

Let the child learn to think God his best friend, in its sins even its best friend, in his laws its best friend — as a Being whose goodness is as universal as the light or air — as one in whom it may entirely trust, whose commands are for its welfare, who is interested in all its struggles to do right, and who looks with condemnation only on what is bad and unjust and unkind and untrue. Let it have, not because it is for its pleasure, but because it is right so to do, happy and confiding and relying thoughts of God.

2. The second point to be specially regarded is the duty of obeying God — not merely doing what is abstractly right, but doing it with reference to the Divine Being, as that which he commands and approves. We speak of it here, not as a duty, but in connection with the education of the religious sentiment. Its importance is seen by looking at the parental and filial relation. The love of children for parents of course depends on various causes, but among all, no one does more to determine its depths and permanence than an early habit of obedience. It is so because this habit is one great source of disinterestedness, and because without disinterestedness the affections, so far as they are unselfish, and they are essentially unselfish, must be dwarfed, narrowed, and deadened. If the child never forms the habit of obedience when the wishes of a parent conflict with its own, it forms the opposite habit of obeying its own wishes in despite of the parent. The child that never learns to surrender its self-will to the wishes of a parent, will never have an affection for that parent strong enough to make it sacrifice its own wishes. Such a child is likely, as he grows up, to possess what is a very common, but a very meagre and poor character, — one in which, perhaps, there is amiability and good nature