

but would it not be darkness to your own home and heart? That parent has indeed sunk lower than the beasts that perish, when he is no longer thus influenced by the love of his children. You cannot, then, say—you surely never even thought—that it is nothing to you how your children grow up. You feel that your happiness even now is bound up in what they are. And when they leave the domestic roof, will you not be thankful and proud if they turn out well, and are honored and respected by the world? Will you not feel their shame and dishonor to be your own? Will their well-doing not be a crown of glory to you in old age; and would not their ill-doing help to bring down your grey hairs with sorrow to the grave? Therefore, apart from any other or higher consideration, for your own sake have a care how you train them up.

A strong working man once came to me requesting the ordinance of baptism for his child. He was a smith; he confessed that he had formerly been in the habit of drinking to excess, but that for two years he had lived a strictly sober life. On my asking what led to this change, he replied, after some hesitation: "Indeed, I believe it was the bairns." "The bairns!" I exclaimed, "how was that?"—"Why, sir," said he, "when I came home at night they used to run and meet me, and play about me; and the youngest was a special favorite, and extraordinary fond of me; and one evening when she had her arms about my neck, and was giving me a kiss, the thought struck me, What a beast I was to be taking drink in this way, if it was for no other reason than the harm I was sure to do baith the bodies and souls of my ain bairns. I took such shame to myself, that I dropped it since then; and now I hope I have better reasons, even than the good of the family, for keeping sober."

3. But consider, further, the personal as well as relative importance of these young ones, or their importance to themselves.—For you know one's own state for time and for eternity is of more importance to ourselves than anything else possibly can be. It is this fact which the words of our Lord imply, when He says: "For what shall it profit a man if he will gain the whole world and lose his soul?" Not anything!—not the whole universe! To a man himself, his own soul—his own life and happiness, are more valuable than aught else. Now, parents, weigh this matter well. Behold your children, or any one of them, and hear what I have to say about that one child.

(1.) *That child must live forever.* Its existence is endless as the life of its Maker. There lies concealed in that frame, clasped to a mother's bosom, and so feeble that the evening breeze might seem sufficient to destroy it, a living spark which no created power can ever extinguish! Cities and empires shall rise and fall during coming centuries; but that infant of yours will survive them all! The world and its works,

shall be burnt up, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, new systems may be created, and pass away; but your child will live amidst the changes and revolutions of endless ages, which will no more touch or destroy it than the wild hurricane can touch the rainbow which reposes in the sky, though it may rage around its lovely form. When eras that no arithmetic can number have marked the life of your child, an eternity will still be before it, in which it shall live, move, and have its being! What think you, parents, of having such a creature as this under your roof, and under your charge, and that creature your own child? Consider.

(2.) *Your child must live for ever in bliss or woe.* It must stand before the judgement-seat of Christ. It must be forever lost, or for ever saved. It must be with God and Christ, with the angels and saints, loving and beloved, a glorious and majestic being, or for ever wicked and unutterably miserable with Satan, and lost spirits! I am assuming, of course, that it shall here attain that age as shall make it fully responsible to God; for if it dies in infancy, I believe that it is certainly saved through Jesus Christ. But even to be able to entertain such a hope as this, that your babe, though dead, actually lives somewhere with Jesus; or that, if living here, is yet capable of becoming one of God's high and holy family in His home above for ever—may well deepen upon you a sense of its personal value! Do you ask what this fact has to do with your duty of training up your children? I will tell you. Whether your child—should it be spared some years on earth—shall live for ever in joy or in sorrow, depends upon what it believes and does in this world. It is *how it lives here* which must determine *where and how it shall live hereafter.* Is that not a solemn consideration for you?—and is it not more solemn still, when you further remember, that the character which your child is to possess on this side of the grave, and retain on the other, and on which its destiny hangs, is affected more by what it sees, hears, learns, from you, and in your house, than upon anything else in this world?

3. But I notice, lastly, that your children are of inestimable importance to *their Father in heaven.* Perhaps you are disposed at first to doubt this; but if you consider it you will see how true it is. God being so great and glorious, you think that probably a child is too small and insignificant a thing to be noticed or cared for by Him. But it is just because God is so great and glorious that He is able to know and consider every person and thing in the universe. "Are not five sparrows sold for a farthing? yet not one of them is forgotten before God. Fear not; ye are of more value than many sparrows!"

It was perhaps this wrong impression of God's greatness which, on one occasion, induced the disciples to prevent mothers bringing their children to the Saviour to

obtain His blessing. How could the great Messias, thought they, condescend to attend to such weak and insignificant creatures? But very different were His own feelings! "Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not!" and accordingly the good Shepherd took the lambs into His arms, and blessed them.

Who gave the heartiest welcome to the King when He entered the temple? Not the priests, nor Sadducees, nor Pharisees, but the children who cried Hosanna! Those who pretended to great wisdom and piety rebuked them, and wished Christ to do the same; but He would not. He received the praises of the young; for God had ordained such to come from the mouth even of babes and sucklings.

Why should this astonish you, parents? "O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt?" For only reflect for a moment upon the relationship in which God stands to those children. *They belong to Him,* and are His property, not yours. He it is who has given them all the value which they possess. He it is who has created them, and endowed them with such wonderful powers and capacities, in order that, as the very end of their being, they might glorify Him, and enjoy Him for ever. And such immense value does He attach to those His own creatures, that He reckoned them, not with such corruptible things as silver and gold,—for these could not purchase the least and poorest of them,—but with the precious blood of His own Son! And at baptism did He not claim them as His own, revealing Himself as *their* God,—their Father, Saviour, and Sanctifier?

Remember, then, parents, that God has given you this precious property of His in trust; and of each child beneath your roof He says: "Nurse this child for me!" Have a care, then, I again say, how you train them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

I cannot conclude this address to parents of the working classes, without saying a few words to employers. Masters of public works, masters and mistresses of private families!—I have appealed to these parents in your name, begging them to furnish you with good and faithful servants; and you know well how much your comfort and prosperity depend upon the supply which they may afford to such demands. But let me remind you that duties are reciprocal,—that if you require those in your service to consider *your* comfort and advantage, it becomes you equally to consider *theirs*, actuated by that Christian principle which should be common to both—the principle of "loving our neighbour, and pleasing him for his good to edification." If you treat those in your service as mere machines, mere helps to your personal aggrandizement or convenience; if you acknowledge no obligation to make any sacrifices of your ease or wealth to