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CHILDREN ARE AN HERITAGE OF THE LORD.

PSALM 127:3. *Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord.*

IT is thought by some that this psalm was written by Solomon when advanced to the throne of Israel, and when about to build the temple. If so, it is to be regarded as expressing his strong conviction, that success in every undertaking was mainly dependent on God; and that, in the noble enterprise of building an house for God, it was peculiarly so. Others think that it was written by David, and that it was especially intended for the instruction of his son. Furnished with means in vast abundance, with the grand design fully formed of building an house for God, and withal flushed with the ardor of a youthful mind, Solomon was strongly tempted to self-dependence. Against this his pious father sets him on his guard. While he commands attention and diligence in the discharge of the duties called for, he urges the necessity of entire dependence on God for success in his undertaking. The design of David to build an house for the worship of Jehovah was approved as pious; yet because he was a man of war, and had shed much human blood, he was refused that honor. God had declared that Solomon his son should build him an house; and had promised that he would dwell with him. With this declaration of God upon his mind, and the certainty that it gave, that his son should build God's house, David assures Solomon that all his attempts would prove vain unless the Lord would work with him. "Except the Lord do build the house, they labor in vain who build it." This is true in ordinary cases. They labor in vain, who build for pleasure or convenience, if the blessing of God be wanting to their labors. Dependence upon God in all cases of duty and of right is essential to success. Armed guards may compass the city; their eyes may be wakeful and penetrating as the eagle's; yet if "God guard not the city the watch-

man waketh in vain." Men may rise early and sit up late, yet all in vain: for so, by diligent discharge of duty accompanied with reliance on him, giveth he his beloved sleep. While his mind is so engaged on the important subject of trusting in God, the parental relation and its responsibilities break in upon his thoughts, and, as if by surprise, he exclaims, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord."

These words imply,

I. THAT CHILDREN ARE AN HERITAGE, OR POSSESSION, OF THE LORD'S BESTOWING.

We do not hold them as property of our own acquisition, nor as at our own disposal. Our title to the possession is through the gift of God, and we hold them under such restrictions and reservations as have been dictated by his wisdom and benevolence. Duty to the sovereign Giver demands, that we maintain an habitual conviction that they are his, and a just sense of his goodness in bestowing them. Jacob when asked by his brother Esau, "And who are these that are with you," answered, "These are the children which God hath graciously given thy servant." Joseph called his firstborn Manasseh; for God by this, with other instances of his kindness, had made him forget the toils of his past life and his father's house. The second he "called Ephraim; for God had caused him to be fruitful in the land of his affliction." By these names he expresses his sense of God's goodness in bestowing upon him an heritage so invaluable. When Joseph brought his sons to his aged and now dying father, the patriarch inquired, "And who are these?" "They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place." "Of all my sons," says David, "for God hath given me many sons, he hath chosen my son Solomon to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord." The envious, the impatient Rachel accosted Jacob saying, "Give me children or else I die." Her impiety, in the wrong direction of her prayer, was reproved by the patriarch, who, being angry, said, "Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?" Of God it is said, "That he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." In this light the Christian in every age has regarded him. Who can be the author of life to any thing that lives, but he that never began to be!—Who is uncreated. Wherever you turn your eyes upon God's vast dominion, you behold it swarming with life. The insect, seen only by microscopic aid; the atom that floats in the sunbeam; the worm and the serpent that crawl; the multifarious tenants of the deep; the beasts of prey that roam through the desert, and the domestic animal that waits at the stall: these all have derived life from the same creative power

