

Address on Vainglory and How to Bring Up Children

John Chrysostom

Patristic · Nicene & Post-Nicene · Sermon

STROMATA 01

Downloaded from The Stromata (thestromata.com). Free for personal, educational, and ministry use.

INTRODUCTION

Delivered by the Archbishop of Constantinople near the end of the fourth century, this discourse begins as a sermon against vainglory before turning, midway, into something almost without precedent in patristic literature: a detailed manual on the Christian rearing of a son, covering everything from the household's servants to the boy's first encounters with Scripture, his eating habits, his friendships, and the governance of his five senses. It is the earliest sustained treatment of Christian pedagogy as a domestic art, and it shaped Byzantine and later Western thinking on the family as a "little church." Chrysostom writes with the directness of a pastor who has watched parents fail, and the reader should expect plainspoken, often vivid practical counsel rather than systematic theology, a text to be consulted as much as read through.

- Has any man done what I asked? Has he prayed to God on our behalf and on behalf of the whole body of the Church for the quenching of the conflagration, begotten of Vainglory, which is bringing ruin on the entire body of the Church and is tearing the single body asunder into many separate limbs and is disrupting love? Like a wild beast swooping on a healthy, tender, and defenceless body, Vainglory has fastened her foul teeth in her victim and injected poison and filled it with a noisome stench. She has severed and cast away some limbs, others she has torn into shreds, others she has chewed up. Yea, if it were possible to look on Vainglory and the Church with our eyes, one would behold a pitiful sight, exceeding by far in savagery the spectacles in the circus — the body of the Church prostrate and Vainglory standing over it, gazing fixedly all-round, restraining those that attack her, never giving ground nor drawing back. Which of us will scare away this wild beast? It is the task of Him who has set the contest when we beseech Him to send his angels, and they, muzzling her bold and shameless mouth as it were with cords, lead her away so. He who has set the contest will do this whenever we cease to long for her when she has been led away. If He bids the dread beast withdraw from us and dismisses it, but we, after we have escaped safely and she has been driven off to her own den, rise up with our countless wounds and seek the beast once more and strike her and overturn her to carry her off, then He will pity us no longer nor spare us. “Who,” saith one (Ecclesiasticus 12:13), “pitieth the charmer that is stung or anyone that cometh nigh to a ravening beast?”
- Well then? How may we be rid of this evil and wicked spirit? Truly it is a spirit with a lovely face. Suppose some spirit were to take on the form of a harlot and, bedecking itself with many golden ornaments and putting on soft raiment and scenting itself with many perfumes, should steal into the semblance of a woman, a semblance most fair and concealing an exceeding beauty, and then should seem to be of that very age that most flutters the hearts of young men, with the bloom of youth upon her, encircled by a golden girdle and with curls on her head tastefully plaited in the Persian fashion; and should place a circlet about her head, enhancing the beauty of her uncovered tresses, and displaying flashing gold and precious gems about her throat; and the spirit, having assumed the shape of a youthful whore, should stand all alone before the brothel and then should display the height of modesty. Whom of the youth that were there would she not capture? And then the spirit, leading the young man within the house, would put off that fair bloom and show itself in its own character, a hideous, fiery, savage spirit. And it would confound the wretched intruder and, leaping upon him and gaining possession of his soul, would drive his mind to frenzy. Even such is the wicked spirit of Vainglory. Could anything seem fairer than her, anything more lovable? But if we see that it is all sham reality as in the theatre, we shall not be ensnared in its nets nor caught by its stage tricks. The words spoke of a harlot (Proverbs 5:3) one might fairly utter also of such a one: “For the lips of a harlot woman drop as a honeycomb.” The same word might truly be applied also to Vainglory.
- Vainglory is like the fruit of Sodom, which has a fair semblance and the beholder, as he views it, receives the impression of wholesome fruit. But if he takes in his hand a pomegranate or apple, straightway it is soft to his fingers and the rind that covers it outside is crushed and lets the fingers light upon dust and ashes. Such also is Vainglory. As we look upon her she seems tall and admirable, but when held fast in our hands forthwith she casts our soul down into the dust. That

such is the nature of Vainglory can be proved by many examples. Well, then, let us begin, so you will, with the pagan world about us.

- The theatre is filling up, and all the people are sitting aloft presenting a splendid sight and composed of numberless faces so that many times the very rafters and roof above are hidden by human bodies. You can see neither tiles nor stones, but all is men's bodies and faces. Then, as the ambitious man who has brought them together enters in the sight of all, they stand up and as from a single mouth cry out. All with one voice call him protector and ruler of their common city and stretch out their hands in salutation. Next, between whiles they liken him to the greatest of rivers, comparing his grand and lavish munificence to the copious waters of the Nile; and they call him the Nile of gifts. Others, flattering him still more and thinking the simile of the Nile to mean, reject rivers and seas; and they instance the Ocean and say that he in his lavish gifts is what Ocean is among the waters, and they leave not a word of praise unsaid. The face of Vainglory is brilliant, but do you recall, pray, the likeness of the girl into which we fitted the evil spirit, bedecking it with gold and giving it the semblance of a youthful courtesan? And you will see that what is within the likeness is worthless.
- What next? The great man bows to the crowd and in this way show his regard. Then he sits down amid the congratulations of all his admirers, each of whom prays that he himself may attain to the same eminence and then die. But after a huge expenditure on gold, silver, horses, costumes, slaves, and the rest, and the waste of many fortunes, they greet his departure with the same eulogies, though there are no longer so many in the crowd; for, as the theatre is ended, each man hastens to his own home. Then in his house, there are costly luncheons and much feasting and the brilliance of daylight. In the afternoon the events of the morning are repeated, and this continues for two or three days. And so, when he has expended all, even to the value of ten thousand talents of gold, these words of praise are seen to be nought but embers, ashes, and dust.
- As often as he examines the accounts in his household and reflects on the extravagant outlay, he laments. While he is enjoying his heart's desire he is possessed by a kind of intoxication of Vainglory and would expend himself as well, and he cannot form the smallest notion of his losses. But when he has come home — inside the dwelling of this evil spirit — and sees that his hour of glory has departed as the concourse has dissolved, and he looks at the theatre and finds it emptied of its audience and no man uttering a word, and that his losses are nothing of the imagination but have already been incurred in hard cash, then it is that he perceives the ashes.
- And, if, after he has spent beyond his fortune, he is in want, and standing on his feet begs in the centre of the marketplace, and not one of those who formerly hailed him as their patron attends him or stretches out his hand, nay, what is more, if they rejoice at what has happened — for at the time when they hailed him, they were consumed with envy and thought it a consolation for their own domestic troubles that the man who had been so glorious was likely to be the most dishonoured of all — when no man attends him or stretches out a hand, can anything be more pitiful than that? Nay, is it not rather deserving of tears? Could anything be crueler?
- Have you perhaps never at all heard of any man so unfortunate? One could wish that men had not stretched out their hands to him, but the opposite has happened; he is being assailed by the

