

by a natural affection, which you cannot resist. He has bound them to you by an instinct almost equally strong. He has provided in you what the child wants in himself. He has made you his superior in knowledge, wisdom, energy, resolution, and strength. He puts the child into your hands, the moment it is born; he gives you the lead of all other influences; he gives you the mind of the child entirely empty that you may fill it—he has made its simplicity, its confidence, its reverence, its love, and its whole nature, to open up facilities for your success. He has made it weak in body and mind, to favour your authority and government. He has made it dependent,—consciously dependent on you, for support and protection, to render it still more at your command. He has placed it in the same house with you, often in your presence; almost always accessible, and habitually under your inspection. Its fate, its character, its habits, are linked to you, in a manner inseparable. Your neglect is its certain loss—your care, its certain gain. It is actually learning from you every day. Its character is moulding on yours. The world of parents are giving shape moral and religious to the world of children, in spite of themselves. They may prevent the shape from being a good one, but they cannot prevent it from being given, in one way or other. God has made children peculiarly open to impressions, and he has made these impressions peculiarly ineffaceable. They strike deep into the young heart, especially when they are hallowed and strengthened by every tie of endearment, that binds a child to a parent. They are laid at the foundation; they are laid, as it were, under ground, and are not easily reached by the hand of the destroyer. It is as if nature itself were partly forming in early youth; as if the image derived from the parent were not complete until the stamp of his domestic influence was communicated. What a call then do a parent's obligations, as manifested by his opportunities and advantages, and the degree in which the eternal interests of his children are suspended on his conduct, make upon him, to consult these interests in his whole deportment.

But you are not left to infer your duties from your circumstances, however clearly and certainly you may do so. There is laid before you all the responsibility involved in bringing the subjects of an express command of God. The Lord himself hath spoken, and all reasoning, excuses and objections, however plausible, must yield before his sovereign mandate. If you are Christians indeed, you will need nothing more than the explicit declaration of God's will. That will is signified to us by injunctions and examples, by God's approval of those who attend to the duties of family religion, and denunciation of those who neglect them, &c. Space will not allow us to quote; but we refer you to the following

passages.
xxviii. 9;
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2 Sam. vi.
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iii. 11—14;
Col. iii. 21

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