

A

WORD OF EXHORTATION

TO

CHRISTIAN PARENTS,

ON

EPHESIANS VI., 4.

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PART I.

ON EPHESIANS VI., 4.

“And ye Fathers, provoke not your Children to wrath.”

BELOVED FRIENDS,

As a somewhat aged father of several children, I reckon on your kindness in bearing with me while I seek to lay before you a few thoughts, that with God's blessing, as I hope, may be useful and instructive, chiefly as pointing you to the “Word” itself, our only sure and safe directory. I take as a motto, Eph. vi., 4.

“And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Nothing can be more simple, and as I believe, nothing more comprehensive, as in few words containing a code of instruction to parents. Where authority is vested whether in Parent, Master or Magistrate, there would always be danger, more or less, of its being abused. Power often engenders self-importance in the ruler, and this naturally leads to resistance in the one ruled over; the consequence is wrath. The father is here contemplated as liable to become the aggressor, and it is he that by the Spirit of God is so faithfully warned. I need hardly say that the wife is exhorted also as included with her husband, though the father is primarily addressed and responsibility

begins with him, (an important thought) though it does not end there. Where authority is entrusted, the heart of man, as I have said, naturally prides itself in its display, and if resisted, as naturally becomes irritated and wrathful. The Spirit of God, in His perfect knowledge of all things, as soon as ever fathers are addressed, puts in a word of wholesome warning and admonition. "And ye fathers," He saith, "provoke not your children to wrath."

Now all exhortation in the "Word" is based upon certain doctrinal principles of truth previously adduced and declared. This is of immense importance; the looseness and carelessness with which exhortations are ordinarily treated, arise mainly from this, that grace is not fully and rightly apprehended. The individual does not see himself not only as saved and as having eternal life in Christ, but as placed in the very same position as Christ Himself, in the presence of God, "holy and without blame *before Him* in love,"—"having" says the Apostle, "quickened us together with Christ, raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Ephesians ii., 6. Grace has thus wrought, and wrought too when we were dead in sins, and "children of wrath, even as others." Let any one attentively and prayerfully read Ephesians i., 4; ii., 1-10, and see if they can make anything else of these passages than our identity in position and blessedness with a risen Christ, together with the forgiveness of all our sins, for how could we be in such a position if our sins were not forgiven? (chap. i., 7.) Blessed be

God it is so, for, "As He is, so are we, in this world." This is the doctrine of the Epistle; the work of Christ accomplished on the cross is the divine and eternal basis of it all, chap. ii., 13-17. The first three chapters form a beautiful compendium of Christian doctrine, the last three are chiefly exhortatory, interspersed, as we might naturally expect, with truths which are suited to act upon the heart and conscience, at the moment the exhortations are given.

Now the Christian parent in this vi. chapter, is exhorted, as on christian ground, in a position of the highest possible standing before God, "as Christ is, so are we." i. John iv., 7. He is to know this intelligently, that he may walk as a Christian in all the relationships of life, so as to glorify Christ; and here comes in his strength and wisdom as a parent, and hence his responsibility. I would rather say his privilege, for dear friends, we shall most surely find it our privilege to be filling up diligently and obediently the position grace has set us in, towards our dear children. We do but then answer to the grace bestowed upon us, and instead of provoking our children to wrath, we are to exhibit grace towards them, because (to the very highest degree and according to the very depths of our necessities) we have been made partakers of that grace ourselves. God in the riches of His grace has displayed that grace towards us, and because of it, we are debtors to our children to display it towards them, not overlooking the exercise of discipline and admonition if needs be. This is the very opposite of that spirit by which we might be tempted to

provoke them to wrath, it is the spirit of love and good-will by which we should seek to win them to Christ, by exhibiting before them the very same spirit that always governed the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. If a Christian father provokes his child to anger, the Holy Spirit of God is grieved—that same Spirit by which he is sealed unto the day of redemption. If all bitterness, and wrath, and anger and clamour, and evil speaking are to be put away from the Christian, with all malice, and he is to be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving others even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven him, surely he is not to provoke his child to that which the word of God condemns, as grieving and dishonouring to the Spirit of God ; this is all plain and simple. Upon the confession of naughtiness in our children, we are required to forgive as Christ also hath forgiven us, and to walk in love as Christ also hath loved us and given Himself for us. Thus while the great fundamental truth of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is fully asserted in the former part of this Epistle, and our union with Him as the result and consequence of this, and that we are brought into the same position with Christ Himself into the presence of God "*without blame before Him in love,*" the heart and the conscience are appealed to afresh, by a reiteration of this blessed truth, that Christ *has* loved us and *given* Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. The walk flows from this, as its natural result, and it is a walk of love, embracing all the relationships of life.