accusations of the very men who sang his praises. “Why,” says one, “did he run riot? Why was he in love with splendour? for what reason did he gratify harlots and players?” Oh, man without pity! did you not marvel at him? Did you not sing his praise? did you not lead him on to his present state by thy applause and flatteries? Did you not call him “The Nile” and “Ocean”? Did you not spend all day singing his praises? Whence thy sudden change of heart? And when pity is called for, do you accuse most bitterly those whom formerly you did applaud? If, when we see a man being punished among those whom we accuse, we are not so stony-hearted as not to be moved, ought we not to be moved to pity all the more when we behold those in misfortune whom we are lauded? But now you art an accuser. When he gave thee pleasure with the spectacle when you did pass the whole day neglecting all thy affairs, why did you not accuse him then?

- do you see of what kind are the Devil’s works? Of what kind the fruits of Vainglory? I have called them ashes and dust. Nay, I see that they are not alone ashes and dust, but fire and smoke too; for the mischief does not stop at the point when enjoyment has ceased but endures until misfortunes overwhelm. It is ashes and dust for those who expend much and reap nothing, but it is so no less for those who suffer the misfortunes that I have just described.
- “How then,” someone says, “when the givers are honoured for those public services and receive the admiration of the crowd, is that a small return?” Exceedingly small; for the honour that I have just described is not great — I mean, to be exposed to jeers and accusations and calumnies. “But what of those that receive the honour?” The same is true; for they are honoured not for the displays but because they are expected to spend further sums for the crowd. If they were honoured for favours received, why do men accuse them when they have nothing? Why will men not even go near them but rather deride them and call them spendthrifts and profligates? Have you not seen that Vainglory is like a madness?
- But let us leave this aspect of Vainglory which is found only in one or two men, and turn to another. Suppose someone says: “What of those who spend in moderation on the amusements of the cities?” Tell me, I pray: What profits it? For them also the glory and the acclaim is but of a day. And to prove that this is so: Suppose someone gave them the choice of recovering all that money spent or the third part of it or even a small fraction, or else to have listened to no shouts of acclamation, do you think that they would not have preferred them ten thousand times? For if they commit ten thousand acts of shame and recklessness for a single obol, what would they not have done for all that money poured out at random?
- At this point I direct my discourse to the faithful among us who refuse to hand over a trifling sum to Christ when He is poor and lacking the barest sustenance; and what the pagans spend on harlots and mimes and dancers in return for a single shout of applause, this our Christian will not give for the sake of the eternal kingdom.

- But let us pass to another aspect of Vainglory. Which do I mean? One that affects many and not just one or two. We are pleased whenever men praise us even in respect of matters in which we are not implicated in the least degree. Now, the poor man does all he can to clothe himself in fine raiment for no other reason than that he may be held in honor by the crowd. And oftentimes, though he is able to do things for himself, he buys a slave, not because he needs him but that he may not appear disgraced by doing his own work. Tell me, for what reason do thou, after relying so long on the labor of thine own hands, wish now to be served by the hands of others? Or again, if a man acquires gold besides and owns silver plate and a fine house? 9 He needs none of these possessions; for, if they were needed, the greater part of the human race would have perished and been destroyed, as I will show you. There are necessities without which life is impossible; for example, the fruits of the earth are necessary, and if the earth does not bear life is impossible. Clothing to cover us, a roof and walls, shoes — these belong to the necessities, but all other possessions are superfluous. If these also were needful and a man could not live without a servant, as he cannot live without those real necessities, the majority of mankind would have perished, seeing that the majority has no servants. If it were needful to make use of silver plate and life without it were impossible, again the majority of mankind would have been destroyed, since the many do not own silver either. Suppose someone says to the owners of silver: “What does this plate mean to you?” The owner could only give as his reason the honor paid him by the crowd. “Well, I have acquired the plate so as to be admired and not looked down upon; but I hide it again, so that men may not envy and threaten me.” What could be worse than folly of this kind? If you ownest it that the crowd may pay you honor, then display it for all to see; but if you fear their envy, it is not good to own it at all.
- Shall I tell you another folly? Oftentimes men, who have deprived themselves of the necessities and are wasting with hunger, still care for their household possessions. And, if you ask them why, they answer: “I must keep up my place.” What place, O man? Place does not make a man’s character. The righteous Elijah utterly despised place, and Elisha too, and John. The first owned nothing but a sheepskin and asked alms of a widow woman, though she herself was poor; and he lived a beggar’s life, coming to the doorway of that poor woman and uttering such words as beggars utter (1 Kings 17:10). Elisha also despised place when he used to be the poor woman’s guest (2 Kings 4:8). John despised place since he had no garment nor a single loaf (Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6). There is but one kind of place that is shameful, I mean the possession of great wealth, and that is shameful indeed. It brings a man the reputation of cruelty, effeminacy, lazy arrogance, vainglory, and brutality. Place consists not in wearing good raiment but in being clad in good works.
- Yet I hear of many who are admired for this. “So and so,” someone says, “takes thought for his place. His couch is spread and he has an abundance of bronze vessels; he is the manager of his own house.” “And why,” says another, “do you accuse us who own these things, when you shouldst accuse those with greater possessions?” Through you I denounce them even more; for if I do not forbear from charging those who have little, how much more do I charge the wealthy. Place does not consist of a well-furnished house nor of costly tapestries nor a well-spread bed nor a decorated couch nor a crowd of servants. All these are externals and concern us not; but the

things that concern us are fair dealing, disdain of money and fame, contempt for what the many think honor, disregard of human values, embracing poverty, and overcoming our nature by the virtue of our lives. It is these that constitute good place and reputation and honor. But what gives rise to all these evils from the beginning and the manner of it, I tell you now.

