

Forms of prayer he thought especially mischievous to children, as accustoming them to use words to which they attached no meaning.

"My judgment," he says, "is that men go the wrong way to learn their children to pray. It seems to me a better way for people to tell their children betimes what cursed creatures they are, how they are under the wrath of God by reason of original and actual sin; also to tell them the nature of God's wrath and the duration of misery, which, if they would conscientiously do, they would sooner learn their children to pray than they do. The way that men learn to pray is by conviction of sin, and this is the way to make our 'sweet babes' do so too."

"Sweet babes" is unworthy of Bunyan. There is little sweetness in a state of things so stern as he conceives. He might have considered, too, that there was a danger of making children unreal in another and worse sense by teaching them doctrines which neither child nor man can comprehend. It may be true that a single sin may consign me to everlasting hell, but I cannot be made to acknowledge the justice of it. "Wrath of God" and such expressions are out of place when we are brought into the presence of metaphysical laws. Wrath corresponds to free-will misused. It is senseless and extravagant when pronounced against actions which men cannot help, when the faulty action is the necessary consequence of their nature, and the penalty the necessary consequence of the action.

The same confusion of thought lies in the treatment of the kindred subjects of Free-will, Election, and Reprobation. The logic must be maintained, and God's moral attributes simultaneously vindicated. Bunyan argues about