

J. W. BYERS

*Parent
&
Child*



PARENT AND CHILD

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Parent and Child

We are living in an age of tremendous responsibilities, opportunities, perplexities, and possibilities. Success and victory on the one hand, failure and defeat on the other, never awaited a people with such a vast scope of meaning or with so stern a reality as they await the people of this present day. The relationship and the position of man with his fellow creature in the spiritual, the social, the domestic, and the business life bring to us opportunities and possibilities either of glorious and eternal benefit and good, or of sad and deplorable disaster and evil. In no sense is this more real than in the domestic life, where husband and wife, father and mother, son and daughter, hold such a position and so blend their lives together as to produce character and influences that will last to all eternity. These great responsibilities rest unbidden upon us, and these great opportunities and possibilities are at our door. We must meet them, and ask God to help us make use of them in such a manner as will glorify himself and bring joy and happiness to ourselves and all those within this domestic circle and to the generations that shall yet be born.

This present day has developed a condition that gives evil the ascendancy if we submit to it, and many a soul has in the perplexity of this condition unconsciously yielded and thereby become more and more engrossed in confusion, until the enemy of all good has

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brought discouragement and despair upon hearts that otherwise might be filled with courage and victory and that might, turn the battle to the gates. There is much to be said on this subject of the domestic life, and much light that God will turn in upon our hearts as the perfect day sheds its glory upon the church of God, until parent and child shall more fully comprehend their true and noble position in life.

Dear fellow parent, let us solemnly look to God for his perfect will concerning us. Much has been said about us. Some have censured us for our failures; and no wonder, for they have been many. Some who have never been parents have theoretically told us our duty to our children, and some who are parents have given us their experiences of success and failure, and the precious Word of God gives us much wholesome instruction on this important part of our life. All these things are good for us, and let us pray that God may grant us wisdom to profit by the same. We will humbly receive correction where we are wrong, and instruction where we are ignorant, and endeavor to redeem the time we have lost in the past. As a parent with you, who has made many mistakes in the past, with my heart full of sympathy and love for every dear parent and child, I wish to speak. My life companion has with me decided to give our fellow parents the benefits of our success and failure of twenty years in this responsible capacity, and God has laid it upon my heart to preach and teach that which he has given me out of his holy Word. It would be quite pleasant to tell you of our success and many victories on this line, but we find it different to mention our failure and defeat; but we do it for the good of our precious brethren and sisters who are out on life's ocean with us, and pray that our success may encourage many and our failures may be danger signals for the protection of others who are coming along on this same way. Had

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we know what we by the Word of God and experience have learned, we should have less occasion to speak about failure.

Dear parents, we hold the highest and most God honored position in this world, and to a large extent hold in our hands the destiny of our own children and that of generations to come. We are disposed to forget this solemn fact and carelessly neglect our duties and opportunities, and sometimes think our task is a burdensome one. We drift into a state of mind that our children are with us today. We look ahead and see nothing but that they will be with us for life, and think we shall have abundance of opportunity some future time to do what we ought to do today. Many a fatal neglect has occurred in this way, and hearts and homes have been saddened.

Do you know that these little ones around our knee are going to be with us but a short time, and that these older ones at our table will suddenly disappear and a painful emptiness stare at us and point us back to neglected opportunities? O that God may waken us to our important duties and opportunities! They are passing by us never to be called back. We must grasp them now, and ask God to endue us with heavenly wisdom and grace, that no sad regrets will disturb our peace when our precious darlings are gone, and they look back to the hearth and home and say, "Oh, if father and mother had only told me!" These precious lives will be charged to our account in the day of reckoning. Do you believe it, dear parent? Neglect will bring untold regret and misery not only in this life but through eternity. Let us never entertain the thought of our children being a burden. They are no such thing to a true parent. They are our delight and comfort, the very production of ourselves; and when we have the true understanding of ourselves, we shall have it of our children.

Let us praise God for these sacred treasures of our home, and seek to become more and more to them what is this heavenly design

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we should be, and thus mold and fashion the life and character of our children into beautiful and noble men and women who will take our place in life, and when we have served our day and generation they may have well begun far in advance of ourselves, and carry out in the future a higher and more perfect success for God and the welfare of this fallen race of men.

Duty of the Parent

If the question were asked, “What is the duty of the parent?” it might be answered by the question, “What is not the duty of the parent?” To state the full extent of such duty and where it begins is a task greater than I am able to undertake; but there are a few points of duty that I shall endeavor to mention for the good of parents, and in doing so the thought comes very forcibly that there must be some starting point.

At a mother’s meeting the question was brought up, “How early must we begin to train our children?” Some thought at the age of six, some four, two, etc.; but an aged mother said, “You are all wrong. We ought to begin twenty years before the child is born, by giving it a good mother.” This mother’s idea of the beginning place is truly a good one, and we can all see as parents that we have much to do toward the disposition and character of our unborn children. Truly we must go back before the very conception of the new life for the starting point of parental duty. Our spiritual, mental, moral, and physical nature and condition will all be in a greater or less degree impressed upon the life of the being to be born. Who among us as parents cannot see the very image of ourselves in our precious children some of the characteristics of our nature greatly enlarged upon, and some diminished? It is within our power to build character that will dominate the life of the future child for good or evil, and

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mark our own home circle with real comfort and satisfaction or lifelong sorrow and regret. This fact cannot be too plainly dealt with and impressed upon the mind of every parent as an important duty and a God given privilege. We can do much to make our children what we want them to be. With the love of God in our hearts and his wisdom to guide us, our own life can be that which it should be to lay a foundation of character for the life of our unborn child that it may be said of us in the language of the prophet, "For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." Isa. 65:23. "That they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them." Jer. 32:39.

With all the resources of grace at our command and the wonderful law of nature that God has designed to serve in this parental responsibility, we certainly should look upon duty as a pleasure and seek diligently to qualify ourselves in this capacity for glorious results. Then when our home finally receives the welcome treasure, and our hearts beat with tender anxiety for its welfare, we may well ask the question, "What is our duty?" There truly is nothing too great for us to do in caring for the little one, and if we look to God and his precious Word we shall find our obligations clearly defined. Our parental love suggests every comfort in a temporal sense, so it is unnecessary to make mention of this line of duty; and as the child grows we soon find that instruction becomes a plain need. Therefore, we will notice from the Book of Truth that it is our duty to instruct.

Duty to Instruct

We are very liable to fail at this point in thinking the child is too young, but we must bear in mind that we are quite ignorant of the great effect and extent of our influence upon our precious little treasure. As soon as it begins to look so wonderingly into our eyes and makes every possible effort to give expression to its little thoughts, we can begin to communicate with it. We can impart to it impressions that will bear upon its nature for good or evil. Who knows how much good it brought into our individual life when our loving mother pressed us to her heart, and invoked heaven's blessing upon her infant babe, or as we grew older and began to understand the meaning of words, we were held in the arms of our dear parents while kneeling around the family altar, and their prayers were sent up to the throne of grace for their dear little one.

The very first recollection of my life and the earliest impression of my memory is my mother kneeling in prayer by a chair and myself lying on the floor with my head in her lap looking up into her face. This impression will follow me through life, and I have often thanked God for such a sacred beginning in life's memory, which must have been about the age of three years. The influence of those prayers and instructions of my tender years can never be known this side of eternity, but unquestionably they did much toward my eternal good.

