

combustible material, unless you are quite sure there is not even a spark of life or love in your soul!

Among the means of education we mention last what in the order of time and of importance belongs first: the *influence of Christian women* in the home life. If God has shut out the ordinary woman from much participation in public life, and shut her in the home, it is because her sphere makes up in quality what it lacks in quantity. Here are life's arcana, veiled from the common eye; the home is the matrix of character. The faith of the grandmother Lois and mother Eunice still descends to Timothy. Anthusa and Monica still give the church her golden-mouthed Johns and her giant Augustines. To one woman may be traced the rise of the seven kingdoms of the Saxon Heptarchy. At every stream there is a point where a human hand might turn its current, and at that point in human lives the wife and mother presides. The heathen rhetorician Libanius exclaimed: "What women these Christians have!" And, if the secret things were brought to light, it might be found that many, beside Morrison and Burns and Lindley and Patteson, have owed their saintly character and missionary career to the sanctity of a mother. Even before birth, maternal character leaves its impress upon the unborn, and at the mother's breast and knee the earliest lessons are learned in piety and prayer and personal consecration.

The nursery may be the garden where the precious germs are first nourished from which develop pillars of cedar and olive for the temple of God. The Earl of Shaftesbury learned of humble Maria Millis the first lessons in living which made his influence capable of being measured only by parallels of latitude and meridians of longitude, and its results only to be computed by the æons of eternity! My sisters in Christ, do not hesitate to break on your Master's feet your alabaster flask; though it may seem but as waste to some, the house shall be filled with the odor of your consecration, and you shall at least create in the home a mighty mould of character from which shall go forth men and women whose words and deeds shall shake the world!

Here, in the home, if prevailing selfishness and extravagant self-indulgence are to be corrected, must be taught first lessons in giving, the divine doctrine of stewardship, and the responsibilities both of wealth and poverty. Munificent legacies cannot atone for parsimonious gifts. It is not God or His poor who need our gifts, so much as we ourselves need to give. Giving is the sovereign secret of serving, but also of getting and growing. To deny self and help others is God's antidote to that monstrous sin of selfishness which is the root of all others; and so it is more blessed to give than to receive. And if there ever was an altar that sanctified, magnified, glorified the gift, it is the altar of missions. Let the ethics, the economics, the aesthetics of giving be taught at the mother's knee, and we shall have a new generation of givers.

Too much emphasis cannot be laid on placing at the center of the family a consecrated woman. She is like Goethe's mythical lamp, which, set in the humblest hut of the fisherman, changed all within it to silver. She pours on the root of the cocoanut-tree the water, which comes back, by and by, sweetened and enriched, in the milk of the cocoanut which falls from the top. A selfish, sordid woman, presiding in the home, perverts child-life; in such a household there is a malign influence, which, like the mirrors in the temples of Smyrna, represents the fairest images distorted and deformed, and makes even piety seem repellent. The more I see of woman's influence on the whole structure of society the more I feel the stress of the apostolic injunction that the believer should marry *only in the Lord*.

The responsibilities of wealth are to be discussed by another in a separate