

adopted the course pointed out by his able counsel. When the prince came, and Alexander explained the whole history of the case to him, and proved beyond doubt, that his nation was largely in debt to the Israelites, the prince fled into a foreign country."

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.]

Aphorisms extracted from the writings of the late Rev. Robert Hall, of Bristol:—

"Faith, considered as a mere speculative assent to the truth of a Divine testimony, may be looked upon as uniform or stationary; but when we consider it as a practical principle, as one of the graces of the spirit, we perceive it to be, in common with others, susceptible of continual enlargement and increase.

"In the degree of power which future and invisible realities exert over the mind in the practical energy of what men profess to believe; in the promptitude and certainty with which it determines them to a correspondent conduct: there is the utmost diversity, even among those who believe with the heart.

"The faith to which the scriptures attach such momentous consequences, and ascribe such glorious exploits, is a practical habit, which like every other, is strengthened and increased by continual exercise.

"It is nourished by meditation, by prayer, and the devout perusal of the scriptures; and the light which it diffuses, becomes stronger and clearer by an uninterrupted converse with its object, and a faithful compliance with its dictates; as on the contrary, it is weakened and obscured, by whatever wounds the conscience or impairs the purity and spirituality of the mind."

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

BY REV. A. GILLIES.

The religious education of our children and youth. By this phrase we do not mean religion in a general sense, but in a restricted Gospel sense;—not an acquaintance with creeds and covenants, but a spiritual knowledge of the way of life, through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Nor do we mean by a religious education, the training of the intellect in the various arts and sciences of this world: these have their place and importance, but are not to be compared to the moral and spiritual instruction of the immortal soul. The highest degree of mere mental cultivation may be attained, while at the same time its possessor is in perfect ignorance of the one thing needful. Such kind of knowledge may puff up, but cannot impart spiritual edification. The education to which we now call your attention, consists of two

parts—a literal and spiritual knowledge of the Gospel of salvation. The former of these is an acquaintance with the testimony of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ; the latter is the illumination of the Holy Spirit in the regenerated soul, by which we know the things that are freely given us of God, and rejoice in hope of having passed from death unto life. "The one is the foundation on which saving faith rests; the other, the power by which we believe unto righteousness." That which is properly spiritual in a religious education, is communicated by God alone—it comes down from above. "He teacheth savingly and to profit." No human instructor can thus teach. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." In this, as well as many other points, may be seen the vast difference between the religion of Christ and all others in the world. The Mahometan or Brahmin may learn his religion as the school boy his lesson, and soon may become proficient; for, like the dumb idol, it has no life in the midst of it—a body, but no soul. A vital principle of a new life, begotten from heaven, is the essential part of Christianity. To secure this invaluable boon to your children, you are entirely dependent on the influence of the Divine Spirit. "Pray for his power to quicken the dead in trespasses and sins,"

Your proper sphere in this important matter, is to teach the rising generation in what the Gospel reveals. But here let us inquire, on whom devolves the responsibility of giving such an education to children and youth of the land? Christian parents and guardians! at your hand especially is this work required. Both humanity and the holy religion you profess, impose on you this solemn and delightful duty of training your children for the bliss and glory of the upper world. Your relation and position give you a decided advantage over every other, in this important work of faith.

Do you ask, how and when are you to give a religious education to those committed to your care? Every opportunity is the time, and by precept and example the best manner. First seek by the aid of Divine grace to be qualified for the work. The love of Christ, and a correct knowledge of the Word of God, are the principal things in this preparation. Without Divine love, there will be no heart to the work; and without an acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, you will be destitute of the effective instrumentality. The Bible is ever to be the text-book in this training for heaven. From its rich treasures, the first and last lessons are to be drawn. This is the standard of appeal in all questions of life and godliness. Its decisions are to be regarded as final. In educating our youth, then, for a place at the right hand of God, let no other book supplant the oracles of the living God. Whatever benefit or pleasure

may be derived from the study of human writings, the Word of the Lord alone, is supreme in excellence, and "able to make wise unto salvation." "The entrance of God's word giveth light. It giveth understanding to the simple."

Christian parents are expected and required to worship God in their families in a formal, social manner. Here suitable opportunities will be furnished for imparting correct religious instruction. Here let religion, pure and undefiled before God and the Father, "be exhibited at the family altar: let its hallowed influence be seen daily at our fire-sides, in kindness, love, patience, purity, and whatever else is lovely, virtuous, or of good report." Thus will the earliest recollections of our children be blended with the beauties and blessings of religion. From such family devotion an influence will go forth that will outlive the world, running down the track of time into the fathomless ocean of eternity. But is there not much reason to fear that the family devotions of many need greatly to be improved, before such glorious results can reasonably be expected? Does not the length of the reading and praying often defeat the desired object, especially if young children be present? *Fervency, simplicity, and brevity*, are excellent qualities in these duties;—the prayer of FAITH is usually short. Fathers provoke not your children to impatience at the hour of prayer. But this is not the only place where we are to prosecute this work: it may be done as thou goest out and comest in; in the way, the field, or shop. The invisible things of God may be taught by the things that are made—"even his eternal power and Godhead." The Sabbath, with its kindred institutions, of preaching and Sunday Schools, should not be overlooked in this place. The Sunday School, when properly conducted, in perfect harmony with the principles of the Gospel and the preaching of the Word, is heaven's appointed way "to save them who believe."

To these sacred places, then, let parents and guardians lead their children, and encourage, by their presence and counsel, those engaged in imparting to the youth a knowledge of the true God and eternal life.

Beloved brethren and sisters, be not guilty of throwing this duty entirely on the shoulders of the Sunday School teacher, nor yet entrust all to the pastor. Though their parts be faithfully performed, this will not free you from the solemn responsibility your charge involves. You, above every one else, are responsible for the moral and religious character of those whom God has given you. No one has the same power over their eternal destiny. With the blessing of God on your efforts, they may become bright and shining lights in this world, and in the world to come, wear crowns of ever-