

WRITINGS OF JOHN ABBOTT

by John Abbott

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by John Abbott, compiled for study and devotional reading.

17 Chapters

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1. Gentle Child Training

THE CHILD AT HOME; OR THE PRINCIPLES OF FILIAL DUTY FAMILIARLY ILLUSTRATED.
BY JOHN S. C. ABBOTT,

Author Of "The Mother At Home."

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PREFACE. This book is intended for the children of those families to which The Mother at Home has gone. It is prepared with the hope that it may exert an influence upon the minds of the children, in exciting gratitude for their parents' love, and in forming characters which shall ensure future usefulness and happiness. The book is intended, not for entertainment, but for solid instruction. I have endeavored, however, to present instruction in an attractive form, but with what success, the result alone can tell. The object of the book will not be accomplished by a careless perusal. It should be read by the child, in the presence of the parent, that the parent may seize upon the incidents and remarks introduced, and thus deepen the impression.

Though the book is particularly intended for children, or rather for young persons, it is hoped that it will aid parents in their efforts for moral and religious instruction.

It goes from the author with the most earnest prayer, that it may save some parents from blighted hopes, and that it may allure many children to gratitude, and obedience, and heaven.

JOHN S. C. ABBOTT Worcester December, 1833.

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1.01 Responsibility

THE CHILD AT HOME

CHAPTER I.

RESPONSIBILITY. In large cities there are so many persons guilty of crimes, that it is necessary to have a court sit every day to try those who are accused of breaking the laws. This court is called the Police Court. If you should go into the room where it is held, you would see the constables bringing in one after another of miserable and wicked creatures, and, after stating and proving their crimes, the judge would command them to be led away to prison. They would look so wretched that you would be shocked in seeing them.

One morning a poor woman came into the Police Court in Boston. Her eyes were red with weeping, and she seemed to be borne down with sorrow. Behind her followed two men, leading in her daughter.

"Here, sir," said a man to the judge, "is a girl who conducts so badly that her mother cannot live with her, and she must be sent to the House of Correction."

"My good woman," said the judge, "what is it that your daughter does which renders it so uncomfortable to live with her?"

"Oh, sir," she replied, "it is hard for a mother to accuse her own daughter, and to be the means of sending her to the prison. But she conducts so as to destroy all the peace of my life. She has such a temper, that she sometimes threatens to kill me, and does every thing to make my life wretched." The unhappy woman could say no more. Her heart seemed bursting with grief, and she wept aloud. The heart of the judge was moved with pity, and the bystanders could hardly refrain from weeping with this afflicted mother. But there stood the hard-hearted girl, unmoved. She looked upon the sorrows of her parent in sullen silence. She was so hardened in sin, that she seemed perfectly insensible to pity or affection. And yet she was miserable. Her countenance showed that passion and malignity filled her heart, and that the fear of the prison, to which she knew she must go, filled her with rage. The judge turned from the afflicted mother, whose sobs filled the room, and, asking a few questions of the witnesses, who testified to the daughter's ingratitude and cruelty, ordered her to be led away to the House of Correction. The officers of justice took her by the arm, and carried her to her gloomy cell. Her lonely and sorrowing mother went weeping home to her abode of penury and desolation. Her own daughter was the viper which had stung her bosom. Her own child was the wretch who was filling her heart with sorrow. And while I now write, this guilty daughter is occupying the gloomy cell of the prison, and this widowed mother is in her silent dwelling, in loneliness and grief! Oh, could the child who reads these pages, see that mother and that daughter now, you might form some feeble idea of the consequences of disobedience; you might see how unutterable the sorrow a wicked child may bring upon herself and upon her parents. It is not easy, in this case, to judge which is the most unhappy, the mother or the child. The mother is broken-hearted at home. She is alone and friendless. All her hopes are most cruelly

destroyed. She loved her daughter, and hoped that she would live to be her friend and comfort. But instead of that, she became her curse, and is bringing her mother's gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. And then look at the daughter—guilty and abandoned—Oh, who can tell how miserable she must be!

Such is the grief which children may bring upon themselves and their parents. You probably have never thought of this very much I write this book that you may think of it, and that you may, by obedience and affection, make your parents happy, and be happy yourselves. This wicked girl was once a playful child, innocent and happy. Her mother looked upon her with most ardent love, and hoped that her dear daughter would live to be her companion and friend. At first she ventured to disobey in some trifling thing. She still loved her mother, and would have been struck with horror at the thought of being guilty of crimes which she afterwards committed. But she went on from bad to worse, every day growing more disobedient, until she made her poor mother so miserable that she almost wished to die, and till she became so miserable herself, that life must have been a burden. You think, perhaps, that you never shall be so unkind and wicked as she finally became. But if you begin as she began, by trifling disobedience, and little acts of unkindness, you may soon be as wicked as she, and make your parents as unhappy as is her poor broken-hearted mother.

Persons never become so very wicked all at once. They go on from step to step, in disobedience and ingratitude, till they lose all feeling, and can see their parents weep, and even die in their grief, without a tear.

Perhaps, one pleasant day, this mother sent her little daughter to school. She took her books, and walked along, admiring the beautiful sunshine, and the green and pleasant fields. She stopped one moment to pick a flower, again to chase a butterfly, and again to listen to a little robin, pouring out its clear notes upon the bough of some lofty tree. It seemed so pleasant to be playing in the fields, that she was unwilling to go promptly to school. She thought it would not be very wrong to play a little while. Thus she commenced. The next day she ventured to chase the butterflies farther, and to rove more extensively through the field in search of flowers. And as she played by the pebbles in the clear brook of rippling water, she forgot how fast the time was passing. And when she afterwards hastened to school, and was asked why she was so late, to conceal her fault she was guilty of falsehood, and said that her mother wanted her at home. Thus she advanced, rapidly in crime. Her lessons were neglected. She loved the fields better than her book, and would often spend the whole morning idle, under the shade of some tree, when her mother thought her safe in school. Having thus become a truant and a deceiver, she was prepared for any crimes. Good children would not associate with her, and consequently she had to choose the worst for her companions and her friends. She learned wicked language; she was rude and vulgar in her manners; she indulged ungovernable passion; and at last grew so bad, that when her family afterwards removed to the city, the House of Correction became her ignominious home. And there she is now, guilty and wretched. And her poor mother, in her solitary dwelling, is weeping over her daughter's disgrace. Who can comfort such a mother? Where is there any earthly joy to which she can look?

Children generally do not think how much the happiness of their parents depends upon their conduct. But you now see how very unhappy you can make them. And is there a child who reads this book, who would be willing to be the cause of sorrow to his father and his mother? After all

they have done for you, in taking care of you when an infant, in watching over you when sick, in giving you clothes to wear, and food to eat, can you be so ungrateful as to make them unhappy? You have all read the story of the kind man, who found a viper lying upon the ground almost dead with cold. He took it up and placed it in his bosom to warm it, and to save its life. And what did that viper do? He killed his benefactor! Vile, vile reptile! Yes! as soon as he was warm and well, he stung the bosom of his kind preserver, and killed him. But that child, is a worse viper, who, by his ingratitude, will sting the bosoms of his parents; who, by disobedience and unkindness, will destroy their peace, and thus dreadfully repay them for all their love and care. God will not forget the sins of such a child. His eye will follow you to see your sin, and his arm will reach you to punish. He has said, Honor your father and your mother. And the child who does not do this, must meet with the displeasure of God, and must be for ever shut out from heaven. Oh, how miserable must this wicked girl now be, locked up in the gloomy prison! But how much more miserable will she be when God calls her to account for all her sins!—when, in the presence of all the angels, the whole of her conduct is brought to light, and God says to her, "Depart from me, ye cursed!" As she goes away from the presence of the Lord, to the gloomy prisons of eternal despair, she will then feel a degree of remorse which I cannot describe to you. It is painful to think of it. Ah, wretched, wretched girl! Little are you aware of the woes you are preparing for yourself. I hope that no child who reads these pages will ever feel these woes.

You have just read that it is in your power to make your parents very unhappy; and you have seen how unhappy one wicked girl made her poor mother. I might tell you many such melancholy stories, all of which would be true. A few years ago there was a boy who began to be disobedient to his parents in little things. But every day he grew worse, more disobedient and wilful, and troublesome. He would run away from school, and thus grew up in ignorance. He associated with bad boys, and learned to swear and to lie, and to steal. He became so bad that his parents could do nothing with him. Every body who knew him, said, "That boy is preparing for the gallows." He was the pest of the neighborhood. At last he ran away from home, without letting his parents know that he was going. He had heard of the sea, and thought it would be a very pleasant thing to be a sailor. But nothing is pleasant to the wicked. When he came to the sea-shore, where there were a large number of ships, it was some time before any one would hire him, because he knew nothing about a ship or the sea. There was no one there who was his friend, or who pitied him, and he sat down and cried bitterly, wishing he was at home again, but ashamed to go back. At last a sea captain came along, and hired him to go on a distant voyage; and as he knew nothing about the rigging of a vessel, he was ordered to do the most servile work on board. He swept the decks and the cabin, and helped the cook, and was the servant of all. He had the poorest food to eat he ever ate in his life. And when night came, and he was so tired that he could hardly stand, he had no soft bed upon which to lie, but could only wrap a blanket around him, and throw himself down any where to get a little sleep. This unhappy boy had acquired so sour a disposition, and was so disobliging, that all the sailors disliked him, and would do every thing they could to tease him. When there was a storm, and he was pale with fear, and the vessel was rocking in the wind, and pitching over the waves, they would make him climb the mast, and laugh to see how terrified he was, as the mast reeled to and fro, and the wind almost blew him into the raging ocean. Often did this poor boy get into some obscure part of the ship, and weep as he thought of the home he had forsaken. He thought of his father and mother, how kind they had been to him, and how unkind and ungrateful he had been to them, and how unhappy he had made them by his misconduct. But

these feelings soon wore away. Familiarity with sea life gave him courage, and he became inured to its hardships. Constant intercourse with the most profligate and abandoned, gave strength and inveteracy to his sinful habits; and before the voyage had terminated, he was reckless of danger, and as hardened and unfeeling as the most depraved on board the ship. This boy commenced with disobedience in little things, and grew worse and worse, till he forsook his father and his mother, and was prepared for the abandonment of every virtue, and the commission of any crime. But the eye of God was upon him, following him wherever he went, and marking all his iniquities. An hour of retribution was approaching. It is not necessary for me to trace out to you his continued steps of progress in sin. When on shore, he passed his time in haunts of dissipation. And several years rolled on in this way, he growing more hardened, and his aged parents, in their loneliness, weeping over the ruin of their guilty and wandering son.

One day an armed vessel sailed into one of the principal ports of the United States, accompanied by another, which had been captured. When they arrived at the wharf, it was found that the vessel taken was a pirate. Multitudes flocked down upon the wharf to see the pirates as they should be led off to the prison, there to await their trial. Soon they were brought out of the ship, with their hands fastened with chains, and led through the streets. Ashamed to meet the looks of honest men, and terrified with the certainty of condemnation and execution, they walked along with downcast eyes and trembling limbs. Among the number was seen the unhappy and guilty boy, now grown to be a young man, whose history we are relating. He was locked up in the dismal dungeon of a prison. The day of trial came. Pale and trembling; he was brought before the judge. He was clearly proved guilty, and sentenced to be hung. Again he was carried back to his prison, there to remain till the hour for his execution should arrive. News was sent to his already broken-hearted parents, that their son had been condemned as a pirate, and was soon to be hung. The tidings was almost too much for them to endure. In an agony of feeling which cannot be described, they wept together. They thought of the hours of their child's infancy, when they watched over him in sickness, and soothed him to sleep. They thought how happy they felt when they saw the innocent smile play upon his childish cheek. They thought of the joy they then anticipated in his opening years, and of the comfort they hoped he would be to them in their declining days. And now to think of him, a hardened criminal, in the murderer's cell!— Oh, it was too much, too much for them to bear. It seemed as though their hearts would burst. Little did they think, when, with so much affection they caressed their infant child, that he would be the curse of their life, embittering all their days, and bringing down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Little did they think, that his first trifling acts of disobedience would lead on to such a career of misery and of crime, But the son was sentenced to die, and the penalty of the law could not be avoided. His own remorse and his parents' tears could be of no avail. Agonizing as it would be to their feelings, they felt that they must go and see their son before he should die.

One morning, a gray-headed man, and an aged and infirm woman, were seen walking along, with faltering footsteps, through the street which led to the prison. It was the heart-broken father and mother of this unnatural child. When they came in sight of the gloomy granite walls and iron-grated windows of this dreary abode, they could hardly proceed, so overwhelming were the feelings which pressed upon their minds. When arrived at the door of the prison, the aged father, supporting upon his arm the weeping and almost fainting mother, told the jailer who they were, and requested permission to see their son. Even the jailer, accustomed as he was to scenes of

suffering, could not witness this exhibition of parental grief without being moved to tears. He led the parents through the stone galleries of the prison, till they came to the iron door of the cell in which their son was confined. As he turned the key with all his strength, the heavy bolt flew back, and he opened the door of the cell. Oh, what a sight for a father and a mother to gaze upon! There was just enough light in this gloomy abode to show them their son, sitting in the corner on the stone floor, pale and emaciated, and loaded with chains. The moment the father beheld the pallid features of his long-absent son, he raised his hands in the agony of his feelings, and fell fainting at his feet. The mother burst into loud exclamations of grief, as she clasped her son, guilty and wretched as he was, to her maternal bosom. Oh, who can describe this scene! Who can conceive the anguish which wrung the hearts of these afflicted parents! And it was their own boy, whom they had loved and cherished, who had brought all this wo upon them. I cannot describe to you the scene which ensued. Even the very jailer could not bear it, and he wept aloud. At last he was compelled to tear the parents away; and it was agonizing indeed to leave their son in such a situation, soon to be led to an ignominious death. They would gladly have staid and died with their guilty child. But it was necessary that they should depart; and, the jailer having closed the door and turned the massive bolt, they left the unhappy criminal in his cell. Oh, what would he have given, again to be innocent and free! The parents returned to their home, to weep by day and by night, and to have the image of their guilty son disturbing every moment of peace, and preventing the possibility of joy. The day of execution soon arrived, and their son was led to the gallows, and launched into eternity. And, crimsoned with guilt, he went to the bar of God, there to answer for all the crimes of which he had been guilty, and for all the woes he had caused.

You see, then, how great are your responsibilities as a child. You have thought, perhaps, that you have no power over your parents, and that you are not accountable for the sorrow which your conduct may cause them. Think you that God will hold this child guiltless for all the sorrow he caused his father and his mother? And think you God will hold any child guiltless, who shall, by his misconduct, make his parents unhappy? No. You must answer to God for every thing you do, which gives your parents pain. And there is no sin greater in the sight of God than that of an ungrateful child, I have shown you, in the two illustrations which you have just read, how much the happiness of your parents depends upon your conduct. Every day you are promoting their joy or their sorrow. And every act of disobedience, or of ingratitude, however trifling it may appear to you, is, in the eyes of your Maker, a sin which cannot pass unnoticed. Do you ask, Why does God consider the ingratitude of children as a sin of peculiar aggravation? I reply, Because you are under peculiar obligation to love and obey your parents. They have loved you when you could not love them. They have taken care of you when you could not reward them. They have passed sleepless nights in listening to your cries, and weary days in watching over you, when you could neither express thanks nor feel grateful. And after they have done all this, is it a small sin for you to disobey them and make them unhappy? And indeed you can do nothing to make yourself so unhappy as to indulge in disobedience, and to cherish a spirit of ingratitude. You never see such a child happy. Look at him at home, and, instead of being light-hearted and cheerful, he is sullen and morose. He sits down by the fireside in a winter evening, but the evening fireside affords no joy to him. He knows that his parents are grieved at his conduct. He loves nobody, and feels that nobody loves him. There he sits silent and sad, making himself miserable by his own misconduct. The disobedient boy or girl is always unhappy. You know how different the dispositions of children are. Some are always pleasant and obliging, and you love their company. They seem happy when they

are with you, and they make you happy. Now you will almost always find, that such children are obedient to their parents. They are happy at home, as well as abroad. God has in almost every case connected enjoyment with duty, and sorrow with sin. But in no case is this connection more intimate, than in the duty which children owe their parents. And to every child who reads this book, I would say, If you wish to be happy, you must be good. Do remember this. Let no temptation induce you for a moment to disobey. The more ardently you love your parents, the more ardently will they love you. But if you are ungrateful and disobedient, childhood will pass away in sorrow; all the virtuous will dislike you, and you will have no friends worth possessing. When you arrive at mature age, and enter upon the active duty of life, you will have acquired those feelings which will deprive you of the affection of your fellow beings, and you will probably go through the world unloved and unrespected. Can you be willing so to live? The following account, written by one who, many years after her mother's death, visited her grave, forcibly describes the feelings which the remembrance of the most trifling act of ingratitude will, under such circumstances, awaken.

"It was thirteen years since my mother's death, when, after a long absence from my native village, I stood beside the sacred mound, beneath which I had seen her buried. Since that mournful period, a great change had come over me. My childish years had passed away, and with them my youthful character. The world was altered too; and as I stood at my mother's grave, I could hardly realize, that I was the same thoughtless, happy creature, whose cheeks she so often kissed in an excess of tenderness. But the varied events of thirteen years had not effaced the remembrance of that mother's smile. It seemed as if I had seen her but yesterday—as the blessed sound of her well-remembered voice was in my ear. The gay dreams of my infancy and childhood were brought back so distinctly to my mind, that, had it not been for one bitter recollection, the tears I shed would have been gentle and refreshing. The circumstance may seem a trifling one, but the thought of it now pains my heart, and I relate it, that those children who have parents to love them may learn to value them as they ought.

"My mother had been ill a long time, and I became so accustomed to her pale face and weak voice, that I was not frightened at them, as children usually are. At first, it is true, I sobbed violently; but when, day after day, I returned from school, and found her the same, I began to believe she would always be spared to me. But they told me she would die.

"One day, when I had lost my place in the class, and had done my work wrong side outward, I came home discouraged and fretful. I went to my mother's chamber. She was paler than usual, but she met me with the same affectionate smile that always welcomed my return. Alas, when I look back through the lapse of thirteen years, I think my heart must have been stone not to have melted by it. She requested me to go down stairs and bring her a glass of water. I pettishly asked why she did not call a domestic to do it. With a look of mild reproach, which I shall never forget, if I live to be a hundred years old, she said, 'And will not my daughter bring a glass of water for her poor sick mother?'

"I went and brought her the water, but I did not do it kindly. Instead of smiling and kissing her, as I was wont to do, I set the glass down very quickly, and left the room. After playing about a short time, I went to bed without bidding my mother good night. But when alone in my room, in darkness and in silence, I remembered how pale she looked, and how her voice trembled when she said, 'Will not my daughter bring a glass of water for her poor sick mother?' I could not, sleep. I stole into

her chamber to ask forgiveness. She had sunk into an easy slumber, and they told me I must not waken her. I did not tell any one what troubled me, but stole back to my bed, resolved to rise early in the morning, and tell her how sorry I was for my conduct.

"The sun was shining brightly when I awoke: and, hurrying on my clothes, I hastened to my mother's chamber. She was dead! She never spoke more—never smiled upon me again and when I touched the hand that used to rest upon my head in blessing, it was so cold that it made me start. I bowed down by her side, and sobbed in the bitterness of my heart. I thought then I might wish to die, and be buried with her, and, old as I now am, I would give worlds, were they mine to give, could my mother but have lived to tell me that she forgave my childish ingratitude. But I cannot call her back; and when I stand by her grave, and whenever I think of her manifold kindness, the memory of that reproachful look she gave me will bite like a serpent and sting like an adder." And when your mother dies, do you not think that you will feel remorse for every unkind word you have uttered, and for every act of ingratitude? Your beloved parents must soon die. You will probably be led into their darkened chamber, to see them pale and helpless on their dying bed. Oh, how will you feel in that solemn hour! All your past life will come to your mind, and you will think that you would give worlds, if you could blot out the remembrance of past ingratitude. You will think that, if your father or mother should only get well, you would never do any thing to grieve them again. But the hour for them to die must come. You may weep as though your heart would break, but it will not recall the past, and it will not delay their death. They must die; and you will probably gaze upon their cold and lifeless countenances in the coffin. You will follow them to the grave, and see them buried for ever from your sight. Oh, how unhappy you will feel, if you then have to reflect upon your misconduct! The tears you will shed over their graves will be the more bitter, because you will feel that, perhaps, your own misconduct hastened their death. But perhaps you will die before your parents do. If you go into the grave-yard, you will see the graves of many children. You know that the young are liable to die, as well as the old. And what must be the feelings of the dying child, who knows that he is going to appear before God in judgment, and yet feels conscious that he has been unkind to his parents! Oh, such a child must fear to go into the presence of his Maker. He must know that God will never receive into heaven children who have been so wicked. I have seen many children die. And I have seen some, who had been very amiable and pleasant all their lives, when they came to die, feel grieved that they had not been more careful to make their parents happy. I knew one affectionate little girl, who was loved by all who knew her. She hardly ever did any thing which was displeasing to her parents. But one day she was taken sick. The doctor was called: but she grew worse and worse. Her parents watched over her with anxiety and tears, but still her fever raged, and death drew nearer. At last all hopes of her recovery were over, and it was known that she must die. Then did this little girl, when she felt that she must leave her parents for ever, mourn that she had ever done any thing to give them pain. The most trifling act of disobedience, and the least unkindness of which she had ever been guilty, then came fresh into her mind, and she could not die in peace, till she had called her father and her mother to her bedside, and implored their forgiveness. If so obliging and affectionate a little girl as this felt so deeply in view of the past, when called upon to die, how agonizing must be the feelings which will crowd upon the heart of the wicked and disobedient child who has filled her parents' heart with sorrow! But you must also remember, that there is a day of judgment to come. You must appear before God to answer for every thing you have done or thought while in this world. Oh, how will the ungrateful child then feel! Heaven will be before him, in all its beauty and

bliss, but he cannot enter.

"Those holy gates for ever bar

Pollution, sin and shame."

He has, by his ingratitude, made a home on earth unhappy, and God will not permit him to destroy the happiness of the homes in heaven.

He will see all the angels in their holiness and their joy, but he cannot be permitted to join that blessed throng. With his ungrateful heart he would but destroy their enjoyment. The frown of God must be upon him, and he must depart to that wretched world where all the wicked are assembled. There he must live in sorrows which have no end. Oh, children, how great are your responsibilities! The happiness of your parents depends upon your conduct. And your ingratitude may fill your lives with sorrow, and your eternity with wo. Will you not, then, read this book with care, and pray that God will aid you to obey its directions, that your homes on earth may be joyful, and that you may be prepared for happier homes beyond the stars?

1.02 Deception

CHAPTER II.

DECEPTION.

Probably nearly all who read this book have heard the story of George Washington and his hatchet.

George, when a little boy, had received from his father a hatchet, and he, much pleased with his present, walked around the house trying its keen edge upon every thing which came within his reach. At last he came to a favorite pear-tree of his father's, and began, with great dexterity, to try his skill in felling trees. After hacking upon the bark until he had completely ruined the tree, he became tired, and went into the house. Before long, his father, passing by, beheld his beautiful tree entirely ruined; and, entering the house, he earnestly asked who had been guilty of the destruction. For a moment George trembled and hesitated. He was strongly tempted to deny that he knew any thing about it. But summoning all his courage, he replied, "Father, I cannot tell a lie. I cut it with my hatchet." His father clasped him to his arms, and said, "My dear boy, I would rather lose a thousand trees than have my son a liar." This little anecdote shows that George Washington, when a boy, was too brave and noble to tell a lie. He had rather be punished than be so mean and degraded as to utter a falsehood. He did wrong to cut the pear-tree, though, perhaps, he did not know the extent of the injury he was doing. But had he denied that he did it, he would have been a cowardly and disgraceful liar. His father would have been ashamed of him, and would never have known when to believe him. If little George Washington had told a lie then, it is by no means improbable that he would have gone on from falsehood to falsehood, till every body would have despised him. And he would thus have become a disgrace to his parents and friends, instead of a blessing to his country and the world. No boy, who has one particle of that noble spirit which George Washington had, will tell a lie. It is one of the most degrading of sins. There is no one who does not regard a liar with contempt. Almost always, when a lie is told, two sins are committed. The first is, the child has done something which he knows to be wrong. And the second is, that he has not courage enough to admit it, and tells a lie to hide his fault. And therefore, when a child tells a lie, you may always know that that child is a coward. George Washington was a brave man. When duty called him, he feared not to meet danger and death. He would march to the mouth of the cannon in the hour of battle; he would ride through the field when bullets were flying in every direction, and strewing the ground with the dead, and not a nerve would tremble. Now, we see that George Washington was brave when a boy, as well as when a man. He scorned to tell a lie, and, like a noble-hearted boy, as he was, he honestly avowed the truth. Every body admires courage, and every body despises cowardice. The liar, whether he be a boy or a man, is looked upon with disgust.

Cases will occur in which you will be strongly tempted to say that which is false. But if you yield to the temptation, how can you help despising yourself? A little girl once came into the house and told her mother something which was very improbable. Those who were sitting in the room with

her mother did not believe her, for they did not know the character of the little girl. But the mother replied at once, "I have no doubt that it is true, for I never knew my daughter to tell a lie." Is there not something noble in having such a character as this? Must not that little girl have felt happy in the consciousness of thus possessing her mother's entire confidence? Oh, how different must have been her feelings from those of the child whose word cannot be believed, and who is regarded by every one with suspicion! Shame, shame on the child who has not magnanimity enough to tell the truth.

God will not allow such sins to go unpunished. Even in this world the consequences are generally felt. God has given every person a conscience, which approves that which is right, and condemns that which is wrong. When we do any thing wrong, our consciences punish us for it, and we are unhappy. When we do any thing that is right, the approval of conscience is a reward. Every day you feel the power of this conscience approving or condemning what you do. Sometimes a person thinks that if he does wrong, and it is not found out, he will escape punishment. But it is not so. He will be punished whether it is found out or not. Conscience will punish him if no one else does.

