

However, in the present state of things, such visions are fanciful: fanciful, less from the impossibility, than the improbability of their being realised.

Nevertheless, we are in no wise to let the persuasion, that we cannot accomplish all we wish, minister to our prejudice, by discouraging us from performing our parts, and doing what we can. It is the duty of every one of us, then, to come to the excellent determination of Joshua; that, whatever be the conduct of others in this respect, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

And let it be observed, that, if we be really and sincerely Christians, we shall not rest satisfied with serving and loving God ourselves: it will be our anxious wish and desire that all, but more particularly our own family, should have the privilege and happiness of communion with Him also.

And our anxiety on this head would not be a little increased, did we entertain proper views of our responsibility to God, for the morals and spiritual welfare of those, whom, for the furtherance of his allwise purposes, he has entrusted to our care. We are too prone to look upon our offspring as absolutely ours; forgetting that they are the Lord's heritage, and are, even as we ourselves, bought with an inestimable price. They are, indeed, subjected to our direction, as tutors and fosterers under God, "for whom and to whom are all things." Wo, therefore, be to that person who betrays the trust reposed in him! "it were better," to use the language of our Saviour, "that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depths of the sea," than that, owing to any neglect on his part, "one of these little ones should perish."

Again, on the score of natural affection, it is reasonable that a parent should warn his offspring of the rocks and shoals of present and eternal misery, and bring them up in the way in which they should go; that when they arrive at the age of maturity, and have discretion to act for themselves, they may naturally, and as matter of choice, pursue that line of conduct, to which early habits, and a sense of duty incline them.

Let us, but for a moment, place ourselves in the situation of a person, who, with respect to himself and his family; has, Gallio like, "cared for none of these things;" and if the pains of hell admit an additional pang, it must arise from the consideration, that those, who were flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, and are now become the sharers of his misery, might, but for his neglect and evil example, have then been shining as "stars in the kingdom of their father." My brethren! may this agonizing reflection never be experienced by us!

If this thought, however, be painful to humanity, what object, on the other hand, can be more truly engaging, than that of a