

the main question, I still say, viz., the divine wisdom of these sayings of Solomon—whether they were received by him directly from heaven, or at second hand—there had been, up to the preceding century, but one opinion. It was reserved for a generation which Solomon, unless gifted at times with prophetic vision, never thought of, to brand as foolishness the maxims, precepts, or sayings themselves.

Nor is this done, even now, in a direct manner. The general character of the Jewish king is first assailed, and when the sneers of an unthinking world are fairly roused against his errors—for errors he certainly had—then it is that his sayings and proverbs fall into reproach. Even their high practical tone and tendency is lost sight of, when the keen edge of ridicule is fairly presented.

These preliminary remarks have not been made, however, with the remotest intention of entering the lists against infidelity, ancient or modern. Mine is wholly a different purpose. It was simply to define my position, and to say that, however he may have been supposed to have come by it, whether at first or second hand, the wisdom of Solomon is acknowledged to be divine. It has stood the test of all but ridicule for thousands of years; nor has even the latter been successful in her attempts to overthrow it. It still lives and, like the family and church, is destined to survive as long as man survives—nay, as long as its Divine Author.

This wisdom of Solomon is adapted to the wants of all persons of every age, and of every condition and relation in life. It deserves to be written, if not on the bells of our houses, at least on our gates and door posts. It deserves to be studied at our going out and coming in; at home or abroad; at our lying down and at our rising up.

To no classes of society, however, are Solomon's instructions more ample and more valuable than to parents and children. The relations which God has here established, he appears to have thought of more than any—I was going to say more than all others. To them above all others, at the least, his voice is not only a voice of wisdom but of experience, and though he has by no means forgotten to admonish the father or the children, his directions are more emphatic, if possible, than any where else, to the mother.

The wise and good of every age, as it is believed, have been led by observation and experience, no less than by studying the Word of God, to rest their hopes of the future, very largely, on correct family education. Yet who of modern times has gone farther in this matter than Solomon? Have the worshippers of Pestalozzi been able to challenge for him a superiority, in this respect, to the sage and king of Jerusalem?

But to quote the whole of his excellent instructions to mothers would be to transcribe no small portion of the book of Proverbs itself, with much that is contained in Ecclesiastes and elsewhere. Such a work is not by any means intended. All that I propose in a single article is, to direct the maternal eye to a single trait in the character of the virtuous woman, whom he so beautifully describes in the closing paragraphs of

his Proverbs. The encomium, it is true, is put into the mouth of another, but then it is fairly endorsed by Solomon himself.

The allusion is to her habits of early rising, and taking time and business, according to the old adage, by the foretop. It is found in the 15th verse of the 21st chapter, and is as follows: "She riseth, also, while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens." To which might be added or coupled, the 27th verse: "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

Now it would be unpardonable to occupy important space in a mother's magazine on family duties and family education, without being aware of the fact that Solomon's virtuous woman is something more than a mere creation of fancy. She has, and ever has had, an existence. She is found in all ages and in most countries; and is, under God, to the world generally, what the ten righteous ones, could they have been found would have been to Sodom. And yet while this concession is fairly and freely made, is it not also true—most painfully so—that such heads of families are and always have been, "few and far between?" Or in any event, and whatever may have been the case in former times and in other countries, are they not extremely scarce now in our own country? Is not early rising by the mother, the wife or the housekeeper, becoming unfashionable, and falling into disrepute? And are not the whole family, especially the children, made large sufferers by it?

Mothers and wives, and daughters and housekeepers, have sometimes been disposed to complain that while so much is said and written for them, comparatively little is said to the other sex, even to fathers. Now we mean not to exonerate the father, the husband, or the brother, (Nor have they been wholly neglected, in a country where there are such works as the "Young Man's Guide," the "Young Husband," the "Father's Book," the "Boy's Guide," etc., etc.) from blame in any point where human nature is culpable. Adam sinned as well as Eve; still, who does not know that Eve was first in the transgression? And as it was at first, so it is at the present day; and as Eve was conspicuous in the ruin of our race, so she must be in its renovation.

Even in the daily habits of life—since so much depends upon them—she must take the lead. Let no one shrink from this part of my subject, however it may strike at first. We have scripture authority for the inquiry, "For who has despised the day of small things?" Human character is, as it were, an aggregate of what, if isolated from each other, might be thought at first, to be very small things.

I have seen a father who rose early, and persisted in it through life and yet matters never went well in the family, because the mother persisted in habits which were diametrically opposite. But who ever saw the female head of a family follow the wise course Solomon has marked out, without perceiving as the inevitable result a decided change for the better? How seldom has the husband been known to hold out against her?