There was once a boy whose father sent him to ride a few miles upon an errand, and told him particularly not to stop by the way. It was a beautiful and sunny morning in the spring; and as he rode along by the green fields, and heard the singing of the birds as they flew from tree to tree, he felt as light-hearted and as happy as they. After doing his errand, however, as he was returning by the house where two of his friends and playmates lived, he thought he could not resist the temptation just to call a moment to see them. He thought there would be no great harm if he merely stopped a minute or two, and his parents would never know it. Here commenced his sin. He stopped, and was led to remain longer and longer, till he found he had passed two hours in play. Then, with a troubled conscience, he mounted his horse, and set his face towards home. The fields looked as green, and the skies as bright and cloudless, as when he rode along in the morning; but, oh, how different were his feelings! Then he was innocent and happy; now he was guilty and wretched. He tried to feel easy, but he could not; conscience reproached him with his sin. He rode sadly along, thinking what excuse he should make to his parents for his long absence, when he saw his father, at a distance, coming to meet him. His father, fearing that some accident had happened, left home in search of his son. The boy trembled and turned pale as he saw him approaching, and hesitated whether he had better confess the truth at once, and ask forgiveness, or endeavor to hide the crime with a lie. Oh, how much better it would have been for him if he had acknowledged the truth! How much sooner would he have been restored to peace! But one sin almost always leads to another. When this kind father met his son with a smile, the boy said, "Father, I lost the road, and it took me some time to get back again, and that is the reason why I have been gone so long." His father had never known him to be guilty of falsehood before, and was so happy to find his son safe, that he did not doubt what he said was true. But, oh, how guilty, and ashamed, and wretched, did that boy feel, as he rode along! His peace of mind was destroyed. A heavy weight of conscious guilt pressed upon his heart. The boy went home and repeated the lie to his mother. It is always thus when we turn from the path of duty; we know not how widely we shall wander. Having committed one fault, he told a lie to conceal it, and then added sin to sin, by repeating and persisting in his falsehood. What a change had one short half day produced in the character and the happiness of this child! His parent had not yet detected him in his sin, but he was not, on that account, free from punishment. Conscience was at work, telling

him that he was degraded and guilty, His look of innocence and his lightness of heart had left him. He was ashamed to look his father or mother in the face. He tried to appear easy and happy, but he was uneasy and miserable. A heavy load of conscious guilt rested upon him, which destroyed all his peace. When he retired to bed that night, he feared the dark. It was long before he could quiet his troubled spirit with sleep. And when he awoke in the morning, the consciousness of his guilt had not forsaken him. There it remained fixed deep in his heart, and would allow him no peace. He was guilty, and of course wretched. The first thought which occurred to him, on waking, was the lie of the preceding day. He could not forget it. He was afraid to go into the room where his parents were, lest they should discover, by his appearance, that he had been doing something wrong. And though, as weeks passed away, the acuteness of his feelings in some degree abated, he was all the time disquieted and unhappy. He was continually fearing that something would occur which should lead to his detection.

Thus things went on for several weeks, till, one day, the gentleman at whose house he stopped called at his father's on business. So soon as this boy saw him come into the house, his heart beat violently, and he turned pale with the fear that something would be said that would bring the whole truth to light. The gentleman, after conversing a few moments with his father, turned to the little boy, and said, "Well, how did you get home the other day? My boys had a very pleasant visit from you." Can you imagine how the boy felt? You could almost have heard his heart beat. The blood rushed into his face, and he could not speak; and he dared not raise his eyes from the floor. The gentleman then turned to his parents, and said, "You must let your son come up again and see my boys. They were quite disappointed when he was there a few weeks ago, for he only staid about two hours, and they hoped he had come to spend the whole day with them." There, the whole truth was out. And how do you suppose that boy felt? He had disobeyed his parents; told a lie to conceal it; had for weeks suffered the pangs of a guilty conscience; and now the whole truth was discovered. He stood before his parents overwhelmed with shame, convicted of disobedience, and mean, degraded falsehood. This boy was all the time suffering the consequences of his sin. For many days he was enduring the reproaches of conscience, when the knowledge of his crime was confined to his own bosom. How bitterly did he suffer for the few moments of forbidden pleasure he had enjoyed! The way of the transgressor is always hard. Every child who does wrong must, to a greater or less degree, feel the same sorrows. This guilty child, overwhelmed with confusion and disgrace, burst into tears, and implored his parents' forgiveness. But he was told by his parents that he had sinned, not only against them, but against God. The humble child went to God in penitence and in prayer. He made a full confession of all to his parents, and obtained their forgiveness; and it was not till then that peace of mind was restored. Will not the child who reads this account take warning from it? If you have done wrong, you had better confess it at once. Falsehood will but increase your sin, and aggravate your sorrow. Whenever you are tempted to say that which is untrue, look forward to the consequences. Think how much sorrow, and shame, and sin, you will bring upon yourself. Think of the reproaches of conscience; for you may depend upon it, that those reproaches are not easily borne. And is it pleasant to have the reputation of a liar? When persons are detected in one falsehood, they cannot be believed when they speak the truth. No person can place any more confidence in them till a long time of penitence has elapsed, in which they have had an opportunity to manifest their amendment. The little boy, whose case we have above alluded to, was sincerely penitent for his sin. He resolved that he never would tell another lie. But since he had deceived his parents once, their confidence in him was necessarily

for a time destroyed. They could judge of the reality of his penitence only by his future conduct. One day he was sent to a store to purchase some small articles for his mother. In his haste, he forgot to stop for the few cents of change which he ought to have received. Upon his return home, his mother inquired for the change. He had not thought a word about it before, and very frankly told her, that he had forgotten it entirely. How did his mother know that he was telling the truth? She had just detected him in one lie, and feared that he was now telling her another. "I hope, my dear son," she said, "you are not again deceiving me." The boy was perfectly honest this time, and his parents had never before distrusted his word. It almost broke his heart to be thus suspected, but he felt that it was just, and went to his chamber and wept bitterly. These are the necessary consequences of falsehood. A liar can never be believed. It matters not whether he tells truth or falsehood, no one can trust his word. If you are ever tempted to tell a lie, first ask yourself whether you are willing to have it said that nobody can trust your word. The liar is always known to be such. A person may possibly tell a lie which shall not be detected, but, almost always something happens which brings it to light. The boy who stopped to play when on an errand two miles from his father's house, thought that his falsehood would never be discovered. But he was detected, and overwhelmed with shame.

It is impossible for a person who is in the habit of uttering untruths to escape detection. Your character for truth or falsehood will be known. And what can be more humiliating and degrading than to have the name of a liar? It is so considered in all nations and with all people. It is considered one of the meanest and most cowardly vices of which one can be guilty. The liar is always a coward. He tells lies, because he is afraid to tell the truth. And how do you suppose the liar must feel when he comes to die? It is a solemn hour. Perhaps many of the children who read this book have never seen a person die. I have seen many. I have seen children of all ages dressed in the shroud and placed in the coffin. I might write pages in describing to you such scenes. One day, I went to see a little girl about ten years of age, who was very sick. When I went into the room, she was lying upon the little cot-bed, her lips parched with fever, and her face pale and emaciated with suffering. Her mother was standing by her bed-side, weeping as though her heart would break. Other friends were standing around, looking in vain for something to do to relieve the little sufferer. I went and took her by the hand, and found that she was dying. She raised her languid eyes to me, but could not speak. Her breathing grew fainter and fainter. Her arms and limbs grew cold. We could only look mournfully on and see the advances of death, without being able to do any thing to stop its progress. At last she ceased to breathe. Her spirit ascended to God to be judged, and her body remained upon the bed, a cold and lifeless corpse. All children are exposed to death; and when you least expect it, you may be called to lie upon a bed of sickness, and go down to the grave. There is nothing to give one joy in such an hour, but a belief that our sins are forgiven, and that we are going to the heavenly home. But how must a child feel in such an hour, when reflecting upon falsehoods which are recorded in God's book of remembrance! Death is terrible to the impenitent sinner; but it is a messenger of love and of mercy to those who are prepared to die. If you have been guilty of a falsehood, you cannot, die in peace till you have repented and obtained forgiveness.

There was a little girl eleven years of age, who died a few months ago. She loved the Savior, and when told that she could not live, was very happy. She said she was happy to die, and go home and be with her Savior and the angels in heaven. But there was one thing, which, for a time,

weighed heavily upon her mind. A year or two before she felt interested in religion she had told a lie to her aunt; and she could not die in peace, till she had seen that aunt, confessed her sin, and asked forgiveness. Her aunt was sent for, though she was many miles distant. When her aunt came, the sick little girl, with sorrow for her fault, made confession, and asked forgiveness, "Aunt," said she, "I have prayed to God, and hope that he has forgiven me; and I cannot die in peace till I have obtained your forgiveness." If any child who reads this book is tempted to deceive his parents or his friends, I hope he will remember that he must soon die, and think how he will feel in that solemn hour. But perhaps you think that the falsehood of which this girl was guilty was one of peculiar aggravation. It was simply this: She was one day playing in the room with several little children, and was making them laugh very loud. Her aunt said, "My dear, you must not make them laugh so loud." And she replied, "It is not I, aunt, who makes them laugh." This was the falsehood she uttered. And though her aunt did not know that it was false, the little girl did, and God in heaven did. And when she came to die, though it was a year or two after, her soul was troubled, and the consciousness of her sin destroyed her peace. A lie is, in the sight of God, a dreadful sin, be it ever so trifling in our estimation. When we are just ready to leave the world, and to appear before God in judgment, the convictions of a guilty conscience will press upon the heart like lead.

There are many ways of being guilty of falsehood without uttering the lie direct in words. Whenever you try to deceive your parents, in doing that which you know they disapprove, you do, in reality, tell a lie. Conscience reproves you for falsehood. Once, when I was in company, as the plate of cake was passed round, a little boy, who sat by the side of his mother, took a much larger piece than he knew she would allow him to have. She happened, for the moment, to be looking away, and he broke a small piece off and covered the rest in his lap with his handkerchief. When his mother looked, she saw the small piece, and supposed he had taken no more. He intended to deceive her. His mother has never found out what he did. But God saw him, and frowned upon him, as he committed this sin. And do you not think that the boy has already suffered for it? Must he not feel mean and contemptible whenever he thinks that, merely to get a little bit of cake, he would deceive his kind mother? If that little boy had one particle of honorable or generous feeling remaining in his bosom, he would feel reproached and unhappy whenever he thought of his meanness. If he was already dead to shame, it would show that he had by previous deceit acquired this character. And can any one love or esteem a child who has become so degraded? And can a child, who is neither beloved nor respected, be happy? No! You may depend upon it, that when you see a person guilty of such deceit, he does in some way or other, even in this world, suffer a severe penalty. A frank and open-hearted child is the only happy child. Deception, however skilfully it may be practised, is disgraceful, and ensures sorrow and contempt. If you would have the approbation of your own conscience, and the approval of friends, never do that which you shall desire to have concealed. Always be open as the day. Be above deceit, and then you will have nothing to fear. There is something delightful in the magnanimity of a perfectly sincere and honest child. No person can look upon such a one without affection. You are sure of friends, and your prospects of earthly usefulness and happiness are bright. But we must not forget that there is a day of most solemn judgment near at hand. When you die, your body will be wrapped in the shroud, and placed in the coffin, and buried in the grave; and there it will remain and moulder to the dust, while the snows of unnumbered winters, and the tempests of unnumbered summers, shall rest upon the cold earth which covers you. But your spirit will not be there. Far away, beyond the cloudless skies, and blazing suns, and twinkling stars, it will have

gone to judgment. How awful must be the scene which will open before you, as you enter the eternal world! You will see the throne of God: how bright, how glorious, will it burst upon your sight! You will see God the Savior seated upon that majestic throne. Angels, in numbers more than can be counted, will fill the universe with their glittering wings, and their rapturous songs. Oh, what a scene to behold! And then you will stand in the presence of this countless throng to answer for every thing you have done while you lived. Every action and every thought of your life will then be fresh in your mind. You know it is written in the Bible, "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." How must the child then feel who has been guilty of falsehood and deception, and has it then all brought to light! No liar can enter the kingdom of heaven. Oh, how dreadful must be the confusion and shame with which the deceitful child will then be overwhelmed! The angels will all see your sin and your disgrace. And do you think they will wish to have a liar enter heaven, to be associated with them? No! They must turn from you with disgust. The Savior will look upon you in his displeasure. Conscience will rend your soul. And you must hear the awful sentence, "Depart from me, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Oh, it is a dreadful thing to practice deceit. It will shut you from heaven. It will confine you in eternal wo. Though you should escape detection as long as you live; though you should die, and your falsehood not be discovered, the time will soon come when it will all be brought to light, and when the whole universe of men and of angels will be witnesses of your shame. If any child who reads this feels condemned for past deception, oh, beware, and do not postpone repentance till the day of judgment shall arrive. Go at once to those whom you have deceived, and make confession, and implore forgiveness. Then go to your Savior, fall upon your knees before him; pray that he will pardon you, and promise to sin no more. If your prayer is offered in sincerity, and your resolution remains unbroken, the Savior will forgive you; and when the trump of the archangel shall summon you to judgment, he will give you a home in heaven. The tear of sincere penitence our kind Saviour is ever ready to accept.

If you are ever tempted to deceive, O, remember, that your deception must soon be known. It is utterly impossible that it should long remain undetected. The moment the day of judgment arrives, your heart will be open to the view of the universe, and every thought will be publicly known. How much safer then is it to be sincere and honest! Strive to preserve your heart free from guile. Then you will have peace of conscience. You will fear no detection. You can lie down at night in peace. You can awake in the morning with joy. Trusting in the Saviour for acceptance, you can die happy. And when the morning of the resurrection dawns upon you, your heart will be filled with a joy which earth's sunniest mornings and brightest skies never could afford. The Saviour will smile upon you. Angels will welcome you to heaven. You will rove, in inexpressible delight, through the green pastures of that blissful abode. You will lie down by the still waters where there is sweet repose for ever. Oh, what an hour of bliss must that be, when the child, saved from sin and sorrow, "Has reached the shore

Where tempests never beat nor billows roar!"

1.03 Obedience

CHAPTER III.

OBEDIENCE. In the chapters you have now read, I have endeavored to show you how much your own happiness, and that of your parents, depend upon your conduct. And I trust every child who has read thus far, has resolved to do all in his power to promote the happiness of those who have been so kind to him. But you will find that it is a very different thing to resolve to do your duty, from what it is to perform your resolutions when the hour of temptation comes. It requires courage and firmness to do right, when you are surrounded by those who urge you to do wrong. Temptations to do wrong will be continually arising; and, unless you have resolution to brave ridicule, and to refuse solicitation, you will be continually led into trouble. I knew a young man who was ruined entirely, because he had not courage enough to say no. He was, when a boy, very amiable in his disposition, and did not wish to make any person unhappy; but he had no mind of his own, and could be led about by his associates into almost any difficulties, or any sins. If, in a clear moonlight winter evening, his father told him he might go out doors, and slide down the hill for half an hour, he would resolve to be obedient and return home at the time appointed. But if there were other boys there, who should tease him to remain longer he had not the courage to refuse. And thus he would disobey his kind parents because he had not courage to do his duty. He began in this way, and so he continued. One day, a bad boy asked him to go into a store, and drink some brandy. He knew it was wrong, and did not wish to go. But he feared that, if he did not, he would be laughed at; and so he went. Having thus yielded to this temptation, he was less prepared for temptation again. He went to the bottle with one and another, till at last he became intemperate, and would stagger through the streets. He fell into the company of gamblers, because he could not refuse their solicitations. He thus became a gambler himself, and went on from step to step, never having resolution to say no, till he ruined himself, and planted within him the seeds of disease, which hurried him to a premature grave. He died the miserable victim of his own irresolution.

Thousands have been thus ruined. They are amiable in disposition, and in general mean well, but have not courage to do their duty. They fear that others will laugh at them. Now, unless you are sufficiently brave not to care if others do laugh at you; unless you have sufficient courage to say no, when others tempt you to do wrong, you will be always in difficulty: such a person never can be happy or respected. You must not expect it will be always easy to do your duty. At times it will require a great mental struggle, and call into exercise all the resolution you possess. It is best that it should be so, that you may acquire firmness of character and strength of integrity. Near a school-house in the country, there was an apple-tree. One summer it was covered with hard, and sour, and green apples, and the little girls who went to that school could hardly resist the temptation of eating those apples, though they knew there was danger of its making them sick. One girl, who went to that school, was expressly forbidden by her mother from eating them. But when all her playmates were around her, with the apples in their hands, and urging her to eat, telling her that her mother never would know it, she wickedly yielded to their solicitation. She felt guilty, as, in disobedience to her mother's commands, she ate the forbidden fruit. But she tried to

appease her conscience by thinking that it could do no harm. Having thus commenced disobedience, she could every day eat more freely, and with less reluctance. At last she was taken sick. Her mother asked her if she had been eating any of the green apples at school. Here came another temptation to sin. When we once commence doing wrong, it is impossible to tell where we shall stop. She was afraid to acknowledge to her mother her disobedience; and to hide the fault she told a lie. She declared that she had not eaten any of the apples. Unhappy girl! she had first disobeyed her mother, and then told a lie to conceal her sin. But she continually grew more sick, and it became necessary to send for the physician. He came, and when he had looked upon her feverish countenance, and felt her throbbing pulse, he said there was something upon her stomach which must be removed. As he was preparing the nauseous emetic, the conscience-smitten girl trembled for fear that her disobedience and her falsehood should both be brought to light. As soon as the emetic operated, her mother saw, in the half-chewed fragments of green apples, the cause of her sickness. What could the unhappy and guilty girl say? Denial was now, of course, out of the question. She could only cover her face with her hands, in the vain attempt to hide her shame. We hope that this detection and mortification will teach that little girl a lesson which she will never forget. And we hope that the relation of the story will induce every child, who reads it, to guard against temptation, and boldly to resist every allurements to sin. Temptations will be continually coming, which you will find it hard to resist. But if you once yield, you have entered that downward path which leads inevitably to sorrow and shame. How much wiser would it have been in the little girl, whose story we have just related, if she had in the first instance resolutely refused to disobey her mother's command! How much happier would she have been, when retiring to sleep at night, if she had the joy of an approving conscience, and could, with a grateful heart, ask the blessing of God! The only path of safety and happiness is implicit obedience. If you, in the slightest particular, yield to temptation, and do that which you know to be wrong, you will not know when or where to stop. To hide one crime, you will be guilty of another; and thus you will draw down upon yourself the frown of your Maker, and expose yourself to sorrow for time and eternity. And think not that these temptations to do wrong will be few or feeble. Hardly a day will pass in which you will not be tempted, either through indolence to neglect your duty, or to do that which you know your parents will disapprove. A few years ago, two little boys went to pass the afternoon and evening at the house of one of their playmates, who had a party, to celebrate his birth-day. Their parents told them to come home at eight o'clock in the evening. It was a beautiful afternoon, late in the autumn, as the large party of boys assembled at the house of their friend. Numerous barns and sheds were attached to the house, and a beautiful grove of beach and of oak surrounded it, affording a most delightful place for all kinds of sport. Never did boys have a more happy time. They climbed the tree, and swung upon the limbs, And as they jumped upon the new-made hay in the barns, they made the walls ring with their joyous shouts. Happiness seemed, for the time, to fill every heart. They continued their sports till the sun had gone down behind the hills, and the last ray of twilight had disappeared. When it became too dark for outdoor play, they went into the house, and commenced new plays in the brightly-lighted parlor. As they were in the midst of the exciting game of "blind man's buff," some one entered the room, and requested them all to take their seats, for apples and nuts were to be brought in. Just as the door was opened by the servant bringing in the waiter loaded with apples and nuts, the clock struck eight. The boys, who had been told to leave at that hour, felt troubled enough. They knew not what to do. The temptation to stay was almost too strong to be resisted. The older brother of

the two faintly whispered to one at his side, that he must go. Immediately there was an uproar all over the room, each one exclaiming against it.

"Why," said one, "my mother told me I might stay till nine."

"My mother," said another, "did not say any thing about my coming home: she will let me stay as long as I want to."

"I would not be tied to my mother's apron-string," said a rude boy, in a distant part of the room. A timid boy, who lived in the next house to the one in which these two little boys lived, came up, and said, with a very imploring countenance and voice, "I am going home at half past eight. Now do stay a little while longer, and then we will go home together. I would not go alone, it is so dark." And even the lady of the house where they were visiting, came to them and said, "I do not think your mother will have any objection to have you stay a few moments longer, and eat an apple and a few nuts. I would have sent them in earlier, if I had known that you wanted to go."

Now, what, could these poor boys do? How could they summon resolution to resist so much entreaty? For a moment they hesitated, and almost yielded to the temptation. But virtue wavered only for a moment. They immediately mustered all their courage, and said, "We must go." Hastily bidding them all good night, they got their hats as quick as they could, for fear, if they delayed, they should yield to the temptation, and left the house. They stopped not a moment to look back upon the brightly-shining windows, and happy group of boys within, but, taking hold of each other's hands, ran as fast as they could on their way home. When they arrived at home, their father and mother met them with a smile. And when their parents learnt under what strong temptations they had been to disobey, and that they had triumphed over these temptations, they looked upon their children with feelings of gratification, which amply repaid them for all their trial. And when these boys went to bed that night, they felt that they had done their duty, and that they had given their parents pleasure; and these thoughts gave them vastly more happiness than they could have enjoyed if they had remained with their playmates beyond the hour which their parents had permitted. This was a noble proof of their determination to do their duty. And, considering their youth and inexperience and the circumstances of the temptation, it was one of the severest trials to which they could be exposed. Probably, in all their after life, they would not be under stronger temptations to swerve from duty. Now, every child will often be exposed to similar temptations. And if your resolution be not strong, you will yield. And if you once begin to yield, you will never know where to stop but, in all probability, will go on from step to step till you are for ever lost to virtue and to happiness. But perhaps some child, who reads this, thinks I make too serious a matter of so slight a thing. You say, It cannot make much difference whether I come home half an hour earlier or later. But you are mistaken here. It does make a great difference. Think you God can look upon the disobedience of a child as a trifling sin? Is it a trifle to refuse to obey parents who have loved you, and watched over you for months and for years; who have taken care of you in sickness, and endeavored to relieve you when in pain; who have given you clothes to wear, and food to eat, and have done all in their power to make you happy? It is inexcusable ingratitude. It is awful sin. But perhaps you ask, What positive harm does it do? It teaches your parents that their child is unwilling to obey them; and is there no harm in that? It makes your parents unhappy; and is there no harm in that? It tempts you to disobey in other things; and is there no harm in that? It is entering upon that career of sin which led the girl, whom we have, in the first chapter, described to

you, to the house of correction, and the wretched boy to the gallows. Oh, beware how you think it is a little thing to disobey your parents! Their happiness is in a great degree in your hands; and every thing which you knowingly do that disturbs their happiness in the least degree, is sin in the sight of God; and you must answer for it at his bar.

If you go into any state prison, you will see a large number of men working in silence and in gloom. They are dressed in clothes of contrasted colors, that, in case of escape, they may be easily detected. But the constant presence of vigilant keepers, and the high walls of stone, guarded by an armed sentry, render escape almost impossible. There many of these guilty men remain, month after month, and year after year, in friendlessness, and in silence, and in sorrow. They are in confinement and disgrace. At night, they are marched to their solitary cells, there to pass the weary hours, with no friend to converse with, and no joy to cheer them. They are left, in darkness and in solitude, to their own gloomy reflections. And, oh! how many bitter tears must be shed in the midnight darkness of those cells! How many an unhappy criminal would give worlds, if he had them to give, that he might again be innocent and free! You will see in the prison many who are young—almost children. If you go around from cell to cell, and inquire how these wretched persons commenced their course of sin, very many will tell you that it was with disobedience to parents. You will find prisoners there, whose parents are most affectionate and kind. They have endeavored to make their children virtuous and happy. But, oh! how cruelly have their hopes been blasted! A disobedient son has gone from step to step in crime, till he has brought himself to the gloomy cell of the prison, and has broken his parents' hearts by his disobedience. The chaplain of the Massachusetts state prison recently communicated to the public the following interesting narrative of the progress of crime.

"A few weeks since, I addressed the congregation to which I minister, on the importance of a strict attention to what are usually denominated little things; and remarked, that it is the want of attention to these little things, which not unfrequently throws a disastrous influence over the whole course of subsequent life. It was also further remarked, that a large proportion of the events and transactions, which go to make up the lives of most men, are, as they are usually estimated, comparatively unimportant and trivial; and yet, that all these events and transactions contribute, in a greater or less degree, to the formation of character; and that on moral character are suspended, essentially, our usefulness and happiness in time, and our well-being in eternity.

"I then remarked, that I could not doubt, but, on sober reflection, many of that assembly would find that they owed the complexion of a great portion of their lives, and their unhappy situation as tenants of the state prison, to some event or transaction comparatively trivial, and of which, at the time, they thought very little. I requested them to make the examination, and see whether the remark I had made was not correct.

"This was on the Sabbath. The next morning; one of the prisoners, an interesting young man, came to me, and observed, that he should be glad to have some conversation with me, whenever I should find it convenient. Accordingly, in the afternoon of the same day, I sent for him. On his being seated, and my requesting him to state freely what he wished to say, he remarked, 'that he wished to let me know how peculiarly appropriate to his case were the observations I had made, the previous day, on the influence of little things; and if I would permit him, he would give me a brief sketch of his history; and, particularly, of the transaction, which, almost in childhood, had

given a disastrous coloring to the whole period of his youth, and, in the result, had brought him to be an occupant of his present dreary abode.'

"It appears, from the sketch which he gave, that he was about ten years of age, when his father moved from a distant part of the state to a town in the vicinity of Boston. In this town was a respectable boarding-school, not a great distance from the residence of his father; and to this school he was sent. Having always lived in the country, he had seen very few of those novelties, and parades, and shows, which are so common in and near the city; and it is not wonderful, that, when they occurred, he should, like most children, feel a strong desire to witness them.

"Before he had been long at school, he heard there was to be a "Cattle Show" at Brighton. He had never seen a Cattle Show. He presumed it must be a very interesting spectacle, and felt a very strong desire to attend. This desire, on the morning of the first day of the show, he expressed to his father, and was told that it would be a very improper place for him to go to, unless attended by some suitable person to watch over and take care of him; and that such was the business of the father, that he could not accompany him, and, of course, his desire could not be gratified. He was sorely disappointed, but resolved not to give up, without further effort, an object on which his heart was so much set.

"The next morning he beset his father again on the subject. His father seemed anxious to have his son gratified, but told him that he could by no means consent to have him go to such a place without suitable company; and, though his business was urgent, he would try to go in the afternoon; and, if he did, he would call at the school- house, and take him with him. This was all he could promise.

"But here was an uncertainty, an if, which very illy accorded with the eager curiosity of the son. Accordingly, he resolved that he would go at all hazards. He doubted much whether his father would go, and if he did not, he concluded he might, without much difficulty, conceal the matter from him. Having formed his determination and laid his plan, he went, before leaving home in the morning, to his father's desk, and took a little money to spend on the occasion; and, instead of going to school, went to Brighton. Contrary, however, to his expectations and hopes, his father, for the sake of gratifying him, concluded to go to the show, and, on his way, called for him. But no son was to be found, and no son had been there that day. The father, during the afternoon, saw the son, but took care that the son should not discover him. After the return of both at evening, the father inquired of the son whether he had attended school that day. His reply was that he had. My youthful readers will perceive how readily and naturally one fault leads to another. But the son was soon satisfied from further questions, and from the manner of his father, that he knew where he had been; and he confessed the whole.