- The man-child has lately been born. His father thinks of every means, not whereby he may direct the child's life wisely, but whereby he may adorn it and clothe it in fine raiment and golden ornaments. Why do you this, O man? Granted that you do thyself wear these, why do you rear in this luxury thy son who is as yet still ignorant of this folly? For what purpose do you put a necklet about his throat? There is a need for a strict tutor to direct the boy, no need for gold. And you lettest his hair hang down behind, thereby at once making him look effeminate and like a girl and softening the ruggedness of his sex. Implanting in him from the first an excessive love of wealth and teaching him to be excited by things of no profit, why do you plot even greater treachery against him? Why do you excite him with the pleasures of the body? "If a man have long hair," Paul says (1 Corinthians 11:14), "it is a shame unto him." Nature disallows it. God has not sanctioned it, the thing is forbidden. It is an act of pagan superstition. Many also hang golden earrings on their children. Would that not even girls took pleasure in these; but you inflict this outrage on boys.
- Many may laugh at what I am saying on the ground that these things are trifles. They are not trifles but of the first importance. The girl who has been reared in her mother's quarters to be excited by female ornaments, when she leaves her father's house will be a sore vexation to her bridegroom and a greater burden to him than the tax collectors. I have told you already that vice is hard to drive away for this reason, that no one takes thought for his children, no one discourses to them about virginity and sobriety or about contempt of wealth and fame, or of the precepts laid down in the Scriptures.
- What will become of boys when from earliest youth they are without teachers? If grown men, after being nurtured from the womb and continuing their education to old age, still do not live righteously, what wrong will not children, accustomed from the threshold of life to empty words, commit? In our own day every man takes the greatest pains to train his boy in the arts and in literature and speech. But to exercise this child's soul in virtue, to that no man any longer pays heed.
- I shall not cease exhorting and begging and supplicating you before all else to discipline your sons from the first. If you do care for thy son, show it thus, and in other ways too you wilt have thy reward. Harken to the words of Paul, "if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" (1 Timothy 2; 15). And even if you art conscious of a myriad vices within thyself, nevertheless devise some compensation for thy vices. Raise up an athlete for Christ! I do not mean by this, hold him back from wedlock and send him to desert regions and prepare him to assume the monastic life. It is not this that I mean. I wish for this and used to pray that all might embrace it; but as it seems to be too heavy a burden, I do not insist upon it. Raise up an athlete for Christ and teach him though he is living in the world to be reverent from his earliest youth.
-

If good precepts are impressed on the soul while it is yet tender, no man will be able to destroy them when they have set firm, even as does a waxen seal. The child is still trembling and fearful and afraid in look and speech and in all else. Make use of the beginning of his life as you shouldst. you wilt be the first to benefit, if you hast a good son, and then God. you do labor for thyself.

- They say that pearls when first they are collected are but water. But if he that receives them is skilled in his craft, he places the drop on his hand; and, moving it with a gentle rotating movement as it lies on the palm of his upturned hand, he shapes it skillfully and renders it perfectly round. Then, when it has received its form, he can no longer mold it; for that which is soft and with its proper shape not yet set firm is in every way adaptable and therefore is easily suited to every purpose. But that which is hard, having acquired a certain material outline, can be deprived of its hardness only with difficulty and is not changed into another shape.
- To each of you fathers and mothers I say, just as we see artists fashioning their paintings and statues with great precision, so we must care for these wondrous statues of ours. Painters when they have set the canvas on the easel paint on it day by day to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁷ Sculptors, too, working in marble, proceed in a similar manner; they remove what is superfluous and add what is lacking. Even so must you proceed. Like the creators of statues do you give all your leisure to fashioning these wondrous statues for God. And, as you remove what is superfluous and add what is lacking, inspect them day by day, to see what good qualities nature has supplied so that you will increase them, and what faults so that you will eradicate them. And, first of all, take the greatest care to banish licentious speech; for love of this above all frets the souls of the young. Before he is of an age to try it, teach thy son to be sober and vigilant and to shorten sleep for the sake of prayer, and with every word and deed to set upon himself the seal of the faith.
- Regard thyself as a king ruling over a city which is the soul of thy son; for the soul is in truth a city. ¹⁹ And, even as in a city some are thieves and some are honest men, some work steadily and some transact their business fitfully, so it is with the thoughts and reasoning in the soul. Some make war on wrongdoers, like soldiers in a city; others take thought for everything, both the welfare of the body and of the home, like those who carry on the government in cities. Some give orders, like the magistrates, some again counsel lewdness, like profligates, others reverence, like the virtuous. And some are effeminate, even as are women among us; others speak folly, like children. And some again receive orders as slaves, like servants in the city, while others are wellborn, like free men.
- Hence we need laws to banish evildoers and admit the good and prevent the evildoers from rising up against the good. And, just as in a city, if laws are passed which permit thieves great license, the general welfare is undermined, and if the soldiers do not devote their ardor to its proper use, they ruin the body politic, and if each citizen abandons his own household affairs and busies himself with another's, he destroys good order by his greed and ambition — so it is also in the case of the child.
- The child's soul then is a city, a city but lately founded and built, a city containing citizens who are strangers with no experience as yet, such as it is very easy to direct; for men who have been reared and have grown old under a bad constitution it would be difficult to reform, though not impossible.

Even they can be reformed if they be willing. But those who are quite without experience would readily accept the laws that you givest them.

- Draw up laws then for this city and its citizens, laws that inspire fear and are strong, and uphold them if they are being transgressed; for it is useless to draw up laws, if their enforcement does not follow.
- Draw up laws, and do you pay close attention; for our legislation is for the world and today we are founding a city. Suppose that the outer walls and four gates, the senses, are built. The whole body shall be the wall, as it were, the gates are the eyes, the tongue, the hearing, the sense of smell, and, if you will, the sense of touch. It is through these gates that the citizens of the city go in and out; that is to say, it is through these gates that thoughts are corrupted or rightly guided.

