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ON THE DUTY OF GIVING CHILDREN A RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

PROV. XXII. 6. Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

THIS text contains two distinct propositions, the one, a statement of duty ; and the other, an encouragement to discharge that duty.

The duty is, to train up children in the way that they should go. In every view which we can take of this, it will appear to be a most important one. Whether we regard the influence which education will have on the child when he arrives at maturity, on the part he is to act in life, or on his circumstances in a future world, it will manifestly appear that there is scarcely any duty on which more depends than the right training of the rising generation.

That this duty be rightly discharged, it is necessary that we have a correct knowledge of the subject on which we are to work ; and also, a certain point towards which, all our doings are to tend. The children committed to our care are shortly to occupy the place which we now fill, to follow out our plans and to carry onward the great business of society : and their actings upon the stage of life will influence many succeeding generations for weal or woe. We are moreover to remember, that these youths will one day be capable of intense pleasure and intense pain ; that there are lying dormant in them the germs of strong passions which, if rightly controlled and directed, will make them blessed, and make them a blessing ; or if allowed to grow up wild and irregular, will make in their own breasts a hell, and their lives a curse to their fellows. We are farther to bear in mind that these youths are destined to immortality,—that that immortality is a state of perfect blessedness or a state of unalloyed misery,—and that, the character which is acquired in the present life is intimately connected with the place which they are to occupy in all futurity. If these be unknown or imperfectly understood, we can do nothing properly and efficiently to advance the great ends of education.

Next to a knowledge of what nature children are, we must have, in all that we do to them, a certain definite object in view, to the attainment of which, all our efforts are to be directed. Without this all our actings will be desultory and ineffective. Though the character which it is desirable they should possess be composed of many parts, yet all of these are to be based upon one general principle which is to influence all their thoughts and actions. “Man is an unity,” and all that he has to do, as an individual—as a member of society—as a christian, is but the working of one grand master principle. It is this which gives him his character. Nor is this peculiar to man. It is so with God in whose image man was cre-