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In the days of Israel, God laid this duty heavily upon his people. We read in Deut. 4:9, 10: “Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons; specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach the children.” In Deut. 6: 4-7 we read: “Hear O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt serve the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

In the margin the word “teach” reads “whet” or “sharpen,” which signifies a vigorous, keen application of the Word of God upon the minds of the children. They should be sharp and bright in the Word. In other words, the teaching must be so thorough that the child is perfectly familiar with the Word of God. The Psalmist says in Psa. 78: 4-8: “We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: and might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that

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set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.”

How plainly we can see the object of teaching and instructing our children in the Word of God, and how thoroughly it must be taught. It must become part of their life. Daily study must be as much of a necessity as eating and drinking. Neglect will incur a loss. They must become a partaker of the Word so that line upon line and precept upon precept has so impressed the memory with indelible truth that the Spirit of God can illuminate to the soul any part of his Word that will produce the needed result in the development of the future man and woman of God. With such a training of the mind in early life, the Word of God truly becomes engraved upon the door posts of the soul. Dear parents, we must become more diligent in these things. In this busy age we well know how easy it is for us to drift into negligence of our own spiritual welfare. Even though possessed of experience and judgment, we become disposed to let the cares of life and many other things hinder us from our daily devotions that are so necessary to our victory and spiritual growth. Our children need the same care on these lines that we do, and in some respects much more. They are much more susceptible to the evil influences around them than we are, and their lack of judgment appeals to us for help. They naturally would at times feel that their daily instructions and devotions are tiresome and would rather neglect them; but it is our duty to see to it that no such negligence takes place; that this is part of their life's necessities; that they may reach the design that God has had in the beginning a faithful, obedient soul.

Oh, how much our children need to know and remember the “praises of the Lord and his strength and his wonderful works,” “that they might set their hope in God”! Everything in this world of sin

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will draw our minds and hearts away from God if permitted to do so. Men set their hope in everything else but God; therefore, we can see the need of the mind of the child being instructed constantly in the praises, strength, and wonderful works of God. Everything else is a failure but him, and what a blessed inheritance we can leave our child in this manner, one that will prove in all future years and eternally a blessing and joy!

Think of it, parents, our child growing up in life and starting out in all these stern responsibilities with his or her hope set in God, with a heart right and a spirit steadfast with God. Can you comprehend a more beautiful picture than a young man or woman pure and clean from every defilement of sin and all its destructive effects upon the spiritual, moral, and physical being? There never was a jewel nor treasure of earth worthy to be compared with this. There never was anything in all the beautiful works of God in nature, nor any of the skillful work of art, that could draw from our admiration such feelings as this. All the achievements of honor, wealth, and influence of man cannot bring such comfort and satisfaction to the heart of a parent as this. And yet, dear ones, our merciful and loving heavenly Parent has placed this possibility in our hands and expects, yes, requires you and me to produce just such noble men and women to grace this old earth, with which to glorify himself. Brother and sister, that little darling in your arms possesses every ability and resource for one of the most beautiful creatures of earth, and by the grace of God you possess every power to develop it. Let us humbly look to God and obtain wisdom and knowledge from his store that will enable us to fill our responsibility.

We see that God has enjoined upon his people the careful and daily instructions out of his Word to our children. This must be the foundation for all instruction, and a careful system in this respect

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vigorously applied, will prove an eternal benediction to parent and child. With this also there is great need of instruction relative to the physical nature. The sacred Word tells us much about our body, and the child must have knowledge that will enable it to comprehend the design of God in all the different parts of these wonderful earthly temples. As its powers of comprehension expand, we must carefully keep pace with such knowledge that is absolutely necessary for the protection and purity of the child. Physical and moral development have their indispensable place side by side with the spiritual of a properly instructed child.

The safeguard to the moral nature is the properly instructed and intelligent spiritual, which, of course, includes the regenerating grace of God in the soul, without which there can be no true spiritual life. All instruction of a spiritual nature must lead to and sustain an experience of salvation in the child, which anchors the soul in God; and by careful vigilance on the part of the parent over the child equal to that necessary for ourselves, it can be kept in the love of God. This condition is the foundation for the entire structure of the noble being whose welfare God has entrusted to our charge. But there evidently is something of vast importance in the proper enlightenment of the mind pertaining to the physical and moral part of our being that will prove to be a valuable factor in the protection of the spiritual. Our three-fold nature needs proper and equal attention, so that each part may be able to contribute to the other that which God has designed, to enable us to enjoy life in its true sense. One may be spiritually developed and enjoying the precious grace of God in the soul, but through lack of knowledge of his physical and moral welfare, be greatly impaired in usefulness and true happiness. Also, such lack of knowledge may often give Satan an advantage over us, and cause us to lose the spiritual. Many a saint of God has sustained losses in a greater or less degree in this respect;

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and as we who are living in more advanced years realize these things, we must see to it that our children obtain such knowledge as contributes to their highest good. In the light that God has given us, we cannot be clear in his sight and withhold such knowledge.

There has been a great lack in the past on our part as Christian parents. God has had to reprove us in different ways; but the time is here when we must clear our souls of this responsibility, and shake off the false modesty that Satan has tried to hold down upon us, and begin more intelligently to instruct ourselves, then in the fear of God and with true parental love instruct our children in these things.

God has planted in the child the desire for such knowledge. Its very being demands it, as in its innocency it begins to look up into our eyes with all the earnestness of its little soul and asks such plain questions. How many of us have been really honest with our dear little one, and have not in some way given it a wrong impression that has in later years been misleading and actually a snare to the precious treasure that God has given us to protect? Many a parent has thus been guilty and will have to repent of such dishonesty, and may have been the cause of the ultimate downfall of some poor boy or girl. Also, many a one who is the God intended teacher of the child evades the question of the innocent little pupil at the parent's knee, and for fear of saying something that might be immodest, or for fear the mind of the little one might become tainted, or with the thought that the child is not yet old enough to know, the parent puts it off and then neglects altogether to attend to this, one of the most important duties in the home circle.

Dear parents, there are many ruined and blasted lives today dragging out a miserable existence in haunts of wickedness that might have been pure and noble specimens of humanity, had they known what their innocent little hearts at one time desired to know

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from their own parents. When the child fails to obtain this knowledge from the pure parental source, it soon comes in contact with playmates and schoolmates that have also been deprived of their God intended inheritance from their parents and through some impure and malicious source have obtained knowledge poisoned by the venom of hell, and your own pure little darling innocently partakes of that which at once begins to enkindle a flame in its nature, and which only awaits development to break out and burn out all that is good, pure, and noble in your child.

Who is to blame? It is that father and mother who feel too timid to answer a pure, innocent question of a pure, innocent child; that father who tells his boy from four to ten years not to talk about such things and not to ask such questions, and fails to give the instructions which the moral well-being of that child absolutely needs at this especially important period in life. Then when he reaches the critical period of his teens, the father still remains silent. The poor boy sinks deeper and deeper into the mire of pollution and vice until his life spiritually, morally, and physically is wrecked. It is that mother who could not dare to shock the modesty of her little girl by telling her about her little self that which she needs to know at that certain period when she asks her innocent questions, and later on fails to keep her gracious daughter instructed in the nature of her being as she step by step grows towards womanhood; and the longer the mother waits, the more immodest it seems to her to talk to her daughter, until some unfortunate day the awful fact is forced upon the parent that her once innocent and pure girl has become spotted by sin, and many a one has fallen a victim to shame and disgrace.