But the parent may say that his child is already

so disobedient that he cannot bear with him—his own temper is continually ruffled by his conduct, that he necessarily provokes his child to wrath, he cannot command himself, nor act kindly to him as he desires. Alas! how quickly the heart forgets how God has saved us, and still deals with us in perfect grace. Let no Christian parent say it is a thing impossible. Beloved friends, God lays no burden upon you, when he enjoins this precept as “the God of all grace;” He gives suited and sufficient grace to meet your every need. Do you say you need more grace? Well, “He giveth more grace,” wherefore He saith “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.” “Submit yourselves therefore unto God.” Mark the way in which His grace works, “He giveth grace unto the humble” “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God and He shall exalt you in due time.” The case now supposed is rather that of a child whom the father has failed to bring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Already the child is a source of sorrow and uneasiness; the father loses all command of his temper in the presence of his child, he provokes him to wrath instead of inquiring diligently before the Lord the cause of this sorrow, seeking thus to know how far he (the parent) may have been to blame.

Beloved in the Lord, let me beseech you to betake yourselves to God about this matter, and rather charge the sin home upon yourselves than throw it upon your children. Think you, that the Lord’s own nurture and admonition are lost upon us, and that He can let us take our course, and

share our condemnation with the world ; Surely not ! No, “ as many as He loves, He rebukes and chastens ” and “ we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” But alas ! for the laxity of parents in the bringing up of their children, “ as they sow so do they reap,” and yet wonder that their children should turn out as they do, as if God, and not themselves, were to blame. Like Eli whose sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not, they have left their children to themselves, without proper moral restraint, and the result is generally what might be expected, sad and sorrowful consequences to them, and heart-breakings and bitter regrets to the parent. Unlike Abraham, of whom the Lord speaks in terms of such loving commendation when He says “ I know him that *he will command* his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him.” The Lord will not hide from Abraham the secrets of His heart, but will treat him as a *familiar friend*, because he had brought up his children and his household in a way pleasing and acceptable to Him. But what were these deep secret purposes, that were in the heart of the Lord to communicate to His friend and faithful servant, Abraham, and to what did they relate ? They were concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, and the terrible destruction and overthrow that awaited those wicked cities. What marvellous condescension on the part of the Lord thus to speak to Abraham as a man speaketh to the friend of his bosom, in easy and familiar terms, telling out the very secrets of

His heart. It was a most blessed reward surely too, for commanding his children and his household after him, *in that he thus morally restrained them*, and as might be expected from the *moral* tuition of such a father, they *obeyed* him, even in submitting to the painful rite of circumcision; and as to Isaac, his joy and his laughter, for such does his name imply, what more beautiful illustration could we have of filial subjection than in the ascent to Mount Moriah, where father and son are found together in sweetest converse and companionship, *divine* and *precious* type of Him who was ever the delight of the Father, sweetly subject to His Father's will at all times, and "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." But what about his nephew Lot? Alas! dear friends, the well-watered plain attracts him, and next to that lay Sodom, and spite of its wickedness and at all costs, in he goes, but only to get his righteous soul *vexed* from day to day with the filthy conversation of the wicked, to *be mocked* by his sons-in-law, violently *dragged out* of the city by the angels, (in mercy surely), but against his own will, and *finally deceived* by his own daughters. Solemn warning this to parents, who, making riches or honours their object, (for Lot was a *judge* in Sodom) are in the end only vexed and troubled by the world, and distrusted and entangled by their nearest and dearest relatives. What sad and sorrowful results, and yet only the natural consequences of a *worldly, covetous, and self-indulgent course*.

