

tion and a wise education to make them bud, and without which you may never expect to see them bloom. Those happy dispositions which are seen and admired in youth, are but a slight and feeble spark just ready to go out for ever, unless he to whom it is entrusted takes care by his breath to keep it alive, and helps it to open and expand. But many of those who are entrusted with the education of children, are not sufficiently alive to the value of the charge. How seldom do parents themselves consider that in teaching their offspring they are directing immortal spirits. Instead of delighting to train them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, they are anxious to be relieved from the burden, and to consign them into the hands of strangers to receive that mental and spiritual nourishment, which it is their duty to bestow. Is it then to be wondered, that while the children make sufficient progress in the arts and sciences, and such branches of knowledge as may qualify them for the stations in society which they are designed to fill, their hearts are not cultivated, nor are they made lovers of religion.

Not that religious instruction should be forced upon children without attending to the freedom and indulgence so necessary at their age, or that we should expect from them an accurate knowledge of its various truths, it is sufficient that their views, so far as they extend, be sound and scriptural, and so communicated as to touch the heart.

We are aware that great tenderness and delicacy are necessary to bring the truths of the Gospel home to their youthful minds; and this may be the reason why so many parents shrink from the task; but let such remember that religious instruction and religious habits must go together, and though the former may be acquired from public teachers, the latter can only be formed at home. In communicating the truths of revelation to the young, we must give them food convenient for them; nourishing them, not with strong meat, but with the sincere milk of the word, and exciting their attention by frequent and elegant allusions to those images which are the most likely to charm their fancies and interest their hearts.

Since, then, religious and moral instruction are so valuable, it ought to form the basis of every public system of education. Knowledge without religion is dangerous; it is like the reflected light of the moon, distorting the objects which it renders visible.