In thousands of instances it is such parents who are to blame, who with regret and sorrow are compelled to look upon blasted hopes and disappointed prospects in their children. The little lambs

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of our fold are exposed to prowling wolves that are lying in wait to kill and devour. The watch care of these lambs is given to us. It is our business to keep on the lookout for the destroyer, who will not likely make his attacks upon the morals of our children at any such time we are expecting; but when we are absorbed in other duties and responsibilities that cause us to neglect these of greater importance, when we least expect, the wolf creeps in and destroys the purity and innocence of these dear treasures of our home.

Ah, dear parent, if you do not teach your child, someone else will—but how? Your instructions are to be pure and holy, but those of someone else will almost invariably be just the opposite. Let us arise, and with holy jealousy defy the powers of evil by so thoroughly imparting to our children such knowledge as their years require that they will be forewarned and forearmed for the contact with evil, which they must necessarily encounter as they move out into the busy throng of life. Together with our careful vigilance, they will understand how to apply the law of self-protection, and thus defeat every power that seeks to destroy and ruin. We are commanded to train up these tender lives into strength of pure manhood and womanhood.

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Prov. 22:6. The word “train” here signifies catechize, which means thorough teaching. As a teacher applies the instructions over and over until the pupil has unquestionably obtained the required knowledge; so the parent must apply these important precepts until they are thoroughly instilled into the very life of the child. “Train up” means, bring them up to mature age: not simply a short lesson for a short time in the life of the child, but it must be begun with its very existence and continued until it is able to stand, a strong, full grown, well developed man or

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woman. “Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” is the New Testament command. Bring them clear up to the desired place, in the desired manner “the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Nurture them up as a tender little vine is nursed and protected and encouraged to grow by every possible means available, until its little tendrils begin to fasten to the trellis that has been carefully constructed for its protection and beauty. By and by it will be strong and so completely grown to and interwoven with its support that it, cannot be torn loose. At first it had to be bound up until it began to take hold for itself. Now we need have no fear; it holds fast by its own strength, a beautiful, well trained vine. At first it was not disposed to take hold, but it was compelled to do so. It wanted to grow down and creep out on the ground and take hold of everything else but what you desired it to. It would have been down and tangled up and trampled on and soiled, a real dissatisfaction and disappointment. But you designed it otherwise, and now it pleases you well. We also are very careful to see that our little trees grow straight. If they are disposed to lean or grow crooked, we bend them up and bind them to a stake and compel them to grow as we desire. They yield to our desire in this manner, and bring satisfaction to us for our pains. Just so it will be with our dear little one if we give it the proper training.

Someone has objected to such training because of its compulsory appearance, and has gravely said, “You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink.” Well, the reason why you cannot make him drink is, he is not thirsty. If you are careful not to let him drink anywhere else, he will get thirsty in a very little while and will drink with a relish. You must not let him drink at places where he will get water that is impure, but keep him at the pure

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fountain. He must drink somewhere, and you will soon be pleased to see him drink the pure water.

Your child must thus be protected from impure things by actual compulsion. Then it will become hungry for something; and by your careful judgment, it will learn to relish the pure, the good, and the holy, and grow up with a grateful heart to its loving parents, who so carefully protected it in those years when its own judgment was incapable of knowing what was clean or unclean.

Pure parents, a pure home, pure associates, pure literature, and pure influences in every respect, are a heritage belonging to every child born into the world.

Duty to Correct

The disposition of a child to take up with that which is contrary to the wish of the parent must be overcome. Sometimes this is a difficult task in cases where the child has been permitted to have its own way, which condition never exists where the parents have done their duty in the proper instruction of the child. But since we see our duty now and are required of God to do this duty, we must begin in the fear of God. Where the child has been trained, there will be little difficulty in correction, but this important part of our life must necessarily be carried out. Instead of a feeling that it is an awful burden and the next thing to an impossibility to administer correction, we must consider it one of the necessities of life and humbly look to God and his Word for knowledge and grace. The child, of course, does not like this part of life, and it would soon take up with the thought that it is very much abused, etc.; but all such foolish logic must be ignored and a careful system of correction established in every home. One father said he loved his children so well that he could not correct or punish them. Such a parent does not love his child as he should.

Punishment of some kind for disobedience and stubbornness is absolutely necessary in the proper training of the child. Chastening means more than simply inflicting pain. It means correction and disciplining in every necessary respect. Applying the rod of

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correction means more than using a rod in the form of a whip, and yet a whip is one of the most effectual means of chastening in many instances. As children of our heavenly Parent we all know how unpleasant some of the chastenings of God seem to us. “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.” Heb. 12:11. How true this has proved in our experiences! The very chastening that we naturally would have avoided if we could, turned out to be the means of the most precious blessings of our life. The parental eye of God saw the danger ahead and brought to bear upon us the influences that served in his hand as the rod of correction to guide our feet past the danger place. We would not have had it so, but he would; and when it was over and we could look back, we could thank him unspeakably for just the way it all was brought about. The chastenings afterward yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to our grateful hearts.

No child left to its own way will ever escape the pitfalls of Satan. It must be trained up and away from the natural downward tendency. There is too much evil power in the old world and too much natural inclination in the inherent depraved life, to leave a poor, innocent, and ignorant child to its fate. Ruin, eternal perdition, awaits every such child. God gives the child parents, and gives the parents a responsibility for which they must answer. In the text, “Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” the Revised Version reads, “Nurture them up in the chastenings of the Lord.” The child must be brought up with chastenings which are essential to its well-being.

We all are thankful to God today for all the chastenings our godly parents administered to us. We may look back and think we

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know where they made some mistakes, but we have no regrets over our childhood chastenings. If our parents did their duty on every line where they had understanding, we are exceedingly thankful, and we would not have missed one stroke of the rod applied by a loving hand that perhaps is long ago departed from us. That same hand which labored and toiled for our support physically, and often smoothed our troubled brow, and held our little hand as we walked over dangerous places and caught us as we were falling, that hand also applied the rod of correction for the purpose of our security from the evils that so thickly surrounded us.

If we can give reverence to our dear parents for all the chastenings we received, can we now as parents be guiltless before God and neglect our own responsibilities? We want our children to have all the benefits we received, and must therefore see to it that the divinely ordained plan is recognized in our home. These chastenings must be applied in a careful manner, that the child may soon learn that it is no personal comfort, nor any other object of the parents, for their own pleasure, but wholly for the benefit of itself. It would be difficult, of course, for the child to see this in its early years; but the time will come when it will see it and give its parents reverence, and whether or not it would ever see it, the responsibility remains the same on the parental side. Some are disposed to think that an act of disobedience or rebellion or stubbornness may be passed by and overlooked, and a child permitted to go on without any serious result from such an act; but there can be no more fatal error than this. Every such act in a child will develop more and more rebellion, until in due time the word of the parent loses all its power, and the child becomes a downright rebel. O dear parents, let me warn you against this awful spirit of these last days. One of the plain indications of the signs of the times as prophesied by the apostle is “disobedient to parents.” 2 Tim. 3:2.