"The father told him that he should feel himself bound in duty to acquaint his teacher with the affair, and to request him to call him to account for absenting himself thus from the school without permission, and to inflict such punishment on him as might be thought proper.

"He was, accordingly, sent to school, and, in his view, disgraced in the estimation of his teacher and of his school-fellows; and he resolved not to submit to it for any great length of time. A few days after this, he left home, under pretence of going to school, and ran away. He travelled on, until he reached the town from which his father had removed, and had been absent for several

weeks before his parents ascertained what had become of him. He was, however, discovered, and brought back to his home.

"Some time after this, he was sent to another school, in a neighboring town; but, not being altogether pleased, he resolved, as he had run away once, he would try the experiment again; and this he did. He had been absent six months before his parents ascertained what had become of him. He had changed his name; but, getting into some difficulty, in consequence of which he must go to jail, unless he could find friends, he was constrained to tell his name, and who were his parents; and in this way his good father, whom he had so much abused, learning his son's condition, stepped in to his aid, and saved him from confinement in a prison.

"But I should make this story much too long, were I to detail all the particulars of his subsequent life until he became a tenant of the state prison. Suffice it to say, that he went on from one misstep to another, until he entered upon that career of crime which terminated as before stated.

"And now, beloved reader, to what do you think this unhappy young man ascribes his wanderings from home, and virtue, and happiness, and the forlorn condition in which he now finds himself? Why, simply, to the trivial circumstance of his leaving school one day, without his father's consent, for the purpose of going to a cattle show! And what do you think he says of it now? 'I feel,' said he, 'that all I have suffered, and still suffer, is the righteous chastisement of heaven. I deserve it all, for my wicked disobedience both to my earthly and my heavenly Father; and I wish,' said he, further, 'that you would make such use of my case as you shall think best calculated to instruct and benefit the young.'

"And now, beloved reader, I have drawn up this sketch—and I can assure you it is no fictitious one—for your perusal. You here see what has been the result of a single act of disobedience to a parent; what it has already cost this unhappy man to gratify, in an unlawful way, his youthful curiosity even in a single instance.

"May He, who giveth wisdom to all who ask it, lead and guide you safely through the journey of life, and cause that even this humble sketch shall serve to strengthen you in virtue, and to deter you from the paths of the Destroyer." Can any child read this narrative without trembling at the thought of disobedience, even in the most trifling affair? If you once disobey your parents, it is impossible to tell to what it will lead. Crime follows in the steps of crime, till the career is closed by irretrievable disgrace and eternal ruin. The consequences reach far, far beyond the grave. They affect our interests and our happiness in that eternal world to which we are all rapidly going. Yes; the child who utters one falsehood, or is guilty of one act of disobedience, may, in consequence of that one yielding to temptation, be hurried on from crime to crime, till his soul is ruined, and he is shut up, by the command of God, in those awful dungeons of endless despair prepared for the devil and his angels. And how ungrateful is disobedience! A noble-hearted boy would deny himself almost any pleasure; he would meet almost any danger; he would endure almost any suffering, before he would, in the most trifling particular, disobey parents who had been so kind, and had endured so much to make him happy. How different is such a child from one who is so ungrateful that he will disobey his parents merely that he may play a few moments longer, or that he may avoid some trifling work, that he does not wish to perform! There is a magnanimity in a child who feels so grateful for his parents' love that he will repay them by all the affection and obedience in his power, which attracts the respect and affection of all who know him.

Suppose you see a little boy walking before his mother. The boy's father is dead; he has been killed in battle. You see the orphan boy carrying upon his shoulder his father's sword and cap. You look at his poor mother. She is weeping, for her husband is dead. She is returning in sorrow to her lonely house. She has no friend but her dear boy. How ardently does she love him! All her hopes of earthly happiness are depending upon his obedience and affection. She loves her boy so well, that she would be willing to die, to make him happy. She will work night and day, while he is young, to supply him with clothes and with food. And all she asks and hopes is, that her boy will be affectionate, and obedient, and good.

And, oh! how ungrateful and cruel will he be, if he neglect that mother, and by his unkindness cause her to weep! But you see that he looks like a noble-hearted boy. His countenance seems to say, "Dear mother, do not cry; if ever I grow up to be a man, you shall never want, if I can help it." Oh, who can help loving the boy who loves his mother!

There was a little boy about thirteen years old, whose name was Casablanca. His father was the commander of a ship of war called the Orient. The little boy accompanied his father to the seas. His ship was once engaged in a terrible battle upon the river Nile. In the midst of the thunders of the battle, while the shot were flying thickly around, and strewing the decks with blood, this brave boy stood by the side of his father, faithfully discharging the duties which were assigned to him. At last his father placed him in a particular part of the ship to be performing some service, and told him to remain in his post till he should call him away. As the father went to some distant part of the ship to notice the progress of the battle, a ball from the enemy's vessel laid him dead upon the deck. But the son, unconscious of his father's death, and faithful to the trust he posed in him, remained in his post, waiting for his father's orders. The battle raged dreadfully around him. The blood of the slain flowed at his feet. The ship took fire, and the threatening flames drew nearer and nearer. Still this noble-hearted boy would not disobey his father. In the face of blood, and balls, and fire, he stood firm and obedient. The sailors began to desert the burning and sinking ship, and the boy cried out "Father, may I go?" But no voice of permission could come from the mangled body of his lifeless father. And the boy, not knowing that he was dead, would rather die than disobey. And there that boy stood, at his post, till every man had deserted the ship; and he stood and perished in the flames. O, what a boy was that! Every body who ever heard of him thinks that he was one of the noblest boys that ever was born. Rather than disobey his father, he would die in the flames. This account has been written in poetry, and, as the children who read this book, may like to see it, I will present it to them here:

CASABIANCA. The boy stood on the burning deck,

Whence all but him had fled;

The flame that lit the battle's wreck,

Shone round him, o'er the dead.

Yet beautiful and bright he stood,

As born to rule the storm;

A creature of heroic blood,

A proud, though childlike form. The flames rolled on; he would not go,
Without his father's word;
That father, faint in death below,
His voice no longer heard.
He called aloud—"Say, father, say
'If yet my task is done.'"
He knew not that the chieftain lay
Unconscious of his son.
"Speak, father," once again he cried,
"If I may yet be gone."
And—but the booming shots replied,
And fast the flames rolled on.
Upon his brow he felt their breach,
And in his waving hair;
And looked from that lone post of death,
In still, yet brave despair; And shouted but once more aloud,
"My father, must I stay?"
While o'er him fast, through sail and shroud,
The wreathing fires made way.
They wrapped the ship in splendor wild,
They caught the flag on high,
And streamed above the gallant child,
Like banners in the sky.
Then came a burst of thunder sound
The boy—oh! where was he?
Ask of the winds that far around
With fragments strewed the sea. With mast, and helm, and pennon fair,
That well had borne their part,
But the noblest thing that perished there,

Was that young, faithful heart.

O, who would not love to have such a child as that! Is not such a boy more noble than one who will disobey his parents merely that he may have a little play, or that he may avoid some unpleasant duty? The brave little Casablanca would rather die than disobey. He loved his father. He had confidence in him. And even when death was staring him in the face, when "The flames rolled on, he would not go,

Without his father's word."

I have seen some bad boys who thought it looked brave to care nothing for the wishes of their parents. But do you think that Casablanca was a coward? No; the boy who is truly brave, and has a noble spirit, will obey his parents. If others tease him to do differently, he will dare to tell them, that he means to do his duty; and if they laugh at him, he will let them laugh, and show them, by his conduct, that he does not care for the sneers of bad boys. The fact is, that, in almost all cases, disobedient boys are mean, and cowardly, and contemptible. They have not one particle of the spirit of the noble little Casablanca. And when these disobedient boys grow up to be men, they do not command influence or respect.

If you would be useful and happy when you arrive at mature years, you must be affectionate and obedient as a child. It is invariably true that the path of duty is the path of peace. The child who has established principles of firm integrity—who has that undaunted resolution which can face opposition and brave ridicule—bids fair to rise to eminence in usefulness and respect. These qualities, which shed so lovely a charm over childhood, will go with you into maturer life; they will give stability to your character, and command respect. And those faults of childhood which render one hesitating, and weak, and cowardly, will, in all probability, continue through your whole earthly existence. The man is but the grown-up child, possessing generally the same traits of character in every period of life. How important it is then that, in early youth, you should acquire the habit of triumphing over temptation, and of resolutely discharging all your duties!

It is important for you to remember that obedience requires of you, not only to do as you are bidden, but to do it with cheerfulness and alacrity. Suppose, as you are sitting at the table in a pleasant evening, the customary hour for you to retire to rest arrives. You are, perhaps, engaged in reading some very interesting book, and do not feel at all sleepy. You ask permission to sit up a little longer. But your mother tells you that the time for you to go to bed has come, and she prefers that you should be regular in your habits. You think it is rather hard that you cannot be indulged in your wishes, and, with sullen looks, shut your book, and, taking a light, in ill humor go to your chamber. Now, this is not obedience. As you retire to your chamber, the displeasure of God follows you. Your sin of disobedience is so great, that you cannot even pray before you fall asleep. It is impossible for a person to pray when out of humor. You may repeat the words of prayer, but you cannot offer acceptable prayer to the Lord. And as you lie down upon your bed, and the darkness of night is around you, your offended Maker regards you as an ungrateful and disobedient child. And all the night long his eye is upon your heart, and the knowledge of your sin is in his mind. Obedience belongs to the heart, as well as to the outward conduct. It is necessary that you should, with affection and cheerfulness, fulfill the wishes of your parents. You should feel that they know what is best, and, instead of being sullen and displeased because they do not think fit to indulge you in all your wishes, you should, with a pleasant countenance and a willing heart,

yield to their requirements.

You do not know how much pleasure it affords your parents to see you happy. They are willing to make almost any sacrifice for your good. And they never have more heartfelt enjoyment themselves than when they see their children virtuous, contented, and happy. When they refuse to gratify any of your desires, it is not because they do not wish to see you happy, but because they see that your happiness will be best promoted by refusing your request. They have lived longer in the world than you, and know better than you the dangers by which you are surrounded. Deeply interested in your book, you desire to sit up later than usual, and think it would make you happy. But your mother, who is older and wiser, knows that the way to make children healthy and happy, is to have them in the regular habit of retiring early at night. And when you ask to sit up later than usual, she loves you too well to permit it. You think she is cruel, when, in fact, she is as kind as she can be. If she were an unkind mother, and cared nothing about your happiness, she would say, "O yes; you may sit up as long as you please. I do not care any thing about it."

Now, is it obedience, when your kind mother is doing all in her power to make you happy, for you to look sullen and morose? Is it honoring your father and your mother, for you to look offended and speak unkindly, because they wish you to do that which they know to be for your welfare? The truly grateful child will endeavor, always, with a pleasant countenance, and a peaceful heart, to yield ready obedience to his parents' wishes. He will never murmur or complain. Such a child can retire to bed at night contented and happy. He can sincerely thank God for all his goodness and pray for that protection which God is ever ready to grant those who love him.

1.04 Obedience (cont)

CHAPTER IV.

OBEDIENCE, (continued)

There is hardly any subject upon which children in well-regulated families feel more like complaining-, than of the unwillingness of their parents to indulge them, in evening plays and evening visits. An active boy, whose heart is full of fun and frolic, is sitting quietly by the fireside, in a pleasant winter evening. Every now and then he hears the loud shouts and joyful laugh of some twenty of his companions, who are making the moonlight air ring with their merriment. Occasionally, a troop of them will go rushing by the windows, in the impetuosity of their sports. The ardent little fellow by the fireside can hardly contain himself. He longs to unite his voice in the shout, and try his feet in the chase. He nestles upon his chair, and walks across the room, and peeps through the curtains. As he sees the dark forms of the boys clustered together in merry groups, or scattered in their plays, he feels as though, he were a prisoner. And even though he be a good boy, and obedient to his parents, he can hardly understand why it is that they deprive him of this pleasure. I used to feel so when I was a boy, and I suppose other boys feel so. But now I see the reason. Those night plays led the boys into bad habits. All kinds of boys met together, and some would use indecent and profane language, which depraved the hearts and corrupted the morals of the rest. The boys who were thus spending their evenings, were misimproving their time, and acquiring a disrelish for the purifying and peaceful enjoyments of home. You sometimes see men who appear to care nothing about their families. They spend their evenings away from home with the idle and the dissolute. Such men are miserable and despised. Their families are forsaken and unhappy. Why do these men do so? Because, when they were boys, they spent their evenings away from home, playing in the streets. Thus home lost all its charms, virtue was banished from, their bosoms, and life was robbed of its joy. I wish every boy who reads this would think of these reasons, and see if they are not sufficient. Your kind parents do not allow you to go out in the evenings and play in the streets—

I. Because you will acquire bad habits. You will grow rude and vulgar in manners, and acquire a relish for pleasures which will destroy your usefulness and your happiness.

II. You will always find in such scenes bad boys, and must hear much indecent and profane language, which will corrupt your heart.

III. You will lose all fondness for the enjoyment of home, and will be in great danger of growing up a dissipated and a worthless man.

Now, are not these reasons sufficient to induce your parents to guard you against such temptations? But perhaps you say, Other parents let their children go out and play as much as they please every evening. How grateful, then, ought you to be, that you have parents who are so kind and faithful that they will preserve you from these occasions of sin and sorrow! They love you too well to be willing to see you preparing for an unhappy and profitless life.

It not unfrequently is the case that a girl has young associates, who are in the habit of walking without protectors in the evening twilight. On the evening of some lovely summer's day, as the whole western sky is blazing with the golden hue of sunset, her companions call at her door, to invite her to accompany them upon an excursion of pleasure. She runs to her parents with her heart bounding with joy, in anticipation of the walk. They inquire into the plans of the party, and find that it will be impossible for them to return from their contemplated expedition before the darkness of the evening shall come. As affectionate and faithful parents, they feel that it is not proper or safe for them to trust their little daughter in such a situation. They, consequently, cannot consent that she should go. She is disappointed in the extreme, and as she sees her friends departing, social and happy, she retires to her chamber and weeps. The momentary disappointment to her is one of the severest she can experience, and she can hardly help feeling that her parents are cruel, to deprive her of so much anticipated pleasure. Her companions go away with the same feelings. They make many severe remarks, and really think that this little girl's parents are unkind. Perhaps they have a pleasant walk, and all return home in safety; and for many days they talk together at school of the delightful enjoyments of that evening. And this increases the impression on the mind of the little girl, that it was unkind in her parents not to let her go.

But, perhaps, as they were returning, they met a drunken man, who staggered in amongst them. Terrified, they scatter and run. One, in endeavoring to jump over a fence, spoils her gown. Another, fleeing in the dark, falls, and sadly bruises her face. Another, with loss of bonnet, and with dishevelled hair, gains the door of her home. And thus is this party, commenced with high expectations of joy, terminated with fright and tears. The parents of the little girl who remained at home, knew that they were exposed to all this; and they loved their daughter too well to allow her to be placed in such a situation. Was it not kind in them?

Perhaps, as they were returning, they met some twenty or more of the rudest boys of the village, in the midst of their most exciting sports. Here are Emma, Maria, and Susan, with their party of timid girls, who must force their way through this crowd of turbulent and noisy boys. It is already dark. Some of the most unmannerly and wicked boys of the village are there assembled. They are highly excited with their sports. And the moment they catch a view of the party of girls, they raise a shout, and rush in among them reckless and thoughtless. The parents of the little girl who staid at home, knew that she would be exposed to such scenes; and as they loved their daughter, they could not consent that she should go. Was it not kind? A few young girls once went on such an evening walk, intending to return before it was dark. But in the height of their enjoyment they forgot how rapidly the time was passing, and twilight leaving them. But, at last, when they found how far they were from home, and how dark it was growing, they became quite alarmed, and hastened homeward. They, however, got along very well while they were all together. But when it became necessary for them to separate, to go to their respective homes, and several of them had to go alone in the darkness, they felt quite terrified. It was necessary for one of these little girls, after she had left all her companions, to go nearly a quarter of a mile. She set out upon the run, her heart beating with fear. She had not proceeded far, however, before she heard the loud shouts of a mob of young men and boys, directly in the street through which she must pass. As she drew nearer, the shouts and laughter grew louder and more appalling. She hesitated. But what could she do? She must go on. Trembling, she endeavored to glide through the crowd, when a great brutal boy,

with a horrid mask on his face and a "jack-o'-lantern" in his hand, came up before her. He threw the glare of the light upon her countenance, and stared her full in the face. "Here is my wife," said he, and tried to draw her arm into his. A loud shout from the multitude of boys echoed through the darkened air. Hardly knowing what she did, she pressed through the crowd, and, breathless with fright, arrived at her home. And I will assure you she did not wish to take any more evening walks without a protector. From that time afterwards she was careful to be under her father's roof before it was dark.

Now can you think that your father or mother are unkind, because they are unwilling to have you placed in such a situation? And when they are doing all that they can to make you happy, ought you not to be grateful, and by a cheerful countenance, and ready obedience, to try to reward them for their love?

It is the duty of all children to keep in mind that their parents know what is best. And when they refuse to gratify your wishes, you should remember that their object is to do you good. That obedience which is prompt and cheerful, is the only obedience which is acceptable to them, or well-pleasing to God. A great many cases will occur in which you will wish to do that which your parents will not approve. If you do not, in such cases, pleasantly and readily yield to their wishes, you are ungrateful and disobedient.

Neither is it enough that you should obey their expressed commands. You ought to try to do every thing which you think will give them pleasure, whether they tell you to do it or not. A good child will seek for opportunities to make his parents happy. A little girl, for instance, has some work to do. She knows that if she does it well and quick, it will gratify her mother. Now, if she be a good girl; she will not wait for her mother's orders, but will, of her own accord, improve her time, that she may exhibit the work to her mother sooner and more nicely done than she expected.

Perhaps her mother is sick. Her affectionate daughter will not wait for her mother to express her wishes. She will try to anticipate them. She will walk softly around the chamber, arranging every thing in cheerful order. She will adjust the clothes of the bed, that her mother may lie as comfortably as possible. And she will watch all her mother's movements, that she may learn what things she needs before she asks for them. Such will be the conduct of an affectionate and obedient child. I was once called to see a poor woman who was very sick. She was a widow, and in poverty. Her only companion and only earthly reliance was her daughter. As I entered the humble dwelling of this poor woman, I saw her bolstered up in the bed, with her pale countenance emaciated with pain, and every thing about the room proclaiming the most abject poverty. Her daughter sat sewing at the head of the bed, watching every want of her mother, and active with her needle. The perfect neatness of the room, told how faithful was the daughter in the discharge of her painful and arduous duties. But her own slender form and consumptive countenance showed that by toil and watching she was almost worn out herself. This noble girl, by night and by day, with unwearied attention, endeavored to alleviate the excruciating pains of her afflicted parent. I could not look upon her but with admiration, in seeing the devotedness with which she watched every movement of her mother. How many wealthy parents would give all they possess, to be blessed with such a child! For months this devoted girl had watched around her mother by night and by day, with a care which seemed never to be weary. You could see by the movement of her eye, and by the expression of her countenance, how full her heart was of sympathy. She did

not wait for her mother to tell her what to do, but was upon the watch all the time to find out what would be a comfort to her. This is what I call obedience. It is that obedience which God in heaven approves and loves.

I called often upon this poor widow, and always with increasing admiration of this devoted child, One morning, as I entered the room, I saw the mother lying upon the bed on the floor, with her head in the lap of her daughter. She was breathing short and heavy in the struggles of death. The tears were rolling down the pale cheeks of her daughter, as she pressed her hand upon the brow of her dying mother. The hour of death had just arrived, and the poor mother, in the triumphs of Christian faith, with faint and faltering accents, was imploring God's blessing upon her dear daughter. It was a most affecting farewell. The mother, while thus expressing her gratitude to God for the kindness of her beloved child, breathed her last. And angels must have looked upon that humble abode, and upon that affecting scene, with emotions of pleasure, which could hardly be exceeded by any thing else which the world could present. O that all children would feel the gratitude which this girl felt for a mother's early love! Then would the world be divested of half its sorrows, and of half its sins. This is the kind of obedience which every child should cultivate. You should not only do whatever your parents tell you to do, with cheerfulness and alacrity, but you should be obedient to their wishes. You should be watching for opportunities to give them pleasure. You should, at all times, and under all circumstances, do every thing in your power to relieve them from anxiety and to make them happy. Then can you hope for the approbation of your God, and your heart will be filled with a joy which the ungrateful child can never feel. You can reflect with pleasure upon your conduct. When your parents are in the grave, you will feel no remorse of conscience harrowing your soul for your past unkindness. And when you die yourselves, you can anticipate a happy meeting with your parents, in that heavenly home, where sin and sorrow, and sickness and death, can never come.

God has, in almost every case, connected suffering with sin. And there are related many cases in which he has, in this world, most signally punished ungrateful children. I read, a short time since, an account of an old man, who had a drunken and brutal son. He would abuse his aged father without mercy. One day, he, in a passion, knocked him flat upon the floor, and, seizing him by his gray hairs, dragged him across the room to the threshold of the door, to cast him out. The old man, with his tremulous voice, cried out to his unnatural son, "It is enough—it is enough. God is just. When I was young, I dragged my own father in the same way; and now God is giving me the punishment I deserve."

Sometimes you will see a son who will not be obedient to his mother. He will have his own way, regardless of his mother's feelings. He has grown up to be a stout and stubborn boy, and now the ungrateful wretch will, by his misconduct, break the heart of that very mother, who, for months and years, watched over him with a care which knew no weariness. I call him a wretch, for I can hardly conceive of more enormous iniquity. That boy, or that young man, who does not treat his affectionate mother with kindness and respect, is worse than I can find language to describe. Perhaps you say, your mother is at times unreasonable. Perhaps she is. But what of that? You have been unreasonable ten thousand times, and she has borne with you and loved you. And even if your mother be at times unreasonable in her requirements, I want to know with what propriety you find fault with it. Is she to bear with all your cries in infancy, and all your fretfulness in childhood, and all your ingratitude and wants till you arrive at years of discretion, and then,

because she wishes you to do some little thing which does not exactly meet your views, are you to turn upon her like a viper and sting her to the heart? The time was, when you was a little infant, your mother brought paleness to her own cheek, and weakness to her own frame, that she might give you support. You were sick, and in the cold winter night she would sit lonely by the fire, denying herself rest that she might lull her babe to sleep. You would cry with pain, and hour after hour she would walk the floor, carrying you in her arms, till her arms seemed ready to drop, and her limbs would hardly support her, through excess of weariness. The bright sun and the cloudless sky would invite her to go out for health and enjoyment, but she would deny herself the pleasure, and stay at home to take care of you, her helpless babe. Her friends would solicit her to indulge in the pleasures of the social evening party, but she would refuse for your sake, and, in the solitude of her chamber, she would pass weeks and months watching all your wants. Thus have years passed away in which you have received nothing but kindness from her hands; and can you be so hard-hearted, so ungrateful, as now to give her one moment of unnecessary pain? If she have faults, can you not bear with them, when she has so long borne with you? Oh, if you knew but the hundredth part of what she has suffered and endured for your sake, you could not, could not be such a wretch as to requite her with ingratitude. A boy who has one particle of generosity glowing in his bosom, will cling to his mother with an affection which life alone can extinguish. He will never let her have a single want which he can prevent. And when he grows to be a man, he will give her the warmest seat by his fire-side, and the choicest food upon his table. If necessary, he will deprive himself of comforts, that he may cheer her declining years. He will prove, by actions which cannot be misunderstood, that he feels a gratitude for a mother's love, which shall never, never leave him. And when she goes down to the grave in death, he will bedew her grave with the honorable tears of manly feeling. The son who does not feel thus, is unworthy of a mother's love; the frown of his offended Maker must be upon him, and he must render to Him an awful account for his ungrateful conduct.

It is, if possible, stranger still, that any daughter can forget a mother's care. You are always at home. You see your mother's solicitude. You are familiar with her heart. If you ever treat your mother with unkindness, remember that the time may come when your own heart will be broken by the misconduct of those who will be as dear to you as your mother's children are to her. And you may ask yourself whether you would be pleased with an exhibition of ungrateful feeling from a child whom you had loved and cherished with the tenderest care. God may reward you, even in this world, according to your deeds. And if he does not, he certainly will in the world to come. A day of judgment is at hand, and the ungrateful child has as fearful an account to render as any one who will stand at that bar.

I have just spoken to you of the grateful girl who took such good care of her poor sick mother. When that good girl, dies, and meets her mother in heaven, what a happy meeting it will be! With how much joy will she reflect upon her dutifulness as a child! And as they dwell together again in the celestial mansions, sorrow and sighing will for ever flee away. If you wish to be happy here or hereafter, honor your father and your mother. Let love's pure flame burn in your heart and animate your life. Be brave, and fear not to do your duty. Be magnanimous, and do more for your parents than they require or expect. Resolve that you will do every thing in your power to make them happy, and you will be blest as a child, and useful and respected in your maturer years. Oh, how lovely is that son or daughter who has a grateful heart, and who will rather die than give a mother

sorrow! Such a one is not only loved by all upon earth, but by the angels above, and by our Father in heaven.

It may assist you a little to estimate your obligations to your parents, to inquire what would become of you if your parents should refuse to take care of you any longer. You, at times, perhaps, feel unwilling to obey them: suppose they should say,

"Very well, my child, if you are unwilling to obey us, you may go away from home, and take care of yourself. We cannot be at the trouble and expense of taking care of you unless you feel some gratitude."

"Well," perhaps you would say, "let me have my cloak and bonnet, and I will go immediately."

"YOUR CLOAK AND BONNET!" your mother would reply. "The cloak and bonnet are not yours, but your father's. He bought them and paid for them. Why do you call them yours?"

You might possibly reply, after thinking a moment, "They are mine because you gave them to me."

"No, my child," your mother would say, "we have only let you have them to wear. You never have paid a cent for them. You have not even paid us for the use of them. We wish to keep them for those of our children who are grateful for our kindness. Even the clothes you now have on are not yours. We will, however, give them to you; and now suppose you should go, and see how you can get along in taking care of yourself."

You rise to leave the house without any bonnet or cloak. But your mother says, "Stop one moment. Is there not an account to be settled before you leave? We have now clothed and boarded you for ten years. The trouble and expense, at the least calculation, amount to two dollars a week. Indeed I do not suppose that you could have got any one else to have taken you so cheap. Your board, for ten years, at two dollars a week, amounts to one thousand and forty dollars. Are you under no obligation to us for all this trouble and expense?"

