

The Saviour said, "Search the Scriptures," and the Apostle testifies, "They are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus." I find no chapter or text which releases us, at any period of life, from the study of the Scriptures. But, do we sufficiently realize the importance of the *time of beginning* this study, or of teaching it? Solomon said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The prophet says, "Whom shall he teach knowledge, and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little." The first seven years of life are more important than parents are aware. In them are sown the seeds of all that is good and amiable in character, or most that is evil. The most effectual corrector, even at this early period, is the Bible. And since the condition of a child is that to which we must come to receive the blessed Saviour, I conceive that childhood is the important season in which to sow the seed. For at mature age we have to make use of all the childlike simplicity and confidence that remains in our nature to help us to exercise faith in God's word or his promises. *Faith*, that very simple and yet difficult thing to be obtained, after leaving childhood, it is that makes us a child of Christ. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." Receive it with childlike confidence, believing from the heart that "Jesus died for me, even me."

The need of early culture cannot be sufficiently estimated; of beginning with the bud or germ. "In the *morning* sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand." I am impressed that the weight of the command is *in the morning*; wait not for the noonday sun, nor for the evening shade. Pre-occupy the ground. Seek the *dew* of God's blessing, and our children shall be numbered among the lambs of Christ's flock.

"The lambs of Jesus, who are they,
But children who believe and pray —
That keep God's laws and ask His grace,
And seek a heavenly dwelling-place.

"The lambs of Jesus, they are meek,
The words of peace and truth they speak;
To all God's creatures they are kind,
And, like their Lord, of gentle mind."

They may and probably will be more vivacious, sprightly, lively, and buoyant in juvenile life than afterward. This is natural; religion tends to happiness; cheerfulness and joyfulness are commendable, as the fruits of faith and hope in God.

The "fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith."

"Religion never was designed
To make our pleasures less."

It imparts true pleasure and abiding peace, and sweetens every thing in life. The child Samuel heard the voice or call of the Lord, when aged Eli did not. May we sow the seed in faith, and the Lord will take care of it. To us teachers the poet has said:

"O'er wayward children would'st thou hold firm rule,
And sun thee in the light of happy faces?
Love, hope, and patience—these must be thy graces,
And in thy own heart let them first keep school."

The Bible says, "He that winneth souls is wise"—he does not drive, but wins by love and kindness. May we strive to imitate our blessed Master, who so loved us that He gave himself for us; and we will be able to