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God cannot look with approval upon the home where disobedience is permitted to exist. Every transgression of this kind must be accounted for by the child, or ruin will be its doom, and the careless parent will have to give account for it in the day of reckoning, while in this life there will be untold sorrow and regret on the part of both the parent and the child. The law of heaven is obedience. The universe is held by the same law. Every earthly government must recognize the same, or else anarchy and ruin will be its shameful destruction. The church of God cannot exist upon earth without this law strictly enforced, and no home will ever be worthy of the name without this same law recognized by every member of the household. In other words, no rebel dare exist under any form of proper government, unless he be kept imprisoned, or in some other way prevented from coming in contact with anyone else. There is no place in heaven or earth where this is more real or serious than in the home, and yet there are many professing saints, I fear, who are wholly ignorant of this stupendous fact.

Disobedience under any earthly government dare not go unpunished. Rebellion is a crime, and punishable by banishment or death. Otherwise no government can stand. I have seen mothers and fathers let their little babe become stubborn and rebellious, and they look upon it as something smart and cute. As the child grew, that awful element grew also, and in a few years the child was a disgrace to parents, to itself, and to the community. Mothers allow their little ones to defy them, and strike at them, or kick and squall in a fit of anger, sometimes right in a public place of worship, where many eyes behold the shameful scene. The rebellious child must be conquered, no matter how young. It must be punished by some rigid method until every grain of stubbornness is ground out of it, and it becomes a good, obedient child.

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In Col. 3:21 we read, “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.” This admonition means much. It applies to chastening as well as to other parental dealings. You have often seen children when punished fly into an outrageous fit of anger, or when already in a paroxysm of rebellion and stubbornness, some little fellow will catch its breath and fall over like one dead, become black and blue in its face, and frighten the perplexed parent that it really might die. The rod of correction is laid aside, and the parent begins to coax and pet the little one to bring it out of its spell. After a while the little fellow sees that he has conquered, and straightens up, the master of the situation. The parent simply provoked it to anger, and the next time it feels like it there will be a repetition of the scene, and almost invariably at such a time when it is the most humiliating to you. In meeting or when company comes, little Johnny or Mary will take advantage of the circumstance and boss the parents around to his or her own satisfaction, or else there will be a scene on hand.

Beloved parent, you do wrong when you allow your little one to have its own way. If it is angry by your chastening, or before you begin to chasten it, you make the mistake if you stop or fear to begin. You simply encourage it in its wrong. You must conquer the child’s will. Many a time we only provoke it to anger by an improper or partial punishment. When we begin, we must go through with it. It may often seem a hopeless task, but no matter; we must go through with it, in the fear of God, or else our dear child will be ruined. “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” Prov. 13:24. To spare here means to neglect to chasten and incomplete chastening. If in case a little whip is the means of chastening, you must apply it until the child is conquered. If it needs chastening only because it was disobedient, or made some mistake, and it takes it in a submissive manner, you can safely stop

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as soon as this correction indicates to you to be sufficient according to the need of the occasion; but if it is a case of stubbornness and rebellion, the rod must be applied until the will is conquered, and the child recognizes your authority over it. You must break its will, or it will break your heart and home. With a loving, though sorrowful, heart you must keep at your unpleasant task until your object is accomplished, your little subject comes up to you and puts its arms around your neck, with a loving little heart full of sorrow because of its stubbornness. A proper chastening on this line will not need to be repeated often; and if in some rare cases it must be repeated, do it in the fear of God, and do it right away. If you must be excused from the presence of company, or must go out of meeting or Sunday school, withdraw with your child out of hearing distance and settle this matter.

Of course no parent has any business to chasten a child in any other way than in true parental love, and the effectual method of the chastening must be determined by the parent as wisdom and divine guidance may suggest.

The Word of God recommends the use of the rod, and also commands it. A mother who had been in the habit of spanking her child was saying that she hardly knew what to do any more, as the little fellow was getting so large. A sister said, "Take the Bible way for correction." "What is that?" asked the mother. "The rod," was the answer. The mother found that the little rod was effectual. It is not Scriptural to slap, cuff, or spank, even though it might often be convenient, especially to some parent who has become angered at the provocation of the child, but no one can do right and undertake such a responsibility in such a frame of mind, and no child of God will do so. If you feel thus toward your child, you must first get down before God and get grace into your heart. There are instances

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where children have been ruined by a blow on the side of the head, or a slap on the face. It is not consistent with Christianity nor parental love to administer such punishment. A spank to a small child may injure its flesh and otherwise harm its body. A similar application to a half grown boy or girl would require a severe blow to make it felt, which would endanger the body and certainly be unsatisfactory in its results as a means of correction. Use the rod and such means as will be consistent with the Word of God, and he will stand ready to fulfil his promises.

“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.” Prov. 22:15. “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.” Prov. 23:13, 14. “The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.” “Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.” Prov. 29:15, 17.

Of course, “the rod” means every proper method of correction; but it certainly includes the whip, as the quoted texts imply. Some of us who have been ignorant of the true course of training and whose children have become partly or wholly grown up, are often quite perplexed with the problem of proper correction; but in the light of God’s Word there is but one law for the home for young and old—the law of obedience. Unless a child has been carefully held to this law from infancy, there will probably be some difficulty on the part of the parent to convince the young man or woman that parental authority has no respect of persons, any more than has true government authority; but that this law must be enforced in every Christian home, regardless of age or position. Obedience must be written upon the heart of every child. Suppose you should let John

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or George have his way, and let him smoke cigarettes, chew tobacco, play cards, swear, dance, disobey your commands in any way, how long before Willie takes up the same things? You cannot keep him from them. He will get into his older brother's pockets, and smoke, chew, etc., as his brother. He will disobey you in just the same way. Then little Henry will see his older brothers do these things, and you will have his little mind and life poisoned with the same soul destroying disease, and you will have a family of rebels in your home. You cannot expect God to bless your home under such circumstances.

In a certain family there was a young man who disregarded the earnest wishes of his parents. He spent all his summer's wages in foolishness, and then came home to live on his parents during the winter. He was carrying on something right in plain sight of his parents and the other children that was a disgrace to the family. The poor parents plead with him to desist from this; but he would have his own way, and defied their authority. The earnest request for prayer for this wayward son was brought to meeting. The parents in tears were perplexed and troubled. We entered into the trouble, and got under the burden with them. We prayed and prayed that God would stop the downward course of this boy, but he kept right on with his rebellion. Repeated requests for prayer were made, and one morning upon awaking my soul was burdened for this boy. I prayed, and God began to show me that there must be something done on the part of the parents. Like Phinehas, there must be some judgment executed. I must go to the parents and tell them what God had shown me. I told them that God was displeased with such a boy in their home, as he was polluting the sacred atmosphere for the other children; that their home could not be one where God dwelt if this condition of things continued; and that I could not come to pray for

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them when sick, and could not recognize them as saints unless they positively forbade and prohibited such rebellion under their roof.

We had a precious season of prayer. God witnessed with his approval upon the proposed course of action. It was enforced in the fear of God. The young man was told the law of the home, and that no such thing or anything else should ever be permitted there that was displeasing to God. The boy became indignant, and said he would leave home. The parents had decided that God should have his way, even if their son should leave home; and that their home must be purified, and kept pure from that moment on. He left, but the home was protected and the other children saved from the ungodly influences.