which animates the tongue of the seraph, which enlivens the wing of the ministering angel, and "which sendeth man to his work." Shall we not all join with David in exclaiming, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all: the whole earth is full of thy riches." Shall creatures, then, that breathe by the inspiration of the Almighty, set up a claim of exclusive right to their own being; or shall they so set claim to their own offspring, barely because to them is left the care and direction of their infancy, childhood, and youth. The claim, if made, is founded either in ignorance or arrogance; for "children are an heritage of the Lord." Nor are we to admit the thought, that the inheritance bestowed is of small, or even of common importance. That little heart that palpitates within that bosom, is actuated by a spirit that will never die. That little immortal may be destined to tell the story of redeeming love, and to bring salvation to many of his fellow men. It may live and be the support and comfort of aged and feeble parents. It may be the instrument of public good to its country; or it may be an example of wickedness, and the subject of misery unutterable and everlasting. And all this, the reasonable and natural result of parental faithfulness, or the contrary. Parents we appeal to you; for ye can tell the excellence and worth of this inheritance. Why are your children the objects of your anxious care? Because they are most ardently and tenderly loved. The love of offspring is in man a law of nature. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb." Was there ever a heart so leaden and motionless as not to be moved by an infant's smile? Their charms displayed in the artless forms to which instinct leads, when reason scatters her earliest rays upon the soul, how enchanting! The first voice it utters tells you that it is a sufferer. It is cast into your arms forlorn and helpless. Its cries are eloquent pleas for compassion; and if they ever fall ineffectual on the ears of any, then there are monsters in human form. "He that provideth not for his own, and especially those of his own household, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." To parents, then, children are a precious gift of God. They are a treasure which they are bound to improve for their Master's use.

II. THE WORDS DO INTIMATE THAT GOD IN BESTOWING CHILDREN AS AN HERITAGE, HOLDS PARENTS BOUND TO TRAIN THEM UP FOR HIM, AND TO SURRENDER THEM TO HIM AT HIS CALL.

This seems to be the sentiment as enforced in the second clause, "and the fruit of the womb is his reward." That is, the children which God has given you for an heritage are to be restored to him as a reward

for his gift, improved by the performance of all parental offices. Should I mistake the sentiment of inspiration intended in these words, the position which I have taken still presents a duty binding on parents universally; and the general principle applies to every man and every thing we call our own. The principle which I maintain is briefly this: As we are God's, so the children which God has given us are his; and that they are given us, that we may train them for and dedicate them to him. By the Spirit of inspiration we are told that "the Lord's people are his portion." This is said of them as a people in covenant with God, and has a respect to Israel as a nation. This is plainly stated in the following passage: "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; and to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that thou mayest be a holy people unto the Lord thy God." Deut. 26:17, 18, &c. These words of the covenant could only be addressed to the living individuals of the nation; yet they plainly include the future generations; as the whole form applies only in a future sense, viz. the promises on God's part, and the pledges of fidelity on Israel's part. Now if parents pledged themselves to God in behalf of their offspring; and if they had a full prospect of a blessing on them as the reward of their fidelity, how could they redeem their pledge to God, or reasonably expect a blessing on their seed, but by teaching them concerning God and his ways; concerning their duty and their hope of reward. After God had promised to Abraham, that he should be the father of many nations, that he should be exceedingly fruitful, and that kings should descend from him, he adds, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee." So dealt God in renewing his covenant with Isaac and with Jacob. And why does God embrace the parents with the children in his covenant? That the parents might be held by the special covenant obligation, as well as by natural affection and the interest which they have in the eternal well-being of the children, to train them by every proper means for God. Good men feel the obligation, and their hearts gladden with the hope of blessing on their labors. God holds them bound to fidelity, and confidently looks for the proper fruit of their labor. "I know him"—I know Abraham—"that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abra-

