

A failure in this important obligation may lay the foundation of degradation and misery for generations to come, not in this world only, but in an endless eternity. How little do many parents consider this startling probability; how few are they who learn to look with anxious eyes on their children as the heirs of immortality, or who are ready to bestow one tenth part of that attention to their eternal destination which they willingly devote to their transitory and uncertain sojourn in this, the first stage of an existence which shall never know a close.

We toil for our children that they may receive an education which shall fit them to hold a high station in this world; we are never weary of watching over their earthly interests; and we cheerfully deny ourselves even the comforts of life, that we may leave them wherewithal to support the station here which our ambition covets for them; but did we look forward a little farther into that eternal world which the gospel enables us to view with prophetic vision, and consider that those beloved ones depend greatly on us for their portion there, how vain, how trifling, how valueless, would the honors and rewards of this world appear in the comparison, even were the highest dreams of parental ambition certain to be realised. There is no compromising in this duty, for who would willingly be responsible for the consequences of its neglect. We may satisfy our own consciences by taking our children to church, and we may teach them many formal observances of religion, and we may occasionally labour to impress on their young minds, by good precepts, the importance of the subject; but children are acute observers even in their infancy, and they are in a great degree the creatures of habit and of imitation. If they discover that their parents' conduct belies their instructions; if they see that those to whom they look for patterns serve Mammon rather than serve God—that they attach more importance to the things of this world than to the things of eternity, they will naturally imbibe with their earliest impressions the same fatal indifferences to religion, and scarcely be awakened to a true sense of its necessity in their after lives. It is thus that the sins of the fathers are visited on the third and fourth generation, and when parental duty has been faithfully fulfilled, and the love and the fear of God carefully inculcated, then it is that He shows mercy unto thousands of those who keep his commandments. The sentiments, and principles, and habits of parents, particularly in religious matters, are an inheritance to their descendants, and no one can say in what generation the pollution shall cease from bad example, or the blessing be lost which is the fruit of a good one. Can the fond father, who looks proudly upon his rising offspring,—can the mother, who has nourished them at her bosom, who has watched early and late for their sakes, with unwearied tenderness and care, endure the thought, that, for their neglect, those beloved children may be the heirs of eternal misery rather than the sharers of eternal happiness; and that