

Hall, said some sensible things about the training of children. Her preliminary answer to the inquiry, "How can I train my children for God?" was, "Try to realize your responsibility to God in the doing of it." All through Scripture this responsibility is very clearly stated, Try, further, to recognize your ability for the task; God commands you thus to train your children, and therefore your ability is presupposed. There is something very wrong somewhere when the children of christian parents do not themselves become christians. Resolve, then, that you will accept this responsibility at all costs.

Strive to qualify yourselves for the work; the fact that you are Christians is not enough for this. If there were a more frequent combination of wisdom with piety how many fair young lives would be saved from shipwreck! Will God deny this wisdom to any who go to Him for it? Search the Scriptures, and find the principles on which such training must proceed. Many pray for their children, but not from the right motive. There is great anxiety as to personal prosperity or family credit; but these, after all, are of the very essence of selfishness. You must consider your children as redeemed unto God. I grieve to say it, but I fear many professed Christians think more of the training of their horses than that of their sons! Are not our children a heritage from the Lord? If we are responsible for mere earthly possession, surely we are doubly so for our children.

It is the training of the heart that is most needed; in other words, the inspiring of the child with the love of goodness and truth. That is "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This is to be accomplished, first, by inculcating obedience to rightly constituted authority. I look upon this as the foundation of all moral excellence. You stand toward your children in their earlier years in the place of God. If this were rightly understood, how many broken hearts would be spared! Now-adays it seems as if the obedience were to be on the part of the part of the parents. Children of five are treated as if they were men and women: so they grow up in lawlessness. If they have not been accustomed to obey their parents there less probability that they will be willing to obey God. This obedience is the first element of successful training. Begin with them from the very earliest years; there is a way of combining tenderness with firmness that mothers can easily adopt, and it is of the utmost importance.

Home Atmosphere.

This atmosphere of the household, which either converts to Christ or prevents to fashion, folly, and impiety, is commonly created by the parents. They are responsible for it. If the whole trend of household talk and thought and ambition runs toward money-making, or social convivialities, or general godlessness, it is the father and the mother who give the pitch. Nowhere is it so difficult to make the best preaching or the best Sabbath school teaching effective on character as in the unalloyed air of such a home. As soon expect to rear oranges in Lapland as plants of grace in so godless an atmosphere. The parental influence penetrates through the house with as subtle a poison as escaping gas from an ill-built furnace. As Dr. Bushnell has pithily said, in his incomparable book on "Christian Nurture;" "Whatever fire the parents kindle the children are found gathering the wood. They help as either apprentices or accessories."

If the father begins the Sabbath with some secular Sunday newspaper the family will help him read it. If the parents go irregularly to God's house the children will hardly care to go at all. If the mother is a scandalmonger she will make her children tattlers and eavesdroppers. If she directs her servants to say at the door that "she is not at home," the children will learn to be polite liars. If the father puts the decanter on his table the boys will soon begin to practise with the fatal glass. That rich father who disinherited a son for drunkenness, and in the same will bequeathed his wine-cellar to certain heirs, gave a very palpable proof of the home atmosphere which had poisoned the poor boy. Parental provocation and ill-temper sour the very air of many households, so that the children can hardly escape being cross, snappish, and irritable. How can piety breathe in such air? How can a family be trained up in the knowledge of God's Word when the Book of books is seldom opened, and the spirit of its instruction is no more known than in the house of a Mussulman? Even in the families of many professors of religion I do not look for any conversions, for I know that the most faithful discourses will be destroyed by the malaria of the home. It was the atmosphere of Elkanah's and Hannah's godly house that produced a Samuel. It was the wretched air of Eli's house which ruined Hophni and Phinehas.—*T. L. Cuyler, D. D.*