ham that which he hath spoken of him." The change of dispensation from the forms of the ancient ritual to the simple and venerable forms of the gospel, has produced no alteration in the parental and filial relations, neither in that which exists between God and man. The gospel exhibition of grace as it respects men in successive generations is as follows: "The promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." It is to you, believing parent, and to your seed; but it extends now to heathen nations, said to be "afar off," and to the children of such of them as shall be savingly called; and so on, to the believing and their children, until all the "earth shall see the salvation of God." Upon this is founded the parent's privilege of dedicating his children in baptism unto the Lord. In this dedication, the parent pleads this promise, and trusts in him that made it, that he and that his offspring may be jointly partakers of the blessings it contains: viz. that God may be his God and the God of his tender infant. In this dedication, too, the church receives the promise of the parent on the child's behalf, that he will teach and otherwise faithfully train it in the ways of the Lord. And the church becomes bound to have oversight of his fidelity, and to see to it that he is faithful to his vows. By such means as these, a most reasonable expectation may be entertained, that the Lord will give efficacy to his own appointed instrumentality, and come and save. Let us now see how this view of the subject accords with the directions or injunctions of the Scriptures to parents and to children. When Moses had recited to the people of Israel the substance of the covenant at Horeb, and had subjoined the most solemn exhortations to keep the statutes and commandments contained in it, he calls their attention to the only object of worship, and to the sum of all duty in the following words: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy 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:" subduing their corruptions, regulating their purposes, animating their affections, and directing all their actions, as a people who sought and had reason to expect blessings from God. Without this, their mere mental acquaintance with divine things could avail them nothing personally; nor without this, would they be inclined to use them to any benefit in the relative obligations of life. Having thus taught them how they were individually dependent on a living and heart-governing power of divine truth, for their own present and eternal well-being, the Spirit of the Lord, by Moses, commands as follows: "Thou shalt teach them diligently to 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: And thou shalt bind them as a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates." Whether the interest which parents have in the felicity of their offspring, or God's rightful claim upon their services, are most prominent in this passage is not easily determined. Children are spoken of as being the property of parents. "Teach them diligently to *your* children." But why does God, in forms so varied, in terms so strong, and on occasions which would seem to admit apology, press the duty of parental fidelity, if he did not hold them as his peculiar property, and as in circumstances peculiarly dangerous? Parents are to make religion the subject of their conversation on the little occasions of respite from common labors, when they sit in their houses waiting or receiving their wonted repast; as they go to or return from the labors of the day. They must remind them of the Keeper of Israel that never slumbereth nor sleepeth before they deliver them over to sleep, or take repose to themselves. They must tell them, that trusting in this faithful Guardian, they are equally safe from "the terror by night" and from "the pestilence that walketh in darkness," as from "the arrow that flieth by day," or "the destruction that wasteth at noon-day." In the morning, before the cares of the day occupy the attention, the subject must be introduced. They should be told that the appointed angels of their Father in heaven have watched their pillows, and enjoined to seek his guidance and his protecting care through the day. Fearful of neglect, parents are commanded to bind them for a sign, or remembrancer, upon their hand, that as the employment of the hand in business demands the attention of the eye, they might have a monitor continually pointing to the duty. So habitually must they be engaged on the all-solemn theme, that their countenances must, by their fixed solemn adjustment, speak to the children around the devotional feelings of the heart. The posts of their doors and their gates must bear witness to their fidelity, in showing to their dear offspring the way of life, as fully as if the whole were described or written upon them. Of worth how unspeakable are immortal souls! And how full of wisdom and good-will to men are the arrangements of God's providence, by which he prepares them for future felicity. Parents are ministers of his for the instruction of infancy and childhood. They are guards of his, set between them and danger. The laws of superiority in the parent, and of subjection in the child, which are indeed laws of nature, founded in the dependence of the child and the strong affection of the parent, abundantly discover the divine intention to be, that parents teach and in all things direct and rule their offspring on his behalf. The written law is in exact accordance with