- Well now, let us first of all approach the gate of the tongue, seeing that this is the busiest of all; and let us, to begin with and before all the other gates, provide this one with doors and bolts, not of wood or iron but of gold. Verily the city that is thus equipped is golden; for it is not any mortal but the King of the universe who intends to dwell in this city, if it has been well built. And, as our discourse proceeds, you shall see where we set up His palace. So let us build for the city gates and bolts of gold, that is, the words of God, even as the prophet says (Psalms 119:103; 19:10); “The words of God are sweeter than honey and honeycomb to my mouth, more precious than gold and a stone of great price.” Let us teach the child so that the words revolve on his lips all the time, even on his walks abroad, not lightly nor incidentally nor at rare intervals, but without ceasing. It is not enough merely to cover the gates with gold leaf. They must be fashioned of gold thick and solid through and through, and they must have precious stones set in deeply instead of merely laid on the surface. The bolt of these gates shall be the Cross of the Lord fashioned through and through of precious gems and set athwart the middle of the gates. But when we have fashioned the gates massive and golden and have fixed on the bolt, we must fashion the citizens also to be worthy of the city. Of what character shall these citizens be? We must train the child to utter grave and reverent words. We must drive many strangers away, so that no corrupt men may also find their way in to mingle with these citizens. Wards that are insolent and slanderous, foolish, shameful, common, and worldly, all these we must expel. And no one save only the King must pass through these gates (cf. Ezekiel 44:2). For Him and all that are His this gate shall be open so that one may say of it (Psalms 118:20): “This is the gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter,” and, as the blessed Paul says (Ephesians 4:29), 20 “speech that is good for edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” Let their words be giving thanks, solemn hymns; let their discourse ever be about God, about heavenly philosophy.
- How shall this be? And in what manner shall we train them? If we are zealous critics of those that are growing. The boy is very easily guided. He does not fight for wealth or glory — he is still a small boy — nor on behalf of wife or children or home. What reason for insolence or evil-speaking should he have? He contends only with companions of his own age.
- Make a law straightway that he use no one in despite, that he speak ill of no man, that he swear not, that he be not contentious. If you shouldst see him transgressing this law, punish him, now with a stem look, now with incisive, now with reproachful, words; at other times win him with gentleness and promises. Have not recourse to blows constantly and accustom him not to be trained by the rod; for if he feel it constantly as he is being trained, he will learn to despise it. And when he has learnt to despise it, he has reduced thy system to nought. Let him rather at all times fear blows but not receive them. Threaten him with the tawse, but do not lay it on and do not let thy threats proceed to action. Do not let it appear that thy words do not pass the stage of threats; for a threat is only of use when attended by the belief that it will be put into effect. If the offender learn your intention, he will despise it. So let him expect chastisement but not receive it, so that his fear may not be quenched but may endure, like a raging fire drawing thorny brushwood from every side or like a sharp and searching pick digging to the very depths. Yet when you do see that he has profited by fear, forbear, seeing that our human nature has need of some forbearance.

- Teach him to be fair and courteous. If you do see a servant ill-used by him, do not overlook it, but punish him who is free; for if he knows that he may not ill use even a slave, he will abstain all the more from insulting or slandering one who is free and of his class. Stop his mouth from speaking evil. If you do see him traducing another, curb him and direct his tongue toward his own faults.
- Exhort his mother, too, to converse with the child thus, and his tutor and his servant, so all of them together may be his guardians and on the watch that none of those evil thoughts spring out from the boy and from that mouth and from the golden gates.
- And do not, I pray, think that this takes a long time. If from the first you do firmly lay on thy behests and threats and do appoint so many guardians, two months suffice, and all is in good order and the habit is firmly established as his second nature.
- Thus this gate will have been made worthy of the Lord, when no word that is shameful or flippant or foolish or the like is spoken, but all beseems the Master. If those who give military training teach their sons from the first to be soldiers and to shoot and to put on military dress and to ride, and their tender years are no hindrance, how much more should those who are soldiers of God assume all this royal discipline. So let him learn to sing hymns to God that he may not spend his leisure on shameful songs and ill-timed tales.
- Let this gate thus be made secure and let these be the citizens that are enrolled. But the others within the city let us put to death, as bees kill drones, and let us not allow them to sally forth or buzz.
- Now let us pass to another gate. Which is that? One that lies close by the first and resembles it greatly, I mean, the sense of hearing. The first gate has citizens that go forth from within, and none that enter by it; but this second gate has only those that enter from outside, none that pass out through it. The second then much resembles the first. If it be agreed that none that is pernicious and corrupt may tread upon its threshold, the mouth experiences but little trouble; for he that hears no base or wicked words does not utter base words either. But if this gate stands wide open to all, the other will suffer harm and all those within will be thrown into confusion. And it was needful to speak fully about the former gate and first to block up its entrance.
- Let children then hear nothing harmful from servants or tutor or nurses. But, even as plants need the greatest amount of care when they are tender shoots, so also do children; and so let us take thought for good nurses that a fair foundation from the ground up be laid for the young and that from the beginning they may receive nought that is evil.
- Therefore let them not hear frivolous and old wives' tales: "This youth kissed that maiden. The king's son and the younger daughter have done this." Do not let them hear these stories, but let them hear others simply told with no elaboration. They can hear such from slaves but not from all. They must not be allowed to consort with all the servants, but rather let those who are participating with us in training stand out clearly, as though they were approaching a holy statue. If we were builders and were erecting a house for the ruler, we should not permit one and all of the servants to approach the building. Would it not then be absurd, when we are establishing a city and citizens for the heavenly King, to entrust the task indiscriminately to all? Let those of the servants who are

well fitted take part. If there be none, then hire someone who is free, a virtuous man, and entrust the task especially to him, so that he may have a full share in the undertaking.

- Let them not hear such tales. But when the boy takes relaxation from his studies — for the soul delights to dwell on stories of old — speak to him, drawing him away from all childish folly; for you art raising a philosopher and athlete and citizen of Heaven. Speak to him and tell him this story; “Once upon a time there were two sons of one father, even two brothers.” Then after a pause continue: “And they were the children of the same mother, one being the elder, the other the younger son. The elder was a tiller of the ground, the younger a shepherd; and he led out his flocks to woodland and lake.” Make thy stories agreeable that they may give the child pleasure and his soul may not grow weary. “The other son sowed and planted. And it came to pass that both wished to do honor to God. And the shepherd took the firstlings of his flocks and offered them to God.” Is it not a far better thing to relate this than fairy tales about sheep with golden fleeces? Then arouse him — for not a little depends on the telling of the story — introducing nothing that is untrue but only what is related in the Scriptures: “Now when he offered the firstlings to God, straightway fire came down from Heaven and bore them off to the altar aloft. But the elder son did not so but went away and, after storing up for himself the first fruits from his toil, brought the second-best to God. And God paid no heed to them but turned away and let them lie on the ground. But the other offering he received for himself in Heaven. Even so it happens with earthly rulers. The master honors one who brings gifts and receives him in his house; another he suffers to stand outside. Even so it was in this story. And then what happened? The elder brother was very wroth as having been dishonored and passed over for another, and his countenance fell. God said unto him: ‘Why art you wroth? did you not know that you madest an offering to God? Why hast you insulted me? What grievance hast thou? Why did you offer me the second-best?’ ” If it seems better to use simpler language, you wilt say: “The elder brother had nothing to say and kept quiet,” or better, “was silent. And thereafter, seeing his younger brother, he said to him: ‘Let us go to the field.’ And the elder caught the younger unawares and slew him. And he thought that God saw him not. But God came to him and said to him: ‘Where is thy brother?’ He replied: ‘I know not. Am I my brother’s keeper?’ And God said unto him: ‘Lo, the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground. ’”

