

love and a sense of obedience to a Father in heaven, can be awakened in the bosom of a child shortly after it has begun to warm with love and a sense of obedience towards its parents on earth. But without noticing the period of mere infancy, let us advance a few years onward, and how delightfully do we behold the mind expand to the hallowed power of truth and piety ! What stores of valuable knowledge can be imparted ! what holy impressions can be made on the hearts of the young group collected around a parent's knee ! In instances innumerable, the character has here received the immutable stamp of goodness ; and all the freedom from worldly pollution which it maintained in future years, and all its virtuous dignity, and all beneficent usefulness, resulted from the principles then implanted, the emotions then awakened. But, apart altogether from the considerations of the beneficial effect, it is a duty enjoined on parents by God to instruct their children in his fear. Children are placed under subordination to their parents chiefly for this end. To refuse to teach them is to deprive them of a right, and to inflict upon them irreparable injury. For if the faculties of their mind are not early cultivated, they will become weak ; if religious sentiment is not early cherished, the heart will become insensible ; if the essential activities of youth be not early directed to good, they will soon of themselves tend in the direction of evil ; and the parent who is thus negligent of the religious well being of his offspring, may, in reality, do them a greater wrong than the poor blinded Hindoo who exposes his to certain death on the banks of the Ganges, or the still more cruel idolaters who made them pass through the fire to Moloch. Is it nothing to you, let me ask, that the children whom you now gather around you with instinctive fondness, grow up in ignorance of God, and of his Son's gospel—without any fixed principles of religion or moral conduct ? that the finer affections of the heart never be awakened in them ? that they continue at a distance from all the means ordained to prepare mankind for a blessed immortality ? and that when you are summoned to appear at the judgment seat of God, you depart with no other conviction respecting them, than that they are filling up the measure of their iniquities ! Ah ! an hour is approaching when the most careless parent will be compelled to think aright on this subject. Meanwhile, with those who seriously acknowledge that it is the duty of parents to give religious instruction to their children, let us consider how it ought to be performed.

And first there ought to be a set and sufficient time appropriated to its performance. It is only a

small degree of labour and application which young people can give, at once, to any subject, but especially to those of a spiritual and religious nature. They must soon be relieved from their task ; but they ought soon also to be recalled to it in order to preserve what is attained, and make farther progress. If the religious instruction of a family be limited to a hasty lesson on the Sabbath, it is beyond reason to expect that they can be brought to understand and remember the many momentous subjects that are embraced in the Gospel of Christ. No intelligent parent would think an hour a week sufficient to instruct his children in any of the common branches of education, and are the doctrines of religion of easier attainment ? And no christian will affirm that the knowledge of the word of God is of less necessity to a child than skill in any of the branches of common learning ? There must then be repeated perusals of the sacred volume ; often repeated and often varied illustrations ; its truths must be interwoven with their habits of thought and feeling ; its great principles must become familiar as "household words ;" the very sound of which, has power to awaken a virtue. Now, if ever parental instruction shall have this effect upon children, there must be something more than Sunday inculcation. The command given to the Jews in reference to the words of their law, must be almost literally complied with. "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up—and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hands, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes—and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." If a mind well instructed in the law of God, be a desirable attainment, sufficient labour must be expended to obtain it ; and we do not overstrain the mark when we say, it should form part of every day's task. We think it ought not to prove an irksome duty to a christian parent, who knows something of the value of an immortal mind, that he should every day take under his own tuition the children whom God has given him—to unfold to them simply and affectionately, the principles and hopes of that gospel which is heaven's best gift to man. His own knowledge and experience might thus prove of incalculable benefit in forming their character, and in securing their future well-being. If such be a parent's duty, and such the benefits arising from it, what excuse can you give for the neglect of it ?—You are not competent ? What a pity, that you cannot do for your offspring what nature has enabled even irrational creatures to do for theirs ?—