the above on this important subject. "Children," says the apostle, "obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." How unfriendly to the reception of instruction is a spirit of disobedience? Against this the command recited provides. That they may not mistake the divine design in placing parents over them, they are expressly enjoined to be submissive. And that the relation of parents is one in which they have much interest, and which has high claims upon their gratitude and reverence, they are commanded, "Honor thy father and thy mother," which is a command, by no means the dictate of power, or mere claim of right, but a command commended to whatever is ingenuous in the human heart, by the promise of reward: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long upon the earth." On the other hand, whatever is attractive, persuasive, or alluring, is to be employed by parents for the end of rendering the duty of the young pleasant and improving. "Fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." A fault-finding, impatient, and fretful temper in parents, how very inconsistent with the successful performance of parental duties. And when such caprice is the means of discouraging children in seeking instruction, or of provoking them to decline waiting upon it, how fearfully accountable must parents be to him who is the God of their little ones, and who demands that they train them up for him. The ministry of parents over children, among the means of salvation, is of no common importance. When the religious education of youth is wanting, it cannot be supplied without a diligence which the engagements of life seldom admit, and without an attention which ministers of Christ, engaged to strive for a whole church and for a world, to save them, cannot pay. And rare are the instances, in my apprehension, in which persons, who have reached maturity in ignorance of the doctrines of religion, ever obtain what may be called a well-settled system of divine truth. My heart has often been sorely pained on finding, in certain regions of our country, where the education of children has been neglected—I shall not say from what causes—that many persons, amiable and attractive, who showed a fondness for conversing on the subjects of religion generally, were altogether unacquainted with its foundation and all its component parts. I have heard these speak confidently of their saving relation to God, and of their assurance of rest in heaven, while in the same conversation they affirmed that the Scriptures contained contradictions, and that they liked to read them where they did not. I have heard conversations maintained with ardor and zeal which filled me with delight, but how dashed was the cup of pleasure, when on bringing into view some of the important and even most consoling doctrines of the

Bible, I noted on their countenances the marks of surprise, and was left now to address them a silent audience.

It has been urged with great malignity of intention, and with a plausibility which has obtained too much success, That the doctrines of religion are too sublime for the contemplation of the tender mind; that they are too solemn, and that the abuse of them is too dangerous, to risk the presentment of them before the unexpanded and untrained minds of children. Are persons so objecting, willingly ignorant, that the years of childhood often are the seasons of grace. Do they not know, that the opportunities of grace often close before life has reached its vigor; and that the divine Spirit, for whose gracious influences all faithful parents have reason to look, can sanctify the word to them, by making it effectual to their salvation. Do they not know that we owe to God the whole of our time, and that the love and devotion of youth are peculiarly acceptable. Do they not know, that those points in the system of religion, which outreach the conceptions of men, are not taught that they may be explored, analyzed, or elucidated; but that on God's testimony they may be believed; and that being believed they can share all the influence which they were intended to have by him that taught them. Do they forget that when the human mind is unfurnished with materials for religious thoughtfulness, evil inclinations, corrupt imaginations, a sinful world, and a tempting devil, will fill it to overflowing with an host of pampered inclinations, evil passions, and sinful purposes, which, if it do not render the condition desperate, will surely render it but little hopeful. By the one sin of one man guilt stands charged against all the individuals of our race; pollution has overspread the whole family; out of this all evil passions and propensities do grow, and, when unresisted, flourish. Now I ask, is it the part of wisdom to look on unalarmed at the growth of these, until conscience is silent, the mind enslaved, and a sense of future responsibility buried in the general ruin. God has chosen parents as teachers, that the minds of the young may be pre-occupied on his behalf, by the infusion of divine knowledge, and that thus their minds may possess materials for amending their hearts and directing their lives. Let such enemies of man know, that until they can show that impulses and choices derived from the materials which corrupt inclinations, evil consciences, worldly objects addressed to the senses, and the excitements of the grand enemy of God and man, are the true means of human refinement, and the ordained means of rendering man fit for heaven, no argument can lie against parental instruction. It is this that, by the grace of God, has been the means of retaining a place and a church for God in a world lying in wickedness until this time. How just the sentiment of the poet:

"'Tis education forms the human mind;
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined."

