

opinions, or religious habits. They stand loose to the Church of Christ. They are carried a wide step downwards in the scale of religious degeneracy, and make way for a still lower descent, in those who follow them. But will professing Christians, will Members of the Church of Christ, taking their places at a communion table, be accessory to these evils? Will *they* give ground for the charge, that *they* neglect their children? It cannot be denied, that those, who make a fair profession in other respects, often miserably fail here; and even the best might be more careful than they are. There is great need for a special communication on the subject; and, may the Lord carry this one home to the minds of you all, and give it practical effect.

The duties of parents are plain, and require only to be named, to recommend themselves to the conscience of every one, who looks at them, with candour and intelligence. They consist of family instruction, family devotion, and family government. These are means obviously conducive to one great end—the end which parents should have in view,—the eternal salvation of their children. It is for the performance of these duties, that parents are responsible. And that word *responsible* may well have a solemn sound in their ears. Responsibility carries us forward to the great day of judgment, when all our conduct, and all its effects are completed, and the whole becomes a subject of trial and decision before God and an assembled universe. And how will you stand that account if you neglect your children? Most parents have an awe upon their spirits, when they hear of their responsibility. But they frequently shut their ears that they will not hear. They despair of fulfilling their duty, and therefore avoid the full sense of their obligation. But this is the way to shift duty, not to perform it. The more proper course is to call in the aid of every consideration, that may tell upon the practice. And it is hoped you will thus act, as we proceed to show the greatness of your responsibility.

And the first consideration we shall urge, is the interest at stake. As professing Christians, you are prepared to take a proper view of these interests. You know that a child is, at once, born immortal, and a lost sinner. These facts are but dimly seen through the feebleness and helplessness of infancy. They are utterly unknown to the little subject himself. But they are not the less true, and ought not the less to be realised by parents. That tender babe has a soul of incalculable value—a soul that shall, one day, shine in all the beauties of holiness, or wear the horrid characters of matured and full grown corruption; that will, one day, rival angels in glory, or devils in degradation; that will, one day, take its flight to the mansions of eternal light and joy, or descend to the regions of utter darkness and despair. For such souls, a Saviour

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