You hang down your head and do not know what to say. What can you say? You have no money. You cannot pay them. Your mother, after waiting a moment for an answer, continues, "In many cases, when a person does not pay what is justly due, he is sent to jail. We, however, will be particularly kind to you, and wait awhile. Perhaps you can, by working for fifteen or twenty years, and by being very economical, earn enough to pay us. But let me see; the interest of the money will be over sixty dollars a year. Oh, no! it is out of the question. You probably could not earn enough to pay us in your whole life. We never shall be paid for the time, expense, and care, we have devoted to our ungrateful daughter. We hoped she would love us, and obey us, and thus repay. But it seems she prefers to be ungrateful and disobedient. Good by."

You open the door and go out. It is cold and windy. Shivering with the cold, and without money, you are at once a beggar, and must perish in the streets, unless some one takes pity on you.

You go, perhaps, to the house of a friend, and ask if they will allow you to live with them.

They at once reply, "We have so many children of our own, that we cannot afford to take you, unless you will pay for your board and clothing."

You go again out into the street, cold, hungry, and friendless. The darkness of the night is coming on; you have no money to purchase a supper, or night's lodging. Unless you can get some employment, or find some one who will pity you, you must lie down upon the hard ground, and perish with hunger and with cold.

Perhaps some benevolent man sees you as he is going home in the evening, and takes you to the overseers of the poor, and says, "Here is a little vagrant girl I found in the streets. We must send the poor little thing to the poor house, or she will starve to death."

You are carried to the poor house. There you had a very different home from your father's. You are dressed in the coarsest garments. You have the meanest food, and are compelled to be obedient, and to do the most servile work.

Now, suppose, while you are in the poor house, some kind gentleman and lady should come and say, "We will take this little girl, and give her food and clothes for nothing. We will take her into our own parlor, and give her a chair by our own pleasant fireside. We will buy every thing for her that she needs. We will hire persons to teach her. We will do every thing in our power to make her happy, and will not ask for one cent of pay in return."

What should you think of such kindness? And what should you think of yourself, if you could go to their parlor, and receive their bounty, and yet be ungrateful and disobedient? Would not a child who could thus requite such love, be deserving of universal detestation? But all this your parents are doing, and for years have been doing for you. They pay for the fire that warms you; for the house that shelters you; for the clothes that cover you; for the food that supports you! They watch over your bed in sickness, and provide for your instruction and enjoyment when in health! Your parents do all this without money and without price. Now, whenever you feel ill humored, or disposed to murmur at any of their requirements, just look a moment and see how the account stands. Inquire what would be the consequence, if they should refuse to take care of you. The child who does not feel grateful for all this kindness, must be more unfeeling than the brutes. How can you refrain from, doing every thing in your power to make those happy who have loved you so long, and have conferred upon you so many favors! If you have any thing noble or generous in your nature, it must be excited by a parent's love. You sometimes see a child who receives all these favors as though they were her due. She appears to have no consciousness of obligation; no heart of gratitude. Such a child is a disgrace to human nature. Even the very fowls of the air, and cattle of the fields, love their parents. They put to shame the ungrateful child.

You can form no conception of that devotedness of love which your mother cherishes for you. She is willing to suffer almost every thing to save you from pain. She will, to protect you, face death in its most terrific form. An English gentleman tells the following affecting story, to show how ardently a mother loves her child.

"I was once going, in my gig, up the hill in the village of Frankford, near Philadelphia when a little girl about two years old, who had toddled away from a small house, was lying basking in the sun, in the middle of the road. About two hundred yards before I got to the child, the teams of three wagons, five big horses in each, the drivers of which had stopped to drink at a tavern at the brow of the hill, started off, and came nearly abreast, galloping down the road. I got my gig off the road as speedily as I could, but expected to see the poor child crushed to pieces. A young man, a

journeyman carpenter, who was shingling a shed by the road side, seeing the child, and seeing the danger, though a stranger to the parents, jumped from the top of the shed, ran into the road, and snatched up the child from scarcely an inch before the hoof of the leading horse. The horse's leg knocked him down; but he, catching the child by its clothes, flung it back out of the way of the other horses, and saved himself by rolling back with surprising agility. The mother of the child, who had apparently been washing, seeing the teams coming, and seeing the situation of the child, rushed out, and, catching up the child, just as the carpenter had flung it back, and hugging it in her arms, uttered a shriek, such as I never heard before, never heard since, and, I hope, shall never hear again; and then she dropped down as if perfectly dead. By the application of the usual means, she was restored, however, in a little while, and I, being about to depart, asked the carpenter if he were a married man, and whether he were a relation of the parents of the child. He said he was neither. 'Well, then,' said I, you merit the gratitude of every father and mother in the world, and I will show you mine by giving you what I have,— pulling out the nine or ten dollars which I had in my pocket. 'No, I thank you, sir,' said he, 'I have only done what it was my duty to do.'

"Bravery, disinterestedness, and maternal affection surpassing these it is impossible to imagine. The mother was going right in amongst the feet of these powerful and wild horses, and amongst the wheels of the wagons. She had no thought for herself; no feeling of fear for her own life; her shriek was the sound of inexpressible joy, joy too great for her to support herself under."

Now, can you conceive a more ungrateful wretch, than that boy would be, if he should grow up, not to love or obey his mother? She was willing to die for him. She was willing to run directly under the feet of those ferocious horses, that she might save his life. And if he has one particle of generosity in his bosom, he will do every thing in his power to make her happy. But your mother loves you as well as did that mother love her child. She is as willing to expose herself to danger and to death. And can you ever bear the thought of causing grief to her whose love is so strong; whose kindness is so great? It does appear to me that the generous-hearted boy, who thinks of these things, will resolve to be his mother's joy and blessing. A few years ago a child was lost in one of those vast plains in the west, called prairies. A gentleman who was engaged in the search for the child, thus describes the scene. It forcibly shows the strength of a mother's love.

"In the year 1821 I was stationed on the Mad River circuit. You know there are extensive prairies in that part of the state. In places, there are no dwellings within miles of each other; and animals of prey are often seen there. One evening, late in autumn, a few of the neighbors were assembled around me, in one of those solitary dwellings, and we had got well engaged in the worship of God, when it was announced that the child of a widow was lost in the prairie. It was cold; the wind blew; and some rain was falling. The poor woman was in agony, and our meeting was broken up. All prepared to go in search of the lost child. The company understood the business better than I did, for they had been bred in those extensive barrens; and occurrences like the present are, probably, not unfrequent among them. They equipped themselves with lanterns and torches, for it was quite dark; and tin horns, to give signals to different parts of the company, when they should become widely separated. For my part, I thought duty required that I should take charge of the unhappy mother. She was nearly frantic; and as time permitted her to view her widowed and childless condition, and the circumstances of the probable death of her child, her misery seemed to double upon her. She took my arm; the company divided into parties; and, taking different directions, we

commenced the search. The understanding was, that, when the child should be found, a certain wind of the horn should be made, and that all who should hear it should repeat the signal. In this way all the company would receive the information.

"The prospect of finding a lost child in those extensive prairies, would, at any time, be sufficiently discouraging. The difficulty must be greatly increased by a dark, rainy night. We travelled many miles, and to a late hour. At length we became satisfied that further search would be unavailing; and all but the mother determined to return home. It was an idea she could not, for a moment, endure. She would hear of nothing but further search. Her strength, at last, began to fail her, and I prevailed on her to return to her abode. As she turned her face from further search, and gave up her child as lost, her misery was almost too great for endurance. 'My child,' said she, 'has been devoured by a wild beast; his little limbs have been torn asunder; and his blood been drunk by the hideous monster,'—and the idea was agony. As she clung to my arm, it seemed as if her heart-strings would break. At times I had almost to support her in my arms, to prevent her falling to the earth.

"As we proceeded on our way back, I thought I heard, at a great distance, the sound of a horn. We stopped, and listened: it was repeated. It was the concerted signal. The child was found. And what were the feelings of the mother!" Language cannot describe them. Such is the strength of maternal affection. And can a child be so hard-hearted as not to love a mother? Is there any thing which can be more ungrateful than to grieve one who loves you so ardently, and who has done so much for you? If there be any crime which in the sight of God is greater than all others, it appears to me it must be the abuse of parents. If the spirit of a demon dwells in any human breast, it must be in that breast which is thankless for parental favors, and which can requite that love, which watched over our infancy and protected our helpless years, with ingratitude and disrespect.

1.05 Religious Truth

CHAPTER V.

RELIGIOUS TRUTH. In this chapter I shall take up the subject of religion. That you may understand your duties, it is important that you should first understand your own character in the sight of God. I can, perhaps, make this plain to you by the following illustration: A few years since a ship sailed from England to explore the Northern Ocean. As it was a voyage of no common danger to face the storms and the tempests of those icy seas, a crew of experienced seamen was obtained, and placed under the guidance of a commander of long-trying skill. As the ship sailed from an English port, in pleasant weather and with favorable breezes, all was harmony on board, and every man was obedient to the lawful commander. As weeks passed away, and they pressed forward on the wide waste of waters, there were occasional acts of neglect of duty. Still the commander retained his authority. No one ventured to refuse to be in subjection to him, But as the ship advanced farther and farther into those unexplored regions, new toils and dangers stared them in the face. The cold blasts of those wintry regions chilled their limbs. Mountains of ice, dashed about by the tempests, threatened destruction to the ship and to the crew. As far as the eye could reach, a dreary view of chilling waves and of floating ice warned them of dangers, from which no earthly power could extricate them. The ship was far away from home, and in regions which had been seldom, if ever, seen by mortal eyes. The boldest were at times appalled by the dangers, both seen and unseen, which were clustering around them. Under these circumstances the spirit of revolt broke out among that ship's crew. They resolved that they would no longer be in subjection to their commander. They rose together in rebellion: deprived him of his authority, and took the control of the ship into their own hands. They then placed their captain in an open boat, and throwing in to him a few articles of provision, they turned him adrift upon that wide and cheerless ocean, and he never was heard of more. Appointing one of their number as commander, they turned the ship in a different direction, and regulated all their movements by their own pleasure. After this revolt, things went on pretty much as before. They had deprived their lawful commander of his authority and elevated another to occupy his place. A stranger would, perhaps, have perceived no material difference, after this change, in the conduct of the crew. The preservation of their own lives rendered it necessary that the established rules of naval discipline should be observed. By night the watches were regularly set and relieved as before. The helmsman performed his accustomed duty, and the sails were spread to the winds, or furled in the tempest, as occasion required. But still they were all guilty of mutiny. They had refused to submit to their lawful commander. Consequently, by the laws of their country, they were all condemned to be hung. The faithful discharge of the necessary duties of each day after their revolt, did not in the least free them from blame. The crime of which they were guilty, and for which they deserved the severest punishment, was the refusal to submit to authority.

Now, our situation is very similar to that of this rebellious crew. The Bible tells us that we have said in our hearts that "we will not have God to reign over us." Instead of living in entire obedience to him, we have chosen to serve ourselves. The accusation which God has against us, is not that we

occasionally transgress his laws, but that we refuse to regard him, at all times and under all circumstances, as our ruler. Sometimes children think that if they do not tell lies, and if they obey their parents, it is all that God requires of them. This, however, is by no means the case. God requires of us not only to do our duty to our parents, and to those around us, but also to love him with our most ardent affection, and to endeavor at all times to do that which will be pleasing to him. While the mutinous seamen had command of the ship, they might have been kind to one another; they might, with unwearied care and attention, have watched over the sick. They might, with the utmost fidelity, have conformed to the rules of naval discipline, seeing that every rope was properly adjusted, and that cleanliness and order should pervade every department. But notwithstanding all this, their guilt was undiminished. They had refused obedience to their commander, and for this they were exposed to the penalty of that law which doomed them to death.

It is the same with us. We may be kind to one another; we may be free from guile; we may be faithful in the discharge of the ordinary duties of life; yet, if we are not in subjection to God, we are justly exposed to the penalty of his law. What would have been thought of one of those mutinous seamen, if, when brought before the bar of his country, he had pleaded in his defence, that, after the revolt, he had been faithful to his new commander? Would any person have regarded that as an extenuation of his sin? No! He would at once have been led to the scaffold. And the voice of an indignant public would have said that he suffered justly for his crime.

Let us imagine one of the mutineers in a court of justice, and urging the following excuses to the judge.

Judge.—You have been accused of mutiny, and are found guilty; and now what have you to say why sentence of death should not be pronounced against you?

Criminal.—To be sure I did help place the captain in the boat and turn him adrift; but then I was no worse than the others. I did only as the rest did.

Judge.—The fact that others were equally guilty, is no excuse for you. You are to be judged by your own conduct.

Criminal.—Well, it is very unjust that I should be punished, for I was one of the hardest-working men on board the ship. No one can say that they ever saw me idle, or that I ever refused to perform any duty, however dangerous.

Judge.—You are not on trial for idleness, but for refusing obedience to your commander.

Criminal.—I was a very moral man. No one ever heard me use a profane word; and in my conduct and actions, I was civil to all my shipmates.

Judge.—You are not accused of profanity, or of impoliteness. The charge for which you are arraigned, is that you have rebelled against lawful authority. Of this you have been proved to be guilty; and for this I must now proceed to pass the penalty of the law.

Criminal.—But, may it please your honor, I was a very benevolent man. One night one of my shipmates was sick, and I watched all the night long at his hammock. And after we placed the captain in the boat, and cut him adrift, I threw in a bag of biscuit, that he might have some food.

Judge.—If your benevolence had shown itself in defending your commander, and in obedience to his authority, you might now be rewarded; but you are guilty of mutiny, and must be hung.

Criminal.—There was no man on board the ship more useful than I was. And after we had turned the captain adrift, we must all have perished if it had not been for me, for no one else understood navigation. I have a good education, and did everything I could to instruct my shipmates, and to make them skilful seamen.

Judge.—You are then the most guilty of the whole rebellious crew. You knew your duty better than the rest, and are more inexcusable in not being faithful. It appears by your own confession, that your education was good; that your influence was extensive; and that you had been taught those duties which man owes his fellow man. This does not extenuate, but increases your guilt. Many of your shipmates were ignorant, and were confirmed in their rebellion by your example. They had never been taught those moral and social duties which had been impressed upon your mind. That you could have been so ungrateful, so treacherous, so cruel as to engage in this revolt, justly exposes you to the severest penalty of the law. I therefore proceed to pronounce upon you the sentence which your crimes deserve. You will be led from this place to the deepest and strongest dungeon of the prison; there to be confined till you are led to the gallows, and there to be hung by the neck till you are dead; and may God have mercy upon your soul.

Now, who would not declare that this sentence is just? And who does not see the absurdity of the excuses which the guilty man offered? So it is with you, my young reader. It is your duty, at all times, to be obedient to God. The charge which God brings against us, is, that we have refused to obey him. For this we deserve that penalty which God has threatened against rebellion. If we love our parents ever so ardently, it will not save us, unless we also love God. If we are ever so kind to those around us, it will not secure God's approbation, unless we are also obedient to him. If our conduct is so correct that no one can accuse us of what is called an immoral act, it will be of no avail, unless we are also living with faith in the promises of God, and with persevering efforts to do his will. And we shall be as foolish as was the guilty mutineer, if we expect that any such excuses will save us from the penalty of his law.

We cannot, by any fidelity in the discharge of the common duties of life, atone for the neglect to love and serve our Maker. We have broken away from his authority. We follow our own inclinations, and are obedient to the directions of others, rather than to those of our Maker. The fact is, that the duties we owe God and our fellow men are not to be separated. God expects the child in the morning to acknowledge his dependence upon his Maker, and to pray for assistance to do that which is right, during all the hours of the day. And he expects you, when the evening comes, to thank him for all his goodness, and solemnly to promise, all your days, to be obedient to his authority. You must not only love your parents, but you must also love your God. You must try to have your words and your thoughts pure, and all your conduct holy. Now, when you look back upon your past lives, and when you examine your present feelings, do you not see that you have not obeyed God in all your ways? Not only have you had wicked thoughts, and at times been disobedient to your parents, but you have not made it the great object of your life to serve your Maker.

God now desires to have you obedient to him. He loves you, and wishes to see you happy. He has for this purpose sent his Son into the world to die for your sins, and to lead you to piety and peace.

The Savior now asks you to repent of sin and love him, that, when you die, you may be received to heaven, and be happy for ever. You perhaps remember the passage of Scripture found in Revelation 3:2, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." By this he expresses his desire that we should receive him to our hearts.

One of the most affecting scenes described by the pen of the most eloquent of writers, is, that of an aged father driven from his home by ungrateful and hard-hearted children. The broken-hearted man is represented as standing by the door of his own house, in a dark and tempestuous night, with his gray locks streaming in the wind, and his head unprotected to the fury of the storm. There he stands, drenched with the rain, and shivering with the cold. But the door is barred, and the shutters are closed. His daughters hear the trembling voice of their aged parent, but refuse him admission. Their flinty hearts remain unmoved. The darkness increases; the tempest rages; the rain falls in torrents, and the wind howls most fearfully. The voice of their father grows feebler and feebler, as the storm spends its fury upon him. But nothing can touch the sympathies of his unnatural children. They will not open the door to him. At last, grief, and the pangs of disappointed hope, break the father's heart. He looks at the black and lowering clouds above him, and, in the phrensy of his distracted mind, invites the increasing fury of the storm. And still those wretched children refuse to receive him to their fireside, but leave him to wander in the darkness and the cold. The representation of this scene, as described by the pen of Shakspeare, has brought tears into millions of eyes. The tragedy of King Lear and his wretched daughters is known throughout the civilized world. What heart is not indignant at such treatment? Who does not abhor the conduct of these unnatural children? Our blessed Savior represents himself as taking a similar attitude before the hearts of his children. He has presented himself at the door of your heart, and can you refuse him admission? "Behold," says he, "I stand at the door and knock." But we, with a hardness of heart which has triumphed over greater blessings, and is consequently more inexcusable than that of the daughters of King Lear, refuse to love him, and to receive him as our friend. He entreats admission. He asks to enter and be with you and you with him, that you may be happy. And there he has stood for days, and months, and years, and you receive him not. Could we see our own conduct in the light in which we behold the conduct of others, we should be confounded with the sense of our guilt. Is there a child who reads this book, who has not at times felt the importance of loving the Savior? When you felt these serious impressions, Christ was pleading for admission to your heart. You have, perhaps, been sick, and feared that you were about to die. And, oh, how ardently did you then wish that the Savior were your friend! Perhaps you have seen a brother or a sister die: you wept over your companion, as her cheek daily grew more pale, and she drew nearer and nearer to death. And when she ceased to breathe, and her limbs were cold and lifeless, you wept as though your heart would break. And when you saw her placed in the coffin and carried to the grave, how earnestly did you desire to be prepared to die yourself! Oh, how did the world seem then to you! This was the way the Savior took to reach your heart. When on earth, he said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." And now he endeavors, in many ways, to induce you to turn to him. Sometimes he makes you happy, that his goodness may excite your love. When he sees that in happiness you are most prone to forget him, he sends sorrow and trouble, under which your spirits sink, and this world appears gloomy, and you are led to look forward to a happier one to come. And does it not seem very ungrateful that you should resist all this kindness and care, and continue to refuse to submit yourself to him? You think the

daughters of King Lear were very cruel. Indeed they were; but not so cruel as you. Their father had been kind to them, but not so kind as your Savior has been to you. He stood long at the door and knocked, but not so long as the Savior has stood at the door of your heart. It is in vain that we look to find an instance of ingratitude equal to that manifested by the sinner who rejects the Savior. And it is, indeed, melancholy to think, that any child could be so hard-hearted.

It is strange that any person can resist the love which God has manifested for us. He has sent angels with messages of mercy, and invitations to his home in heaven. He sent his Son to die that we might be saved from everlasting sorrow. He has provided a world of beauty and of glory, far surpassing any thing we can conceive, to which he invites us, and where he will make us happy for ever. And we are informed that all the angels in heaven are so much interested in our welfare, that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." It is indeed wonderful that the holy and happy angels above should feel so deep an interest in our concerns. But, oh, how surpassingly strange it is, that we feel so little for ourselves!

It is kind in God that he will not let the wicked enter heaven. He loves his holy children there too well, to allow the wicked to enter and trouble them, and destroy their peace. There was a little girl once, who had a party of her companions to spend the evening with her. They were all playing very happily in the parlor, when a drunken man happened to go by. As he heard their voices, he came staggering up to the door, and tried to get in. All the girls were very much frightened, for fear the degraded wretch would get into the parlor. But the gentleman of the house told them not to be frightened. He assured them that the man should not come in, and though it was a cold winter's night, he went out and drove him away. Now, was not this gentleman kind thus to protect these children?

Suppose a wicked man, or a lost spirit, should go to the gates of heaven and try to enter there. Do you suppose that God would let him in? Would not God be as kind to the angels as an earthly father to his earthly children? Every angel in heaven would cry to God for protection, if they should see the wicked approaching that happy world. And God shows his love, by declaring that the wicked shall never enter there.

"Those holy gates for ever bar

Pollution, sin and shame;

None shall obtain admittance there,

But followers of the Lamb."

It is not because God is unkind and cruel that he shuts up the wicked in the world of wo. He does this because he loves his children, and, like a kind father, determines to protect them from oppression and sorrow. The bright wings of the angel glitter in the heavenly world. Pure joy glows in the bosoms of the blest. Love unites them all, as they swell their songs, and take their flight. In their home, the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are for ever at rest. A few years since, there was a certain family which was united and happy. The father and mother looked upon the children who surrounded their fireside, and beheld them all virtuous in their conduct, and affectionate towards one another. Their evening sports went on harmoniously, and those children were preparing, in their beloved home, for future virtues and usefulness. But, at last, one of the

sons became dissipated. He went on from step to step in vice, till he became a degraded wretch. His father and mother wept over his sins, and did everything in their power to reclaim him. All was in vain. Every day he grew worse. His brothers and sisters found all the happiness-of their home destroyed by his wickedness. The family was disgraced by him, and they were all in sorrow and tears. One evening he was brought home so intoxicated that he was apparently lifeless. His poor broken-hearted mother saw him conveyed in this disgraceful condition to his bed. At another time, when his parents were absent, he came home, in the evening, in a state of intoxication bordering on phrensy. He raved about the house like a madman. He swore the most shocking oaths. Enraged with one of his sisters, he seized a chair, and would have struck her, perhaps, a fatal blow, if she had not escaped by flight. The parents of this child felt that such things could no longer be permitted, and told him that, if there was not an immediate reformation in his conduct, they should forbid him to enter their house. But entreaties and warnings were alike in vain. He continued his disgraceful career. His father, perceiving that amendment was hopeless, and that he was, by remaining at home, imbittering every moment of the family, and loading them with disgrace, sent his son to sea, and told him never to return till he could come back improved in character. To protect his remaining children, it was necessary for him to send the dissolute one away.

Now, was this father cruel, in thus endeavoring to promote the peace and the happiness of his family? Was it unkind in him to resolve to make his virtuous children happy, by excluding the vicious and the degraded? No! Every one sees that this is the dictate of paternal love. If he had been a cruel father—if he had had no regard for his children, he would have allowed this abandoned son to have remained, and conducted as he pleased. He would have made no effort to protect his children, and to promote their joy. And is it not kind in our heavenly Father to resolve that those who will not obey his laws shall be for ever excluded from heaven? He loves his virtuous and obedient children, and will make them perfectly happy. He never will permit the wicked to mar their joys and degrade their home. If God were an unkind being, he would let the wicked go to heaven. He would have no prison to detain them. He would leave the good unprotected and exposed to abase from the bad. But God is love. He never thus will abandon his children. He has provided a strong prison, with dungeons deep and dark, where he will hold the wicked, so that they cannot escape. The angels in heaven have nothing to fear from wicked men, or wicked angels. God will protect his children from all harm. Our Father in heaven is now inviting all of us to repent of our sins, and to cultivate a taste for the joys of heaven. He wishes to take us to his own happy home, and make us loved members of his own affectionate family. And every angel in heaven rejoices, when he sees the humblest child repent of sin and turn to God. But if we will not be obedient to his laws; if we will not cultivate in our hearts those feelings of fervent love which glow and burn in the angel's bosom; if we will not here on earth learn the language of prayer and praise, God assures us that we never can be admitted to mingle with his happy family above. Would not God be very unkind to allow the wicked and impenitent to enter in and mar their joys? The angels are happy to welcome a returning wanderer. But if they should see an unsubdued spirit directing his flight towards heaven, they all would pray to God that he might not be permitted to enter, to throw discord into their songs, and sorrow into their hearts. God is love. He will keep heaven pure and happy. All who will be obedient to him, he will gladly elevate to walk the streets of the New Jerusalem, and to inhabit the mansions which he has built. But those who will not submit to his authority must be shut out for ever. If we do not yield to the warnings and entreaties which

now come to us from God, we must hear the sentence, "Depart from me,"—"I know you not." God uses all the means which he deems proper to reclaim us; and when he finds that we are incorrigible, then does he close upon us the doors of our prison, that we never may escape.

If God cared not for the happiness of his children, he would break these laws; he would tear down this prison; he would turn all its guilty inmates loose upon the universe, to rove and to desolate at their pleasure. But, blessed be God, he is love; and the brightness and glory of heaven never can be marred by the entrance of sin. In hell's dreary abyss, the wretched outcasts from heaven will find their secure and eternal abiding place. Where do you wish to have your home? with the virtuous and happy in heaven, or with the vicious and miserable in the world of wo? Now is the time to decide. But life will soon be gone. As we die, we shall continue for ever.

"There are no acts of pardon passed

In the cold grave to which we haste."

