

cares temptations, employments, and disturbing influences in general, which beset our mature life. It is laid in the provisions of the gospel, for of little children alone it is said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." And again, "Except ye become converted, and become like little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." During this period the destiny of human souls, in a most important sense, is committed to parental faithfulness.—

It is, indeed, true, that conversions do take place after a neglected childhood; but the stains and deformities early contracted never become entirely obliterated and removed. The errors of childhood are carried into growth, and are there still further developed. From growth they are carried into manhood, and are there confirmed. Old age is darkened by ripened evil. Eternity alone can fully reveal the effects of an early blight.

On the other hand, it may be said that parental faithfulness is often disappointed in its hope. It does appear so sometimes, but we believe the instances are rare. And even in respect to these, who is prepared to affirm that there certainly has been no parental delinquency which led to the bad result?

Let parents, in the education of their children, place before themselves solemnly the question, "For what shall we educate them—for the use of earth, or of God, and Christ, and heaven? If they choose the latter, God, and Christ, and heaven, will all be arrayed on their side, and the end cannot be doubtful. But if, with a show of religious discipline the world be really allowed to maintain its ascendancy, or it be attempted to hold a middle course between the claims of the world and the calls of duty, then there need be no surprise if those, whom we were unwilling to give wholly to God, depart wholly from Him.

The education of our offspring for immortality must be undertaken as our greatest and all absorbing duty in respect to them, or it is not properly undertaken. There are interests which are so engrossing in their very nature that they do not admit of competition, and this is one of them. The accumulation of estates for our children; their introduction into fashionable life; the endowments of gay accomplishments;

the formation of eligible connections—of how much worth are these; put in the balance against a godly character; a preparation for noble usefulness here, for death at last, and for blessed immortality? We may not evade the question—we must choose whether we will give them to the world or to God.

When this great question of duty is once settled, then we may proceed to consider the principles on which we shall conduct the momentous discipline.

How shall we bring them up for heaven?

1. First of all we must aim to secure habits of implicit obedience. The years of childhood are absolutely committed to the parents. The child is only beginning to gain knowledge and experience, and must therefore, of necessity, be subject to an authority which is already possessed of both. Reckless, wild, and ungovernable tempers will soon appear, if obedience be not early formed into habit. This once gained, and then the growing soul forms easily under the plastic hand of parental love.

Herein, too, is laid the fundamental element of social and civil life, and of religion: for herein is established the great principle of subjection to law. The well governed child early and naturally yields to the restraints of social order, to the authority of the State, and, more than all, learns the principle of obedience to God as the highest duty of man. Children who have not been brought to submit to the mild and loving authority of a blessed home can hardly be expected to yield readily to any other authority. All law to them will prove irksome, and most of all the law of God. The habit of implicit obedience, therefore, must be established, or nothing else can be accomplished. Let this point never be given up. Begin early; patiently, wisely, and lovingly pursue it until it is gained. Then what comes after will be comparatively easy, and altogether pleasant.

2. The second point is daily religious instruction from God's word. The father is the priest of his household. The mother is the impersonation of heavenly mercy. Let both unite by precept and example in inculcating the great truth, and laying open the glorious influences and hopes of the gospel.