What a striking contrast is presented in the history of Abraham! As a worshipper he is on the mount with God, and intercedes on the behalf

of Lot and the inhabitants of Sodom up to the moment of its overthrow. But in the *domestic circle* he is the one to "*command his children and his household after him,*" and the Lord said, I know him that he will do it. What a commendation, especially when we think of his advantages and privileges, how very much below ours! If motives so vastly inferior governed him, and brought out such blessed results, what manner of persons ought we to be in relation to the godly training of our children and households? And after all, beloved friends, be assured, the secret of all right moral government, is the knowledge of our heavenly standing, position, and privileges, as united to a risen Christ, and *blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* Eph. i., 3; ii. 4-7.

Reverse the order and train your child for the world, or "to make the best of both worlds," as men speak now-a-days, teach him to value the smiles of the rich and the great in this world, and to esteem very highly the advantages the world offers to him for getting rich and advancing himself in society, and what have you done for your child? You have in truth helped to push him into the world from which (if you know yourself as a Christian according to God's thoughts) you yourself are delivered. "Who gave himself," says the Apostle, "for our sins, that *He might deliver us from this present evil world,* according to the will of God and our Father." Galatians i., 4. Not that we or our children should have a good portion in it, but be delivered out of it, and because it is an *evil world, a sin-stricken, Christ-rejecting*

world; concerning which the Lord Jesus Christ says to his disciples, “Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

Dear friends, if Satan tempts you to bring up your children for the world, hear I beseech you the Spirit of God’s solemn definition of the world and all that is in it, such as the heart of man naturally values and sets store by,—“All that is in the world, the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, is not of the Father but is of the *world*. And the *world* passeth away, and the lusts thereof.” Now, says the Apostle, “Love not the *world*, neither *the things that are in the world*, If any man love *the world*, the love of the Father is not in him.” Solemn and searching test this to the heart of the Christian, and to his conscience too!!

PART II.

ON EPHESIANS VI., 4.

"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The first part of the exhortation is rather negative, it tells fathers what they are not to do, they are not to provoke their children to wrath. The second part is positive, they are "to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," that is bring them up for the Lord, and as the Lord Himself would bring them up. One is very naturally reminded of Pharaoh's daughter's request to the mother of Moses. "Take this child," says she, "and nurse it *for me*, and I will give thee thy wages." But there is this difference, that God does not commit children into our hands for the sake of hire, but as a matter of special privilege though of the deepest and most solemn responsibility, yet most true is it in this case, as in every other, as to responsibility, that "to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly, but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have." *"And as a man soweth, so shall he also reap."* I ought to know the privilege of having a precious child committed to me, to bring up for Him to

whom I owe my all, "my Lord and my God," but to shift or evade my responsibility by lightly throwing that upon another, which the Lord has plainly committed to my hands, is most surely wrong. Again, not to study diligently His own word in order that I may fully know how to bring up my child for Him, or to neglect to wait on Him continually, that I may have all the wisdom and grace I need for this purpose, in either case, the parent is surely culpable before the Lord. I believe the Lord is very jealous on this point, and because He has put Himself and His ways before us as His children, as our direct rule of guidance in a manner that deeply involves His own honour and our positive blessing.

Has he dealt with you dear friends, in marvellous grace, and love, and is that the character of his dealings with you day by day? After such a manner should you deal with your children. Has He showed out the utmost pity and compassion to you in all your failure, and under all your infirmity and ignorance? In like manner bear with your children, not provoking them to wrath as the Spirit of the Lord so plainly warns you against. Does he wink at, or overlook any naughtiness of temper, any act of self-will, any failure in affection or obedience, in His own dear children? Assuredly not, as a Father He loves them too well, and is too wise to do that. He may have to rebuke and chasten them, as He surely will if there is carelessness in seeking to know His will, or in the observance of it when it is known. And just so in faithful love are you to deal with your beloved children, both because you

love them, and because God your Father has so dealt in infinite tenderness towards you. Besides which, He does not overlook the minutest matter as if it were of little or no moment how one brought into such intimate relationship to Him, should behave himself *in everything*. Has He spent all His love upon us in giving us Jesus His beloved Son to die for our sins, and do we according to His promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Surely this word applies to the inner circle of the relationships of life, including of course the parental relationship, as well as our outward testimony before the world. Dear Christian parents, be assured it is a matter of the very highest importance, how you seek to enter into, and understand God's ways towards you as His children. Study the character of your heavenly Father according to the revelation of His beloved Son, that you may know how to walk before your children in daily circumstances, so as to commend yourselves to them as in the intimacy of relationship to such a Father, who has such a Son to set before you, who having been down here and "*in the bosom of the Father*," in order to reveal Him to your faith, unfolds all His ways of truth and grace, that by precept and example you may commend those ways to your beloved children.