Someone will say that this is fanaticism and wrong. It matters not what may be said; we are determined to have a pure home, and are consecrated to keep it so at any cost. If some grownup, rebellious son or daughter will not submit to Heaven's law of the home, the parent must be willing to see the extreme result, if need be, of the child's leaving the home circle. Such, however, I believe, will be a rare occurrence; but if need be, let the rebellious one depart rather than have a whole family of rebels, and the sin of neglect to follow you all through life with bitter regrets, and to answer for it in the day of reckoning, and to see your poor children go down into an endless hell. The law of obedience and parental reverence will bring the opposite result. We shall thank God all through life for our precious children; and when we stand at the bar of God with our loved ones, we shall be able to say, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me." We cannot afford to make any mistakes on this line. There is too much at stake. This sacred parental charge is one of such a short period. We may be inclined to feel that it is long and tiresome; but it is very short, and every day must be carefully

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improved, for every day has its own opportunities, which if permitted to pass by can never be recalled. I had rather have a child break away from home, if such a sad thing should be the result of a thorough enforcement of the law of obedience, than have him or her stay at home and live in open rebellion. If a son or daughter should actually leave home under such circumstances, they could never forget the cause of such an act, and in their heart they would have a much better understanding of right and wrong than if permitted to go on in the home in lawlessness and rebellion. Conviction could much better fasten upon such a heart, because you could pray with much more faith than if conscious that you had not yourself been up to the Bible standard in this law of obedience.

Like Abraham, we must command our children and our household after us, and they will keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment. The parental command must not be broken. If through lack of knowledge or understanding it should be broken, the transgression, of course, may be dealt with accordingly; but if through stubbornness or rebellion, there must be such measures taken as will bring the transgressor to speedy submission and repentance. The parent does a great wrong by letting a child go a day or night in rebellion. "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." 1 Sam. 15:23. This is God's idea about these awful sins, and it must be that of every parent. We cannot let such evil exist in our home.

If a child is well broken from the start, there will be but little difficulty in maintaining purity in the home; but even though there has been a sad deficiency on our part in the past, we can from now on, by the grace of God, largely recover from some of the evil effects. It is a serious question, we must admit, when a child has had its way fifteen years or more and has become headstrong, proud, and

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stubborn; but, dear parent, this will by no means excuse you now from your duty. You say that you shall begin from now on with the little ones that you can control, but shall have to let the older one go on and have his own way. No; you cannot do that. You must begin with the older one, and make that one an example of obedience for the rest.

Break your child as we break a colt or a horse. It is easier to take the colt when young, I admit, but the horse too can be broken, and we never stop until they are well broken. What do we break? Their will. We make them understand that their will is subject to ours. It is their business to serve our will, to do our pleasure, at our bidding, without any objection or complaint. They must work where we please and when we please, go, stop, stand, walk, trot, run, pull, and do everything that our will and pleasure may suggest. Then we say the horse is “well broken” well trained to do our commands. Dear parents, do you think this is a good standard of training for our children? You answer, “The child cannot be compared to a colt in this respect, because a child has a mind and intelligence of its own.” Yes, it has a mind and intelligence of its own, but a colt has one, too. Both must be taught the law of obedience. That of the child certainly is much greater and more susceptible than that of the colt. The child therefore is much more capable of being trained, and can be brought to a much higher standard of intelligent obedience than any other living creature. The child can soon comprehend the nature and need of parental obedience and reverence, so that it will love to obey and do the will of its parents. It will learn to seek every opportunity to please you when such intelligence has once been obtained. It has a mind and a will of its own, but it soon finds that the mind has been given it to be exercised in obedience to that of the parent. It has a will, but the object and business of that will is obedience to the will of the parent. There is only one thing in this world for a child to do.

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The parent has many things to do, but the child has but one object in life while under the parental roof. What is it? Obey its parents. This is the only commandment in the Bible to children that I know of.

As to the method to effect obedience on the part of a grown child, I am sure that we can obtain help from the Lord. Perhaps no one method can be applied to all, but we can accomplish the will of God by his grace. It certainly would not be prudent to undertake the same methods as those for smaller children. If you can conquer a big fellow by the use of a rawhide, it might prove satisfactory in some cases; but there are more effectual means, which are more consistent for such cases, no doubt.

In a certain home a girl of seventeen became stubborn and impertinent toward her mother. The child was sent to her room and told that she could not have a bite to eat until she asked her mother's forgiveness. She went, and fully made up her mind to have a good spell of stubbornness; but the parents fully meant to conquer the young lady. She was given all the time she wanted in this case to decide to yield. The noon meal found a vacant place at the table. At night it was the same, and likewise the next morning, but shortly after breakfast the parents were invited to come to her room, and with deep heart sorrow the child fell upon her mother's neck, and in tears begged forgiveness for her stubbornness and saucy words. There was a precious prayer meeting in that room that morning. The rebellious heart was broken up. God and the parents forgave the child, and she has never had such a fast since. Some critic will say, "Cruel to deprive a poor child of its food three meals." But it was the child, not the parents, that deprived herself of the meals. The parents could hardly eat when they thought of the poor girl without her meals; but she had her choice in the matter, and they were sure she would not starve to death.

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It is quite effectual and an excellent plan to have a reckoning with a disobedient child before its plate is turned up at mealtime. Our God who has supplied our food and home has also said, "Children, obey your parents." We have no right to eat of this food or partake of the benefits of this home until repentance for every transgression of the law of the home has been made. This method is suggestive of satisfactory results, and of honor to God, the parents, the children, and the home. The child who is taught true obedience to its parents will find it easy to obey God.

The heart and nature of a child is like a garden that someone has given us and required us to keep clean from every weed and have it grown full of beautiful and useful plants that will be profitable to the owner and ourselves. We must render a strict account of the care and cultivation and the production of this garden, for it is of incalculable value to the owner and to us. The soil is exceedingly fertile, and equally so in the production of both noxious and valuable plants. The owner furnishes us with every seed that is desirable to plant in this soil and to carefully water and nurture up into exquisite beauty.

The atmosphere around this garden is capable of carrying evil seeds that float around and above and settle down upon the soil and bury themselves in it; and if not constantly watched will germinate and grow up, choke out, and destroy every good plant in the garden, and make it a reproach and disgrace to the owner, ourselves, and the community. In fact, some of these evil germs are naturally in the soil, and until such a time in the culture and development of the garden when by a divine application of the germ destroying remedy everything of the kind will be purified from this soil, there will be need of constant and careful weeding. We shall be held responsible for everything pertaining to this garden, for at least twenty-one years, or as much longer as it is entrusted to our care.

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There are many influences bearing upon the life and nature of our child, which, if left to have their way, will be like the evil seeds and plants in the soil of the garden. Then there is the natural depravity of the heart itself that will easily work the ruination of the child if permitted to do so. As in the fertile, watered garden we must continually fight weeds as well as cultivate the good plants, so we must do with our child. In one sense, the proper methods to destroy the weeds, when applied at the proper time, will be a benefit to the good plants. The cultivation of the soil is good for the plants. The proper chastenings are like good cultivation to the nature of the child, which, if from its infancy are properly applied, will make it a delight to its parents and to God. The evil tendencies must be vigorously prohibited. The outside influences are often pernicious. In fact, there is no good to be expected from an outside source, only as every evil is cautiously weeded out.