And how accordant the thought with that of inspiration: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

If it be asked, by what rule shall parents be guided in preparing the children, which they have received from God, for restoration to him at his call? The answer is: The word of God, as it is able to make parents, who know and improve it, wise unto salvation; so it is qualified to secure to their offspring the same blessedness. It is the full revelation of God to man of all that is to be believed, and of all that is to be done. "It is able to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good word and work." It is plain to the mind of an honest inquirer; except as to the incomprehensible things of God, which it is impossible that man should know, and those wondrous things of his ways and his judgments which it hath pleased him to conceal. The vast diversity of religious systems and opinions which divides the Christian world, is not owing to any obscurity that pervades the sacred volume; but to the dire obliquity given to the intellectual faculties of man through the intervention of sin. Many of these systems, as may be seen by their influence on their votaries, are rather to be regarded as owing their shape and form to the tastes, inclinations, and prejudices of those that have formed and adopted them, than to the prayerful mental research of the Holy Scriptures. But prejudice and passion aside; the great variety of mental endowment, the pressure attendant on many of the unnumbered pursuits in life; the entire privation or the imperfect enjoyment of opportunities of improvement, and many such causes, disqualify the grand mass of mankind for the at once arduous and important work of gathering light from the sacred book that may guide their path to heaven. For this, the God of grace has kindly provided. "He has given some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." As many of these offices as are proper to our period of the church and of the world are still continued. There are still evangelists, pastors, teachers. They are not indeed men specially inspired to teach something which the Scriptures do not contain; but they are qualified by the possession of mental endowments, by learning, by personal piety, by a desire to serve Christ in seeking to save souls, and habitual study of the Scrip-

tures, to open divine truth before the mind and to enforce it upon the heart. Among the blessings conferred through men like these, the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Presbyterian church ought to be regarded as invaluable. Parents, who of you are qualified for sitting down, and gathering together the doctrines of the Bible, and for placing them in the order of mutual dependence? Who of you are prepared to gather the Scriptures around the collected points, should you succeed in collecting them, and fence them in so as to render the citadel of your hope impregnable? Who, if they were in possession of powers equal to the task, could find the leisure, or submit to the labor and self-denial which the work would demand, unless it were one who was set apart to the work of providing food for poor dying souls. The Confession of Faith, in all its parts, claims the admiration of Christians; but, as a short, plain, and comprehensive exhibition of Scripture doctrine, the Shorter Catechism, in my apprehension, stands pre-eminent. Very childhood can embrace and entertain it as matter of memory. And then, the leading work of the parent is, to explain the language and endeavor to impress the sacred sentiments upon their hearts. The child that has on memory that precious summary of divine truth, has obtained a treasure upon which it may draw for direction in every period of life; and which, if the Spirit of the Lord mellow the ground, and warm, and water the precious seed when sown, will not fail of bringing forth fruit to eternal life. We do not ask you, parents, to take our word, as to the soundness of the doctrines it contains. We refer you to the passages upon which every point rests for its support. They are collected for you that at the same glance you may see the truth and the evidence of truth. If you suspect any thing, the whole Bible is in your power, and we ask you to do as the good Bereans did: "search the Scriptures daily and see if these things are so." Strange that there should be any who would endeavor to bring into disuse this useful manual. For I am persuaded that just in the degree in which it is neglected, will truth be undervalued; and discord and disgrace take the place of harmony and order. I firmly believe, that those whose hopes are placed on the system of doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, are securely built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. I stand for no untried foundation; I would not that any should hazard their own salvation, neither that of the precious children which the Lord hath given them, upon a mere experiment. "To the law and to the testimony" it has often been brought, and I know not that any production of man has ever transmitted so fully the light of heaven shining in God's word without shading its lustre, as the Presbyterian Confession has done. On the sacred volume, the Bible, in the light in

which it is exhibited here, I plant my foot, and take my stand, and risk my all. Parents, I invite you to place yourselves with your children by the side of me and mine; and with the Bible as our sun, shedding light upon us through our Confession, let us hold on our way, and whatever may be the toils or trials of our journey, the end will be glorious.