I said our heavenly Father passes by nothing in His children, I would urge this point strongly upon parents in general. I have found, as it has struck me, great carelessness and indifference about it. A parent should be indifferent and careless

about nothing in his child. The minutest matter should not escape his vigilant eye, as it escapes not the eye of Him with whom we have to do. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right." There is another very interesting and instructive scripture in Proverbs xxii, 4, which I especially commend to the consideration of parents, it is this, "Train up a child *in the way* he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Now the word in the margin reads "Catechise a child in his way;" in other words know carefully what he is about; diligently enquire into the matter, not as a matter of curiosity surely, nor to gratify yourself, but with a view to the profit and blessing of your child; to seek to restrain what you find to be evil in him, in order to train him in the opposite way—the way in which he should go. If you say what way? I say in few words, seek to lead him to Christ, for *He is the way*—the only way—Himself declares it, "*I am the way.*" Is there any other? You know there is none, and yet alas! how many Christians appear as if they had found out another way of making their children happy. It is Christ and a large bit of the world, or it is a false Christ such as even the world can admire, not the Christ of God, *despised, rejected, and trampled upon by the world*; whom God has exalted and given Him a Name which is *above every name*, because "*He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*" It is not the Christ, who at the expense of everything to Himself, suffered on the cross, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God. It is

not fellowship with the despised Nazarene, but an *easy-going Christianity* that prevails so much now, which while it owns the cross in a certain sense, is so closely linked up with the world, that the offence of the cross has ceased ; whereas Paul says, " God forbid that I should glory, *save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Dear friends, if you are content that your children should *float along the current* of the world's Christianity, which is certainly running on to destruction, bring them up according to the principles of the world. Yet let me ask you had Christ any fellowship with the world? Was He not born into it with the utmost humiliation? Could anything be below the "*manger* because there was no room for them in the Inn." Moreover, as the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, He passed through the world without house or home, and ever the dependant one, dependant on and receiving help from others, though Lord of all. As a stranger and a pilgrim He passed through it amidst scoffings and insults, enduring the "contradiction of sinners against Himself." Thus He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Is this the Christ you know, love, and follow, or an ideal Christ of your own, like the pictures of the poor Roman Catholics, intended to represent a fair human form, instead of the scripture definition of "*a visage so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men?*" A believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, if taught by the Spirit, knows his sins are forgiven, and that he has

eternal life in Jesus. The disciple denies himself, takes up his cross, and follows Christ in the path of suffering and reproach, and because it was Christ's path and he is linked to Him through those very sufferings and sorrows He endured on the cross. Should the believer and the disciple be ever disunited, or the disciple be above his Lord? Hear what the word says, "for unto you *it is given* on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Again, "the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord." "It is enough for the disciple to be as his Master, and the servant as His Lord." Thus it is counted a privilege to follow in the path of self-denial and suffering, and the Lord in wondrous condescension puts Himself—the Master—in direct association with the servant, and says, it is enough that he be found in one common path of service and of suffering with his Lord. But why are Christian parents, it may be asked, exhorted to be so occupied in their thoughts about the Lord and His ways? For this simple reason beloved friends, it is to the *Lord Himself* the exhortation in Ephesians so especially directs you. It is in *His* nurture and admonition you are to bring your children up. Now this is indeed very precious and important. If therefore it is Himself and His ways toward you that are the standard and the model, it is of the very *last* moment that you should know what those ways are.

The word translated "nurture" here is the same as the word "chastening" which is repeated four times in the xii. Hebrews, it implies bending or conforming to a certain standard, under a

Father's hand (of course our heavenly Father is meant here) using and applying discipline for the good of his child if needful, but always in love. Thus are we to be imitators of Him as dear children.