God, in this world, makes use of all those means which he thinks calculated to affect your feelings and to incline you to his service. You now hear of the love of Jesus, and feel the strivings of the Holy Spirit. You are surrounded by many who love the Savior, and enjoy all the precious privileges of the Bible and the Sabbath. God speaks to you in afflictions and enjoyments, and tries ways without number to reclaim you to himself. If you can resist all this, your case is hopeless. In the world of wo there will be no one to plead with you the wonders of a Savior's love. You will feel no strivings of the Spirit. No Christian friends will surround you with their sympathies and their prayers. The Sabbath will no longer dawn upon you, and the Bible will no longer entreat you to turn to the Lord. If you can resist all the motives to repentance which this life affords, you are proof against all the means which God sees fit to adopt. If you die impenitent, you will for ever remain impenitent, and go on unrestrained in passion and wo. The word of God has declared that, at the day of judgment our doom will be fixed for ever. The wicked shall then go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous to life eternal. The bars of the sinner's prison will never be broken. The glories of the saint's abode will never be sullied. A few years since, a child was lost in the woods. He was out, with his brothers and sisters, gathering berries, and accidentally was separated from them and lost. The children, after looking in vain for some time in search of the little wanderer, returned just in the dusk of the evening, to inform their parents that their brother was lost, and could not be found. The woods at that time were infested with bears. The darkness of a cloudy night was rapidly coming on, and the alarmed father, gathering a few of his neighbors, hastened in search of the lost child. The mother remained at home, almost distracted with suspense. As the clouds gathered and the darkness increased, the father and the neighbors, with highly-excited fears, traversed the woods in all directions, and raised loud shouts to attract the attention of the child. But their search was in vain. They could find no traces of the wanderer; and as they stood under the boughs of the lofty trees, and listened, that if possible they might hear his feeble voice, no sound was borne to their ears but the melancholy moaning of the wind as it swept through the thick branches of the forest. The gathering clouds threatened an approaching storm, and the deep darkness of the night had already enveloped them. It is difficult to conceive what were the feelings of that father. And who could imagine how deep the agony which filled the bosom of that mother as she heard the wind, and beheld the darkness in which her child was wandering! The search continued in vain till nine o'clock in the evening. Then one of the party was

sent back to the village to collect the inhabitants for a more extensive search. The bell rung the alarm, and the cry of fire resounded through the streets. It was, however, ascertained that it was not fire which caused the alarm, but that the bell tolled the more solemn tidings of a lost child. Every heart sympathized in the sorrows of the distracted parents. Soon the multitudes of the people were seen ascending the hill upon the declivity of which the village was situated, to aid in the search. Ere long the rain began to fall, but no tidings came back to the village of the lost child. Hardly an eye was that night closed in sleep, and there was not a mother who did not feel for the agonized parents. The night passed away, and the morning dawned, and yet no tidings came. At last those engaged in the search met together and held a consultation. They made arrangements for a more minute and extended search, and agreed that in case the child was found, a gun should be fired to give a signal to the rest of the party. As the sun arose, the clouds were dispelled, and the whole landscape glittered in the rays of the bright morning. But that village was deserted and still. The stores were closed, and business was hushed. Mothers were walking the streets with sympathising countenances and anxious hearts. There was but one thought there—What has become of the lost child? All the affections and interest of the community were flowing in one deep and broad channel towards the little wanderer. About nine in the morning the signal gun was fired, which announced that the child was found; and for a moment how dreadful was the suspense! Was it found a mangled corpse, or was it alive and well? Soon a joyful shout proclaimed the safety of the child. The shout was borne from tongue to tongue, till the whole forest rung again with the joyful acclamations of the multitude. A commissioned messenger rapidly bore the tidings to the distracted mother. A procession was immediately formed by those engaged in the search. The child was placed upon a platform, hastily constructed from the boughs of trees, and borne in triumph at the head of the procession. When they arrived at the brow of the hill, they rested for a moment, and proclaimed their success with three loud and animated cheers. The procession then moved on, till they arrived in front of the dwelling where the parents of the child resided. The mother, who stood at the door, with streaming eyes and throbbing heart, could no longer restrain herself or her feelings. She rushed into the street, clasped her child to her bosom, and wept aloud. Every eye was suffused with tears, and for a moment all were silent. But suddenly some one gave a signal for a shout. One loud, and long, and happy note of joy rose from the assembled multitude, and they then dispersed to their business and their homes.

There was more joy over the one child that was found than over the ninety and nine that went not astray. Likewise there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. But still this is a feeble representation of the love of our Father in heaven for us, and of the joy with which the angels welcome the returning wanderer. The mother cannot feel for her child that is lost as God feels for the unhappy wanderers in the paths of sin. The child was exposed to a few hours of suffering; the sinner to eternal despair. The child was in danger of being torn by the claws and the teeth of the bear—a pang which would be but for a moment; but the sinner must feel the ravages of the never-dying worm, must be exposed to the fury of the inextinguishable flame. Oh, if a mother can feel so much, what must be the feelings of our Father in heaven! If man can feel so deep a sympathy, what must be the emotions which glow in the bosoms of angels! Such is the nature of the feelings with which we are regarded by our heavenly Father and the holy angels.

Many parables are introduced in the Bible to illustrate this feeling on the part of God. He compares himself with the kind shepherd, who, finding that one little lamb had strayed from the flock, left the

ninety and nine and went in search of the lost one. He illustrates this feeling by that of the woman who had lost a piece of silver, and immediately lit a candle and swept the house diligently, till she found it. In like manner, we are informed, that it is not the will of our Father who is in heaven, that one of his little ones should perish. He has manifested the most astonishing love and kindness that he might make us happy. But what greater proof of love can we have than that which God has given in the gift of his Son! That you might be saved from sin and ceaseless wo, Jesus came and died. He came to the world, and placed himself in poverty, and was overwhelmed with sorrow, that he might induce you to accept salvation, and to be happy for ever in heaven. The Savior was born in a stable. When an infant, his life was sought. His parents were compelled to flee out of the country, that they might save him from a violent death. As he grew up, he was friendless and forsaken. He went about from town to town, and from village to village, doing good to all. He visited the sick, and healed them. He went to the poor and the afflicted, and comforted them. He took little children in his arms, and blessed them. He injured no one, and endeavored to do good to all. And yet he was persecuted, and insulted, and abused. Again and again he was compelled to flee for his life. They took up stones to stone him. They hired false witnesses to accuse him. At last they took him by night, as he was in a garden praying. A cruel multitude came and took him by force, and carried him into a large hall. They then surrounded our blessed Savior, and heaped upon him all manner of insult and abuse. They mocked him. They collected some thorns, and made a crown, which they forced upon his head, pressing the sharp thorns into his flesh, till the blood flowed down upon his hair and his cheeks. And after thus passing the whole night, he was led out to the hill of Calvary, tottering beneath the heavy burden of the cross, which he was compelled to bear upon his own shoulders, and to which he was to be nailed. When they arrived at the place of crucifixion, they drove the nails through his hands and his feet. The cross was then fixed in the ground, and the Savior, thus cruelly suspended, was exposed to the loud and contemptuous shouts of an insulting mob. The morning air was filled with their loud execrations. A soldier came and thrust a spear deep into his side. To quench his burning thirst, they gave him vinegar, mixed with gall. Thus did our Savior die. He endured all this, from the cradle to the grave, that he might save sinners. And when he, while enduring the agony of the cross, cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" he was then suffering those sorrows which you must otherwise have suffered. If it had not been for our Savior's sorrows and death, there would have been no help for any sinner. You never could have entered heaven. You must for ever have endured the penalty of that law which saith, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Was there ever such love as this? And, oh, must not that child's heart be hard, who will not love such a Savior, and who will not do all in his power to prove his gratitude by a holy and an obedient life? Christ so loves you, that he was willing to die the most cruel of deaths, that he might make you happy. He is now in heaven, preparing mansions of glory for all those who will accept him as their Savior, and obey his law. And where is the child who does not wish to have this Savior for his friend, and to have a home in heaven? The Holy Spirit is promised to aid you in all your efforts to resist sin. If, when the power of temptation is strong, you will look to him for aid, he will give you strength to resist. Thus is duty made easy, God loves you. Angels desire that you should come to heaven. Jesus has died to save you. The Holy Spirit is ready to aid you in every Christian effort, and to lead you on, victorious over sin. How unreasonable, then, and how ungrateful it is, for any child to refuse to love God, and to prepare to enter the angels' home! There you can be happy. No night is there. No sickness or sorrow can ever reach you there. Glory will fill your eye. Joy will fill your

heart. You will be an angel yourself, and shine in all the purity and in all the bliss of the angels' happy home.

1.06 Piety

CHAPTER VI.

PIETY. In the last chapter I have endeavored to show you in what your sin principally consists; and also the interest which God feels in your happiness, and the sacrifice he has made to lead you to penitence and to heaven. But you desire more particular information respecting the duties which God requires of you. I shall in this chapter explain the requirements of God; and show you why you should immediately commence a life of piety.

Probably no child reads this book who is not conscious of sin. You feel not only that you do not love God as you ought, but that sometimes you are ungrateful or disobedient to your parents; you are irritated with your brother or your sister, or you indulge in other feelings, which you know to be wrong. Now, the first thing which God requires of you is, that you should be penitent for all your sins. At the close of the day, you go to your chamber for sleep. Perhaps your mother goes with you, and hears you repeat a prayer of gratitude to God for his kindness. But after she has left the chamber, and you are alone in the darkness, you recall to mind the events of the day, asking yourself what you have done that is wrong. Perhaps you were idle at school, or unkind to a playmate, or disobedient to your parents. Now, if you go to sleep without sincere repentance, and a firm resolution to try for the future to avoid such sin, the frown of your Maker will be upon you during all the hours of the night. You ought, every evening, before you go to sleep, to think of your conduct during the day, and to express to God your sincere sorrow for every thing you have done which is displeasing to him, and humbly implore the pardon of your sins through Jesus Christ. Such a child God loves. Such a one he will readily forgive. And if it is his will that you should die before the morning, he will take you to heaven, to be happy there. But remember that it is not enough simply to say that you are penitent. You must really feel penitent. And you must resolve to be more watchful in future, and to guard against the sin over which you mourn. You have, for instance, spoken unkindly, during the day, to your brother. At night, you feel that you have done wrong, and that God is displeased. Now, if you are sincerely penitent, and ask God's forgiveness, you will pray that you may not again be guilty of the same fault. And when you awake in the morning, you will be watchful over yourself, that you may be pleasant and obliging. You will perhaps go to your brother, and say, "I did wrong in speaking unkindly to you yesterday, and I am sorry for it. I will endeavor never again to do so." At any rate, if you are really penitent, you will pray to God for forgiveness, and most sincerely resolve never willingly to be guilty of the same sin again. But you must also remember that, by the law of God, sin can never pass unpunished. God has said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." And when you do any thing that is wrong, and afterwards repent of it, God forgives you, because the Savior has borne the punishment which you deserve. This is what is meant by that passage of Scripture, "he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." Our Father in heaven loved us so much that he gave his own Son to die in our stead. And now he says that he is ready to forgive, if we will repent, and believe in his Son who has suffered and died to save us. And ought we not to love so kind a Savior?

You cannot expect at present precisely and fully to understand every thing connected with the sufferings and death of Christ, and the moral effect they produce. In fact, it is intimated in the Bible, that even the angels in heaven find this subject one capable of tasking all their powers. You can understand, however, that he suffered and died, that you might be forgiven. It would not be safe in any government to forgive sin merely on the penitence of the sinner. Civil government cannot do this safely; a family government cannot do it safely. It is often the case, when a man is condemned to death for a crime he has committed, that his dearest friends, sometimes his wife and children, make the most affecting appeals to the chief magistrate of the state, to grant him pardon. But it will not do. The governor, if he knows his duty, will be firm, however painful it may be, in allowing the law to take its course; for he has to consider not merely the wishes of the unhappy criminal and his friends, but the safety and happiness of the whole community. And so the governor of the universe must consider, not merely his own benevolent feelings towards the sinner, but the safety and the holiness of all his creatures; and he could not have forgiven our sins, unless he had planned a way by which we might safely be forgiven. This way he did devise, to sustain law and protect holiness, and yet to let us go free from the punishment due to our sins. Jesus died for us. He bore our sins. By his stripes we are healed. And shall we not be grateful?

It is thus that God has provided a way for our escape from the penalty of his law. You have read, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Was it not kind in God to give his Son to suffer, that we might be saved from punishment? God has plainly given his law. And he has said, the soul that sinneth, it shall die. And he has said, that his word is so sacred, that, though heaven and earth should pass away, his word shall not pass away. We have all broken God's law, and deserve the punishment it threatens. But our indulgent Father in heaven is looking upon us in loving kindness and in tender mercy. He pities us, and he has given his own Son to bear the punishment which we deserve. Oh, was there ever proof of greater love? And how ardently should we love that Savior, who is nearer and dearer than a brother, who has left heaven and all its joys, and come to the world, and suffered and died, that we might be happy! God expects that we shall love him; that we shall receive him as our Savior, and whenever we do wrong, that we shall ask forgiveness for his sake. And when a child thinks of the sorrows which his sins have caused the Savior, it does appear to me that he must love that Savior with the most ardent affection.

It was the law of a certain town that the boys should not slide down hill in the streets. [FOOTNOTE: To those children who live where it seldom or never snows, I ought to say in this note, that, in New England, it is a very common amusement to slide down the hills on sleds or boards, in the winter evenings, when the roads are icy and smooth. In some places this is dangerous to passengers, and then it is forbidden by law.] If any were found doing so, they were to be fined, and if the money was not paid, they were to be sent to jail. Now, a certain boy, the son of a poor man, broke the law, and was taken up by an officer. They carried him into court, the fact was fully proved against him, and he was sentenced to pay the fine. He had no money, and his father, who stood by, was poor, and found it hard work to supply the wants of the family. The money must be paid, however, or the poor boy must go to jail. The father thought that he could earn it in the evenings, and he promised, accordingly, to pay the money if they would let his son go.

Evening after evening, then, he went out to his work, while the boy was allowed to remain by the comfortable fire, at home. After a while the money was earned and paid, and then the boy felt relieved and free.

Now, suppose this boy, instead of being grateful to the father, who had suffered for him, should treat him with coldness and unkindness. Suppose he should continually do things to give him pain, and always be reluctant to do the slightest thing to oblige him. Who would not despise so ungrateful a boy? And do you think that that child who will grieve the Savior with continued sin, who will not love him, who will not try to obey him, can have one spark of noble, of generous feeling in his bosom? Would any person, of real magnanimity, disregard a friend who had done so much as the Savior has done for us? God requires of us, that while we feel penitent for our sins, we should feel grateful to that Savior who has redeemed us by his blood. And when Jesus Christ says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," this is what he means. We must love Christ, We must regard him as the friend who has, by his own sufferings, saved us from the penalty of God's law. And it is dishonorable and base to refuse to love him, and to do every thing in your power to please him. This kind Savior is now looking upon you with affection. He has gone to heaven to prepare a place for you, and there he wishes to receive you, and to make you happy for ever. His eye is upon your heart every day, and every hour. He never forgets you. Wherever you go, he follows you. He shields you from harm. He supplies all your wants. He surrounds you with blessings. And now, all that he asks for all these favors is your love; not that you may do good to him, but that he may do still more good to you. He wishes to take you, holy and happy, to the green pastures and the still waters of heaven. Can any child refuse to love this Savior? Oh, go to him at once, and pray that he will receive you, and write your name among the number of his friends. Then will he soon receive you to his own blissful abode.

"Fair distant land; could mortal eyes
But half its charms explore,
How would our spirits long to rise,
And dwell on earth no more! No cloud those distant regions know,
Realms ever bright and fair!
For sin, the source of mortal wo,
Can never enter there."

Every child who reads this book probably knows, that, unless he is penitent for sin, and trusts in the Savior, he must for ever be banished from the presence of God. But a person cannot be penitent and grateful who does not endeavor in all things to be obedient. You must try at all times of the day, and in all the duties of the day, to be faithful, that you may please God. It is not a little thing to be a Christian. It is not enough that you at times pray earnestly and feel deeply. You must be mild, and forbearing, and affectionate, and obedient. Do you think that child can be a Christian, who will, by ingratitude, make his parents unhappy? There is, perhaps, nothing which is more pleasing to God than to see a child who is affectionate and obedient to his parents. This is one of the most important Christian duties. And if ever you see a child who professes to be a Christian child, and who yet is guilty of ingratitude and of disobedience, you may be assured that those

professions are insincere. If you would have a home in heaven, you must be obedient while in your home on earth. If you would have the favor and the affection of your heavenly Father, you must merit the affection and the gratitude of your earthly parents. God has most explicitly commanded that you should honor your father and your mother. If you sin in this respect, it is positive proof that the displeasure of God rests upon you.

Sincere love to God will make a child not only more amiable in general character, but also more industrious. You are, perhaps, at school, and, not feeling very much like study, idle away the afternoon. Now, God's eye is upon you all the time. He sees every moment which is wasted. And the sin of that idle afternoon you must render an account for, at his bar. Do you suppose that a person can be a Christian, and yet be neglecting time, and living in idleness? Even for every idle word that men shall speak they must give an account in the day of judgment. If you do not improve your time when young, you can neither be useful, nor respected, nor happy. The consequences of this idleness will follow you through life. With all sin God has connected sorrow. The following account of George Jones will show how intimately God has connected with indolence sorrow and disgrace. **THE CONSEQUENCES OF IDLENESS.**

Many young persons seem to think it is not of much consequence if they do not improve their time well when in youth, for they can make it up by diligence when they are older. They think it is disgraceful for men and women to be idle, but that there can be no harm for persons who are young to spend their time in any manner they please.

George Jones thought so. He was twelve years old. He went to an academy to prepare to enter college. His father was at great expense in obtaining books for him, clothing him, and paying his tuition. But George was idle. The preceptor of the academy would often tell him that if he did not study diligently when young, he would never succeed well. But George thought of nothing but present pleasure. Often would he go to school without having made any preparation for his morning lesson; and, when called to recite with his class, he would stammer and make such blunders, that the rest of his class could not help laughing at him. He was one of the poorest scholars in school, because he was one of the most idle. When recess came, and all the boys ran out of the academy, upon the play-ground, idle George would come moping along. Instead of studying diligently while in school, he was indolent and half asleep. When the proper time for play came, he had no relish for it. I recollect very well that, when tossing up for a game of ball, we used to choose every body on the play-ground before we chose George. And if there were enough to play without him, we used to leave him out. Thus was he unhappy in school and out of school. There is nothing which makes a person enjoy play so well as to study hard. When recess was over, and the rest of the boys returned fresh and vigorous to their studies, George might be seen lagging and moping along to his seat. Sometimes he would be asleep in school, sometimes he would pass his time in catching flies and penning them up in little holes, which he cut in his seat. And sometimes, when the preceptor's back was turned, he would throw a paper ball across the room. When the class was called up to recite, George would come drowsily along, looking as mean and ashamed as though he were going to be whipped. The rest of the class stepped up to the recitation with alacrity, and appeared happy and contented. When it came George's turn to recite, he would be so long, and make such blunders, that all most heartily wished him out of the class. At last George went with his class to enter college. Though he passed a very poor examination, he was admitted with the rest, for those who examined him thought it was possible,

that the reason why he did not answer the questions better was that he was frightened. Now came hard times for poor George. In college there is not much mercy shown to bad scholars; and George had neglected his studies so long that he could not now keep up with his class, let him try ever so hard.

He could without much difficulty get along in the academy, where there were only two or three boys of his own class to laugh at him. But now he had to go into a large recitation room, filled with students from all parts of the country. In the presence of all these he must rise and recite to the professor. Poor fellow! He paid dear for his idleness. You would have pitied him, if you could have seen him trembling in his seat, every moment expecting to be called upon to recite. And when he was called upon, he would stand up and take what the class called a dead set; that is, he could not recite at all. Sometimes he would make such ludicrous blunders that the whole class would burst into a laugh. Such are the applauses idleness gets. He was wretched, of course. He had been idle so long, that he hardly knew how to apply his mind to study. All the good scholars avoided him; they were ashamed to be seen in his company. He became discouraged, and gradually grew dissipated. The government of the college soon were compelled to suspend him. He returned in a few months, but did no better; and his father was then advised to take him from college. He left college, despised by every one. A few months ago I met him in New-York, a poor wanderer, without money or friends. Such are the wages of idleness. I hope every reader will from this history take warning, and "stamp improvement on the wings of time." This story of George Jones, which is a true one, shows how sinful and ruinous it is to be idle. Every child who would be a Christian, and have a home in heaven, must guard against this sin. But as I have given you one story, which shows the sad effects of indolence, I will now present you with another, more pleasing, which shows the rewards of industry. THE ADVANTAGES OF INDUSTRY.

I gave you the history of George Jones, an idle boy, and showed you the consequences of his idleness. I shall now give you the history of Charles Bullard, a class-mate of George. Charles was about of the same age with George, and did not possess naturally superior talents. Indeed, I doubt whether he was equal to him, in natural powers of mind. But Charles was a hard student. When quite young, he was always careful to be diligent in school. Sometimes, when there was a very hard lesson, instead of going out in the recess to play, he would stay in to study. He had resolved that his first object should be to get his lesson well, and then he could play with a good conscience. He loved play as well as any body, and was one of the best players on the ground; I hardly ever saw any body catch a ball better than he could. When playing any game every one was glad to get Charles on his side. I have said that Charles would sometimes stay in at recess. This, however, was very seldom; it was only when the lesson was very hard indeed. Generally he was among the first upon the play-ground, and he was also among the first to go into school, when called in. Hard study gave him a relish for play, and play again gave him a relish for hard study; so he was happy both in school and out. The preceptor could not help liking him, for he always had his lessons well committed, and never gave him any trouble. When he went to enter college, the preceptor gave him a good recommendation. He was able to answer all the questions which were put to him when he was examined. He had studied so well when he was in the academy, and was so thoroughly prepared for college, that he found it very easy to keep up with his class, and had much time for reading interesting books. But he would always first get his lesson well, before he did any thing else, and would review it just before recitation. When called upon to recite, he rose

tranquil and happy, and very seldom made any mistake. The government of the college had a high opinion of him, and he was respected by all the students.

There was in the college a society made up of all of the best scholars. Charles was chosen a member of that society. It was the custom to choose some one of the society to deliver a public address every year. This honor was conferred on Charles; and he had studied so diligently, and read so much, that he delivered an address, which was very interesting to all who heard it. At last he graduated, as it is called; that is, he finished his collegiate course, and received his degree. It was known by all that he was a good scholar, and by all he was respected. His father and mother, brothers and sisters, came, commencement day, to hear him speak. They all felt gratified, and loved Charles more than ever. Many situations of usefulness and profit were opened to him, for Charles was now a man, intelligent, and universally respected. He is now a useful and a happy man. He has a cheerful home, and is esteemed by all who know him.

Such are the rewards of industry. How strange is it, that any persons should be willing to live in idleness, when it will certainly make them, unhappy! The idle boy is almost invariably poor and miserable; the industrious boy is happy and prospered. But perhaps some child who reads this, asks, "Does God notice little children in school?" He certainly does. And if you are not diligent in the improvement of your time, it is one of the surest of evidences that your heart is not right with God. You are placed in this world to improve your time. In youth you must be preparing for future usefulness. And if you do not improve the advantages you enjoy, you sin against your Maker.

"With books, or work, or healthful play,

Let your first years be past,

That you may give, for every day,

Some good account at last."

One of the petitions in the Lord's prayer is, "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." We do thus pray that God will exercise the same kind of forgiveness towards us, which we exercise towards others. Consequently, if we are unforgiving or revengeful, we pray that God will treat us in the same way when we appear before him in judgment. Thus God teaches the necessity of cultivating a forbearing and a forgiving spirit. We must do this or we cannot be Christians. When I was a boy, there was another little boy who went to the same school with me, who was a professed Christian. He seemed to love the Savior, and to try in all things to abstain from sin. Some of the bad boys were in the habit of ridiculing him, and of doing every thing they could to tease him, because he would not join with them in mischief. Near the school-house there was a small orchard; and the scholars would, without the leave of the owner, take the apples. One day a party of boys were going into the orchard for fruit, and called upon this pious boy to accompany them.

"Come, Henry," said one of them to him, "let us go and get some apples."

"The apples are not ours," he fearlessly replied, "and I do not think it right to steal."

"You are a coward, and afraid to go," the other replied.

"I am afraid," said Henry, "to do wrong, and you ought to be; but I am not afraid to do right." This wicked boy was exceedingly irritated at this rebuke, and called Henry all manner of names, and endeavored to hold him up to the ridicule of the whole school.

Henry bore it very patiently, though it was hard to be endured, for the boy who ridiculed him had a great deal of influence and talent.

Some days after this the boys were going a fishing. Henry had a beautiful fishing-rod, which his father had bought for him.

George—for by that name I shall call the boy who abused Henry—was very desirous of borrowing this fishing-rod, and yet was ashamed to ask for it. At last, however, he summoned courage, and called out to Henry upon the play-ground—

"Henry, will you lend me your rod to go a fishing?"

"O yes," said Henry; "if you will go home with me, I will get it for you now."

Poor George felt ashamed enough for what he had done. But he went home with Henry to get the rod.

They went up into the barn together, and when Henry had taken his fishing-tackle from the place in which he kept it, he said to George, "I have a new line in the house, which father bought me the other day; you may have that too, if you want it." George could hardly hold up his head, he felt so ashamed. However, Henry went and got the new line, and placed it upon the rod, and gave them into George's hand. A few days after this, George told me about it. "Why," said he, "I never felt so ashamed in my life. And one thing is certain, I will never call Henry names again."

Now, who does not admire the conduct of Henry in this affair? This forgiving spirit is what God requires. The child who would be the friend of God, must possess this spirit. You must always be ready to forgive. You must never indulge in the feelings of revenge. You must never desire to injure another, how much soever you may feel that others have injured you. The spirit of the Christian is a forgiving spirit.

God also requires of his friends, that they shall ever be doing good, as they have opportunity. The Christian child will do all in his power to make those happy who are about him. He will disregard himself that he may promote the happiness of others. He will be obliging to all. This world is not your home. You are to remain here but a few years, and then go to that home of joy or wo, which you never, never will leave. God expects you to be useful here. "How can I do any good?" do you say? Why, in many ways. You can make your parents happy; that is doing good. You can make your brothers and sisters happy; that is doing good. You can try to make your brothers and sisters more obedient to their parents; that is doing good. You can set a good example at school; that is doing good. If you see your companions doing any thing that is wrong, you can try to dissuade them. You can speak to your bosom friend, upon the Savior's goodness, and endeavor to excite in his heart the feelings which are in yours. Thus you may be exerting a good influence upon all around you. Your life will not be spent in vain. God will smile upon you, and give joy in a dying hour.

Some children appear to think that if they are Christians, they cannot be so happy as they may be if they are not Christians. They think that to love God, and to pray, and to do their duty, is gloomy work. But God tells us that none can be happy but those who love him. And every one who has repented of sin, and loves the Savior, says that there is more happiness in this mode of life than in any other. We may indeed be happy a little while without piety. But misfortunes and sorrows will come. Your hopes of pleasure will be disappointed. You will be called to weep; to suffer pain; to die. And there is nothing but religion which can give you a happy life and a peaceful death. It is that you may be happy, not unhappy, that God wishes you to be a Christian.

It is true that at times it requires a very great struggle to take a decided stand as a Christian. The proud heart is reluctant to yield. The worldly spirit clings to worldly pleasure. It requires bravery and resolution to meet the obstacles which will be thrown in your way. You may be opposed. You may be ridiculed. But, notwithstanding all this, the only way to ensure happiness is to love and serve your Maker. Many children know that they ought to love God, and wish that they had resolution to do their duty. But they are afraid of the ridicule of their companions. Henry, who would not rob the orchard, was a brave boy. He knew that they would laugh at him. But what did he care? He meant to do his duty without being frightened if others did laugh. And the consciousness of doing his duty afforded him much greater enjoyment than he could possibly have received from eating the stolen fruit. Others of the boys went and robbed the orchard, because they had not courage to refuse to do as their companions did. They knew it was wrong, but they were afraid of being laughed at. But which is the most easy to be borne, the ridicule of the wicked, or a condemning conscience, and the displeasure of God? It is so with all the duties of the Christian. If you will conscientiously do that which God approves, he will give you peace of mind, and prepare you for eternal joy.

