

ability like this; but more weighty and more solemn is the responsibility of parents in reference to their children. Parents may do more for their children than ministers of the gospel can for the flocks they tend. If you have any knowledge of religion, and of the nature of ministerial duties, you blame the minister who neglects his flock, and apprehend that, for that wicked neglect, an awful account remains. But if a minister incurs a load of guilt by forgetting his responsibility, and neglecting his flock, what does a parent incur who neglects his child? He disregards a weightier responsibility, and loses more favourable opportunities of communicating invaluable good. His concern in his child's welfare is also more intimate. In accordance with these statements, a pious writer remarks:—"Every Christian parent is the pastor over his own household, 'a king and a priest unto God.' How solemn the responsibility to take the care of souls as a public minister! Yet the responsibility lying upon such a person is by no means so great as that upon parents respecting their children; nor even so solemn as that which lies upon an individual in reference to his servants. Children are parts of ourselves; have derived their existence from us; and can we bear that these parts of ourselves should endure the bitter pains of eternal death? And that through our neglect?" O reader, if you labour for your children's eternal welfare, doubtless God will approve your efforts; but if you forget your responsibility, your conduct in neglecting duties so momentous will be base and wicked. Were it in the power of any one to murder an angel, or, still worse, to transform him into a devil, how atrocious would be the perpetration of such a deed! This cannot be done; but a crime akin to this you may commit. By neglect of parental duty you may assist in exposing to everlasting death your own child, that might be like an angel soon; and in transforming one that might be so holy and so happy, into the image of a fiend.

Irreligious parents may plead that they have no intention of producing such dreadful results. The plea is vain. What your conduct is adapted to effect must be looked at, not what you profess to design. If you train up your children in ungodliness, you in reality seek their everlasting destruction. What would you think of a father, that might give his child poison, and plead in excuse, "I did not mean to kill him?" No, but you took a certain method to murder him, and having done this, your actions must be considered, not your professed design. What would you think of another that might set fire to his house, and when it was destroyed, excuse himself by declaring, "I had no intention of burning it down?" The answer must be, "Whatever you meant, you pursued the way to burn it down, and your conduct must be judged of by your actions, and their adaptation to produce the result that followed." Thus, in your case, must be taken into account, not what you profess to design, but what your conduct is calculated to effect, and does in fact accomplish.

The solemn account which awaits you hereafter, furnishes a powerful motive for the careful discharge of parental duties. You are amenable to God's tribunal, where he will bring every work into judgment, and where disregard of important trusts, and neglect of weighty duties, will be judged as flagrant sins. The eternal Judge will then call you to account for the manner in which you discharged the trust confided in you when you became a parent. For to this, as well as to every other part of our conduct, the awful declaration applies, "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Rom. xiv. 12. When God requires this account of the improvement or abuse of every talent—when things of much less importance than the training up of a child are brought into review, surely this trust will not be forgotten. But if you are inattentive to the solemn duties of a parent now, how will you appear when your stewardship is laid down, and God calls you to an account for your children, and their souls! "I committed them to your hands that you might train them up for me. I confided them to your care, and gave you every advantage for making them wise unto salvation. You had my word, that you might teach them my truth. You had my Sabbaths, that in rest from worldly cares you might enjoy quiet opportunities of giving them instruction. They were entrusted to you, not when hardened by years of indifference, but in their earliest moments, and when most susceptible of receiving the impressions of my love and grace. How have you discharged your trust? Where are the records of the Sabbaths in which you instilled my word into their minds, and of the seasons in which you prayed with them, and prayed for them? None such appear. Wicked and slothful servant, you taught them not. You suffered them to spend the years of childhood and of youth in ignorance of my claims and grace. By your neglect of salvation, you

taught them neglect. By your Sabbath-breaking you instructed them to profane my Sabbaths, and slight my house. Instead of carefully training them up for me, by your indifference to my service, and by your wicked example, you trained them up for Satan. Wicked and slothful servant, depart!"

Reader, will not such a sentence, terrible as it is, be just? And can parents who neglect parental duty, anticipate from the Judge of all, a more favourable reception? or reasonably expect a less dreadful doom?

The enjoyment of the Saviour's grace would deliver your children from many present evils, and you from the anguish of witnessing their ruin, and would enrich them with numerous blessings, and you with the delight of beholding their happiness. Numberless are the evils consequent on a life of sin. In the train of ungodliness march disgrace, and poverty, and want; loss of character, loss of peace, loss of property, loss of health, and in countless instances, loss of life. Many parents have seen their neglected children become, through their vices, the offenders of all things. Some have beheld them consigned to prison, and some to transportation, and others to the gallows, as the fruit of sin. And where these fearful consequences of sin have not been witnessed, others have, that were scarcely less fearful. They have seen their children slothful, profligate, drunken, debauched, beggared in character and circumstances, and in millions of instances, sinking to untimely graves, through the diseases that sin has entailed. Where one parent has followed to the grave a son or daughter that had died on a gibbet, thousands have followed their scarcely less wretched children thither, that had died the victims of their vices. While thus ruined for time, in eternity no prospect has remained for them but "a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" of God and holiness. Train up your children for God, and you may trust that, through the grace of Christ, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, all these evils will be avoided. Whatever then may be their situation in the present world, instead of incurring contempt, they will insure respect; instead of abhorrence, esteem; instead of the ruin of slothfulness, the comforts of industry; instead of the diseases and untimely grave of profligacy, the health and vigour, and while it pleases God, the prolonged life which true piety tends to promote. In addition to all this good, religion would secure to them all those noble and eternal blessings which have been referred to in preceding pages, and deliver them from all those aggravated evils which have been recounted there. Thus, whatever might be their condition here, all would be well. If poor on earth, they would be rich in heaven. If destitute of wealthy friends, they would have infinitely glorious friends above. However mean might be their earthly dwelling, their future, expected home would be a mansion in the skies. However small their present portion, their inheritance in reversion would be one that is "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Though strangers to all grandeur here, they would be heirs of immortal crowns. Though no menials might wait upon them, ministering angels would watch their steps, take charge of them by the way, and attend their ransomed spirits at last to heaven. Thus, though no earthly treasures might be laid up by you for them, the treasures of eternity, in all their ample greatness and enduring worth, would, by a better Parent, be laid up for them in heaven.

Or, should their earthly lot be more prosperous, and their portion more abundant, still for them a better portion, and richer treasures, and a happier home, would be provided beyond the grave.

How blessed would escaping the evils, and enjoying the good now referred to, render your children! And if you have a heart to feel the value of the most substantial blessings, how much would their possession of such good conduce to your comfort! If they were placed amidst the snares of prosperity, what a satisfaction to see them escaping those snares, and becoming blessings in their day and generation! If they were afflicted, and passing through trial and suffering, what a comfort to feel assured that all would be well; that your children were in a Father's hands, who would make all things work together for good! How cheering and soothing is the reflection, "My dear child suffers now; but at longest will not suffer long! He is going to that happier world, where no pain, nor sorrow, nor want is felt. The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in him. This light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

With what satisfaction would it inspire you thus to witness a pleasing contrast between your children and the many young