the children of others the same benefits which we would confer upon our own. Whenever this is the case, it is most obvious that the aid of others should be sought. And all must admit that this is now pre-eminently the case with respect to the aid which is found in *the Lord's-day school*. If any man doubt it, let him be more fully informed on the subject. If he still doubt it, let him nevertheless see to it that he himself neglect not the duty *expressly* enjoined in the scriptures. Let him think on the value of religious instruction to his own children; let him think on its value to the children of his neighbors; let him bear them on his heart in prayer to God; and we may hope that his doubts will soon pass away.

We, dear brethren, are fully persuaded in our own minds. We see how happily the idea of Christian instruction in the family, and in the Lord's-day school, accords with all that we, as Baptists, believe to be the mind of Christ. Let us convince our erring brethren of other denominations, that his disciples can feel the force of the divine command, *Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, without performing a ceremony that has *not* been commanded, and that would displace and annihilate a ceremony that has been commanded,—the solemn act of the believer's being baptized upon the profession of his faith in Him who died for him, and rose again.

At no former period have our churches felt a deeper interest in Lord's-day schools, and Bible classes; and

*Deut 6: 6, 7.

some of them are bringing increased attention to these methods of doing good, into a close and endearing connection with their respective associations. Thus they ascertain what has been done, and what remains to be done: they are benefitted by each other's experience; they take sweet counsel together, they consider how they can help and encourage each other, and they return home with new zeal, and with new confidence, that their labors in this, and in other spheres of duty will not be in vain.

On the subject of which we have been treating, as well as in all other truly Christian enterprises, it surely becomes us as a denomination, to be among the foremost of those who exhibit and exemplify 'encouragements to religious effort.' Let us thank God, and take courage, in view of what has already been accomplished for the rising generation, and in view of the indications which we are permitted to behold, that a brighter day is dawning upon the world.

In the course of the year past, a divine blessing has attended the ordinary and the extraordinary means of grace enjoyed in the churches. Multitudes have been converted to God. But amidst the various efforts that have been so signally honored, the duty of giving Christian instruction to children, still holds a prominent place. It must not, and it cannot be forgotten; for it possesses an enduring importance which no event has diminished, and which no language can adequately express.

We have seen on what a deep and broad foundation this duty rests: It is the manifest dictate of reason and affection; it is implied in the general direction to make the gospel known, and it is expressly enjoined. We have glanced at some of the other considerations, by which the duty is urged upon us; the susceptibility of the mind in childhood; the effect on the community; the consequences beyond the grave; and the uncertainty of life,—of our own lives, and of the lives of our children. And we have seen that this duty must be performed in the most affectionate and engaging manner, that, accordingly, and as one of the means of attaining the grand object, the aid of the

Lord's-day school should be employed for our own children, and for the children of others, and yet that we who are parents should remember, *we ourselves still have much to perform.* Here is ample scope for the efforts of teachers and of parents. Here is a great and most blessed work to be done, and it may well call forth the unwearied attention of pastors and churches, and of all that can render assistance. Momentous responsibilities rest upon us all. On every side we see the dear young immortals intrusted to our care. Shall they be formed for usefulness and glory, and bliss? Or shall they be neglected, and ruined for time and for eternity? O may we abound in prayer to God for them and for ourselves. *Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children, and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands, establish THOU it.*

Praying thus, brethren, we proceed with new courage, we bid you *God speed*, and continue, as ever, yours in faith and love.

APPENDIX.

The following remarks, from an address by a dear and highly esteemed brother and fellow-laborer, Professor Ripley, of Newton, are so important and so intimately connected with the subject of the preceding Letter, that they cannot fail of being read with interest and with profit.

It is the obvious dictate of revelation, and strong principles natural to the human heart coincide with this dictate, that parents should have much to do with the religious instruction of their children. The natural affection which a parent must feel for his offspring, and the confidence which a child reposes on the instructions of his parents, are peculiarly favorable circumstances. Besides, who, like a judicious parent, can seize the proper times, and deal out instruction in the proper measures? Who like him can bear with the peevishness and childishness of the

little scholar, and can know when to curb and when to excite? With parental instruction, nothing should be allowed to interfere. But unless I greatly mistake, there is danger that many parents may feel themselves exempted from this duty, in consequence of the advantages which the Sabbath school furnishes. The ignorance and the indolence of many parents may shelter themselves under the wing of the Sabbath school; and even natural affection may plead for an exemption from this duty, by intrusting the performance of it to those who are supposed to be more capable of discharging it.