One of the most eminent and useful of the English clergymen was led, when a child, by the following interesting circumstance, to surrender himself to the Savior. When a little boy, he was, like other children, playful and thoughtless. He thought, perhaps, that he would wait until he was old, before he became a Christian. His father was a pious man, and frequently conversed with him about heaven, and urged him to prepare to die. On the evening of his birth-day, when he was ten years of age, his father took him affectionately by the hand, and reminding him of the scenes through which he had already passed, urged him to commence that evening a life of piety. He told him of the love of Jesus. He told him of the danger of delay. And he showed him that he must perish for ever unless he speedily trusted in the Savior, and gave his life to his service. As this child thought of a dying hour, and of a Savior's love, his heart was full of feeling, and the tears gushed into his eyes. He felt that it was time for him to choose whether he would live for God or for the world. He resolved that he would no longer delay. His father and mother then retired to their chamber to pray for their child, and this child also went to his chamber to pray for himself. Sincerely he gave himself to the Savior. Earnestly he implored forgiveness, and most fervently entreated God to aid him to keep his resolutions and to refrain from sin. And do you think that child was not happy, as, in the silence of his chamber, he surrendered himself to God? It was undoubtedly the hour of the purest enjoyment he ever had experienced, Angels looked with joy upon that evening scene, and hovered with delight and love around that penitent child. The prayers of the parent and the child ascended as grateful incense to the throne, and were accepted. And from that affecting hour, this little boy went on in the path which leads to usefulness, and

peace, and heaven. He spent his life in doing good. A short time since, he died a veteran soldier of the cross, and is now undoubtedly amid the glories of heaven, surrounded by hundreds, who have been, by his instrumentality, led to those green fields and loved mansions. Oh, what a rapturous meeting must that have been, when the parents of this child pressed forward from the angel throng, to welcome him, as, with triumphant wing, he entered heaven! And, oh, how happy must they now be, in that home of songs and everlasting joy!

It is thus that piety promotes our enjoyment. It promotes our happiness at all times. It takes away the fear of death, and deprives every sorrow of half its bitterness. Death is the most gloomy thought that can enter the minds of those who are not Christians. But the pious child can be happy even when dying. I was once called to see a boy who was very dangerously sick, and expected soon to die. I expected to have found him sorrowful. But, instead of that, a happy smile was on his countenance, which showed that joy was in his heart. He sat in bed, leaning upon his pillow, with a hymn book in his hand, which he was reading. His cheeks were thin and pale, from his long sickness, while, at the same time, he appeared contented and happy. After conversing with him a little while, I said, "Do you think you shall ever get well again?"

"No, sir," he cheerfully replied, "the doctor says I may perhaps live a few weeks, but that he should not be surprised if I should die at any time."

"Are you willing to die?" I said.

"O yes, sir," he answered; "sometimes I feel sad about leaving father and mother. But then I think I shall be free from sin in heaven, and shall be with the Savior. And I hope that father and mother will soon come to heaven, and I shall be with them then. I am sometimes afraid that I am too impatient to go."

"What makes you think," I asked, "that you are prepared to die?"

He hesitated for a moment, and then said, "Because Jesus Christ has said, Whosoever cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. I do think that I love the Savior, and I wish to go to him, and to be made holy."

While talking with him, I heard some boys laughing and playing under the window. But this sick boy looked up to me, and said, "Oh, how much more happy am I now, than I used to be when well and out at play, not thinking of God or heaven! There is not a boy in the street so happy as I." This little boy had for some time been endeavoring to do his duty as a Christian. His conduct showed that he loved the Savior. And when sickness came, and death was near, he was happy. But, oh, how sad must that child feel, who is dying in unrepented sin! We all must certainly soon die, and there is nothing to make us happy in death but piety. But when the Christian child goes to heaven, how happy must he be! He rises above the clouds, and the blue sky, and the twinkling stars, till he enters the home of God and the angels. There he becomes an angel himself. God gives him a body of perfect beauty, and furnishes him with wings, with which he can fly from world to world. God is his approving Father. Angels are his beloved friends. You often, in a clear evening, look up upon the distant stars, and wonder who inhabits them. You think, if you had the wings of an eagle, you would love to fly up there, and make a visit. Now, it is not improbable that the Christian, in heaven, can pass from star to star, as you can go from house to house in your own neighborhood. The very thought is enrapturing. If every hour of our lives were spent in sorrow, it would be

nothing, compared with the joys which God has promised his friends at his right hand. When we think of the green pastures of heaven; of the still waters of that happy world; when we think of mingling with the angels in their flight; of uniting our voices with theirs in songs of praise; of gazing upon all the glories and sharing all the rapture of the heavenly world—O, how tame do the joys of earth appear!

Some children, however, think that they can put off becoming Christians till a dying hour, and then repent and be saved. Even if you could do this, it would be at the loss of much usefulness and much happiness. But the fact is, you are never certain of a moment of life. You are little aware of the dangers to which you are continually exposed.

"The rising morning can't assure,
That we shall spend the day;
For death stands ready at the door,
To snatch our lives away."

We are reminded of the uncertainty of life, by the accidents which are every day occurring. Often, when we least suspect it, we are in the most imminent hazard of our lives. When I was a boy, I one day went a gunning. I was to call for another boy, who lived at a little distance from my father's. Having loaded my gun with a heavy charge of pigeon- shot, and put in a new flint, which would strike out a brilliant shower of sparks, I carefully primed the gun, and set out upon my expedition. When arrived at the house of the boy who was to go with me, I leaned the gun against the side of the house, and waited a few moments for him to get ready. About a rod from the door, where I was waiting, there was another house. A little girl stood upon the window- seat, looking out of the window. Another boy came along, and, taking up the gun, not knowing that it was loaded and primed, took deliberate aim at the face of the girl, and pulled the trigger. But God, in mercy, caused the gun to miss fire. Had it gone off, the girl's face would have been blown all to pieces, I never can think of the danger she was in, even now, without trembling. The girl did not see the boy take aim at her, and does not now know how narrow was her escape from death. She little supposed that, when standing in perfect health by the window in her own father's house, she was in danger of dropping down dead upon the floor. We are all continually exposed to such dangers, and when we least suspect it, may be in the greatest peril. Is it not, then, folly to delay preparation for death? You may die within one hour. You may not have one moment of warning allowed you. A few years ago, a little boy was riding in the stage. It was a pleasant summer's day. The horses were trotting rapidly along by fields, and bridges, and orchards, and houses. The little boy stood at the coach window with a happy heart, and looked upon the green fields and pleasant dwellings; upon the poultry in the farm-yards, and the cattle upon the hills. He had not the least idea that he should die that day. But while he was looking out of the window, the iron rim of the wheel broke, and struck him upon the forehead. The poor boy lay senseless for a few days, and then died. There are a thousand ways by which life may be suddenly extinguished, and yet how seldom are they thought of by children! They almost always entirely forget the danger of early death, and postpone to a future day making their peace with God. And how little do those who read this book think that they may die suddenly! Many children, when they go to bed at night, say the prayer,

"Now I lay me down to sleep,

I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

I used to say this prayer, when a child, every night before I went to sleep. But I did not know then, as well as I do now, that I might die before the morning. Almost every night some children go to bed well, and before morning are dead. It is, therefore, very dangerous to delay repentance. Love the Savior immediately, and prepare to die, and it will be of but little consequence when you die, for you will go to heaven and be happy for ever. But we must not forget that a most terrible doom awaits those who will not serve their Maker. It matters not how much we may be beloved by our friends; how amiable may be our feelings. This alone will not save us. We must repent of sin, and love the Savior, who has suffered for us. We must pass our lives in usefulness and prayer, or, when the day of judgment comes, we shall hear the sentence, "Depart from me, for I know you not." It is indeed a fearful thing to refuse affection and obedience to our Father in heaven. He will receive none into his happy family above, but those who love him. He will have no angry, disagreeable spirits there. He will receive none but the penitent, and the humble, and the grateful, to that pure and peaceful home. Who does not wish to go to heaven? O, then, now begin to do your duty, and earnestly pray that God will forgive your sins, and give you a heart to love and obey him.

1.07 Traits of Character

CHAPTER VII.

TRAITS OF CHARACTER.

Every child must observe how much more happy and beloved some children appear to be than others. There are some children you always love to be with. They are happy themselves, and they make you happy. There are others whose society you always avoid. The very expression of their countenances produces unpleasant feelings. They seem to have no friends. No person can be happy without friends. The heart is formed for love, and cannot be happy without the opportunity of giving and receiving affection.

"It's not in titles, nor in rank,

It's not in wealth like London bank,

To make us truly blest.

If happiness have not her seat

And centre in the breast,

We may be wise, or rich, or great,

But never can be blest." But you cannot receive affection, unless you will also give. You cannot find others to love you, unless you will also love them. Love is only to be obtained by giving love in return. Hence the importance of cultivating a cheerful and obliging disposition. You cannot be happy without it. I have sometimes heard a girl say, "I know that I am very unpopular at school."

Now, this is simply saying that she is very disobliging and unamiable in her disposition. If your companions do not love you, it is your own fault. They cannot help loving you if you will be kind and friendly. If you are not loved, it is good evidence that you do not deserve to be loved. It is true that a sense of duty may at times render it necessary for you to do that which is displeasing to your companions. But if it is seen that you have a noble spirit; that you are above selfishness; that you are willing to make sacrifices of your own personal convenience to promote the happiness of your associates, you will never be in want of friends. You must not regard it as your misfortune that others do not love you, but your fault. It is not beauty, it is not wealth, that will give you friends. Your heart must glow with kindness if you would attract to yourself the esteem and affection of those by whom you are surrounded.

You are little aware how much the happiness of your whole life depends upon your cultivating an affectionate and obliging disposition. If you will adopt the resolution that you will confer favors whenever you have an opportunity, you will certainly be surrounded by ardent friends. Begin upon this principle in childhood, and act upon it through life, and you will make yourself happy, and promote the happiness of all within your influence.

You go to school in a cold winter morning. A bright fire is blazing upon the hearth, surrounded with boys struggling to get near it to warm themselves. After you get slightly warmed, another schoolmate comes in suffering with the cold.

"Here, James," you pleasantly call out to him, "I am 'most warm; you may have my place." As you slip one side to allow him to take your place at the fire, will he not feel that you are kind? The worst dispositioned boy in the world cannot help admiring such generosity. And even though he be so ungrateful as to be unwilling to return the favor, you may depend upon it that he will be your friend, as far as he is capable of friendship. If you will habitually act upon this principle, you will never want for friends.

Suppose some day you are out with your companions playing ball. After you have been playing for some time, another boy comes along. He cannot be chosen upon either side; for there is no one to match him.

"Henry," you say, "you may take my place a little while, and I will rest."

You throw yourself down upon the grass, while Henry, fresh and vigorous, takes your bat, and engages in the game. He knows that you gave up to accommodate him. And how can he help liking you for it? The fact is, that neither man nor child can cultivate such a spirit of generosity and kindness, without attracting affection and esteem. Look and see who of your companions have the most friends, and you will find that they are those who have this noble spirit; who are willing to deny themselves, that they may make their associates happy. This is not peculiar to childhood, but is the same in all periods of life. There is but one way to make friends, and that is by being friendly to others.

Perhaps some child who reads this, feels conscious of being disliked, and yet desires to have the affection of companions. You ask me what you shall do. I will tell you what. I will give you an infallible recipe. Do all in your power to make others happy. Be willing to make sacrifices of your own convenience that you may promote the happiness of others. This is the way to make friends, and the only way. When you are playing with your brothers and sisters at home, be always ready to give them more than their share of privileges. Manifest an obliging disposition, and they cannot but regard you with affection. In all your intercourse with others, at home or abroad, let these feelings influence you, and you will receive the rich reward of devoted friends. The very exercise of these feelings brings enjoyment. The benevolent man is a cheerful man. His family is happy. His home is the abode of the purest earthly joy. These feelings are worth cultivating, for they bring with them their own reward. Benevolence is the spirit of heaven. Selfishness is the spirit of the fiend. The heart benevolent and kind

The most resembles God. But persons of ardent dispositions often find it exceedingly difficult to deny themselves. Some little occurrence irritates them, and they speak hastily and angrily. Offended with a companion, they will do things to give pain, instead of pleasure. You must have your temper under control if you would exercise a friendly disposition, A bad temper is an infirmity, which, if not restrained, will be continually growing worse and worse. There was a man, a few years since, tried for murder. When a boy, he gave loose to his passions. The least opposition would rouse his anger, and he made no efforts to subdue himself. He had no one who could love him. If he was playing with others, he would every moment be getting irritated. As he grew older,

his passions increased, and he became so ill-natured that every one avoided him. One day, as he was talking with another man, he became so enraged at some little provocation, that he seized a club, and with one blow laid the man lifeless at his feet. He was seized and imprisoned. But, while in prison, the fury of a malignant and ungoverned spirit increased to such a degree that he became a maniac. The very fires of the world of wo were burning in his heart. Loaded with chains, and immured in a dark dungeon, he was doomed to pass the miserable remnant of his guilty life, the victim of his ungovernable passion. This is a very unusual case. But nothing is more common than for a child to destroy his own peace, and to make his brothers and sisters continually unhappy by indulging in a peevish and irritable spirit. Nothing is more common than for a child to cherish this disposition until he becomes a man, and then, by his peevishness and fault- finding, he destroys the happiness of all who are near him. His home is the scene of discord. His family are made wretched. An amiable disposition makes its possessor happy. And if you would have such a disposition, you must learn to control yourself. If others injure you, they the gospel rule, and do them good in return, If they revile you, speak kindly to them. It is far better to suffer injury than to inflict injury. If you will endeavor in childhood in this way to control your passions, to be always mild, and forbearing, and forgiving, you will disarm opposition, and, in many cases, convert enemies to friends. You will be beloved by those around you, and when you have a home of your own, your cheerful and obliging spirit will make it a happy home.

One thing you may be sure of. There can be no real happiness when there is not an amiable disposition. You cannot more surely make yourself wretched, than by indulging in an irritable spirit. Love is the feeling which fills every angel's bosom; and it is the feeling which should fill every human heart. It is love which will raise us to the angel's throne. It is malice which will sink us to the demon's dungeon. I hope that every child who reads this, will be persuaded, by these remarks, immediately to commence the government of his temper, Resolve that you never will be angry. If your brother or your sister does any thing which has a tendency to provoke you, restrain your feelings, and speak mildly and softly. Let no provocation draw from you an angry or an unkind word. If you will commence in this way, and persevere, you will soon get that control over yourself that will contribute greatly to your happiness. Your friends will increase, and you will be prepared for far more extensive usefulness in the world. And is there not something noble in being able to be always calm and pleasant? I once saw two men conversing in the streets. One became very unreasonably enraged with the other. In the fury of his anger, he appeared like a madman. He addressed the other in language the most abusive and insulting. The gentleman whom he thus abused, with a pleasant countenance and a calm voice, said to him, "Now, my friend, you will be sorry for all this when your passion is over. This language does me no harm, and can do you no good."

Now is it not really magnanimous to have such a spirit? Every person who witnessed this interview despised the angry man, and respected the one who was so calm and self-possessed.

Humility is another very important trait of character, which should be cultivated in early life. What can be more disgusting than the ridiculous airs of a vain child? Sometimes you will see a foolish girl tossing her head about, and walking with a mincing step, which shows you at once that she is excessively vain. She thinks that others are admiring her ridiculous airs, when the fact is, they are laughing at her, and despising her. Every one speaks of her as a very simple, vain girl. Vanity is a sure sign of weakness of mind; and if you indulge in so contemptible a passion, you will surely be

the subject of ridicule and contempt. A young lady was once passing an afternoon at the house of a friend. As she, with one or two gentlemen and ladies, was walking in the garden, she began to make a display of her fancied learning. She would look at a flower, and with great self-sufficiency talk of its botanical characteristics. She thought that the company were all wondering at the extent of her knowledge, when they were all laughing at her, as a self-conceited girl who had not sense enough to keep herself from appearing ridiculous. The gentlemen were winking at one another, and slyly laughing as she uttered one learned word after another, with an affected air of familiarity with scientific terms. During the walk, she took occasion to lug in all the little she knew, and at one time ventured to quote a little Latin for their edification. Poor simpleton! She thought she had produced quite an impression upon their minds. And, in truth, she had. She had fixed indelibly the impression that she was an insufferably weak and self-conceited girl. She made herself the laughing-stock of the whole company. The moment she was gone, there was one general burst of laughter. And not one of those gentlemen or ladies could ever think of that vain girl afterwards, without emotions of contempt. This is the invariable effect of vanity. You cannot so disguise it, but that it will be detected, and cover you with disgrace. There is no foible more common than this, and there is none more supremely ridiculous.

One boy happens to have rich parents, and he acts as though he supposed that there was some virtue in his father's money which pertained to him. He goes to school and struts about, as though he were lord of the play-ground. Now, every body who sees this, says, it is a proof that the boy has not much mind. He is a simple boy. If he had good sense he would perceive that others of his playmates, in many qualities, surpassed him, and that it became him to be humble and unostentatious. The mind that is truly great is humble.

We are all disgusted with vanity wherever it appears. Go into a school-room, and look around upon the appearance of the various pupils assembled there. You will perhaps see one girl, with head tossed upon one shoulder, and with a simpering countenance, trying to look pretty. You speak to her. Instead of receiving a plain, kind, honest answer, she replies with voice and language and attitude full of affectation. She thinks she is exciting your admiration. But, on the contrary, she is exciting disgust and loathing.

You see another girl, whose frank and open countenance proclaims a sincere and honest heart. All her movements are natural. She manifests no desire to attract attention. The idea of her own superiority seems not to enter her mind. As, in the recess, she walks about the schoolroom, you can detect no airs of self-conceit. She is pleasant to all her associates. You ask her some question. She answers you with modesty and unostentation. Now, this girl, without any effort to attract admiration, is beloved and admired. Every one sees at once that she is a girl of good sense. She knows too much to be vain. She will never want for friends. This is the kind of character which insures usefulness and happiness. A little girl who had rich parents, and was handsome in personal appearance, was very vain of her beauty and of her father's wealth. She disgusted all her school-mates by her conceit. And though she seemed to think that every one ought to admire her, she was beloved by none. She at last left school, a vain, disgusting girl. A young man, who was so simple as to fall in love with this piece of pride and affectation, at length married her. For a few years the property which she received of her father supported them. But soon her father died, and her husband grew dissipated, and before long their property was all squandered. She had no friends to whom she could look for assistance, and they were every

month sinking deeper and deeper in poverty. Her husband at last became a perfect sot, and staggered through the streets in the lowest state of degradation. She was left with one or two small children, and without any means of support. In a most miserable hovel, this poor woman was compelled to take up her residence. By this time, her pride had experienced a fall. She no longer exhibited the airs of a vain girl, but was an afflicted and helpless woman. The sorrow and disgrace into which she was plunged by the intemperance of her husband, preyed so deeply upon her feelings as to destroy her health, and in this condition she was carried to the poor-house. There she lingered out the few last years of her sad earthly existence. What a termination of life for a vain and haughty girl! And what a lesson is this to all, to be humble and unassuming! You may be in health to-day, and in sickness to-morrow. This year you may be rich, and have need of nothing, and the next year you may be in the most abject poverty, Your early home may be one of luxury and elegance, and in your dying hour you may be in the poor-house, without a friend to watch at your bedside. Is it not, then, the height of folly to indulge in vanity?

If any child will look around upon his own companions, he will see that those are most beloved and respected, who have no disposition to claim superiority over their associates. How pleasant is it to be in company with those who are conciliating and unassuming! But how much is every one disgusted with the presence of those who assume airs of importance, and are continually saying, by their conduct, that they think themselves deserving particular attention! No one regrets to see such self-conceit humbled. When such persons meet with misfortune, no one appears to regret it, no one sympathizes with them.

You must guard against this contemptible vice, you would be useful, or respected, or happy. If you would avoid exciting disgust, avoid vanity. If you do not wish to be the laughing-stock of all your acquaintance, do not let them detect in you consequential airs. If you would not be an object of hatred and disgust, beware how you indulge feelings of fancied superiority. Be plain, and sincere, and honest-hearted. Disgrace not yourself by affectation and pride. Let all your words and all your actions show that you think no more highly of yourself than you ought to think. Then will others love you. They will rejoice at your prosperity. And they will be glad to see you rising in the world, in usefulness and esteem.

Moral courage is a trait of character of the utmost importance to be possessed. A man was once challenged to fight a duel. As he thought of his own condition, if he should kill his adversary, and of his widowed wife and orphan children, if he should be shot himself as he thought of his appearance before the bar of God to answer for the atrocious sin, he shrunk from accepting the challenge. But when he thought of the ridicule to which he would be exposed if he declined; that others would call him a coward, and point at him the finger of scorn, he was afraid to refuse. He was such a coward that he did not dare to meet the ridicule of contemptible men. He had so little moral courage, that he had rather become a murderer, or expose himself to be shot, than boldly to disregard the opinions and the sneers of the unprincipled and base. It is this want of moral courage which very frequently leads persons to the commission of crimes.

There is nothing so hard to be borne as ridicule. It requires a bold heart to be ready to do one's duty, unmoved by the sneers of others. How often does a child do that which he knows to be wrong, because he is afraid that others will call him a coward if he does right! One cold winter's day, three boys were passing by a school-house. The oldest was a mischievous fellow, always in

trouble himself, and trying to get others into trouble. The youngest, whose name was George, was a very amiable boy, who wished to do right, but was very deficient in moral courage. We will call the oldest Henry, and the other of the three James. The following dialogue passed between them.

Henry.—What fun it would be to throw a snowball against the schoolroom door, and make the instructor and scholars all jump!

James.—You would jump if you should. If the instructor did not catch you and whip you, he would tell your father, and you would get a whipping then, that would make you jump higher than the scholars, I think.

Henry.—Why, we could get so far off, before the instructor could come to the door, that he could not tell who we are. Here is a snow-ball just as hard as ice, and George had as lief throw it against that door as not.

James.—Give it to him and see. He would not dare to throw it against the door.

Henry.—Do you think George is a coward? You don't know him as well as I do. Here, George, take this snow-ball, and show James that you are not such a coward as he thinks you to be.

George.—I am not afraid to throw it. But I do not want to. I do not see that it will do any good or that there will be any fun in it.

James.—There, I told you he would not dare to throw it.

Henry.—Why, George, are you turning coward? I thought you did not fear any thing. We shall have to call you chicken-hearted. Come, save your credit, and throw it. I know you are not afraid to.

George.—Well, I am not afraid to, said George. Give me the snowball. I had as lief throw it as not.

Whack went the snow-ball against the door; and the boys took to their heels. Henry was laughing as heartily as he could to think what a fool he had made of George. George afterwards got a whipping for his folly, as he richly deserved. He was such a coward that he was afraid of being called a coward. He did not dare to refuse to do as Henry told him do, for fear that he would be laughed at. If he had been really a brave boy, he would have said,

"Henry, do you suppose that I am such a fool as to throw that snowball just because you want to have me? You may throw your own snowballs, if you please."

Henry would perhaps have tried to laugh at him. He would have called him a coward, hoping in this way to induce him to obey his wishes. But George would have replied,

"Do you think that I care for your laughing? I do not think it is right to throw a snow-ball against the school-room door. And I will not do that which I think to be wrong, if the whole town join with you in laughing." This would have been real moral courage. Henry would have seen at once, that it would do no good to laugh at a boy who had so bold a heart. And you must have this fearlessness of spirit, or you will be continually involved in trouble, and will deserve and receive contempt.

I once knew a man who had so little independence, that he hardly dared express an opinion different from that of those he was with. When he was talking upon politics, he would agree with the persons with whom he happened to be conversing, no matter what their views, or what their

party. He was equally fickle and undecided upon the subject of religion, differing from none, and agreeing with all. The consequence was, that he had the confidence of none, and the contempt of all. He sunk into merited disgrace in the estimation of the whole community.

You must have an opinion of your own. And you must be ready, frankly and modestly, to express it, when occasion requires, without being intimidated by fear of censure. You can neither command respect nor be useful without it. In things which concern your own personal convenience merely, you should be as yielding as the air. But where duty is concerned, you should be as firm and as unyielding as the rock. Be ever ready to sacrifice your own comfort to promote the comfort of others. Be conciliating and obliging in all your feelings and actions. Show that you are ready to do every thing in your power to make those around you happy. Let no one have occasion to say that you are stubborn and unaccommodating. But, on the other hand, where duty is involved, let nothing tempt you to do wrong. Be bold enough to dare to do right, whatever may be the consequences. If others laugh at your scruples, let them laugh as long as they please. And let them see that you are not to be frightened by their sneers. Your courage will often be tried. There will be occasions in which it will require a severe struggle to preserve your integrity. But ever remember that if you would do any good in the world, you must possess this moral courage. It is the want of this that leaves thousands to live in a way which their consciences reprove, and to die in despair. Unless you possess this trait of character, to some considerable degree, it can hardly be expected that you will ever become a Christian. You must learn to act for yourself, unintimidated by the censure, and unmoved by the flattery of others.

I now bring this book to a close. If you will diligently endeavor to be influenced by its directions your usefulness and happiness will surely be promoted. Soon you will leave home, no more to return but as a visitor. The character you have acquired and the habits you have formed while at home, in all probability, will accompany you through life. You are now surrounded by all the joys of home. Affectionate parents watch over you, supplying all your wants. You have but few solicitudes and but few sorrows. Soon, however, you must leave parents, brothers, and sisters, and enter upon the duties and cares of life almost alone. How affecting will be the hour, when your foot steps from your father's dwelling, from your mother's care, to seek a new home among strangers! You now cannot conceive the feelings which will press upon you as your father takes your hand to bid you the parting farewell, and your mother endeavors to hide her tears, as you depart from her watchful eye, to meet the temptations and sorrows of life. Your heart will then be full. Tears will fill your eyes. Emotion will choke your voice.

You will then reflect upon all the scenes of your childhood with feelings you never had before. Every unkind word you have uttered to your parents—every unkind look you have given them, will cause you the sincerest sorrow. If you have one particle of generous feeling remaining in your bosom, you will long to fall upon your knees and ask your parents' forgiveness for every pang you may have caused their hearts. The hour when you leave your home, and all its joys, will be such an hour as you never have passed before. The feelings which will then oppress your heart, will remain with you for weeks and months. You will often, in the pensive hour of evening, sit down and weep, as you think of parents and home far away. Oh, how cold will seem the love of others, compared with a mother's love! How often will your thoughts fondly return to joys which have forever fled! Again and again will you think over the years that are past. Every recollection of affection and obedience will awaken joy in your heart. Every remembrance of ingratitude will awaken

repentance and remorse.

