

The Parent

by J.R. Miller

Transcript

God has so constituted us, that in loving and caring for our own children—the richest and best things in our natures are drawn out. Many of the deepest and most valuable lessons ever learned, are read from the pages of unfolding child life. We best understand the feelings and affections of God toward us—when we bend over our own child and see in our human parenthood, a faint image of the divine Fatherhood. Then in the culture of character, there is no influence more potent than that which touches us when our children are laid in our arms. Their helplessness appeals to every principle of nobleness in our hearts. Their innocence exerts over us a purifying power. The thought of our responsibility for them, exalts every faculty of our souls. In the very care which they exact, they bring blessing to us. When old age comes, very lonely is the home which has neither son nor daughter to return with grateful ministries, to bring solace and comfort to the declining years!

It is a new marriage, when the first born enters the home. It draws the wedded lives together in a closeness they have never known before. It touches chords in their hearts, which have lain silent until now. It calls out powers, which have never been exercised before. Hitherto unsuspected beauties of character appear. The laughing, heedless girl of a year ago—is transformed into a thoughtful woman! The careless, unsettled youth—leaps into manly strength and into fixedness of character, when he looks into the face of his own child and takes it in his bosom. New aims rise up before the young parents; new impulses begin to stir in their hearts. Life takes on at once, a new and deeper meaning. The glimpse they have had into its solemn mystery, sobers them. The laying in their hands of a new and sacred trust—an immortal life, to be guided and trained by them—brings to them a sense of responsibility which makes them thoughtful. Self is no longer the center. There is a new object to live for, an object great enough to fill all their life, and engross their highest powers! It is only when the children come, that life becomes real, and that parents begin to learn to live. We talk about training our children—but they train us first, teaching us many a sacred lesson, stirring up in us many a slumbering gift and possibility, calling out many a hidden grace, and disciplining our wayward powers into strong and harmonious character.

Our homes would be very cold and dreary, without the children. Sometimes we weary of their noise. They certainly bring us a great deal of care and concern. They cost us no end of toil. When they are very young they break our rest many a weary night, with their colics and teething; and when they grow older they well-near break our hearts many a time with their waywardness! After they come to us, we may as well bid farewell to living for self, and to personal ease—if we mean to do faithful duty as parents.

There are some who therefore look upon the coming of children as a misfortune. They talk about them lightly as "responsibilities." They regard them as an obstacle to their personal pleasure. They see no blessing in them. But it is cold selfishness which looks upon children in this way. Instead of being hindrances to true and noble livingâ€”they are helps! They bring blessings from heaven when they comeâ€”and while they stay they are perpetual blessings.

When the children comeâ€”what shall we do with them? What duties do we owe to them? How may we discharge our responsibility? What is the parents\

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