

mother makes, for the improvement of her child in knowledge and virtue, are necessarily retired and unobtrusive. The world knows not of them; and hence the world has been slow to perceive how powerful and extensive is this secret and silent influence. But circumstances are now directing the eyes of the community to the nursery, and the truth is daily coming more distinctly before the public, that the influence which is exerted upon the mind, during the first eight or ten years of existence, in a great degree guides the destinies of that mind for time and eternity. And as the mother is the guardian and guide of the early years of life, from her goes the most powerful influence in the formation of the character of man. And why should it not be so? What impressions can be more strong and more lasting than those received upon the mind, in the freshness and the susceptibility of youth? What instructor can gain greater confidence and respect than a mother? And where can there be delight in acquiring knowledge, if not when the little flock cluster around a mother's knee, to hear of God and heaven? There are, it is true, innumerable causes incessantly operating in the formation of character. A mother's influence is by no means the only influence which is exerted. Still, it must be powerful, for, with God's ordinary blessing, it may form in the youthful mind the habits, and implant the principles, to which other influences are to give permanency and vigour.

A pious and faithful mother may have a dissolute child. He may break away from all restraints, and God may leave him to "eat the fruit of his own devices." The parent, thus afflicted and broken hearted, can only bow before the sovereignty of her Maker, who says, "Be still, and know that I am God." The consciousness, however, of having done one's duty divests this affliction of much of its bitterness. And, besides, such cases are rare. Profligate children are generally the offspring of parents, who have neglected the moral and religious education of their family. Some parents are themselves profligate, and thus not only allow their children to grow up unrestrained, but by their own example lure them to sin. But there are others, who are very upright and virtuous, and even pious themselves, who do, nevertheless, neglect the moral culture of their children, and, as a consequence, they grow up in disobedience and sin. It matters but little what the cause is which leads to this neglect. The neglect itself will ordinarily be followed by disobedience and self-will.

Hence the reason that children of eminent men, both in church and state, are not unfrequently the disgrace of their parents. If the mother is unaccustomed to govern her children, if she look to the father to enforce obedience, and to control it; when he is absent, all family government is absent, and the children are left to run wild; to learn lessons of disobedience; to practise arts of deception; to build, upon the foundation of contempt for a mother, a character of insubordination and iniquity. But if the children are under the efficient government of a judicious mother, the reverse of this is almost invariably the case. And since, in nearly every instance, the early years of life are intrusted to a mother's care, it follows that maternal influence, more than any