O, then, think of the time when you must bid father and mother, brothers and sisters, farewell. Think of the time when you must leave the fireside around which you have spent so many pleasant evenings, and go out into the wide world, with no other dependence than the character you have formed at home. If this character be good, if you possess amiable and obliging and generous feelings, you may soon possess a home of your own, when the joys of your childhood will in some degree be renewed. And if you will pass your days in the service of God, imitating the character of the Savior, and cherishing the feelings of penitence and love, which the Bible requires, you will soon be in that happy home which is never to be forsaken. There, are joys from which you never will be separated, There, are friends, angels in dignity and spotless in purity, in whose loved society you will find joys such as you never experienced while on earth. When a son was leaving the roof of a pious father, to go out into the wide world to meet its temptations, and to battle with its storms, his heart was oppressed with the many emotions which were struggling there. The day had come in which he was to leave the fireside of so many enjoyments; the friends endeared to him by so many associations— so many acts of kindness. He was to bid adieu to his mother, that loved, loved benefactor, who had protected him in sickness, and rejoiced with him in health. He was to leave a father's protection, to go forth and act without an adviser, and rely upon his own unaided judgment. He was to bid farewell to brothers and sisters, no more to see them but as an occasional visitor at his paternal home. Oh, how cold and desolate did the wide world appear! How did he hesitate from launching forth to meet its tempests and its storms! But the hour had come for him to go; and he must suppress his emotions, and triumph over his reluctance. He went from room to room, looking, as for the last time, upon those scenes, to which imagination would so often recur, and where it would love to linger. The well-packed trunk was in the entry, waiting the arrival of the stage. Brothers and sisters were moving about, hardly knowing whether to smile or to cry. The father sat at the window, humming a mournful air, as he was watching the approach of the stage which was to bear his son away to take his place far from home, in the busy crowd of a bustling world. The mother, with all the indescribable emotions of a mother's heart, was placing in a small bundle a few little comforts such as none but a mother could think of, and, with most generous resolution, endeavoring to preserve a cheerful countenance, that, as far as possible, she might preserve her son from unnecessary pain in the hour of departure.

"Here, my son," said she, "is a nice pair of stockings, which will be soft and warm for your feet. I have run the heels for you, for I am afraid you will not find any one who will quite fill a mother's place." The poor boy was overflowing with emotion, and did not dare to trust his voice with an attempt to reply.

"I have put a little piece of cake here, for you may be hungry on the road, and I will put it in the top of the bundle, so that you can get it without any difficulty. And in this needle-book I have put up a few needles and some thread, for you may at times want some little stitch taken, and you will have no mother or sister to go to." The departing son could make no reply. He could retain his emotion only by silence. At last the rumbling of the wheels of the stage was heard, and the four horses were reined up at the door. The boy endeavored, by activity, in seeing his trunk and other baggage properly placed, to gain sufficient fortitude to enable him to articulate his farewell. He, however, strove in vain. He took his mother's hand. The tear glistened for a moment in her eye, and then silently rolled down her cheek. He struggled with all his energy to say good by, but he could not. In

unbroken silence he shook her hand, and then in silence received the adieus of brothers and sisters, as one after another took the hand of their departing companion. He then took the warm hand of his warm-hearted father. His father tried to smile, but it was the struggling smile of feelings which would rather have vented themselves in tears. For a moment he said not a word, but retained the hand of his son, as he accompanied him out of the door to the stage. After a moment's silence, pressing his hand, he said, "My son, you are now leaving us; you may forget your father and your mother, your brothers and your sisters, but, oh, do not forget your God!" The stage door closed upon the boy, The crack of the driver's whip was heard, and the rumbling wheels bore him rapidly away from all the privileges and all the happiness of his early home. His feelings, so long restrained, now burst out, and, sinking back upon his seat, he enveloped himself in his cloak, and burst into tears.

Hour after hour the stage rolled on. Passengers entered and left; but the boy (perhaps I ought rather to call him the young man) was almost insensible to every thing that passed. He sat, in sadness and in silence, in the corner of the stage, thinking of the loved home he had left. Memory ran back through all the years of his childhood, lingering here and there, with pain, upon an act of disobedience, and recalling an occasional word of unkindness. All his life seemed to be passing in review before him, from the first years of his conscious existence, to the hour of his departure from his home. Then would the parting words of his father ring in his ears. He had always heard the morning and evening prayer. He had always witnessed the power of religion exemplified in all the duties of life. And the undoubted sincerity of a father's language, confirmed as it had been by years of corresponding practice, produced an impression upon his mind too powerful ever to be effaced—"My son, you may forget father and mother, you may forget brothers and sisters, but, oh, do not forget your God." The words rung in his ears. They entered his heart. Again and again his thoughts ran back through the years he had already passed, and the reviving recollections brought fresh floods of tears. But still his thoughts ran on to his father's parting words, "forget not your God."

It was midnight before the stage stopped, to give him a little rest. He was then more than a hundred miles from home. But still his father's words were ringing in his ears. He was conducted up several flights of stairs to a chamber in a crowded hotel. After a short prayer, he threw himself upon the bed, and endeavored to obtain a little sleep. But his excited imagination ran back to the home he had left. Again he was seated by the fireside. Again he heard the soothing tones of his kind mother's voice, and sat by his father's side. In the vagaries of his dream, he again went through the scene of parting, and wept in his sleep as he bade adieu to brothers and sisters, and heard a father's parting advice, "Oh, my son, forget not your God." But little refreshment could be derived from such sleep. And indeed he had been less than an hour upon his bed, before some one knocked at the door, and placed a lamp in his room, saying, "It is time to get up, sir: the stage is almost ready to go." He hastily rose from his bed, and after imploring a blessing upon himself, and fervently commending to God his far-distant friends, now quietly sleeping in that happy home which he had left for ever, he hastened down stairs, and soon again was rapidly borne away by the fleet horses of the mailcoach.

It was a clear autumnal morning. The stars shone brightly in the sky, and the thoughts of the lonely wanderer were irresistibly carried to that home beyond the stars, and to that God whom his father had so affectingly entreated him not to forget. He succeeded, however, in getting a few moments

of troubled sleep, as the stage rolled on; but his thoughts were still reverting, whether asleep or awake, to the home left far behind. Just as the sun was going down the western hills, at the close of the day, he alighted from the stage, in the village of strangers, in which he was to find his new home. Not an individual there had he ever seen before. Many a pensive evening did he pass, thinking of absent friends. Many a lonely walk did he take, while his thoughts were far away among the scenes of his childhood. And when the winter evenings came, with the cheerful blaze of the fireside, often did he think, with a sigh, of the loved and happy group encircling his father's fireside, and sharing those joys he had left for ever. But a father's parting words did not leave his mind. There they remained. And they, in connection with other events, rendered effectual by the Spirit of God, induced him to endeavor to consecrate his life to his Maker's service. In the hopes of again meeting beloved parents and friends in that home, which gilds the paradise above, he found that solace which could no where else be obtained, and was enabled to go on in the discharge of the duties of life, with serenity and peace. Reader, you must soon leave your home, and leave it for ever. The privileges and the joys you are now partaking, will soon pass away. And when you have gone forth into the wide world, and feel the want of a father's care, and of a mother's love, then will all the scenes you have passed through, return freshly to your mind, and the remembrance of every unkind word, or look, or thought, will give you pain. Try, then, to be an affectionate and obedient child. Cultivate those virtues which will prepare you for usefulness and happiness in your maturer years, and above all, make it your object to prepare for that happy home above, where sickness can never enter, and sorrow can never come. THE END.

2. The Christian Mother

THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER by John Abbott, 1833, Worcester, Mass. Published by the American Tract Society 01 The Mother's RESPONSIBILITY 02 The Mother's AUTHORITY 03 The Mother's DIFFICULTIES 04 The Mother's FAULTS and ERRORS 05 The Mother's RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION 06 FRUITS of PIETY

07 RESULTS

"Be an example . . . in speech, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity." 1 Timothy 4:12 "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6 The object of this book is practical utility, not literary effect. It was written for mothers in the common walks of life. There are many mothers, in every village of our land, who are looking eagerly for information respecting the government of their children. It is hoped that the following treatise may render them some assistance.

Some people may object to the minuteness of detail, and the familiarity of illustration, occasionally introduced. We, however, are persuaded that this objection will not be made by mothers. Education consists in attention to little things. The religious sentiments inculcated in this book are those usually denominated evangelical. We have proceeded upon the principle that this present life is the commencement of external existence, and that the great object of education is to prepare the child for its heavenly home.

2.01 The Mother's RESPONSIBILITY

THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER by John Abbott, 1833, Worcester, Mass. Published by the American Tract Society The Mother's RESPONSIBILITY

"Be an example . . . in speech, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity." 1 Timothy 4:12 "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6 A few years ago, some gentlemen who were associated in preparing for the ministry, felt interested in ascertaining what proportion of their number had pious mothers. They were greatly surprised and delighted in finding that out of one hundred and twenty students, over a hundred had been borne by a mother's prayers, and directed by a mother's counsels, to the Savior. Though some of these had broken away from all the restraints of home, and like the prodigal, had wandered in sin and sorrow, yet they could not forget the impressions of childhood, and were eventually brought to the Savior, to be a mother's joy and blessing. Many interesting facts have, within a few years, drawn the attention of Christians to this subject. The efforts which a mother makes for the improvement of her child in knowledge and virtue, are necessarily retired and unobtrusive. The world knows nothing 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?

"A good boy generally makes a good man." Said the mother of Washington,

"George was always a good boy." Here we see one secret of his greatness. George Washington had a mother who made him a good boy, and instilled into his heart those principles which raised him to be the benefactor of his country, and one of the brightest ornaments of the world. The mother of Washington is entitled to a nation's gratitude. She taught her boy the principles of obedience, and moral courage, and virtue. She, in a great measure, formed the character of the hero, and the statesman. It was by her own fire-side that she taught her playful boy to govern himself; and thus was he prepared for the brilliant career of usefulness which he afterward pursued. We are indebted to God for the gift of Washington; but we are no less indebted to him for the gift of his inestimable mother. Had she been a weak, and indulgent, and unfaithful parent, the unchecked energies of Washington might have elevated him to the throne of a tyrant; or youthful disobedience might have prepared the way for a life of crime and a dishonored grave.

Byron had a mother just the reverse of lady Washington; and the character of the mother was transferred to the son. We cannot wonder then at his character and conduct, for we see them to be the almost necessary consequence of the education he received, and the scenes witnessed in his mother's parlor. She would at one time allow him to disobey with impunity; and at another time, she would fly into a rage and beat him. She thus taught him to defy all authority, human and divine; to indulge, without restraint, in sin; to give himself up to the power of every maddening passion. It was the mother of Byron who laid the foundation of his pre-eminence in guilt. She taught him to plunge into that sea of profligacy and wretchedness, upon whose agitated waves he was tossed for life. If the crimes of the poet deserve the execration of the world—the world cannot forget that it was the mother who fostered in his youthful heart those passions which made the son a curse to his fellow-men.

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 may be the most 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 vigor. 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 beside, 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 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 looks to the father to enforce obedience, and to control; 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 entrusted to a mother's care, it follows that maternal influence, more than any thing else, forms the future character. The history of John Newton is often mentioned as a proof of the deep and lasting impression which a mother may produce upon the mind of her child. He had a pious mother. She often retired to her closet, and placing her hand upon his youthful head, implored God's blessing upon her boy. These prayers and instructions sunk deep into his heart. He could not but revere that mother. He could not but feel that there was a holiness in such a character, demanding reverence and love. He could not tear from his heart, in after life, the impressions then produced. Though he became a wicked wanderer, though he forsook friends and home, and every virtue; the remembrance of a mother's prayers, like a guardian angel, followed him wherever he

went. He mingled in the most evil and disgraceful scenes of a sailor's life, and while surrounded with guilty associates, in midnight revelry, he would fancy he felt the soft hand of his mother upon his head, pleading with God to forgive and bless her boy. He went to the coast of Africa, and became even more degraded than the savages upon her dreary shores. But the soft hand of his mother was still upon his head, and the fervent prayers of his mother still thrilled in his heart. And this influence, after the lapse of many guilty years, brought back the prodigal, a penitent and a child of God; elevated him to be one of the brightest ornaments of the Christian church, and to guide many sons and daughters to glory. What a forcible comment is this upon the power of maternal influence! And what encouragement does this present to every mother to be faithful in her efforts to train up her child for God! Had Mrs. Newton neglected her duty, had she even been as remiss as many Christian mothers, her son, to all human view, might have continued in sin, and been an outcast from heaven. It was through the influence of the mother that the son was saved. Newton became afterward a most successful preacher of the Gospel, and every soul which he was instrumental in saving, as he sings the song of redeeming mercy, will, through eternity, bless God that Newton had such a mother. The influence thus exerted upon the mind, in early childhood, may, for many years, be apparently lost. When a son leaves home, and enters upon the busy world, many are the temptations which come crowding upon him. If he leaves home without established principles of religion and self-control, he will most assuredly fall before these temptations. He may indeed fall, even after all a mother has done, or can do; and he may become deeply involved in guilt. But he may apparently forget every lesson he learnt at home, while the influence of a mother's instructions, and a mother's prayers, is yet working powerfully and effectually in his heart. He will think of a mother's tears, when remorse keeps him awake at midnight, or when danger threatens him with speedy arraignment at the bar of God. The thoughts of the sacredness of home will often throw bitterness into his cup of guilty pleasure, and compel him to sigh for the virtue and the peace he has forsaken. Even though far away, in abodes of infamy, degraded and abandoned, he must occasionally think of a broken-hearted mother. Thus may he, after many years, perhaps long after she has gone down to the grave, be led, by the remembrance of her virtues, to forsake his sins. A short time since, a gentleman, in one of our most populous cities, was going to attend a seaman's meeting in the mariner's chapel. Directly opposite the chapel there was a sailor's boarding house. In the door-way sat a hardy, weather-beaten sailor, with arms folded, and puffing a cigar, watching the people as they gradually assembled for the meeting. The gentleman walked up to him and said, "Well, my friend, won't you go with us to meeting?"

"No!" said the sailor, bluntly. The gentleman, who, from the appearance of the man, was prepared for a repulse, mildly replied, "You look, my friend, as though you had seen hard days; have you a mother?" The sailor raised his head, looked earnestly in the gentleman's face, and made no reply. The gentleman continued—"Suppose your mother were here now, what advice would she give you?" The tears rushed into the eyes of the poor sailor; he tried for a moment to conceal them, but could not; and, hastily brushing them away with the back of his rough hand, rose and said, with a voice almost inarticulate through emotion, "I'll go to the meeting." He crossed the street, entered the door of the chapel, and took his seat with the assembled congregation.

What afterward became of the man is not known. It is however almost certain that he must have had a mother who had given him good instruction; and when the gentleman appealed to her,

hardened as the sailor was, his heart melted. It is by no means improbable that this interview may have checked this man in his sins, and led him to Christ. At any event, it shows the strength of maternal influence. It shows that years of wandering and of sin cannot erase from the heart the impression which a mother's instructions and a mother's prayers have left there.

It is a great trial to have children undutiful when young; but it is a tenfold greater affliction to have a child grow up to maturity in disobedience, and become a dissolute and abandoned man. How many parents have passed days of sorrow and nights of sleeplessness in consequence of the misconduct of their offspring! How many have had their hearts broken, and their gray hairs brought down with sorrow to the grave, solely in consequence of their own neglect to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord! Your future happiness is in the hands of your children. They may throw gloom over all your prospects, embitter every enjoyment, and make you so miserable, that your only prospect of relief will be in death. That little girl whom you now cuddle upon your knee, and who plays, so full of enjoyment, upon your floor, has entered a world where temptations are thick around. What is to enable her to resist these temptations, but established principles of piety? And where is she to obtain these principles, but from a mother's instructions and example? If, through your neglect now, she should hereafter yield herself to temptation and sin, what must become of your peace of mind? O mother! little are you aware of the wretchedness with which your beloved daughter may hereafter overwhelm you!

Many illustrations of the most affecting nature might be here introduced. It would be easy to appeal to a vast number of living sufferers, in attestation of the woe which the sin of the child has occasioned. You may go, not only in imagination, but in reality, to the darkened chamber, where the mother sits weeping, and refusing to be comforted, for a daughter is lost to virtue and to heaven. Still, no person can imagine how overwhelming the agony which must prey upon a mother thus dishonored and broken-hearted. This is a sorrow which can only be understood by one who has tasted its bitterness and felt its weight. We may go to the house of piety and prayer, and find the father and mother with countenances emaciated with suffering; not a smile plays upon their features, and the mournful accents of their voice tell how deeply seated is their sorrow. Shall we inquire into the cause of this heart-rending grief? The mother would only reply with tears and sobs. The father would summon all his fortitude, and say, "my daughter"—and say no more. The anguish of his spirit would prevent the farther utterance of his grief. Is this exaggeration? No! Let your lovely daughter, now your pride and joy, be abandoned to infamy, be an outcast from society, and you must feel what language cannot express. This is a dreadful subject; but it is one which the mother must feel and understand. There are facts which might here be introduced, sufficient to make every parent tremble. We might lead you to the dwelling of the clergyman, and tell you that a daughter's sin has shattered the mother, and sent paleness to the cheek, and trembling to the frame, and agony to the heart of the aged father. We might carry you to the parlor of the rich man, and show you all the elegance and the opulence with which he is surrounded; and yet he would tell you that he was one of the most unhappy of the sons of affliction, and that he would gladly give all his treasures if he could purchase back a daughter's virtue; that he could gladly lie down to die, if he could thus blot out the remembrance of a daughter's infamy. No matter what your situation in life may be, that little child, now so innocent, whose playful endearments and happy laugh awaken such thrilling emotions in your heart, may cause you years of most unalleviated misery! And mother! look at that drunken vagrant, staggering by your door. Listen to his horrid imprecations, as

bloated and ragged he passes along. That wretch has a mother. Perhaps, widowed and in poverty, she needs the comfort and support of an affectionate son. You have a son. You may soon be a widow.

If your son is dissolute, you are doubly widowed; you are worse, infinitely worse than childless. You cannot now endure even the thought that your son will ever be thus abandoned. How dreadful then must be the experience of the reality!

I once knew a mother who had an only son. She loved him most ardently, and could not bear to deny him any indulgence. He, of course, soon learned to rule his mother. At the death of his father, the poor woman was left at the mercy of this vile boy. She had neglected her duty when he was young, and now his ungovernable passions had become too strong for her control. Self-willed, turbulent, and revengeful, he was his mother's bitterest curse. His fits of rage at times amounted almost to madness. One day, infuriated with his mother, he set fire to her house, and it was burned to the ground, with all its contents, and she was left in the extremest state of poverty. He was imprisoned as an incendiary, and, in his cell, he became a maniac, if he was not such before, and madly dug out his own eyes. He now lies in perpetual darkness, confined by the stone walls and grated bars of his dungeon, an infuriated madman.

O how hard it must be for a mother, after all her pain, and anxiety, and watchings, to find her son a demoniac spirit, instead of a guardian and friend!

You have watched over your child, through all the months of its helpless infancy. You have denied yourself, that you might give it comfort. When it has been sick, you have been unmindful of your own weariness, and your own weakness, and through many nights you have watched at its cradle, administering to all its needs. When it has smiled, you have felt a joy which none but a parent can feel, and have pressed your much loved treasure to your bosom, praying that its future years of obedience and affection might be your ample reward. And now, how dreadful a requital, for that child to grow up to hate and abuse you; to leave you friendless, in sickness and in poverty; to squander all his earnings in haunts of iniquity and degradation!

How entirely is your earthly happiness at the disposal of your child! His character is now, in an important sense, in your hands, and you are to form it for good or for evil. If you are consistent in your government, and faithful in the discharge of your duties, your child will probably through life revere you, and be the stay and solace of your declining years. If, on the other hand, you cannot summon resolution to punish your child when disobedient; if you do not curb his passions; if you do not bring him to entire and willing subjection to your authority; you must expect that he will be your curse. In all probability, he will despise you for your weakness. Unaccustomed to restraints at home, he will break away from all restraints, and make you wretched by his life, and disgraceful in his death. But few parents think of this as they ought. They are not conscious of the tremendous consequences dependent upon the efficient and decisive government of their children. Thousands of parents now stand in our land like oaks blighted and scathed by lightnings and storms. Thousands have had every hope wrecked, every prospect darkened, and have become the victims of the most agonizing and heart-rending disappointment, solely in consequence of the misconduct of their children. And yet thousands of others are going on in the same way, preparing to experience the same suffering, and are apparently unconscious of their danger.

It is true that there are many mothers who feel their responsibilities perhaps as deeply as it is best they should feel them. But there are many others—even of Christian mothers—who seem to forget that their children will ever be less under their control than they are while young. And they are training them up, by indecision and indulgence, soon to tyrannize over their parents with a rod of iron—and to pierce their hearts with many sorrows!

If you are unfaithful to your child when he is young, he will be unfaithful to you when he is old. If you indulge him in all his foolish and unreasonable wishes when he is a child, when he becomes a man he will indulge himself; he will gratify every desire of his heart; and your sufferings will be rendered the more poignant by the reflection that it was your own unfaithfulness which has caused your ruin. If you would be the happy mother of a happy child, give your attention, and your efforts, and your prayers, to the great duty of training him up for God and heaven.

2.02 The Mother's AUTHORITY

THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER by John Abbott, 1833, Worcester, Mass. Published by the American Tract Society The Mother's AUTHORITY

I have thus endeavored to show the mother how much her happiness is dependent upon the good or bad character of her children. Your own reflections and observation have, doubtless, impressed this subject most deeply upon your heart. The question has probably often presented itself to your mind, while reading the previous chapter, "How shall I govern my children, so as to secure their virtue and happiness?" This question I shall now endeavor to answer.

OBEDIENCE is absolutely essential to proper family government. Without this, all other efforts will be in vain. You may pray with, and for your children; you may strive to instruct them in religious truth; you may be unwearied in your efforts to make them happy, and to gain their affection. But if they are in habits of disobedience, your instructions will be lost, and your toil in vain. And by obedience, I do not mean languid and dilatory yielding to repeated threats—but prompt and cheerful acquiescence in parental commands. Neither is it enough that a child should yield to your arguments and persuasions. It is essential that he should submit to your authority.

I will suppose a case in illustration of this last remark. Your little daughter is sick; you go to her with the medicine which has been prescribed for her, and the following dialogue ensues.

"Here, my daughter, is some medicine for you."

"I don't want to take it, mamma."

"Yes, my dear, do take it, for it will make you feel better."

"No it won't, mother; I don't want it."

"Yes it will, my child; the doctor says it will."

"Well, it doesn't taste good, and I don't want it." The mother continues her persuasions, and the child persists in its refusal. After a long and wearisome conflict, the mother is compelled either to throw the medicine away, or to resort to compulsion, and force down the unpalatable drug. Thus, instead of appealing to her own supreme authority, she is appealing to the reason of the child, and, under these circumstances, the child of course refuses to submit. A mother, not long since, under similar circumstances, not being able to persuade her child to take the medicine, and not having sufficient resolution to compel it, threw the medicine away. When the physician next called, she was ashamed to acknowledge her lack of government, and therefore did not tell him that the medicine had not been given. The physician finding the child worse, left another prescription, supposing the previous one had been properly administered. But the child had no idea of being convinced of the propriety of taking the bitter dose, and the renewed efforts of the mother were unavailing. Again the fond and foolish—but cruel parent—threw the medicine away, and the fever was left to rage unchecked in its veins. Again the physician called, and was surprised to find the

inefficacy of his prescriptions, and that the poor little sufferer was at the verge of death. The mother, when informed that her child must die, was in an agony, and confessed what she had done. But it was too late. The child died. And do you think that mother gazed upon its pale corpse with any common emotions of anguish? Do you think the idea never entered her mind that she was the destroyer of her child? Physicians will tell you that many children have been thus lost. Unaccustomed to obedience when well, they were still more averse to it when sick. The efforts which are made to induce a stubborn child to take medicine, often produce such an excitement as entirely to counteract the effect of the prescription; and thus is a mother often called to weep over the grave of her child, simply because she has not taught that child to obey.

It is certainly the duty of parents to convince their children of the reasonableness and propriety of their requirements. This should be done to instruct them, and to make them acquainted with moral obligation. But there should always be authority sufficient to enforce prompt obedience, whether the child can see the reason of the requirement or not. Indeed, it is impossible to govern a child by mere argument. Many cases must occur, in which it will be incapable of seeing the reasonableness of the command; and often its wishes will be so strongly opposed to duty, that all the efforts to convince will be in vain. The first thing therefore to be aimed at, is to bring your child under total subjection. Teach him that he must obey you. Sometimes give him your reasons; again withhold them. But let him perfectly understand that he is to do as he is bid. Accustom him to immediate and cheerful acquiescence in your will. This is obedience. And this is absolutely essential to good family government. Without this, your family will present one continued scene of noise and confusion; the toil of rearing up your children will be almost intolerable, and, in all probability, your heart will be broken by their future licentiousness or ingratitude.

We come now to the inquiry, HOW is this habit of obedience to be established? This is not so difficult a matter as many imagine. It does not require profound learning, or a mysterious skill, which pertains but to the few. Where do you find the best regulated families? Are they in the houses of the rich? Do the children of our most eminent men furnish the best patterns for imitation? Obviously not. In some of the most humble dwellings we find the beautiful spectacle of an orderly and well regulated family. On the other hand, in the mansions of the wealthiest or most eminent men of our country, we may often find a family of rude girls and ungovernable boys—a picture of wild misrule. It is not greatness of talent, or profound learning, which is requisite to teach a child obedience. The principles by which we are to be guided are very simple and very plain.

Never give a command which you do not intend shall be obeyed!

There is no more effectual way of teaching a child disobedience, than by giving commands which you have no intention of enforcing. A child is thus habituated to disregard its mother; and in a short time the habit becomes so strong, and the child's contempt for the mother so confirmed, that entreaties and threats are alike unheeded.

"Mary, let that book alone," says a mother to her little daughter, who is trying to pull the book from the table.

Mary stops for a moment, and then takes hold of the book again.

Pretty soon the mother looks up and sees that Mary is still playing with the book. "Did not you hear me tell you to let that book alone?" she exclaims—"Why don't you obey?"

Mary takes away her hand for a moment, but is soon again at her forbidden amusement. By and by, down comes the book upon the floor. Up jumps the mother, and hastily giving the child a passionate blow, exclaims, "There then, obey me next time." The child screams, and the mother picks up the book, saying, "I wonder why my children do not obey me better." This is not a very interesting family scene, but every one of my readers will admit that it is not an uncommon one. And is it strange that a child, thus managed, should be disobedient? No! She is actually led on by her mother to insubordination—she is actually trained to pay no heed to her directions. Even the improper punishment which sometimes follows transgression, is not inflicted on account of her disobedience, but for the accidental consequences. In the case above described, had the book not fallen, the disobedience of the child would have passed unpunished. Let it be an immutable principle in family government, that your word is law!

