

more thankful for nothing, than that in their earliest years their parents awakened their hearts to a consciousness of the Divine goodness and to a reverence for the Divine will. They feel that their parents did what might easily have been neglected, but which neglected, the loss would have been, practically, all but irretrievable. Of the greatest and wisest men, many a one has looked back to a mother, not wise, perhaps, as the world counts wisdom, with undying gratitude and honor, not merely for her affection, but because in a truly wise affection she opened his mind to thoughts of God and taught his heart to look up in trust and reverence to him. And though long gone from the earth, she stands for ever, in his memory of the past and his thoughts of the future, a blessed spirit between him and heaven. All of human philosophy he has since learned is but the vain trifling of a summer's day compared with those early lessons from a mother's heart, which have given to his heart a prevailing, cheerful, hopeful sense of a beneficent and guiding Providence. How, then, is the religious sentiment to be awakened? It must, obviously, be mainly through domestic influences. The child lives in a narrow circle, and whatever is done for it must be done in that circle. It is not chiefly by direct instructions, by arguments which the child can hardly attend to or understand, by commands, which awaken fears, but not affections, nor by requiring creeds and catechisms to be committed to memory, though, as will presently appear, we not underate the importance of the memory in religious instruction. It is most effectually done through a general influence, often acting indirectly and incidentally. It is the order of Providence that a child's heart shall be awakened through its *sympathies*,