

respectful to yourselves, and pass into a life of profligacy and crime; heaviest of all, when they are lost for eternity. You are responsible to other parents and children. You and your children come in, as deleterious ingredients, to poison the good effects wrought by others. You are responsible to future generations, on whom you are entailing irreligion and vice. Your evil influences may be propagated through thousands of years. You are responsible to the Church, whom you rob of her members and office-bearers. Pious families are the nurseries of the Church. With no family religion, no early seriousness, whence is the Church to get her members? Whence is she to obtain her Ministers? It is when young men are about to leave the parental roof that they usually choose a profession. With piety generally prevailing in families, a goodly proportion would be inclined to the high calling of winning souls to Christ. Our Church at this moment looks mainly to you for an increase of labourers. She regards her present want of Ministers as a sad proof of parental delinquency. The Church is languishing, Congregations are starving through the want of family religion. The young are brought up with tastes and habits altogether alien to the sacred profession, or even to common membership in the Church of Christ. You are responsible to society at large. The alienation of parents from their children, seen in the general neglect of religious obligations, paves the way for the most blasting curse, with which God visits the nations. A nation may thrive and enjoy many of the blessings of civilized life, that has never heard of Christianity. But when it has once been Christianized, and has got the mental stimulus and enlargement, which Christianity imparts, and afterwards renounces the faith, no language can describe the dreadful results. Because they like not to retain God in their knowledge, he gives them over to vile affections. Their unbridled passions are excited to fury and frenzy. The whole community is convulsed, and becomes a scene of riot, anarchy, and blood. Now, if parents neglect their duty to their children, religion will infallibly lose hold of the public mind; and its absence will give rise to these terrible consequences.

Upon the whole, then, it is plain that your responsibility is of the most grave and solemn kind; and it is emphatically so in this country. Here, there is a special necessity that the principles of your children should be well established in youth. Here, there is such a mixture of right principle and wrong principle producing a general laxity and indifference, that even those who were nursed in the bosom of pious families at home, and had long lived under the restraints of religion, are seen to give way and draw back unto perdition. What then can be expected of the young, who grow up untaught and uncared for, in the midst of the

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