For some years when our family was young we had our minds made up that we would keep our children shut away from the outside world, and thus keep them untainted; but we soon found that there were some necessary exposures that our children must meet, and that it would be better to carefully teach them what they need and then do our part toward their protection, and let them be exposed only where it is absolutely necessary. It is better in a practical sense that they should know how to resist and overcome evil than that we should try to keep them completely from coming into contact with any of it; for we are in the world, and will in a greater or less degree be exposed to the evils in it.

The prayer of Jesus for us in John 17:15 is a practical, parental prayer: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." This does not mean that the parent or the child should go out into the world and do as it

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does, but just the opposite. “Keep them from the evil.” To do as the world, would be to do evil; “for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” 1 John 2:16. The child properly forearmed by intelligent instructions spiritually, morally, and physically, will be able to be kept from the evil.

The parent, like the keeper of the garden, stands on the watch for every evil weed that makes its appearance, and will not let it grow. The child may want something that the parent knows is not good for it. It cannot have it. It may cry and want to beg and reason and plead, but this must not be allowed. The parent knows, and the child does not, what is good for it. It must be kept from the evil, until it knows for itself what is good and right and is able to choose the good and resist the evil.

When a child has grown up and wants to do evil, the parent has no more right to consent than if it were small. It is a question, How long must a child be compelled to obey its parents? Answer. As long as it eats at your table and lives under your roof. My child must obey me when under my roof, if he or she is fifty years old and still under my charge. If away from home and grown up and out in life, independent from the home law, I am no longer responsible; yet I could not dare consent even then to evil in such a child. If such children should persist in evil, it would be under parental protest and answerable to the home law, if the child should ever again become dependent upon the home.

Another question associates itself with the above. Can the parent compel the child to be saved? Answer. No; but you can and must compel them to obey the home law of obedience and reverence to you, which law is so much like that which God requires of every one for salvation that it will not be hard for the child to obey and

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reverence God. It will be easy to appeal to the will of the child and bring it to Jesus, when your home life is such as has inspired confidence in the heart of the child toward you, and your home law has been obeyed. If you have neglected your duty in the early part of the child's life, and it has grown up without salvation, you still have a tremendous advantage if you do what you can to redeem the time, before the child leaves the home circle, or if he or she has gone from home, you can prevail with faith, prayers and tears until the dear one becomes willing to yield to the convicting grace of God.

Some of us have made some sad mistakes and have neglected opportunities, which cannot be recalled; but the grace of God can yet do much for us and our children. One of the regrets of our past negligence, which has been through ignorance of duty, is that we permitted our children to stop praying. They were taught, to pray from their infancy, were born in an atmosphere of prayer, and were willing to pray until the oldest one was quite grown. We could have kept them willing had we known how. We made the mistake by permitting them to do things and have things that at the time were questionable in our minds as to whether or not they were the best. The prayers of the children became formal, and we did not know how to remedy that; and at last they wanted to stop praying, and we permitted that. Then they wanted many things that we knew were not right, and from that time on our home was not what it had been. We found it much harder to satisfy the children and keep them obedient and consistent with our profession. We might have kept them willing to obey God, then it would have been easy for them to obey us. As it was, it was hard for them and frequently brought them into trouble, and we feel that we have lost an advantage over those who are yet unsaved that can now be regained only by supplication, fasting, and prayer.

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Our children must be taught the Word of God, to reverence God and their parents, to pray, and to trust God from their infancy. In the mind of the child, God and the parents must have a place of honor and absolute respect, to whom it also must look for all its support and refuge. Under these conditions the child can be kept devotional to God and obedient to its parents. It will be a delight to the child and the parent to worship God. Many happy seasons of prayer can be spent together. The family altar will be a delightful place, where parents and children together meet for daily worship. The house of worship will be the next spot of sacredness to both, as the whole family go up to worship. The Sunday school will be looked forward to by the child, as it expects to sit and listen to the precious instructions out of God's Word. You say your children are not that way. You have to almost compel them to go to meeting and Sunday school, and you cannot get them to pray at home. Do you know why this is so? Answer. Because you have not done your duty. You have perhaps not been spiritual and devotional yourself, or have partly or wholly neglected your child in spiritual instructions. Now, if you have failed in any respect along these lines, you need not be surprised at the disposition of your child. It has not been trained up in the way it should go, and now you must regret the sad condition it is in. But, dear parent, you can yet do much to change this condition. Repent of your negligence and begin at once to carry into effect the Scriptural course of instruction and correction. If the child is old enough to understand, explain why you do this, and also confess your negligence.

There is no reason why a child under the age of ten or twelve years should not be compelled to pray. We all agree that they should be compelled to go to meeting and Sunday school, and to kneel down at family worship and respect the worship of God so long as they eat at our table; and it certainly is consistent with proper

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parental love for the welfare of a child under the age mentioned to require it to pray. The reason I name this age is that most children are then yet unaccountable. Until a child reaches the age of accountability the parent is wholly accountable for its well-being. The child is innocent and must have devotional instruction and form devotional habits while in this period, because it is so much easier then, and there will be a foundation laid upon which to build. If the parent has neglected this important period of the child's life, it will be a more difficult matter to bring it into a true devotional attitude. But in every family there are special times when the hearts of the whole household are softened, such as cases of sickness or bereavement or some severe trial or in some visible danger or during some special season of grace at camp meeting or some other meeting when all hearts are touched. At some such time, if the parents are living in God, it will not be hard to bring to bear upon the will of each member of the family the deep convictions of the Spirit of God, even upon those quite this side the age of accountability, who can be persuaded to yield their hearts to God.

A child under Scriptural parental care, under the age of accountability, can certainly be kept devotional. Then when it passes that age it can be made to see the need of salvation and brought to the experience of regeneration, from which time the grace of God in the heart will become an inward defense against sin, and if the parents do their faithful duty the child can be kept in the love of God.

The statement that a child can be kept in the love of God is one that can be verified in our own life. The Word of God says, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." Jude 21. This is a plain command, and one that involves our vital interests. To have the love of God in us and to keep in this love, is the secret of our Christian victory. We must keep ourselves in the love of God. It will not do to simply know

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that we once were in this love, or that we once enjoyed salvation. We must know that we have it now. Neglect is a weapon that Satan uses to destroy this love. Every saint that has ever lived on earth has had to learn how to overcome at this point. There must be a daily vigilance in prayer, reading God's Word, devotion to God, in assembling with the saints when possible, and every means of grace that is within our reach. The more we devote ourselves to the love of God, the stronger it becomes in us to keep us. We must do all we can to keep ourselves in this love, then it becomes strong to keep us.

