

College, but happily, the election of Professor Gregg by the Assembly in June, made the defection a less serious one than it might have been. Three names of ministers appear among the obituaries of the past year—those of Dr. Boyd, and Messrs. Daniel Clarke and Francis Duncan. So with the years men pass away. “Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.” The year on which, by the good providence of God, we have entered, is one that calls for great wisdom, energy, and liberality on the part of all connected with our prosperous and united Church. May the prayers of God’s strong ones be with the workers, and the power of the Man whom He has made strong for Himself and for us.

“THE SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION AND CONVERSION OF THE CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH.”

(A paper read before the Presbytery of Ottawa.)

No Christian parent or pastor can fail to entertain deep solicitude for the spiritual welfare of the young committed to his care. But what are the best means of securing, under God, the end in view? How shall faith in the Divine promises best find a fitting expression in the spiritual uptraining of the children of the covenant? Some would urge the duty of prayer in the consecration of their offspring to God, as an effectual means; and in the offering up of earnest, importunate, supplication at a throne of grace they would consider parental obligation fully discharged, leaving results to Him alone who can turn the hearts of men as He turneth the rivers of water. But as prayer itself is only one mode of expressing our faith, or rather the offering up of our desires unto God,—it follows that prayer alone does not cover the whole ground of Christian responsibility and duty. Rather, we are to view prayer as resting upon a basis warranted by Divine testimony—so as to secure the fulfilment of the Divine promise. This basis, we conceive, is *the instruction of youth in the things of the Kingdom.*

All along in the history of God’s Church, the conversion of children and youth is predicated as being based upon their moral instruction. An encomium was pronounced on Abraham because he commanded his children and household, and instructed them to keep the way of the Lord. The Israelites were enjoined at the giving of the law to teach all the words which Jehovah commanded “diligently unto their children.” One of the proverbs of the wise King was to the same effect—“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” And besides the oft-repeated exhortation addressed to Christian parents to “bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” we have left on record the godly example of Lois and Eunice in training up young Timothy, who, from early childhood, was instructed in “the Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation.”

To neglect this duty, then, is to run counter to the will of God as made known in Scripture. It would be going as much in the face of Providence, to expect the conversion of a child in answer to prayer, without the employment of other means of moral culture, as it would for the farmer to expect a crop of grain without sowing the seed. The genial warmth of the sun, and the fertilizing rains of heaven, would all be lost without the sowing of