If our right to the possession of children is founded in the gift of God, then we should not only feel thankful for them, but hold them as at his disposal. Children trained in the fear of the Lord are unspeakable blessings. The attentions due to them, and the expressions of love and regard received in return, not only lessens the tedium of life, but bring with them much positive satisfaction. The performance of the duties which we owe to them, as tender, helpless, and dependent, improve and soften the finer feelings of humanity, and prepare the heart for the entertainment of those sympathies, the exercise of which is so often called for towards the miserable around us. Who that, as a parent, has been teaching his children, with the diligence that becomes him, the sacred lessons that open to their view a happy immortality, will not testify that the things of God and religion have risen higher in his own estimation, and that the labors spent on them have terminated in his own benefit? What thanks are due to God for appointing us a task so pleasant as to teach the child, which by nature's laws we so much love, how to obtain and enjoy *him* and heaven; and for how important an end shall we have lived, if we are blessed as instruments in preparing their souls for a willing and peaceful surrender at his call. To hold our offspring as ours, by a deed of gift, implies God's right to take them when he pleases, and our duty in resigning them when he calls. Resignation to the will of God, when children are taken from our embraces, is arduous and trying. While all may desire to possess it; all lament, while they feel the pungency of *wo*, that they are so deficient in its exercises, and that they experience so little of the tranquillity it proposes. To what cause is this deficiency rather to be ascribed than to this: that we are accustomed to conceive of our children as exclusively our own. Ask the mother covered with tears, wringing her hands, and pale with sorrow; ask her, why this extravagance of grief? O! the child, the darling child, torn from my bosom, lies there the unseasonable victim of untimely death. Could sympathy for the mourner be suppressed, she ought to be reproved. Inconsiderate woman dry up your tears: you have lost nothing. This child was given you on the express condition that you should surrender it at God's call. He has taken his own heritage, and in doing so has released you from a trust and a labor difficult and precarious. When the train of complicated sorrows, with which Job

was visited, was crowned with the shocking and desolating scene, which swept away all his sons and daughters, observe how the sentiment of my text sustain his spirits. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord *gave* and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of Lord." The words of pious Eli on the death of his abandoned sons, show his submission to the rightful claims of God the giver. "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." When visible wrath from heaven was revealed in consuming Aaron's sons, he held his peace: He had no right to complain: He dare not murmur. For the righteous God doeth righteously. God said to Abraham: Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering, on one of the mountains which I will tell thee. Does he expostulate with God or plead delay? No; but in the morning with all things prepared, he sets out with Isaac to the destined spot. On the third day he arrives in view of the place; and addresses the servants who accompanied him saying, "tarry ye here with the ass, till I and the lad go yonder and worship, and return." He places the wood upon the shoulder of his son, the intended victim, and with the fire and knife, the instruments of death, in his own hand, they set out together. With unsuspecting innocence, Isaac inquires: "Father, here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering?" "Son," said the father, with entire composure, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." Arrived at the place, Abraham builds the altar, piles the wood, binds his son, and lays him upon it. With extended arm, the knife is raised for slaughter. The appointed angel loudly cries from heaven, "lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." For this Abraham was blessed with the multiplying of his seed like the sand of the sea. Through this all nations of the earth in him was blessed.

Parents consider, that whatever any may gain, they are infinite losers, if they lose their souls. How great is the folly, then, of the toil and labor that has for its object the worldly ease or comfort of the child. So far as heaven and its blessedness excels the things of earth or rises above the things of hell; so far do endeavors for the salvation of souls rise in importance above efforts for the procuring of any thing else. On bended knees, then, daily dedicate yourselves with your children to the Lord: and doing this daily, in the reliance of your souls on your covenant God, if their glass shall be run while you live to plead, on their dying bed you will be enabled in faith to deliver them over to your Savior's arms. Amen.