And let the child’s mother sit by while his soul is being formed thus by such tales, so that she too may take part and praise the story. “What happened next? God received the younger son into Heaven; having died he is up above.” The child also learns the story of raising from the dead. If in pagan legend such marvels are told, one says; “He made the soul the soul of a hero.” And the child believes and, while he does not know what a hero is, he knows that it is something greater than a man. And as soon as he hears, he marvels. Much more will he do so when he hears of raising from the dead and that the younger brother’s soul went up to Heaven. “And so God received the one straightway; but the other, the slayer, lived for many years continuously in misfortune, with fear and trembling as his companions, and suffered ten thousand ills and was punished every day.” And do you relate the punishment with much intensity and not simply that he heard God say: “Groaning and trembling you shall be on the Earth”; for the child does not understand this yet. But say: “Just as thou, when you art standing before thy teacher

and art in an agony of doubt whether you art to receive a whipping, you tremblest and art afraid, even so did he live all his days, because he had given offense to God.”

- So far is enough for the child. Tell him this story one evening at supper. Let his mother repeat the same tale; then, when he has heard it often, ask him too, saying: "Tell me the story," so that he may be eager to imitate you. And when he has memorized it you wilt also tell him how it profits him. The soul indeed, as it receives the story within itself before you hast elaborated it, is aware that it will benefit. Nevertheless, do you say hereafter: "you do see how great a sin is greed, how great a sin it is to envy a brother. you do see how great a sin it is to think that you canst hide aught from God; for He sees all things, even those that are done in secret." If only you sowest the seed of this teaching in the child, he will not need his tutor, since this fear that comes from God, this complete fear has possessed the boy instead and shakes his soul.
- This is not all. Go, leading him by the hand in church and pay heed particularly when this tale is read aloud. you wilt see him rejoice and leap with pleasure because he knows what the other children do not know, as he anticipates the story, recognizes it, and derives great gain from it. And hereafter the episode is fixed in his memory.
- He can profit in other ways from the story. So let him learn from thee: "There is no reason for grief in adversity. God shows this from the very first in the example of this boy, seeing that He received one who was righteous through death into Heaven."
- When this story is firmly planted in the child's understanding, introduce another, again about two brothers, and speak thus: "Again there were two brothers, an elder and a younger. The elder was a hunter, the younger dwelt at home." Now this story, insofar as the reversal of fortune is greater 24 and the brothers are older, gives more pleasure than the former one. "Now these two brothers were also twins. And after their birth, the mother loved the younger, the father the elder son. Now the elder passed much of his time out of doors in the fields, but the younger indoors. And it came to pass when his father was old, that he said to the son whom he loved: 'My son, I am old. Go you and prepare me some game, capture a roe or a hare and bring it and cook it that I may eat and bless thee.' But to the younger son, he spoke no such words. But his mother heard what the father had said and called her younger son and said unto him: 'Child, thy father has bidden thy brother bring to him game that he may eat and bless him. Harken to me and go to the flock and fetch me fair and tender kids, and I will prepare them as thy father loveth, and you shall carry them to him that he may eat and bless thee.' Now the father's eyes were dim from old age. And so when the younger son brought the kids, his mother seethed them, and placing the viands on the dish gave it to her son, and he bore it in. And she put the skin of the goats upon him that he might not be found out, since his skin was smooth but his brother was hairy so that the younger might escape detection and his father perceive it not. And so she sent him in. But the father, thinking that it was in truth his elder son, ate and gave him his blessing. But then, as soon as the father had made an end of the blessing, the elder son came bringing game; and when he saw what had happened, he lifted up his voice and wept."
- See how many fair lessons this story begets, and do not follow it right through to the end, but rather see how many lessons this part begets. First, children learn to reverence and honour their fathers, when they see so keen a rivalry for the father's blessing. And they will sooner suffer a myriad stripes than to hear their parents curse them. If a story can so master the children's soul

that it is thought worthy of belief, the veritable truth, it will surely enthrall them and fill them with great awe. Again, they must learn to despise the belly; for the story must also show them that he gained nothing by being first-born and the elder. Because of the greed of his belly he belayed the advantage of his birthright.

- Then, when the boy has grasped this fully, you wilt say to him again on another evening: “Tell me the story of those two brothers.” And if he begins to relate the story of Cain and Abel, stop him and say: “It is not that one that I want, but the one of the other brothers, in which the father gave his blessing.” Give him hints but do not as yet tell him their names. When he has told you all, spin the sequel of the yarn, and say:
- “Hear what occurred afterwards. Once again the elder brother, like the brother in the former story, was minded to slay his brother, and he was awaiting his father’s death. But their mother, hearing him and being fearful, sent the younger into exile.” Then, as the inward sense transcends the child’s intelligence, it can be simplified to his level of understanding and implanted in this tender childish intelligence, if we adapt the tale. And we shall speak to him thus: “This brother went away and came to a certain place. And he had no one with him, no slave or nurse or tutor or anyone else. And having come to a certain place he prayed, saying: ‘Lord, give me bread and raiment and preserve me.’ And then, when he had spoken thus, he fell asleep from sorrow. And in a dream he saw a ladder reaching from the Earth to Heaven and the angels of God ascending and descending on it and God Himself standing above at the head of the ladder; and he said, ‘Give me Thy blessing.’ And He blessed him and named him Israel.”
- I have remembered opportunely, and the name suggests another notion to my mind. What is this? Let us afford our children from the first an incentive to goodness from the name that we give them. Let none of us hasten to call his child after his forebears, his father and mother and grandsire and great-grandsire, but rather after the righteous — martyrs, bishops, apostles. Let this be an incentive to the children. Let one be called Peter, another John, another bear the name of one of the saints.
- And do not, I pray, follow Greek customs. It is a great disgrace and laughable when in a Christian household some Greek pagan customs are observed; and they kindle lamps and sit watching to see which is the first to be extinguished and consumed, and other such customs which bring certain destruction to those who practice them. Do not regard such doings as paltry and trivial.
- And so I urge this on you too, to call your children by the names of the righteous. In early times these other customs were reasonable, and men used to call their children by the names of their forebears. It was a consolation for death that the departed should seem to live through his name. 28 But this is so no longer. We see at least that the righteous did not name their children in this wise. Abraham begat Isaac. Jacob and Moses were not called after their forebears, and we shall not find a single one of the righteous who was named so. How great is the virtue of which this is a token, this naming and calling by name, seeing that we shall find no other reason for the change of name save that it brings virtue to mind. “you shall be called Cephas,” says Christ (John 1:42), “which is by interpretation Peter.” Why? Because you did acknowledge me. And you shall be called Abraham. Why? Because you shall be the father of nations (Genesis 17: 4). And Israel,

because he saw God (cf. Genesis 35:9-10). And so let us begin the care and training of our children from that point.