Parents may also think themselves excused from personally instructing their children, on account of the irregularity with which their own instructions would have to be imparted. By not rightly distributing their time, or by not rigidly adhering to a right distribution, they find various things interfering with each other, and not unfrequently some of their duties wholly neglected; and the long intervals which occur are specially injurious to their children's advancement in the knowledge of the Bible. By irregularity and various sorts of mismanagement, the waywardness of their children increases, and the parents may come at length to the settled belief, (and perhaps in their case, after having spoiled their children, it may be true,) that almost any one can do more good to their children, than they can themselves. But whatever may be said of the Sabbath school as furnishing a system of correctives for children who have been the victims of such mismanagement, it is certain that those parents greatly err, who deliberately neglect the religious instruction of their children, at a very early period, in consequence of the provisions which Sabbath schools furnish. The truth is, these schools are intended not to supersede, but to assist domestic instruction, and nothing can be plainer than that the benefits of Sabbath schools must be exceedingly restricted, unless the scholars receive at home instruction that may prepare them for the school, and instruction suited to deepen the impression which the school exercises may make. I fear also that pa-

rents who may be willing to relieve themselves of responsibility by placing it upon others, will directly counteract the good which they profess to desire for their children from the Sabbath school, and which they flatter themselves will more readily be gained from the school, than from parental instruction; for such a shrinking from responsibility, or rather such a glad withdrawing of themselves from it, will have a baleful influence upon their whole characters, and will produce in numerous particulars, a carelessness of conduct, and an unconcern respecting the example they set before their children.

The true interests of the rising generation, then, and no less the true interests of Sabbath Schools, require that parents should cherish a deep sense of their personal responsibility, and should regard the Sabbath school chiefly as a most valuable auxiliary to their own efforts. The altar of domestic devotion must not be deserted, because we can resort to the public altar of the sanctuary. Upon no pretence must the vivifying heat of family religion be chilled. The assiduities of parental care cannot safely be superseded by any other anxiety, by any other diligence, however intense, however constant. Let parents, then, be continually reminded, that while divine authority proclaims, 'Children obey your parents in the Lord;' the same authority proclaims with a plainness which cannot be misunderstood, and an urgency which must never be unheeded, 'Ye fathers bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Whatever other persons may do in the training up of children, upon parents is laid an injunction from the High and Holy one. Let parents feel the force of this injunction, and in their endeavors to comply with it, let them avail themselves of the advantages which the Sabbath school furnishes; and remember too, that the increase of advantages for rightly training their children, increases their obligations to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

I have mentioned an error into which parents may

be led; and now let me direct your thoughts to one into which pastors may fall.

It has always appeared to me of immense importance that a pastor should endeavor to maintain a very intimate and affectionate intercourse with the children of his congregation. These constitute the most interesting, in many respects, and the most hopeful part of his charge. If, at an early period, he acquires their confidence and produces in their minds a conviction that he is their friend, their affectionate well-wisher, their willing and patient benefactor, with how much profit may he believe that in after-life they will listen to his instructions; how slow will they be to abandon him for a teacher of a different faith; with how much confidence may he anticipate that with many of them he shall sit down in the kingdom of his Saviour.

It is a mistake, I fear, that children will, as a matter of course, regard their minister with affectionate reverence and confidence. They may indeed regard him with distant respect and awe. Thinking of him only in connection with the services of religion, and as the individual who has not unfrequently caused their consciences to give them pain, they may feel uneasy in his presence; they may endeavor to avoid his sight, and even subject themselves to no little inconvenience in order to escape his observation. Some effort, then, is needed on his part to produce an attachment to his person. His pastoral visitation of families, if judiciously conducted, will do somewhat towards gaining their affections. The esteem which their parents manifest towards him will exert an additional influence. But to these let there be added regular opportunities of meeting the children in an affectionate and tender manner for religious instruction and advice; and I cannot but think a very desirable state of feeling will exist both in the pastor and in the children.

But, as it is in the case of parents, so it is in the case of pastors. Too many of them are not wholly free from a willingness to diminish their cares, and to

presume that, although in different circumstances it would be an indispensable duty to exercise a personal supervision over the children, yet, as religious instruction is so copiously imparted in the Sabbath school, the work is accomplished to better effect than it could be by their exertions. It is indeed done to better effect by the Sabbath school arrangements than it was done previously to the existence of Sabbath schools; but it is not done to so much effect as it would be, if to the weekly efforts of the school teacher, were added the monthly attentions of the pastor.