Now, the same conditions necessary to keep ourselves are also necessary to keep our children. They need even more careful watching in many respects than we do. They have not the experience, judgment, knowledge, wisdom, nor power of resistance that we are supposed to have and must have. They are dependent upon us for these things, and must be taught to depend upon us and to come to us in their troubles and temptations, which to them are as great as ours are to us, and sometimes much greater. One mistake on the part of many parents is, they think the little troubles, heartaches, perplexities, and trials of a child do not amount to much, and ought to be treated as only a little matter, but it is not. The trouble that comes to that premature life, with its tender feelings and its lack of judgment and understanding, is as crushing and severe as any that we have to bear; and the temptations to that inexperienced heart are much more liable to make inroads that will defile its spiritual nature than those that come to us who have learned how to successfully resist the devil steadfast in the faith. The child must have our protection in these things and the benefit of our knowledge and experience until it reaches an age of strength and power to ward off the subtle attacks of the enemy for itself. It must have the proper and timely instruction necessary for its years, which, with our watch care, will keep it from the allurements of sin until it reaches the age

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when the regenerating grace of God can come in and take the throne of its heart. Then there will be an inward resistance against sin, and the child will be able to relish the same daily devotions and continual means of grace to keep it in the love of God that is required for us.

We must settle it in our hearts that we will not neglect these things for our children nor for ourselves. The same effort required to exercise ourselves unto godliness must be applied to our children. It will make a wonderful difference in the daily home life where parents and children keep themselves in the love of God. A regenerated heart in a child enjoys spiritual things, according to its capacity, as much as that of a grown person; and it must have attention as much as a grown person. Let us renew our diligence toward the well-being of our children, and we shall find to our joy that we have made an investment that will bring golden results.

Some of us have accepted an idea that a child cannot attend public school and keep saved. I am persuaded that this is a mistake. There is no duty or obligation that calls us out into the world but that God has the grace to support us and keep us from the evil that is in the world. It is the same with a child. In this age of advancement, a child must have a reasonable degree of education. The golden moments of the short period of a child's life must not be wasted. It is entitled to all the benefits that can be bestowed upon it in this respect; and if we have no opportunity to give our children a good common education outside the public schools, we must make use of the means provided within our reach. Our duty carefully done to keep ourselves and children in the love of God will keep out the evil effects of the necessary contact with sin in the school. We must use judgment and heavenly wisdom. The child must not be exposed unnecessarily.

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In a certain school the teacher wanted a saved boy to take part in an entertainment where he would have to play the part of foolishness. The boy refused of his own accord; but when it came to the question of going to the entertainment, where much foolishness was to be displayed, the child knew not how to decide. He felt it would be better for him not to go, but did not know. He went to his parents for advice, and was instructed not to go. He was perfectly satisfied with the instructions, and said that he really had not wanted to go, but that he hardly knew what to do, before asking about it. You see the love of God was in his heart, but he lacked the true knowledge necessary to guide him.

This is the way it is in the life of every child. The parent must be knowledge and understanding for it, and it must be taught to depend upon the parent. We must make our children feel that they can repose utmost confidence in us in everything, so they naturally will make us their counselor and refuge in every time of need. We sometimes may think it is so much trouble to have the children running to us with mamma this and mamma that, papa this and papa that; but we must be careful as we teach them to become self-reliant that we do not push them off beyond the necessity of depending upon us for instruction in everything that they have not yet completely learned. We must be security for the child in everything. Our civil law holds the parent responsible for the action of a child. The law of God makes no less requirement. We are the child's security.

There is a beautiful lesson in Gen. 43:1-14. Benjamin was required by Joseph to come to Egypt. Jacob could hardly consent, to have this child depart from him; but the famine was in the land, and it meant starvation to them to remain in their land, and they could get no sustenance without going to Egypt. They must go, and they

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must take Benjamin. The father protested, but Judah insisted. The child must go. Judah said, "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame forever." This illustrates the responsibility of the parent for the child. Judah was but a brother and felt that he could assume such a responsibility, even for the life of Benjamin. Our children must be exposed to some extent to the evil in the world; but if we make use of the means God has provided, we can throw a protection around them that will secure their safety. He has given us the children to protect and train up for him. We can say like Judah, "I will be surety for the child." We can bring them safely into the kingdom.

One thought yet about those of our children who grew up and went out into sin before we knew how to get them into the love of God and keep them there. I will tell how my dear mother brought me into the kingdom.

Through lack of understanding my parents permitted me to go out into sin from the age of accountability. They held a strong restraint upon me in many respects, and were successful until a few years before my conversion. The influences became so strong through improper individuals coming into our home that I fell a victim to sin, and did all I could to throw off all parental restraint. For two or three years my heart, was hardened by sin, and caused many tears and prayers on the part of my dear parents. They did not know the law of obedience in the home as they should, and permitted me to openly violate that law without bringing the penalty down upon me. Those few years are a dark spot on the record of my life; but I am thankful to God that that period was no greater in length of time than it was, and also that it is entirely erased from the book of God's remembrance against me.

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While the influences of sin were strong to lead my soul farther and farther away from God, there was an influence of grace bearing heavily upon me. It was the prayers of my dear parents. At last my will was bent under the mighty power of those prayers, and my poor heart found repentance and pardon. For about two months the joys of salvation were unspeakable, but here the dear parents failed to understand how to throw the protection around me necessary to keep me in the love of God. Through the influences of school and young society, my heart was stolen away from the pure love of God, and I became a backslider—miserable, wretched, and dissatisfied. I could not have endured the thought of staying away from God for a number of years, but decided to wait until I was through with school and settled in life; but (God and my parents had something else in mind, and my days of backsliding endured but about two months.

It is remarkable how hard my heart became in that short time. The earnest prayers and pleadings seemed only to make me more desperate. The contest for my soul between heaven and hell was terrific. My power of will was entirely gone. I had yielded it to Satan, and he had forged the chains of sin so hard upon me that it was impossible for me to break them. I had known the joys of salvation; but oh, the anguish of soul I suffered cannot be described. Nothing pleased me. Every comfort of home and loved ones had lost power.

One dark day I was sitting in my room playing a wretched tune on a shrill musical instrument. The door was shut and I was alone. How my dear mother came in and when, I never knew; but suddenly she fell upon my neck and threw herself down on the sofa beside me. Her arms were clinched around my neck and the hot tears began to run down over me. I tried to tear away from her embrace, but found it impossible unless I should carry her with me. I sat still and

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let her weep as though her heart would break. Her sad words shall never be forgotten. "My poor, dear boy, O my precious boy, do stop this awful life and yield to Jesus!" Those hot tears ran down my neck. She wept until the fountain was dry. My heart was like stone. I could not shed a tear. After long pleading and praying with this tight grasp upon me, she at last relinquished her hold and left the room; but she had no more than closed the door when my turn began. My heart began to melt. I fell on the floor upon my face and cried as much as mother did, I believe, and on that spot the decision of my life was made. It had been burned into my heart by mother's tears, and it will last by the grace of God through all eternity. All my prospects were changed, and heaven began to pour the glory into my soul when I had settled my account with God for my backsliding. From that time, I was able by the help of my dear parents to keep myself in the love of God.

One of the most useful ministers and gospel workers of the eighteenth century was John Newton of London. This man when young became dissipated, reckless, and profane; and finally he engaged in the slave trade on the coast of Africa, and was perhaps as hopelessly abandoned as any pirate who ever trod the deck of a slave trader, he had a praying mother, who poured out her prayers and tears for his conversion, and she did not cease until she had the assurance that her prayers had reached the throne of grace, her wayward son kept on his course, but the mother at home had prevailed with God. The mother at last was called to depart this life, but she left her testimony of the assurance of the conversion of her son. One day while pacing the deck of the ship a powerful stroke of conviction smote the heart of this wretched man. He fell on his knees and began calling on God for mercy. He took immediate measures to return home and found that his dear mother had gone to glory and

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left her dying testimony of his salvation. He at once gave his life to the work of the gospel, and he was much used of God.

