

Your time is occupied with more important concerns? We should like to know what a christian would pronounce *more important* than the religious education of his children? The hours of evening when you could most conveniently attend to it is subject to most frequent interruptions? How lamentable that, you should thus suffer your children to be defrauded of what may prove to them their richest inheritance. Alas! the true cause of the neglect is, for the most part, the undervaluing of the advantage of a religious education. Many, even of those who make a christian profession seem to think, that the Sabbath's instructions from the pulpit are sufficient—forgetting that mere children cannot profit much by them; and, if they secure for their children the additional instructions of the Sabbath school, they take no small credit to themselves for this extra carefulness, and quietly consider that they have discharged the duty of a parent in the matter of religion, though perhaps, they never personally converse with or instruct them from one year's end to another. Is there any wonder that children thus neglected, should grow up in ignorance of God, and in deep rooted indifference to all that his word declares; that even the solemnities of religion should fail to command their reverence; and that they should habitually ally themselves to the ungodly multitude, whose whole conduct evince that it would cause them little regret were the gospel and all it teaches extirpated from the world. Christian parents, if you reckon the formation of such a character in your children an evil above all others to be deplored, both on account of its present and its eternal consequences, study now to avert it, by appropriating a set and sufficient time for the religious instruction of your children.

Observe, secondly, that it is the duty of parents to set before their children and household, a proper example. Without this it is much to be feared that whatever religious instruction you may happen to give, will be worse than vain. It will most likely breed in them hypocrisy or a contempt of religion. Of what avail would it be for a parent to teach his children to pray, if they have very good reason to surmise that he himself never prayed? Of what avail would be a parent's occasional admonition to fear God, if it were very plain even to a child's observation, that the fear of God was not before his own eyes? And ah! what should we say of the admonitions of a parent to good temper, when he himself is constantly giving way to peevishness and rage? of a parent whipping his child for blaspheming the sacred name, when the half swallowed oath is often muttering from his own lips? of a parent inculcating upon the

child the sanctification of the Sabbath, when he himself lounges in idleness at home, or receives the visits of persons as idle as himself, or pushes forth into the fields for a recreation that home cannot afford him? Would not instruction thus discredited by example be likely to awaken disgust? And yet many, many a parent who fancied himself religious, has thus converted his child into an infidel or a profligate, because his whole example belied the religious lessons that he taught. If, therefore, our instructions are to exert their appropriate influence, we must illustrate them by our life. It must appear that religion and all connected with it, has the highest place in our regard; that it penetrates our heart and pervades our life; and that so often as we are betrayed into inconsistent conduct, it is cause of bitterness and repentance. When the principles by which we are guided are occasionally explained in a manner level to the capacities of the young; when we tell them, I do this thing because God has commanded it; and I abstain from this other thing because God has forbidden it; and I believe this truth because the Scriptures teach it; and I cherish this hope, for the divine promise warrants it—our instruction and our example combine to persuade the child to imitation. Did Christian parents thus teach and act before their children from earliest infancy, the gates of Zion would be crowded with the offspring of the righteous, and the Church would rejoice in the dawning millennium!

Were parental instruction thus seconded by a consistent example, parental authority would not be contemned. Obedience would be rendered to the lawful commands of parents, because such obedience is enjoined by God. And true authority, and conscientious subordination would bring back to the innumerable little commonwealths of which society is composed, the order, harmony and peace, with which the eyes of the observer is now so rarely blessed.

For further recommending to parents the performance of these duties, let me observe, that they are the main source of individual happiness. Children under the discreet exercise of parental discipline, acquire many habits essential to their well-being. Self-will, from which so many miseries arise, is restrained. The important habit is acquired of submitting to authority; and the effect of this becomes very manifest in the subsequent discipline of the school and the labours of the apprenticeship. (What trouble do children who are neglected at home give to their teachers and masters!) There is fostered a docility of temper very favourable to their future improvement. They learn to