- But as I was relating: “He saw a ladder extended and reaching up to Heaven.” So let the name of the saints enter our homes through the naming of our children, to train not only the child but the father, when he reflects that he is the father of John or Elijah or James; for, if the name be given with forethought to pay honour to those that have departed, and we grasp at our kinship with the righteous rather than with our forebears, this too will greatly help us and our children. Do not because it is a small thing regard it as small; its purpose is to succour us.

51 . But as I was saying, let us return to the sequel of the story: “He saw a ladder firmly planted. He craved a blessing. God blessed him. He departed to his kinsmen. He was a shepherd.” Relate further to the story of his bride and his return home, and the boy will profit much therefrom. Consider how many things he will learn. He will be trained to trust in God, to despise no one though the son of one who is wellborn, to feel no shame at simple thrift, to bear misfortune nobly, and all the rest.

- Next, when he has grown older, tell him also more fearful tales; for you shouldst not impose so great a burden on his understanding while he is still tender, lest you dismay him. But when he is fifteen years old or more, let him hear of Hell. Nay, when he is ten or eight or even younger, let him hear in full detail the story of the flood, the destruction of Sodom, the descent into Egypt — whatever stories are full of divine punishment. When he is older let him hear also the deeds of the New Testament — deeds of grace and deeds of Hell. With these stories and ten thousand others fortify his hearing, as you do offer him also examples drawn from his home.
- But if any man would relate what is base, let us not, as I have said, suffer him to come near the boy. If you do see a slave in his presence speaking lewdly, punish him straightway and inquire zealously and sharply into the offence committed. If you do see a girl — but better by far that no woman, save it be sometimes an old woman with no charms to captivate a youth, come near him and the flame of desire be not kindled. But from a young woman shield him as from fire. In this way then he will speak no foolish word if he hears nought that is foolish but is brought up on those stories that we have told.
- Let us pass on, if you wilt, to another gate, the sense of smell. This gate too admits much that is harmful if it is not kept barred — I mean fragrant scents and herbs. Nothing weakens, nothing relaxes the right tension of the soul as a pleasure in sweet odours. “How then,” says someone, “must one take pleasure in filth?” That is not my meaning, but that one should not take pleasure either in the one or in the other. Let no one bring him perfume; for, as soon as it penetrates to the brain, the whole body is relaxed. Thereby pleasures are fanned into flame and great schemes for their attainment. So bar this gate, for its function is to breathe the air, not to receive sweet odours. It may be that some laugh at us for troubling about trifles if we discourse about such a commonwealth. These are no trifles; nay, if we carry out our plan, our concern is with the origin and rhythmical education of the world.

•

Then there is yet another gate, fairer than those others but difficult to guard, the gate of the eyes; difficult for this reason, that it lies high up and open and is beautiful. It has many little postern gates and not only sees but is seen if well-fashioned.

- Here strict laws are needed, the first being: Never send thy son to the theatre that he may not suffer utter corruption through his ears and eyes. And when he is abroad in the open squares, his attendant must be especially watchful as he passes through the alleys and must warn the boy of this, so that he may never suffer this corruption.
- That he may not suffer it by his own appearance must have our careful thought. We must remove the chief part of his physical charm by clipping the locks on his head all round to attain severe simplicity. If the boy complains because he is being deprived of this charm, let him learn first of all that the greatest charm is simplicity.
- That he may avoid seeing what he should not, those tales are sufficient protection which tells of “the sons of God that lapsed by coming in unto the daughters of men” (Genesis 6:4), and of the people of Sodom, of Gehenna, and the rest.

- In this matter, the tutor and attendant must exercise the greatest care. Show the boy other fair sights, and you wilt steer his eyes away from those others. Show him the sky, the sun, the flowers of the Earth, meadows, and fair books. Let these give pleasure to his eyes; and there are many others that are harmless.
- This gate is difficult to guard, since there burns a fire within and, so to speak, a natural compulsion. Let him learn hymns. If he is not inwardly aroused, he will not wish to see outwardly. Let him not bathe in company with women — such familiarity is evil — and let him not be sent into a crowd of women.
- Let him hear the whole story of Joseph continually. ³⁴ Furthermore, let him learn of the kingdom of Heaven and the great reward that awaits those who live sober lives. Promise him also that you wilt lead to him a fair maid and tell him that you hast made him the heir of thy property. Do not spare thy threats, if you do see the contrary disposition in him, and say to him: “My son, we shall not light upon a virtuous woman unless you hast shown great watchfulness and devotion to virtue. And that you mayest be steadfast, I shall soon guide thee to marriage.”
- Above all, if he is trained to speak no shameful word, he has a firm foundation of reverence derived from above. Speak to him of the beauty of the soul, instil into him a resolute spirit against womankind. Say that to be despised by the slave woman is meet only for a slave, and that a young man has the greatest need of earnestness. He who speaks will be conspicuous, he who sees will not be conspicuous; for this sense is swift and, as he sits among many, he can pick what maid he wishes with quick glances. Let him have no converse with any woman save only his mother. Let him see no woman. Do not give him money, let nothing shameful come in his way. Let him despise luxury and everything of that kind.
- There is yet another gateway, unlike the others because it extends through the whole body. We call it touch. It appears to be closed, yet it is, as it were, open and sends within whatever comes. Let us not allow it to have any contact with soft raiment or bodies. Let us make it austere. We are raising an athlete, let us concentrate our thoughts on that. And so let him not use soft couches or raiment. Let these be our ordinances.
- Come now, when we have entered this city, let us write down and ordain laws, seeing that our arrangement of the gates is so fair. First, let us thoroughly inform ourselves about the houses and chambers of the citizens that we may know where dwell the zealous and where the effete.
- The seat and habitation of spirit, we are told, are the breast and the heart within the breast; of the appetitive part of the soul, the liver; of the reasoning part, the brain. The Spirit produces both good and bad qualities; the good are sobriety and equability, the bad, rashness and ill temper. So, too, with the appetitive part; the good it causes is sobriety, the evil, licentiousness. And with the rational part the good is understanding, the bad, folly. Let us then have a care that the good qualities come to birth in these places and that they bear citizens of like character and not evil. These properties of the soul have been established to be like the mothers of our rational thoughts.
- Let us pass to the despotic part of the soul, spirit. We must not eliminate it utterly from the youth nor yet allow him to use it all the time. Let us train boys from earliest childhood to be patient when

they suffer wrongs themselves, but, if they see another being wronged, to sally forth courageously and aid the sufferer in fitting measure.