In our personal acquaintance there is a friend who was once very low down in sin and debauchery. He became a drunkard, and he so disgraced his life and family that he did not want any of them to know of his whereabouts. For twenty-five years he was not heard from at home. He says: "I knew my father was dead and thought my mother was. My friends and relatives heard at different times many different and well authenticated reports of my sudden death by various means, and of different scenes of my career. As each successive report was told mother, she said: "Fred is not dead, and you will hear from him, and hear he is a Christian. God has given me the joy of knowing that all my other children are Christians; and I have claimed Fred's salvation, and God has promised it to me." Sure enough, sometime after coming to Christ, the first letter breaking the twenty-five years' silence told them I was a Christian." The mother had died and gone to glory, but with the assurance of the salvation of her boy. The prayers of every parent must be answered, if we see to it that we pray in line with God and his holy Word. Let us never cease until we have our petitions for our unsaved children securely stored up, and placed on record at the throne of grace. God will answer and bring our loved ones safe to glory, even though some of us should have to go on before.

The Sin of Eli

It would not seem proper to close this series of articles on the subject of parental duty and responsibility without a brief notice of the sad failure of Eli, and the sin he committed against God and his people. The first we notice concerning his sons is, they were “sons of Belial,” and they “knew not the Lord”; that is, they were worthless and profane. They had no respect for their father nor his office as the priest of God. They were idle, loose, and indolent. In some way their father had made the sad mistake that so many parents are making today of permitting their sons to have their own way, and to rise up in rebellion against home government and law, to do what they please, to go where they please and when they please; and if the parent should say a word of opposition against them, there would be a storm of anger poured out upon them, and the home made so miserable that the poor subdued and defeated parents would be glad to keep still and let the young rebels have their way, rather than disturb the peace of the home by any further efforts to correct or restrain.

The sons of Eli were doubtless permitted to grow up in this manner. Their father was occupied with his duties in the office of priest much of the time, no doubt, and may have felt justified in the negligence of his family; but God did not look at it in this manner. What the attitude of the mother of these sons was toward them, we

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have no knowledge. Whether she was tolerant toward their misbehavior and failed to fill the place of a true mother or not, this did not excuse the father from his responsibility. He had to answer before God for his neglect, and the sons with him had to suffer the penalty.

These sons were permitted to defile the sacred sacrifices of God, and the people were caused to abhor the true worship. The failure of the father was that he did not teach them and in their younger years compel them to respect and reverence the worship of God. It was his business as the very leader of worshipers to see that every man who brought his offerings and sacrifices to God did so in the most sacred and reverential manner, and above all it was his business to see that his own household set the example for the people to follow. Eli had the authority to execute every command of God, and see that order and sacred devotion were maintained in Israel. But he failed to do this. He permitted his boys to run loose and careless and bring disorder in the tabernacle of God. The very place and spot that was to be the most sacred on earth was desecrated in this manner. He certainly knew that this was wrong, but neglected to correct and instruct his children in these necessary things. They grew up in this improper manner, and thus brought upon themselves exposures to greater evils.

Being unrestrained and unpunished in their first offenses of defiling the offerings and sacrifices, they were hardened and lost all respect for God, their father, the people of God, and themselves, and actually committed open adultery at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. The same weakness and lack of parental management that Eli had before manifested, is strikingly noticeable now in his remonstrance with his sons in this abominable crime. He said unto them: "Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealing by all

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this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress." Of course, the boys did not care for such a plea. They were too far gone in debauchery and iniquity, and simply scorned such correction. It would take the most sensitive and conscientious person to be affected by such soft reproof as this. These calloused hearted sinners cared nothing for it, and went right on in their wickedness.

We see parents today treat their children just as Eli did. They say: "Boys, you must not do such things; you ought not to smoke or chew or swear or dance or play cards and such things. It does not look well to see such things in our home. You know it is contrary to our principles to have such things going on," etc. The proud, haughty young fellow just sneers at such entreaty, and goes ahead in his open disobedience and rebellion as long as he pleases to do so. Then when he pleases to go away from home and have his own way, he soon finds himself face to face with a violated law, inside some prison wall, or in some other way a reproach to his family, himself, and his country.

Had Eli brought down upon the backs of those boys the rod of correction when they first began their wicked deeds, or had he executed the penalty of disobedience upon them as he heard of their misconduct, he would have saved them and himself the sad results that followed. He sinned in that he honored his sons above God (1 Sam. 2:29), and therefore his sons hearkened not unto the voice of their father. He thought too much of his sons to punish them when they needed it. He would rather displease God than punish the child. This is the same soft heartedness that Satan imposes upon many a parent today, and causes a sad neglect in the proper training of our rising generation; and the result is a crop of worthless vagabonds, unfit for any responsible position in life, in the home, in the

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community, or in the nation. Who is to blame? The parents who failed to instruct and correct their children from their infancy up to as long as they had shelter under the parental roof.

Listen how God charged Eli with kicking at his sacrifice and offering which he had commanded in Israel. Why was Eli charged with this? Because he tolerated the evil in his sons. He was partaker of this evil in that he tolerated it. God hates such things in our children no less than he did in the sons of Eli; and if we permit anything in our home or meetings that desecrates the sacredness of God, we become partakers of the evil and will have to give account of the same.

Dear parents, let us take a united stand against sin in every respect. Let us rise up and execute judgment against every evil spirit that is ready to swoop down upon our unsuspecting child and destroy it. Let us administer punishment and correction whenever and wherever it is needed, and hold our children under our perfect control as long as we are responsible for them, and keep them in the love and fear of God. We must answer for our children at the great day of reckoning, and we must fill our responsibility toward them for their earthly and eternal good. Whether they are large or small, they do not know what is for their best good as well as we do; therefore, they must be taught from infancy that our laws and commands must be obeyed. Our children must become used to obedience to their parents, as they are accustomed to coming to our table or going to their beds. It must become as natural to them as to breathe; then with the grace of God and heavenly wisdom in our hearts, we shall guide them past the hidden pitfalls along the path of youth and childhood, and they will become partakers of the grace of God, and with mature judgment and discretion be able to stand.

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The awful evil that befell Eli and his sons stands on the records of history as a warning to every parent. God in his mercy means that we take heed and escape even a sorer punishment than this. Notice what the decree says: “For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever.” 1 Sam. 3:13, 14. In due time God fulfilled the decree, and in one day these two sons were slain in battle and Israel defeated, the ark of God fell into the hands of the Philistines and Eli died. Surely these are some of the things that were written for our admonition, and by being careful lest we let some of the precious truths on this subject slip, we can profit by the mistakes of those who have gone over this parental pathway before us. We can see by the Word of God what is required of us, and grasp our opportunities with a stronger determination that we will, by the grace of God, conquer every opposing power that is bent to overthrow the well-being of our loved ones whom God has entrusted to our care.

Let us take courage, dear fellow parents. We shall accomplish the desire of our hearts. Our children will become all that we have labored and prayed for if we follow the sacred instructions of the blessed Word of God.