The thought of discipline should ever be grievous to the heart of the parent, yet *never shrunk* from where necessary, and never as retributory, but ever as preventive or restorative, never to inflict chastisement, but to recover and reclaim, and if possible prevent, and therefore with all gentleness and grace, and as being ourselves afflicted in the sorrows of the offender, and in the necessity of the chastisement inflicted, which real love to them would gladly spare if it could. The truth of God which fortifies the soul against evil, and guards it on every hand is preventive and premonitory. Good training of children will be of the same order because it is God's order towards us which is to restrain and deliver from evil, and fortify and establish the soul in truth and grace, that chastening may not be needed. Yet if needed, He never withholds it from His child, neither should we from ours. "He that *spareth the rod*, hateth his child, but he that loveth him, *chasteneth him by times*." "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying," or as the margin reads, to his destruction, or to cause him to die. In other words, it is a false mistaken kindness that spares the rod, if necessary. To let him have his own way, and not to rebuke him, is lending him a helping hand to his own destruction. Alas! how many parents are really doing this, they spare the rod and thus spoil the child, or they

spare themselves a little trial of heart, and exercise of soul in dealing with their child, only to entail upon themselves years of bitterness and disquietude.

But the great secret of all the evil is, that through lack of communion with God they have lost the power of governing their children, and in reality are governed by them, as we may see many affecting instances of in the present day, if we will not shut our eyes to the fact: therefore are the children often sent away from home; "the sanctuary of the domestic circle which God has formed as a safeguard, for those who are growing up in weakness, *the precious home* (if Christ be acknowledged) of kind affections, in which the heart is trained in the ties which God Himself has formed; and, which, by cherishing the affections, preserves from the passions and self-will; and which, where its strength is rightly developed, has a power that, in spite of sin and disorder, awakens the conscience, and engages the heart, keeping it away from evil and the direct power of Satan. For it is God's appointment." Most fully assured I am of the truth of this, and that the practice so common of sending away young children from their own homes, and committing them to others, is most pernicious. I see no authority for it in the New Testament; it is not a delegated power, but ruling and training them that is enjoined. It is not ye fathers commit them to others, *but bring them up yourselves*. It is too in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, according to the Lord's revelation of Himself and His ways to your soul, and not according to the thoughts of another. Ye parents you are to nourish and cherish these weak tender

ones, and yet most assuredly, if needful, to rebuke and chasten them, and not "spare for their crying."

But you may say, all this is plain and simple enough, but how can I with such a weight of earthly care continually pressing upon me, train or bring up my children for the Lord, and as He would bring them up? (for this I believe is the force of the Scripture) Ephesians vi., 4. But beloved friends, let me ask who laid this burden of earthly care upon you? Did the Lord give you precious children *to bring up for Him*, telling you to do it from the moment they were born, and then lay so heavy a burden upon you that you could not do it? Is it not rather your own burden, a self-created, self-imposed burden, and with which the Lord has nothing to do, save to judge and condemn it? Be assured this is matter for deep, solemn, searching enquiry. Is He a hard task-master or anything less than a loving Father, that He should lay any burden upon you in the path of simple obedience to Himself? O no, He loves you too well for that. But then it may be said there are religious, benevolent, philanthropic and scientific institutions of the day; and are these to interfere with the plain, intelligent responsibilities of a Christian father in the bringing up of his dear children for the Lord, and as the Lord would bring them up? Nay, more, beloved friends, are you quite sure that this moral or religious machinery as some call it, so current in the present day is really of the Lord, and such as the Christian can have to do with, as a citizen of Heaven looking shortly to be with Christ, and like Christ? for beloved friends this is *your proper hope* and *this your assured portion*.

