

which is able increasingly to modify human command, because of its being merged in the divine—abating parental authority because the Divine will is being recognized—because “the voice of God” is being heard as the child Samuel heard it.

But parents must understand and measure difficulties, and must sympathize with their children, backing them, cheering them, strengthening them for the fight they have to wage. All life is full of serious fighting, relieved, fortunately, by times of fun and frolic, and undisturbed merriment—times which parents should delight in, and share in too betimes: but it is the serious fight we most need to watch with tender and sympathetic hearts. Our children must conquer, and they will have our help at every turn if our eyes are open, as they should be, and our wisdom guards them against risks and difficulties. Arduous enough, truly, the fight is, in all cases, against selfishness, anger, pride, stubbornness, fear and deceit. Each child has, besides, his own special sense of difficulty; but each child has to face all these, and to conquer in the fight, if his life is to be true and worthy—if his influence is to be fruitful in blessing to others—if he is to follow Jesus, and to find, in an enriching experience, how truly blessed they are who serve God, at whatever cost of weariness and toil and struggle. It counts for a great deal in this fight when a child knows that he has in father and mother, the truest and most sympathetic helpers. Well it is for the young life to know, by deepening experience—that he is not looked down upon by cold, critical eyes—that his parents are not always uttering orders or taunts, but are often alongside, cheering, showing how best to manage temper or the

rising feeling of selfishness. A word of cheer has vastly more power in the family, and in the wide world, than the word of blame, needful though this last may be. Most precious is this word of praise when it has been deserved. It will not nourish pride—it will do the very reverse—if we make it clear, by look and word, that in the thing done we see duty fulfilled, and are giving thanks for divine help, as we ask our child to hear the Lord’s “Well done.” Don’t let us be afraid of this word of our Master; and don’t let us train our children to fear it, or to feel as if it might be safer to have their ears closed to it. The Lord who at the morning hour says, “Go, work!” delights to meet even the little workers at the close of day to say “Well done!” Life’s battle is too sore and too constant to warrant parents pouring out reproaches. Even those of us who grow old have not managed to conquer so well that we can afford to forget that much fighting lies before us yet, and much need for sympathy too. What a store of sympathy these little ones need, and how greatly will it lighten the heart, brighten the eyes, nerve the arms, if they feel that father and mother want them to win in this fight! And don’t think that this fight is lost because of the failures which are seen and mourned over. Words of rebuke must be spoken at times; and when this must be, let us speak them solemnly and tenderly, but yet ever with the feeling that the future is ours: that over it the promise of God shines as a star; and that Jesus is with us, saying to mother and son, to father and daughter, to older and younger alike, as both need to hear it, “I will help thee,” and “Blessed is he that overcometh.”—*Professor Calderwood.*