

up in Christian excellence, shall we apply with intelligence and zeal the means placed at our disposal by Providence for securing that object.

The basis of all successful effort, on behalf of the young, is to be found in the strength of our conviction as to the importance of their spiritual welfare. No great moral triumphs have ever been achieved apart from deep conviction. Earnestness of purpose and persistent endeavour to reach a goal have their root in the primary beliefs of the soul, and this is in no sphere of exertion more true than that of the higher education of youth. If we care more for their pleasure and artistic enjoyment of life, more for their social pride among their fellows, and more for their secular success than for the growth of their souls in Christliness, we shall not, in that case, take much interest in measures selected by more earnest hearts for promoting their salvation and spiritual culture. But if we really believe that strong and healthy piety—exhibiting its features variously in harmony with the natural aptitudes and social position of sons and daughters respectively—is “the one thing needful”—“the pearl of great price”—and of more value than the gain of the whole world, then, under the force of such impressions, we shall spare no pains to assist them to attain to such blessedness. May we hope, so far as you are concerned who are now attending to these remarks, that the unbelieving scoffers who live around and exercise their wonted gifts in weighing the professions and practices of Christians, can discover no valid ground for insinuating that you afford no practical evidence of the sincerity and intensity of your belief in the supreme importance of your children’s salvation?

But as the basis of all persistent effort lies in our strong convictions of its necessity, so the beginning of it should always be made in our homes. A more grievous social and moral calamity could scarcely happen than would happen if public institutions and church action were to be taken as occasions for relieving ourselves, as parents, of what is our highest duty and honoured privilege. No external appliances, however wisely conceived and judiciously employed, can possibly be a substitute for parental care and affection. Civilization cannot improve on nature in the sphere of home life. Obligations based on the primary condition