Dear Christian fathers, let me say these claims are primary, absolute and peremptory; next to the wife of your bosom, the relationship between parents and children holds according to God's order the very nearest place. Moreover, the husband and wife are one in this place of intimacy and relationship, so entirely, that unless as the father and mother of the children they are found in the diligent study of God's word, that they may know His mind, and in continued waiting on Him for strength that they may do it—thus walking together as heirs of the grace of life, that their prayers be not hindered—what moral or spiritual blessing to the children can be expected to result? The Lord is very pitiful and patient we know, but He is jealous too for His own holiness, and He would have us represent His character in our family circles, and be evangelists to our children, reckoning largely upon His grace to make them His own children by faith in His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word admonition in the verse quoted at the head of this paper, is simply, putting in mind, bringing to remembrance, in order to arouse the conscience, and to act upon the heart, thus seeking to bring Him home to the one you desire to appeal to, that, that object may be fastened upon the soul. The object here is *the Lord Himself*. You desire to present Him as an object of faith to the heart of your child.

But more, you ask the Lord to give faith to your child that he may embrace Christ. You do well, it is of infinite importance that your child should have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and

very blessed too, when he becomes a witness to the power of that faith in his father's house. It is a link formed that nothing can break, a bond that nothing can sever, while all that is of nature dies off and is forgotten. A Christian ought to be an epistle of Christ which his child can read in the daily walk of the father and mother, intelligibly and unmistakeably. "It was *what I saw of Christ* in my father, day by day," said one, "not so much what he said to me, that acted upon my conscience, and led me to the Saviour."

In conclusion, beloved friends, I do most earnestly and affectionately commend this whole epistle to you from whence the exhortation is taken, that forms the subject of this paper. Things are beautiful and valuable to us according to their relationships to other things. It is God's order whether as to things in nature or things in grace. It is so especially as to His word, and in this, as in all the other epistles, doctrinal statements and practical details as to our relationships, and the responsibilities they involve in our every day life and circumstances are beautifully brought out in various parts of the epistle, in perfect harmony, and often blended together or put side by side. This is of the last importance in reading the epistle, which while it is at the very height of God's counsels as to Christ and the Church, comes down to the minutest practical details of daily life.

It is the knowledge of redemption and the forgiveness of our sins, of our position as being one and the same with the risen and glorified Son of Man at God's right hand, and of all the exalted privileges and blessings connected therewith, that

gives such Divine preciousness to the whole of this epistle, and such emphasis and importance to every precept and exhortation it contains. As soon as ever I see the church there in union with her risen and glorified Head, perfect and complete according to the mind and heart of God, even as Christ Himself, "without blame before Him in love," I can but bow my head and worship and adore; but for my individual blessing and godly walk through this sin-stricken world, I must see and know myself as a member of this body, of which Christ is the Head in Heaven; that there is my life, that there am I (as possessed of this new life), identified with Him. Now from that point I take my stand, as "risen with Christ I seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." I judge of things down here and form my estimate of their value and importance according to the place I occupy *before God in His beloved Son in Heaven. Before Him I am without spot*, because of the acceptability of the work of Christ to God, on my behalf. God sees me in Christ and delights in me. I know it, and my heart longs to answer to the perfect love and grace that has put me there, and will keep me there, in spite of all the power of the enemy to drive me thence.

The conscious enjoyment of *this position, through the power of the Holy Ghost* is my privilege; this I shall realize if I am intelligent as to the mind of God and walk in faithfulness to, and according to the light given. Then will there be power in Christian parents to walk before their children so as to glorify God, when according to the truth of

this epistle they see themselves blessed with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ ; as dead and risen with Christ, and as members of the one body of which He is the head. Then instead of training their children up for the world, and according to its principles, it will be for Heaven, *the happy home* of their own hearts, to which they will long and desire to bring all their children with them around the person of the Lamb that was slain to redeem us “unto God by His blood, making us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.” Rev. i., 6 ; v., 9.

Now while commending, as I do most heartily, the epistle to the Ephesians, as forming the basis of this exhortation to Christian parents, I desire to say a word to Christian readers in general, including of course parents among them, as to the Divine authority and preciousness of the whole word of God itself, in these days of universal laxity on this point. I desire unflinchingly to maintain the pre-eminent and superlative obligation and value of the Holy Scriptures against all the sophistries and visionary speculation of this infidel age. *Yea “let God be true but every man a liar”* ; true as to the imperishable character of His own word, alike true as to its precepts and its doctrines, implicitly binding on the heart and conscience of the believer, yet full of divine consolation to the weary, heavy-laden soul, and to the burdened and sin-stricken conscience. Solemnly awakening and alarming too to the soul who neglects or despises the great salvation provided in the gospel. Alas ! alas ! for such, *how shall they escape ?* Beloved