- How shall we attain this? If they practice themselves among their own slaves and are patient when slighted and refrain from anger when they are disobeyed, but narrowly examine the faults that they themselves have committed against others. The father is arbiter at all times in such matters. If the laws are transgressed, he will be stem and unyielding; if they are observed, he will be gracious and kind and will bestow many rewards on the boy. Even so God rules the world with the fear of Hell and the promise of His Kingdom. So must we too rule our children.
- And let there be many on all sides to spur the boy on, so that he may be exercised and practiced in controlling his passions among the members of the household. And, just as athletes in the wrestling school train with their friends before the contest, so that when they have succeeded against these they may be invincible against their opponents, even so the boy must be trained in the home. Let his father or brother oftentimes play the chief part in treating him with despite. And let them all strive their hardest to overcome him. Or let someone in wrestling stand up to him and defend himself so that the boy may try his strength against him. So, too, let the slaves provoke him often rightly or wrongly, so that he may learn on every occasion to control his passion. If his father provoke him, it is no great test; for the name of the father, taking first possession of his soul, does not permit him to rebel. But let his companions in age, whether slave or free, do this, that he may learn equality amongst them.
- There is still another method. What is that? When he becomes angry, remind him of the lessons that he has learned at home. When he is wroth with his slave, if he himself has not committed a fault, remind him that he should behave as he would have done on those former occasions. If you do see him striking the slave, demand satisfaction for this, and do likewise if you do see him using the slave ill. Let him be neither indulgent nor harsh, that he may be both a man and equable. Oftentimes he needs the help that spirit can give, as would be the case if at some time he himself have children or be the master of slaves. At all times the faculty of spirit is serviceable; it is only unprofitable when we defend ourselves. For this reason also Paul never made use of it for himself but only for others who had suffered wrong. And Moses, seeing his brother wronged, was wroth, and that right nobly, although he was “the meekest of men” (Exodus 2:11). But when he was used despitefully, he no longer defended himself but fled. Let the boy hear these tales. When we are still engaged in ordering the gates, we need the more artless stories; when we have entered and are training the citizens, then is the time for those of a loftier kind. And so, let this be his first law, never to defend himself when ill-used or suffering misfortune, and never to allow another to undergo this.
- The father, if he discipline himself also, will be far better in teaching the boy these precepts; for, if for no other reason, he will improve himself so as not to spoil the example that he sets. Let the boy be taught to suffer despite and contumely. Let him not demand from the servants such services as a free man demands, but for the most part let him minister to his own needs. Let the slaves only render such services as he cannot do for himself. A free man, for example, cannot do his own cooking; for he must not devote himself to such pursuits at the cost of neglecting the

labors befitting a free man. If, however, the boy would wash his feet, never let a slave do this, but let him do it for himself. Thus you wilt render the free man considerate toward his slaves and greatly beloved by them. Do not let a slave hand him his cloak, and do not let him expect another to serve him in the bath, but let him do all these things for himself. This will make him strong and simple and courteous.

- Teach him the facts of natural society and the difference between slave and free man. Say to him: “My son, there were no slaves of old in the time of our forebears, but sin brought slavery in its train; for when one insulted his father, he paid this penalty, to become his brothers’ bondsman (Genesis 9:21-25). Beware lest you be the slave of thy slaves. If you art wroth and thy conduct is the same as theirs and you art no whit more virtuous than they, you wilt earn no greater respect than they. Strive therefore to be their master and become so, not by doing as they do, but by thy habits, so that being a free man you art never a slave of these. do you not see how many fathers have renounced their sons and have introduced slaves in their place? Look then that no such thing happens to you. Truly I neither wish nor desire it, but the choice lies with you.”
- In this way dispose his spirit to gentleness and bid him treat his servants like brothers, and teach him the facts of natural society, quoting to him the words of Job (31:13-15): “If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me; what shall I do when God afflicts me and when he visits, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make them? Were we not fashioned in the same womb?” And again: “If my maid servants said often, ‘who would give us of his flesh to be satisfied,’ since I am too kindly.”
- Or do you think Paul a simpleton for saying that one who knows not how to rule his own house cannot superintend the church either (1 Timothy 3:5)? So say to the boy: “If you see that your servant has destroyed one of your pencils or broken a pen, be not angry or abusive but forgiving and placable. Thus taught by small losses you wilt learn to bear the greater. Or it might be the strap about your writing tablets or the bronze chain that is broken.” Children are made fractious by the loss of such articles and incline rather to lose their soul than to let the culprit go unpunished. There then one must soften the asperity of his anger. Believe me, the boy who is indifferent to such things and placable will endure every loss when he becomes a man. So if the boy has tablets fashioned of fine wood, clean and without stain, held together by bronze chains, and silver pencils and other like boyish possessions, and his servant lose or break them, and then the boy refrain from anger, he has displayed already all the marks of a philosophic mind. Do not straightway buy him others, lest you abate his sufferings; but when you see that he no longer misses his loss or is distressed by it, then heal his misfortune.
- I am not speaking of trifles, we are discussing the governance of the world. Train the boy also, if he has a younger brother, to let him take precedence or, if not, his servant; for this also involves a philosophical disposition.
- Mold his spirit so that it begets rational thoughts that are friendly to us. When he is dependent on no one, when he suffers loss, when he needs no service, when he does not resent honor paid to another, what source will there be left for anger?
-

It is now time to pass to desire. Both the self-restraint and the harm involved are twofold, that he may not himself suffer outrage nor yet himself do outrage to girls. The medical guild tell us that this desire attacks with violence after the fifteenth year. How shall we tie down this wild beast? What shall we contrive? How shall we place a bridle on it? I know none, save only the restraint of Hell-fire.

- First then let us guide it away from shameful spectacles and songs. Never let a free-born boy enter the theater. If he yearn after the pleasure to be found there, let us point out any of his companions who are holding back from this, so that he may be held fast in the grip of emulation. Nothing, yea nothing, is so effective as emulation. Let us act thus in every instance, especially if he be emulous; for this is a more potent instrument than fear or promises or ought else.