Nor can it be justly said in excuse for this neglect on the part of pastors, that the arrangements for Bible class instruction furnish sufficient opportunities for bringing the pastor into intimate connection with the youthful part of his society. Of the value of Bible class instruction, and of its happily supplying a void that had existed for ages, I am very sensible. But it is not enough that the pastor form an intimate acquaintance with the young, and exert his influence over them in the form of a Bible class. For a large number, though at an early period connected with the Sabbath school, do not become members of a Bible class. Especially is this true respecting lads who sooner leave the paternal roof, and are exposed to more powerful temptations than their sisters, and who, moreover, frequently at an unsuitable age, are removed to a distance from parents, and placed in circumstances almost entirely new. How desirable, then, that the assiduous care of pastors should be extended towards them at that which may well be called the forming period of their lives. Again, how often does the bloom of childhood yield to the paleness of death! The little immortal comes forth as a flower, and is cut down. Would it not be a pleasant reflection to the pastor, as he is consoling the afflicted parents, as he looks upon the coffin which contains the desire of their eyes, would it not be a pleasant reflection, that that child knew him, and loved him, and confided in him; that that child he had often met in company with others, for purposes of the highest import; that

for the salvation of that child he had often felt earnest desires, and poured forth fervent prayers?

I would affectionately suggest it for your consideration, whether pastors ought not occasionally, and without long intervals, to be present in the Sabbath school, and to show the interest which they feel in the instruction of the young; and whether, besides this occasional attendance, they ought not to appoint stated times for meeting the children, either in order to review the Sabbath school lessons, or to impart different, though kindred instruction.

For a most judicious and instructive view of various particulars that call for the parent's attention, see Letters on Christian Education; by a Mother. They constitute a Tract, (Number 73,) of the series published by the Baptist General Tract Society.

tions on their physical properties and nature, while the politician only contemplates the social arrangements of mankind and the shifting forms of policy, fix *your* attention on the individual importance of man as the creature of God and a candidate for immortality. Let it be your highest ambition to train up these children for an unchanging condition of being. Spare no pains to recover them to the image of God; render familiar to their minds, in all its extent, the various branches of that *holiness* without which *none shall see the Lord*. Inculcate the obligation, and endeavour to inspire the love of that rectitude, that eternal rectitude, which was with God before time began, was imbodied in the person of his Son, and in its lower communications will survive every sublunary change, emerge in the dissolution of all things, and be impressed, in refulgent characters, on the new heavens and the new earth, *in which dwelleth righteousness*. Pray often with them and for them, and remind them of the inconceivable advantages attached to that exercise. Accustom them to a punctual and reverential attendance at the house of God: insist on the sanctification of the Sabbath, by such a disposal of time as is suitable to a day of rest and devotion. Survey them with a vigilant and tender eye, checking every appearance of an evil and depraved disposition the moment it springs up, and encouraging the dawn of piety and virtue. By thus *training them up in the way they should go*, you may reasonably hope that, *when old, they will not depart from it*.



Extracted from the Life of Rev. Samuel Kilpin, a Baptist minister in Exeter, England, who died September, 1830.

The subject of this sketch has been heard to say, that he had no conception of any thing so affecting or abiding as his dear father's method of reproof for sin. All the children were assembled, and seated in due order, the mother in the midst of her young group. The father would then enter with a rod in one hand, and the Bible in the other. He read different portions

of scripture on the crime which had been committed, and endeavoured to convince them that it was a bitter thing to sin against God, and although the rod would not alone change the heart or conduct, yet God had given it in charge to the parent, with the assurance that he who spared the rod spoiled the child. All then knelt reverently, whilst the holy parent wept over his sinful child, and sought pardon through the blood of the Saviour. This punishment was so effectual, that it was very seldom necessary. No children could more revere the memory of their parents, or anticipate with greater pleasure, a joyful meeting in the regions of blessedness. These tender but scriptural restraints had a most beneficial influence on the children's conduct in the future periods of their lives. They were taught to reverence God's ministers, and to consider it a great honor to assist them in any way.

Two or three circumstances, which made a deep impression on the infant mind of Samuel, may be related. His father was an ironmonger, and kept a general retail shop in that line. A nobleman in the neighborhood was among his best customers. One sabbath morning the steward came to the house, and said with an insolent sneer, "Are you afraid of the devil, Mr. Kilpin?" "No," replied the good man, "I am not." Will you then sell me some articles to-day?" "No, I will not; it is the sabbath day, and the God of the sabbath I love and fear. To-morrow, I shall feel much obliged by executing his lordship's orders." "Very well, if you will not serve me to-day, you shall not to-morrow, or on any other day." The steward then retired in a violent rage. This scene was never forgotten by the young family group; and it is pleasing to be able to add that the nobleman increased his favors when told of the circumstance.

Passing the street, one evening, a drunken man knocked Mr. Kilpin down, and rolled him into the gutter, exclaiming, "That's the place for you, John Bunyan!" The good man arose calmly, and returning to his family, related the circumstance; adding, "that the honor of bearing such a name, had outweighed the insult."