reader of the word, let me urge on you the still more diligent, constant, and prayerful reading of the word, let the word speak for itself, or rather let Him be heard who is its divine Author or Teacher, with "thus saith the Lord." "So shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it." As to its sweetness, and preciousness, "Thy Word is sweeter to me than honey and the honeycomb." "It is better to me than thousands of gold and silver, more to be desired than gold, than much fine gold." "Thy words were found and I did eat them and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." "How precious are thy thoughts unto me O God how great is the sum of them." "If I should count them they are more in number than the sand." Then as to its cleansing power, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." "His truth shall be thy shield and buckler." As to its searching power, "The word of God is quick and powerful sharper than any two edged-sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." And as one of blessed memory has said, "It is by the Word as an instrument He accomplishes His gracious purposes in us. We are begotten by the *word of truth*, James i., 18. We are born of the *word*, i., Peter i., 23. *By the word* we grow i., Peter ii., 2. *By the word* we are cleansed, John xv., 3. Eph. v., 26. *By the word* we are kept undefiled in the way and from the paths of

the destroyer, Psalm xvii., 4; Psalm cxix., 9. *By the word* as the sword of the Spirit we are able to stand against the wiles of Satan, Ephesians vi., 2. It is *by the word* known in the power of the Spirit that our practical sanctification is carried on. "Sanctify them through *Thy truth, Thy word is truth.*" Now while commending as one cannot do too strongly the authority, purity, and preciousness of *the word itself*; its infinite and pre-eminent superiority to the writings of man, the truth of which is alone valuable as drawn from the fountain of truth, that is from the written word, or rather from *the living word*—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself *in whom* are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; yet we should not overlook, but thankfully acknowledge whatever is of God in human writings, or teaching, or preaching, yet the conviction forces itself upon my own mind, that a vast deal of what passes for truth in the present day, throws the poor exercised heart of the convinced sinner more upon looking into his evidences and experiences, to know whether he is a child of God, and casts him more upon his frames and feelings, leading him to trust in them rather than to the testimony of God's word, as to the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, accomplished on behalf of every poor sinner that in his heart believeth unto righteousness, and with his mouth confesses the Lord Jesus unto Salvation; of such, the word declares they shall be saved. "If," says the word, "thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." The word asks for no evidences, waits for

no experience, but assures the soul of salvation upon the reception of God's testimony as to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Evidences there will be, and experience too, but to make them the basis of a sinner's hope towards God as to salvation, for the work of Christ on the cross, would be substituting the work of the Spirit in me, for *the work of Christ for me*. Now, the Spirit speaketh not of Himself, but as it is written, "He shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you." This is one special office of the Holy Ghost, and He glorifies Christ in doing so. He seals the truth that concerns the Person, work and glory of Christ upon the heart of the poor sinner, and thus gives it rest, a rest that is never got by looking into oneself, but as the word says looking (*off*) unto Jesus, beholding Him as the Lamb slain, but alive again for evermore, and who says to the poor sinner who believes in Him, "because I live ye shall live also." Frames and feelings fluctuate, evidences and experience will vary according to the measure of our communion. The soul progressing in the knowledge of Christ, the fruits and graces of the Spirit will become more manifest under the daily guidance of the Spirit; but the work of Christ for the sinner varies not, but is the same before God, finished once and for ever, on behalf of all and everyone who believes in Him to the salvation of the soul. Blessed assurance this to the heart that needs rest, to know that it is only to be found in Jesus; it ceases from itself and its own doings, and in the exercise of faith is occupied with Him, and the work He accomplished, its only proper object.

Peace and joy are the happy result to the soul, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

J. I.

"THAT THEY (THE AGED WOMEN) MAY TEACH THE YOUNG WOMEN TO BE SOBER, TO LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS, TO LOVE THEIR CHILDREN, TO BE DISCREET, CHASTE, *keepers at home*, GOOD, OBEDIENT TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS, *that the Word of God be not blasphemed.*" Titus ii., 4, 5.