- Next, let us devise for him other harmless pleasures. Let us lead him to saintly men, let us give him recreation, let us show our regard for him by many gifts, so that his soul may patiently bear our rejection of the theater. In place of those spectacles introduce pleasing stories, flowery meadows, and fair buildings. And thereafter let us overthrow those spectacles by our argument, as we say to him: “My child, spectacles such as those, the sight of naked women uttering shameful words, are for slaves. Promise me not to listen to or speak any unseemly words and go thy way. There it is impossible not to hear what is base; what goes on is unworthy of thy eyes.” As we speak to him, let us kiss him and put our arms about him, and press him to us to show our affection. By all these means let us mold him.
- Well then, as I said before, never allow any maid to approach him or to serve him, save it be a slave of advancing years, an old woman. And let us guide the conversation to the kingdom of Heaven and to those men of old, pagan or Christian, who were illustrious for their self-restraint. Let us constantly flood his ears with talk of them. If we should also have servants of sober conduct, let us draw comparisons also from them, saying how absurd to have so sober a servant, while the free man is inferior to him in conduct. There is another remedy yet. Which is that? Let him also learn to fast, not indeed all the while, but on two days of the week, on Wednesday and Friday. Let him visit the church. And let the father take the boy in the evening when the theater is ended and point to the spectators coming out and make fun of the older men because they have less sense than the young and the young men because they are inflamed with desire. And let him ask the boy: “What have all these people gained? Nothing but shame, reproach, and damnation.” Abstention from all these spectacles and songs conduces not a little to virtue.
- Furthermore, let him learn to pray with great fervor and contrition; and do not tell me that a lad would never conform to these practices. Certainly the lad would conform to them if he were keen-eyed and wide-awake. We see many examples of it among the men of old, for instance, Daniel or Joseph. And do not speak to me of Joseph’s seventeen years and consider first why he won his father’s love, and that more than the older sons. Was not Jacob younger than he? or Jeremiah? Was not Daniel twelve years of age? Was not Solomon himself but twelve when he prayed that wondrous prayer (1 Kings 3:6-9)? Did not Samuel when still young instruct his own teacher (1 Samuel 3:17)? So let us not despair; for one who is too immature in soul does not conform even when he is an adult. Let the boy be trained to pray with much contrition and to keep vigils as much as he is able, and let the stamp of a saintly man be impressed on the boy in every way. If he refrains from oaths, 44 and from insults when he is insulted, and from slander and hatred, and if he fasts and prays, all this is a sufficient guide to virtue.
- If you do bring him up to the secular life, introduce his bride to him straightway and do not wait for him to be a soldier or engage in political life before you do so. First train his soul and then take thought for his reputation in the world. Or do you think the fact of a virgin youth and a virgin maid being united is a trifling contribution to their marriage? It is no trifle, not only for the virtue of the youth but for the maiden’s also. Will not then the charm of their love be wholly pure? Above all, will not God then be the more gracious and fill that marriage with countless blessings, when they

come together according to His ordinances? And He makes the youth remember his love always. And if he is held fast in this affection, he will spurn every other woman.

- If you do sing the maiden's praise for her beauty and her comeliness and all the rest, adding that "she will not endure to be thy mate if she learns that you art slothful," he will reflect deeply, seeing that his ultimate happiness is imperiled. If love of the betrothed induced the holy patriarch after he had been deceived to serve for a second term of seven years, to serve for fourteen in all (Genesis 29:20-30), how much more must we. Say to him: "All that know thy bride — her father and mother, her servants and neighbors and friends — are deeply concerned for thee and thy way of life, and all will report to her." Bind him then with this fetter, the fetter that makes virtue secure. Then, even if he cannot have a wife from his earliest manhood, let him have a betrothed from the first and let him strive to show himself a good man. This is enough safeguard to ward off every evil.
- There is yet another protection of virtue. Let him often see the head of his church and let him hear many words of praise from the bishop's lips; and let his father pride himself on this before all the hearers. Let the maidens as they see him be filled with awe; and so the tales and the fear of his father and his promises; and with these the reward laid up for him from God, even the numerous blessings which the virtuous shall enjoy — all this will afford him great security.
- Refer also to distinctions won in the army and in political life; and, besides, at all times express contempt for lewdness and give abundant praise for self-restraint. All these things serve to restrain the boy's soul; and so we shall find them giving birth to serious reflections.
- There is something more. Let us go to the master principle which keeps everything under control. To what do I allude? I mean wisdom. Here great labor is needed to render him sagacious and to banish all folly. This is the great and wondrous function of philosophy, that he may know God and all the treasure laid up in Heaven, and Hell and the kingdom of the other world. "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 1:7).
- Let us then implant in him this wisdom and let us exercise him therein, that he may know the meaning of human desires, wealth, reputation, power, and may disdain these and strive after the highest. And let us bring words of exhortation to his mind: "My child, fear God alone and fear none other but Him."
- By this means he will be a man of good understanding and charm; for nothing is as productive of folly as those passions. The fear of God and the power of forming such a Judgment of human affairs as it behooves us to have are sufficient for wisdom. The summit of wisdom is refusal to be excited at childish things. So let him be taught to think nothing of wealth or worldly reputation or power or death or the present life on Earth. So will he be sagacious. If we lead him to the bridal chamber with a training such as this, consider how great a gift he will be to the bride.
- Let us celebrate the marriage without flutes or harp or dancing; for a groom like ours is ashamed of such absurd customs. Nay, let us invite Christ there, for the bridegroom is worthy of Him. Let us invite His disciples; all things shall be of the best for the groom. And he himself will learn to train his own sons in this way, and they theirs in turn, and the result will be a golden cord.

- Let us teach him to attend to political affairs, such as are within his capacity and free from sin. If he serves as a soldier, let him learn to shun base gain; and so too, if he defend the cause of those who have suffered wrong, or in any other circumstances.
- Let his mother learn to train her daughter by these precepts, to guide her away from extravagance and personal adornment and all other such vanities that are the mark of harlots. 47 Let the mother act by this ordinance at all times and guide the youth and the maiden away from luxury and drunkenness. This also contributes greatly to virtue. Young men are troubled by desire, women by love of finery and excitement. Let us therefore repress all these tendencies. Thus we shall be able to please God by rearing such athletes for Him, that we and our children may light on the blessings that are promised to them that love Him (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9), by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be ascribed glory, power, and honor, now and for evermore.

Amen.

Source: https://archive.org/stream/StJohnChrysostomVaingloryAndChildren/St+John+Chrysostom--Vainglory_and_Children_djvu.txt
<https://www.thestromata.com/texts/address-on-vainglory-and-how-to-bring-up-children>