

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

The father and mother should not have a single divergent thought in reference to the system of training. They should appear before their children as one authority -- one influence. The firmness of the father and the tenderness of the mother should be so sweetly blended as that their joint action might be felt in the entire system of training. But how is all this to be realized? By the parents being much on their knees together before God. This is the true secret of domestic training. If the father and mother do not pray together, they will not act together; and if they do not act together, the education of the children must suffer. May the Lord in His infinite goodness help all christian parents to discharge aright their high and holy functions, so that His name may be glorified in the households of His people!

Things New and Old 19:307

We judge that carelessness in parents as to where their children go, is a sign of a bad state of soul. If the Israelites were to instruct their children so carefully, both as to their redemption from Egypt, and the passage of the Jordan into the land, how much more diligent ought we to be in instructing our children in the eternal realities of redemption, and our present entrance by faith into the heavenlies in Christ! What grace is needed for this! But to allow our children, whilst they are at home and under our care, to go where the eternal character of redemption is set aside, and thus expose them to unbelief and confusion, is the very opposite of the teaching of the word of God. "And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." We must, however, be very careful that the obedience we inculcate should be in the Lord, truly according to His mind. The word to them is, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." Just as it would be wrong to obey, if a heathen parent commanded a child to go and worship idols.

In these matters, then, it is all-important that parents are assured that the obedience they require is in the Lord, especially in this day of increasing infidelity and superstition. We feel we have all much cause for humiliation in these matters.

Things New and Old 26:250,251

MUSIC

My dear Brother,

I am very thankful your conscience has been exercised about the music. I can sympathise with you; for, as far as ear goes, music had the greatest power over me though never taught to play. But the ground of those who wish you to keep it up is all wrong and not true. It is not for Christ they wish you to keep the harmonium; and that decides the case. I am not a Jew, nor can I [do so] in the New Jerusalem where all will be for God's glory, though not in the highest way (for the Father does not come in there). I could suppose a person earning his bread by music, though I think it is a very dangerous way, as Peter did by fishing; which is no excuse for a person spending his time fishing to amuse himself. All these pleas of "gifts of God" are bringing in nature, when it is fallen, into the worship and service of the new man and the Lord, and spoiling it. (I have known hunting justified by the hounds having scent!) No instrument can equal in effect (so Haydn said) the human voice.

Besides, as I have said, it is not true; it is merely keeping the pleasure of fallen nature; not a thing evil in itself, but a connecting sensuous pleasure with spiritual life. It is not the thing to begin with a ruined soul; but we have to live by God's word. Harps and organs down here began in Cain's city when he had gone out from the presence of the Lord.

In point of fact artistic musicians as a general rule are not a moral class. The imagination is at work, not the conscience nor the heart. Judaism did take up nature, to see if they could have a religion of it; which proved it could not be but ended in the rejection of Jehovah and His anointed. We are dead and risen with Christ and belong to another world. Hence I cannot seek my enjoyment in what belongs to the old, though I may recognize God's work in it; but I do not seek it as a world I belong to now. It is not a legal prohibition, but the heart elsewhere. If I could put a poor sick father to sleep with music, I would play the most beautiful I could find. But it only spoils any worship as bringing in the pleasure of sense into what ought to be the power of the Spirit of God. They