

Quotes from *The Duties of Parents* by J.C. Ryle

I recently read a booklet by J.C. Ryle called *The Duties of Parents*. It was first printed in 1888, so it can be a touch more cerebral than we are used to in most modern writing. However, it also has a wealth of wisdom that our society has somehow misplaced in the last 120 years.

Since the copyright is expired, I'll put the whole work online, but I thought I'd share with you a few of the gems I enjoyed:

“Men can see the faults of their neighbors more clearly than their own.”

“Few are to be found, even among grown-up people, who are not more easy to draw than to drive... We are like young horses in the hand of a breaker: handle them kindly, and make much of them, and by and by you may guide them with a thread.”

“Just so you must set before your children their duty—command, threaten, punish, reason—but if affection be wanting in your treatment, your labor will be in vain.”

In regards to the Bible: “They cannot be acquainted with that blessed book too soon, or too well.”

“Tell them of sin, its guilt, its consequences, its power, its vileness: you will find they can comprehend something of this.”

“Surely if there be any habit which your own hand and eye should help in forming, it is the habit of prayer.”

“If you train your children to anything, train them, at least, to a habit of prayer.”

“See to it too, if it can be so arranged, that your children go with you to church, and sit near you when they are there. To go to church is one thing, but to behave well at church is quite another. And believe me, there is no security for good behavior like that of having them under your own eye.”

“Teach them to feel that what they know not now, they will probably know hereafter, and to be satisfied there is a reason and a needs-be for everything you require them to do.”

“Tell your children, too, that we must all be learners in our beginnings, that there is an alphabet to be mastered in every kind of knowledge, that the best horse in the world had need once to be broken, that a day will come when they will see the wisdom of all your training. But in the meantime if you say a thing is right, it must be enough for them, they must believe you, and be content.

“Parents, determine to make your children obey you, though it may cost you much trouble, and cost them many tears. Let there be no questioning, and reasoning, and disputing, and delaying, and answering again. When you give them a command, let them see plainly that you will have it done.”

“Little weeds need plucking up as much as any. Leave them alone, and they will soon be great.”

“But if you do not take trouble with your children when they are young, they will give you trouble when they are old. Choose which you prefer.”

“Archbishop Tillotson made a wise remark when he said, ‘To give children good instruction, and a bad example, is but beckoning to them with the head to show them the way to heaven, while we take them by the hand and lead them in the way to hell.’”

“The best of schoolmasters will not imprint on their minds as much as they will pick up at your fireside... What they see has a much stronger effect on their minds than what they are told.”

“Who sins before a child, sins double.”

“You must not think it a strange and unusual thing, that little hearts can be so full of sin.”

“Let me once more press upon you the necessity and importance of using every single means in your power, if you would train children for heaven.”

“I know well that God is a sovereign God, and does all things according to the counsel of His own will. I know that Rehoboam was the son of Solomon, and Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, and that you do not always see godly parents having a godly seed. But I know also that God is a God who works by means, and sure am I, if you make light of such means as I have mentioned, your children are not likely to turn out well.”

You may want to post these on your fridge or bathroom mirror for a while. They contain many great truths on which to meditate.