I was once, when riding in the country, overtaken by a rain shower, and compelled to seek shelter in a farm house. Half a dozen rude and ungovernable boys were racing about the room, in such an uproar as to prevent the possibility of conversation with the father, who was sitting by the fire. As I, however, endeavored to make some remark, the father shouted out, "Stop that noise, boys."

They paid no more heed to him than they did to the rain. Soon again, in an irritated voice, he exclaimed, "Boys, be still, or I will whip you; as sure as you are alive I will." But the boys, as though accustomed to such threats, screamed and quarreled without intermission. At last the father said to me, "I believe I have got the worst boys in town; I never can make them mind me." The fact was, these boys had the worst father in town! He was teaching them disobedience as directly and efficiently as he could. He was giving commands which he had no intention of enforcing—and they knew it! This, to be sure, is an extreme case. But just so far as any mother allows her authority to be disregarded, so far does she expose herself to the contempt of her children—and actually teaches them lessons of disobedience. And is there any difficulty in enforcing obedience to any definite command? Take the case of the child playing with the book. A mild and judicious mother says distinctly and decidedly to her child, "My daughter, you must not touch that book." The child hesitates for a moment, but yielding to the strong temptation, is soon playing with the forbidden book. The mother immediately rises, takes the child, and carries her into her chamber. She sits down and says calmly, "Mary, I told you not to touch the book, and you have disobeyed me. I am very sorry, for now I must punish you."

Mary begins to cry, and to promise not to do so again.

"But Mary," says the mother, "you have disobeyed me, and you must be punished."

Mary continues to cry, but the mother seriously and calmly punishes her. She inflicts real pain—pain that will be remembered.

She then says, "Mary, it makes mother very unhappy to have to punish you. She loves her little daughter, and wishes to have her a good girl."

She then perhaps leaves her to herself for a few minutes. A little solitude will deepen the impression made. In five or ten minutes she returns, takes Mary in her lap, and says, "My dear, are you sorry that you disobeyed mother?"

Almost any child would say, "Yes!"

"Will you be careful and not disobey me again?"

"Yes, mother."

"Well, Mary," says her mother, "I will forgive you, so far as I can; but God is displeased; you have disobeyed him as well as me. Do you wish me to ask God to forgive you?"

"Yes, mother," answers the child. The mother then kneels with her daughter and offers a simple prayer for forgiveness, and the return of peace and happiness. She then leads her out, humbled and subdued. At night, just before she goes to sleep, she mildly and affectionately reminds her of her disobedience, and advises her to ask God's forgiveness again. Mary, in child-like simplicity, acknowledges to God what she has done, and asks him to forgive her, and take care of her, during the night. When this child awakes in the morning, will not her young affections be more strongly fixed upon her mother, in consequence of the discipline of the preceding day? As she is playing about the room, will she be likely to forget the lesson she has been taught, and again reach out her hand to a forbidden object? Such an act of discipline tends to establish a general principle in the mind of the child, which will be of permanent operation, extending its influence to every command, and promoting the general authority of the mother and subjection of the child.

I know that some mothers say that they have not time to pay so much attention to their children. But the fact is, that not one-third of the time is required to take care of an orderly family, which is necessary to take care of a disorderly one. To be faithful in the government of your family, is the only way to save time. Can you afford to be distracted and harassed by continued disobedience? Can you spare the time to have your attention called away, every moment, from the business in which you are engaged, by the mischievousness of your willful children?

Look at the parent surrounded by a family of children who are in the habit of doing as they please. She is very busy, I will suppose, upon some article of dress, which it is important should be immediately finished. Every moment she is compelled to raise her eyes from her work, to see what the children are about. Samuel is climbing upon the table. Jane is drawing out the andirons. John is galloping about the room upon the tongs. The mother, almost deafened with noise, wonders what makes her children so much more troublesome than other people's.

"Jane, let those andirons alone," she exclaims. Jane runs away for a moment, chases Charles around the room, and returns to her mischief.

"Charles, put up those tongs." Charles pays no heed to the direction. The mother, soon seeing how he is ripping the carpet and bruising the furniture, gets up, gives Charles a shake, and places the tongs in their proper situation; but by the time she is fairly seated, and at her work again, Charles is astride the shovel, and traveling at the top of his speed.

I need not continue this picture. But every one knows that it is not exaggerated. Such scenes do often occur. Thousands of immortal spirits are trained up in this turbulence, and anarchy, and noise—for time and for eternity. Now this mother will tell you that she has not time to bring her children into subjection. Whereas, had she been faithful with each individual child, she would have saved herself an immense amount of time and toil.

We will suppose the case of another mother, who has the same work to perform. She has taught her children prompt and implicit obedience. She gives three of them perhaps some blocks, in one

corner of the room, and tells them that they may play "build houses," but that they must not make much noise, and must not interrupt her, for she wishes to be busy. The other three she places in another corner of the room, with their slates, and tells them that they may play "make pictures." The children, accustomed to such orderly arrangements, employ themselves very quietly and happily for perhaps three quarters of an hour. The mother goes on uninterrupted in her work. Occasionally she raises her eyes and says an encouraging word to her children, now noticing the little architects in the corner, and now glancing her eye at the drawings upon the slates; thus showing the children that she sympathizes with them, and takes an interest in their enjoyments. The children are pleased and happy. The mother is undisturbed.

She does not let them continue their amusements till they are weary of them. But after they have played perhaps three quarters of an hour, she says,

"Come, children, you have played long enough; you may take up all your little blocks and put them away in the drawer."

"O, mother," says Maria, "do let me play a little while longer, for I have got my house almost done."

"Well, you may finish it," says the judiciously kind mother, "but tell me as soon as it is done." In a few minutes Maria says, "There, mamma, see what a large house I have built!" The mother looks at it, and adds a pleasant word of encouragement, and then tells them to put all their blocks in the proper place. She tells the children with the slates to hang them up, and to put away their pencils; so that, the next day, when slates and blocks are wanted, no time may be lost in searching for them.

Now which mother has the most time? and which mother has the happiest time? And which mother will find the most comfort in the subsequent character and affection of her children?

Perhaps some one will say, this is a pleasing picture, but where are we to look for its reality? It is indeed to be regretted that such scenes are of so infrequent occurrence. But it is far from being true that they do not occur. There are many such families of happy parents and affectionate children. And these families are not confined to the wealthy and the learned. It requires not wealth, and it requires not extensive learning, to train up such a family. The principle of government is simple and plain. It is to begin with enforcing obedience to every command. It is to establish the principle that a mother's word is never to be disregarded. Every judicious parent will, indeed, try to gratify her children in their reasonable wishes. She will study to make them happy; but she will never allow them to gratify themselves in contradiction to her wishes. To illustrate this, let us refer to the children playing with the blocks. The mother tells them to put up the blocks. Maria asks permission to play a few moments longer, till she can finish her house. The mother, desirous of making her children as happy as she can, grants this reasonable wish. Here is a judicious indulgence. But suppose again that the children had continued playing without regard to their mother's command. They intend perhaps to continue their amusement only till they complete the pile then in progress. Here is an act of direct disobedience. The children are consulting their own inclinations instead of the commands of their mother. A judicious parent will not allow such an act to pass unnoticed or unpunished. She may perhaps think, considering the circumstances of the case, that a serious reprimand is all that is required. But she will not fail to seize upon the occasion to instill into their minds a lesson of obedience. Is it said that by noticing such little things a mother

must be continually finding fault? But it is not a little thing for a child to disobey a mother's commands! This one act of disregarding authority prepares the way for another. It is the commencement of evil which must be resisted. The very first appearances of insubordination must be checked. There are doubtless cases of trifling faults occurring, which a wise parent will judge it expedient to overlook. Children will be thoughtless and inadvertent. They will occasionally err from strict propriety, without any real intention of doing wrong. Judgment is here requisite in deciding what things must be overlooked; but we may be assured, I think, that direct and open disobedience is not, in any case, to be classed among the number of trifling faults. The eating of an apple banished our first parents from paradise. The atrocity of the offence consisted in its disobedience of a divine command.

Now, every mother has power to obtain prompt obedience—if she commences with her children when they are young. They are then entirely in her hands. All their enjoyments are at her disposal.

God has thus given her all the power she needs to govern and guide them as she pleases. We have endeavored to show, by the preceding illustrations, that the fundamental principle of government is—when you do give a command, invariably enforce its obedience. And God has given every mother the power. He has placed in your hands a helpless babe, entirely dependent upon you; so that if it disobeys you, all you have to do is to cut off its sources of enjoyment, or inflict bodily pain, so steadily and so invariably that disobedience and suffering shall be indissolubly connected in the mind of the child. What more power can a parent ask for than God has already given? And if we fail to use this power for the purposes for which it was bestowed, the sin is ours, and upon us and upon our children must rest the consequences. The exercise of discipline must often be painful—but if you shrink from duty here, you expose yourself to all that sad train of woes which disobedient children leave behind them. If you cannot summon sufficient resolution to deprive of enjoyment, and inflict pain when it is necessary, then you must feel that a broken heart and an old age of sorrow will not be unmerited. And when you look upon your dissolute sons and ungrateful daughters, you must remember that the time was when you might have checked their evil propensities.

If you love 'momentary ease' better than your children's welfare and your own permanent happiness, you cannot murmur at the lot you have freely chosen. And when you meet your children at the bar of God, and they point to you and say, "It was through your neglect of duty that we are banished from heaven—and consigned to endless woe!" you must feel what no tongue can tell. Ah! it is dreadful for a mother to trifle with duty. Eternal destinies are committed to your trust. The influence you are now exerting will go on, unchecked by the grave or the judgment, and will extend onward through those ages to which there is no end!

Upon the subject of obedience there are a few other suggestions of importance to be made.

1. First then, there is a very great diversity in the natural dispositions of children. Some are very tender in their feelings, and easily governed by affection. Others are naturally independent and self-willed. Sometimes a child gets its passions excited and its will determined, and it cannot be subdued but by a very great effort. Almost every faithful mother is acquainted with such contests, and she knows that they often form a crisis in the character of the child. If the child then obtains the victory, it is almost impossible for the mother afterward to regain her authority. The child feels that he is the victor, and his mother the vanquished; and it is with very great difficulty that he will be

compelled to renounce his independence.

If, on the other hand, the mother conquers, and the child is subdued, he feels that the question is settled, and he has but little disposition to resume hostilities with one who has proved herself superior. I have known many such contests, severe and protracted, which were exceedingly painful to a parent's feelings. But, when once entered upon, they must be continued till the child is subdued. It is not safe, on any account, for the parent to give up and retire vanquished. The following instance of such a contest occurred a few years since. A gentleman, sitting by his fireside one evening, with his family around him, took the spelling-book and called upon one of his little sons to come and read. John was about four years old. He knew all the letters of the alphabet perfectly, but happened at that moment to be in rather a sullen mood, and was not at all disposed to gratify his father. Very reluctantly he came as he was bid, but when his father pointed to the first letter of the alphabet, and said, "What letter is that, John?" he could get no answer. John looked upon the book, sulky and silent.

"My son," said the father, in a serious and decided tone. "What letter is that?"

John refused to answer. The contest was now fairly commenced. John was willful, and determined that he would not read. His father knew that it would be ruinous to his son to allow him to conquer. He felt that he must, at all hazards, subdue him. He took him into another room, and punished him. He then returned, and again showed John the letter. But John still refused to name it. The father again retired with his son, and punished him more severely. But it was unavailing; the stubborn child still refused to name the letter. Again the father inflicted punishment as severely as he dared to do it, and still the child, with his whole frame in agitation, refused to yield. The father was suffering from the most intense concern. He regretted exceedingly that he had been drawn into the contest. He had already punished his child with a severity which he feared to exceed. And yet the willful sufferer stood before him, sobbing and trembling, but apparently as unyielding as a rock.

I have often heard that parent mention the acuteness of his feelings at that moment. His heart was bleeding at the pain which he had been compelled to inflict upon his son. He knew that the question was now to be settled—who should be master! And after his son had withstood so long and so much, he greatly feared the result. The mother sat by, suffering, of course, most acutely, but perfectly satisfied that it was their duty to subdue the child, and that in such a trying hour a mother's feelings must not interfere. With a heavy heart the father again took the hand of his son to lead him out of the room for farther punishment. But, to his inconceivable joy, the child shrunk from enduring any more suffering, and cried, "Father, I'll say the letter." The father, with feelings not easily conceived, took the book and pointed to the letter.

"A," said John, distinctly and fully.

"And what is that?" said the father, pointing to the next letter.

"B," said John.

"And what is that?"

"C," he continued.

"And what is that?" pointing again to the first letter.

"A," said the now humbled child.

"Now carry the book to your mother, and tell her what the letter is."

"What letter is that, my son?" said the mother.

"A," said John. He was evidently perfectly subdued. The rest of the children were sitting by, and they saw the contest, and they saw where was the victory. And John learnt a lesson which he never forgot—that his father had an arm too strong for him. He learned never again to wage such an unequal warfare. He learnt that it was the safest and happiest course for him to obey! But perhaps some one says it was cruel to punish the child so severely. Cruel! It was mercy and love. It would indeed have been cruel had the father, in that hour, been unfaithful, and shrunk from his painful duty. The passions he was then, with so much self-sacrifice, striving to subdue, if left unchecked, would, in all probability, have been a curse to their possessor, and have made him a curse to his friends. It is by no means improbable that upon the decisions of that hour depended the character and happiness of that child for life—and even for eternity. It is far from improbable that, had he then conquered, all future efforts to subdue him would have been in vain, and that he would have broken away from all restraint, and have been miserable in life, and lost in death! Cruelty! May the Lord preserve children from the indulgence of those who so regard such self-denying kindness.

It is always best, if possible, to avoid such collisions. Many children are taught implicit obedience, without ever entering into such a contest with their parents. And it is certainly preferable to govern a child by the mild procedure of ordinary discipline, rather than enter into such a formidable conflict, where great severity is often required. Wisdom, therefore, teaches us to guard against giving a child an opportunity of summoning all its energies to disobey. They are peculiar occasions, and peculiar moods of mind, which generally elicit this strength of rebellious feeling. A little foresight will often enable us, without surrender of authority, to calm the rising feeling, instead of exciting it to its utmost strength. We may sometimes, by judicious management, check the rebellion in its first appearance—before it has gained sufficient strength to call all our power into exercise to put it down! As an illustration, let us suppose that James and Mary are playing together in the evening, and James gets vexed and strikes his sister. He has done this without any provocation, and ought to be punished, and to ask his sister's forgiveness. But the mother has perceived that, during the whole day, James has manifested a very unpleasant disposition. He has been irritable and unyielding. She sees that now he is excited and angry. Every parent knows that such variations of feeling are not uncommon. One day a child is pleasant and affectionate; the next, every thing seems to go wrong; little things vex, and the whole disposition seems to be soured. The mother perceives that her son is in this frame of mind. He has done wrong, and ought to ask his sister's forgiveness. But she knows that, in this excited and unamiable frame of mind, he will be strongly tempted to resist her authority. Unreasonably vexed as he is, it would be one of the hardest acts of submission for him to ask the forgiveness of his sister. If the mother tells him to do so, the temptation to refuse is so strong, that, in all probability, he will decline obeying. She must then punish him. And here comes the contest, which must be continued, if it is commenced, till the child submits. Now, how is this contest to be avoided? By overlooking the fault? Most certainly not. The mother rises, takes James by the hand, and says, "My son, you have been doing very wrong; you are behaving badly, and must not stay with us any longer; I will carry you to bed." She

accordingly leads him away to his chamber.

Just before leaving him for the night, she tells him in a kind but sorrowful tone, how much she is displeased, and how much God must be displeased with his conduct. As usual, she hears him say his prayers, or kneels by the bedside, and prays that God will forgive him. She then leaves him to his own reflections and to sleep.

He is thus punished for his fault. And as he lies in his bed, and hears his brothers and sisters happy downstairs, he feels how much wiser and better it is to be a good boy. In the morning he awakes. Night has given repose to his excited feelings. He thinks how unhappy his yesterday's misconduct made him, and resolves to be more upon his guard for the future. All his rebellious feelings are quelled by the soothing influence of sleep. His passions are not aroused. The mother can now operate upon his mind without any fear of having a contest with a determined and stubborn will. When the children come down in the morning, she calls James and Mary before her. Taking the hand of each, she mildly says, "My son, you made us all unhappy last night by striking your little sister; I hope you are sorry for what you did." "Yes, mother, I am," says James; being led easily now to the feelings of penitence and submission, to which, during the moments of irritation and excitement, he could not, at least without great difficulty, have been driven. Thus, by judicious management, the desired object is attained, and perfectly attained, while the contest is avoided. The fault is not overlooked, and James is humbled. But had the mother, regardless of the child's peculiar state of feeling, commanded him immediately to ask forgiveness of his sister, it would, in all probability, have led to a scene actually painful to both mother and son. And the final effect of the discipline would, perhaps, have been less beneficial upon the mind of the child. But cases will sometimes occur when it is not possible thus to avoid the strife. When such an emergency rises, it is the duty of the parent boldly and resolutely to meet it. If, from false feeling, you then shrink, you are disloyal to the sacred trust which God has committed to your care. Is it kindness for a mother to let her child die, rather than compel it to take the bitter prescription which is to restore it to health and strength? And is it kindness to let those passions conquer, which, unsubdued, will be, for time and eternity, a scourge to their possessor? If there is any cruelty in the world which is truly horrendous—it is the cruelty of a falsely indulgent and unfaithful parent!

Let it be particularly understood, however, that all we here inculcate is firmness in the discharge of parental duty, in those cases where such collisions between parents and children are unavoidable. They can, however, in most cases, be avoided. If, for instance, a child disobeys you, you can simply punish it for the act of disobedience, and there let the difficulty end.

It is not necessary that you should always require that the thing at first commanded should be done. You direct a little girl to give a book to her sister. She refuses; and you may take two distinct courses to maintain your violated authority. You may go and take the book yourself and give it to the sister, and then inflict such a punishment upon the disobedient one as the offence deserves. Or, you may insist upon obedience; and to enforce it, enter upon a contest which may be long and painful. Now, whichever of these plans you adopt, be firm and decided in the execution of it. The former is, however, in almost all cases, the wisest and best. In the above remarks allusion has been made to the variations of feeling to which children are subject. No one, who has had any thing to do with education, can have failed to observe this. Almost every individual is conscious of seasons when he seems to be afflicted with a kind of morbid sensitiveness. Our spirits often rise

and fall with bodily health; and he has gained a great victory over his body, and a great triumph of mind, who can invariably preserve the same calm and cheerful spirit, undisturbed by harassing cares, or the irritations of a diseased frame. The nervous system of some individuals is so delicately constructed, that an east wind, or a damp day, will completely unhinge the mind. When we see some of the wisest and best of men oppressed with these infirmities, we must learn forbearance and sympathy with children. At such times, a judicious mother, knowing that the irritability is as much a bodily as a mental infirmity, will do all in her power to calm and soothe. She will avoid every thing calculated to jar the feelings, and will endeavor, by mild amusements or repose, to lull these feelings asleep. By this method she will save the child much unhappiness, and will promote an amiable and sweet disposition. Probably many children have had their feelings permanently soured by utter disregard of these variations of mind. The disposition of a child is of too delicate a texture to be handled with a rough and careless grasp. Its affectionate and gentle feelings should be elicited by maternal sympathy and love. And we should endeavor to assuage its occasional irritability, by calling away the mind from objects of unpleasant excitement, and alluring it to cheering contemplations.

It is clear that there is a striking difference in the natural dispositions of children; but nothing can be more evident than that a good disposition may be soured by mismanagement—and that a child of naturally unamiable feelings may, by judicious culture, become mild and lovely. The cultivation of the disposition is an important part of education. Hence the necessity of studying the moods and the feelings of the child, and of varying the discipline to meet these changes. Cases will undoubtedly arise, when the parent will find it difficult to judge what is duty. Such cases will, however, be infrequent. The obvious general policy is, when a child is in this excited state, to remove him as much as possible from the power of temptation. And if he commits a fault which it is necessary to notice, let the punishment be of such a kind as is calculated to soothe him. For instance, give him a comfortable seat by the fire, and tell him that he must not leave the chair for half an hour. Place in his hand some pleasing book, or some plaything which will amuse him. In this way let the punishment be adapted to the peculiarity of the moral disorder. This is not the mockery of punishment which it may seem. The child feels it to be real, and it is of a nature to operate beneficially. Some faults, however, he may commit, which, under the circumstances of the case, it may be inexpedient to notice. He may speak peevishly to his sister. The mother does not appear to notice it; she, however, sees the importance of immediately allaying this peevish spirit, and she endeavors to plan some amusement which will promote good humor. Perhaps she lays down her work and joins the children in their amusements, till, through her happy influence, cheerfulness and good humor are restored.

"Here, my son," perhaps she says, "I would like to have you take your slate, and sit down in your chair, and see if you can draw some animal so correctly that I can tell what it is. And Maria, you may take your slate and chair, and sit by his side, and do the same." The children are quite animated with their new play. They are soon busily at work, and whispering together, that their mother may not hear what animals they are drawing. By this simple artifice, the little cloud of irritated feeling which was rising, is entirely dispelled. Had the mother, on the other hand, punished the child for the incidental peevishness of remark, the mind would not have been so speedily or so pleasantly brought into its desired state. Or, had the mother taken no notice of the occurrence, the disposition of the child would have been injured by the allowed increase of the ill-humor, and, in all

probability, a quarrel might soon have ensued. Constant watchfulness, on the part of the mother, will soon enable her to foresee many dangers, and prevent many difficulties.

2. Never punish when the child has not intentionally done wrong. Children are often very unjustly punished. Things which are really wrong are overlooked, and again, punishment is inflicted on account of some accident, when the child is entirely innocent. Such a course of procedure not only destroys, in the mind of the child, the distinction between accident and crime, but is in itself absolutely wrong. The parent has all the power, and she may be the most relentless tyrant, and the child can have no redress. There is no oppression more cruel than that often thus exercised by passionate parents over their children. It is frequently the case that a mother, who does not intend to be guilty of injustice, neglects to make a proper distinction between faults and accidents. A child is playing about the room, and accidentally tears its clothes, or breaks a window with the ball which it is allowed to bounce upon the floor. The mother, vexed with the trouble it will cause her, hastily punishes the poor child. A child may be careless, and so criminally careless as to deserve punishment. In that case, it ought not to be punished for the accident, but for the carelessness, which is a fault. This injustice is far more extensively practiced than is generally imagined. The most common cause of unjust punishment, is confounding the accidental consequences of an act—with the real guilt which a child incurred while performing that act. We are all too much inclined to estimate guilt by consequences. A child who has been permitted to climb upon the chairs, and take things from the table, accidentally pushes off some valuable article. The mother severely punishes the child. Now, where did this child do wrong? You never taught him that he must not climb upon the table. Of course, in that there was no disobedience, and he was not conscious of doing anything improper. If merely a book had fallen, probably no notice would have been taken of it. But the simple fact, that one thing fell instead of another, cannot alter the nature of the offence. If it had been the most valuable watch which had fallen, and thus had been entirely ruined—if it had occurred purely through accident, the child deserves no punishment. Perhaps someone says, there is no need of arguing a point which is so clear. But is it not clear that such acts of injustice are very frequent? And is not almost every mother conscious that she is not sufficiently guarded upon this point? A mother must have great control over her own feelings—a calmness and composure of spirit which is not easily disturbed—or she will be occasionally provoked to acts of injustice by the misfortunes of which her children are the innocent cause. Does any one ask what should be done in such cases as the one referred to? The answer is plain. Children ought to be taught not to do what will expose property to damage; and then, if they do what is thus prohibited, consider them guilty—whether damage results or not. If the child, in the above- named case, had been so taught, this would have been an act of direct disobedience. And a faithful mother would probably pursue some such course as this. Without any manifestation of anger, she would calmly and seriously say to her son, "My son, I have often told you that you must not climb upon the table. You have disobeyed me."

"But, mother," says the son, "I did not mean to do any harm."

"I presume you did not, my son; I do not accuse you of doing harm, but of having disobeyed me. The damage was accidental, and you are not accountable for it; but the disobedience was deliberate, and very wrong."

"I am very sorry to punish you, but I must do it. It is my duty."

She would then punish him, either by the infliction of pain, or by depriving him, for a time, of some of his usual privileges or enjoyments. The punishment, however, would be inflicted for the disobedience—and not for the accident which attended the disobedience. The child could not but feel that he was justly condemned. But the question still remains, what is to be done, upon the original supposition that the child had never been taught that it was wrong to climb upon the table, or to throw his ball about the room? In that case the mother has, manifestly, no right to blame the child. The fault is hers—in not having previously taught him the impropriety of such conduct. All she can now do, is to improve the occasion, to show him the danger of such amusements, and forbid them in future.

If the child be very young, the mother will find it necessary occasionally to allude to the accident, that the lesson may be impressed upon the mind. If she did not do this, the occurrence might soon pass from his memory, and in a few days he might again, through entire forgetfulness, be engaged in his forbidden sports.

Allowance must also be made for the ignorance of a child. You have, perhaps, a little daughter, eighteen months old, who often amuses herself in tearing to pieces some old newspaper which you give her. It is, to her, quite an interesting experiment. Some day you happen to have your attention particularly occupied for a length of time, and at last raise your eyes, to see what keeps her so quiet upon the floor. Behold, she has a very valuable book in her hand, which she has almost entirely ruined; and your first impulse is to punish her, or, at least, severely to reprove her for the injury. But has she really been doing any thing deserving of punishment or censure? Certainly not. How can she know that it is proper for her to tear one piece of paper, but wrong for her to tear another? She has been as innocently employed as she ever was in her life. The only proper thing to be done, in such a case, is to endeavor to teach the child that a book must be handled with care, and must not be torn. But how can she be taught this without punishing her? She may be taught by the serious tone of your voice, and the sad expression of your countenance, that she has been doing something which you regret. In this way she may be easily taught the difference between a book and a newspaper. A little boy, about two years old, was in the habit of amusing himself by scribbling upon paper with a pencil. The father came into the room one day, and found that the little fellow had exceedingly defaced a new book. The marks of his pencil were all over it. Perfectly unconscious of the mischief he was doing, the child continued his employment as the father entered. In many cases, the parent, in irritation, would have roughly taken the book away, and inflicted a severe blow upon the cheek of the child. I thought I perceived that this was the first emotion in the mind of this parent, though he was of an unusually calm and collected spirit. If it was, however, he immediately saw its impropriety; for, approaching his child, he said, in a perfectly mild and pleasant tone, "O! my son, my son, you are spoiling the book." The child looked up in amazement.

"That is a book, my son; you must not scribble upon that. See here," turning over the leaves, "you will spoil father's book. Here is some paper for you. You may write upon this, but you never must write in the book." The father then took the book, injured as it was, and laid it aside, without any exhibition of excited feeling. Now, how manifestly is this the proper course to pursue, in such a case; and yet how few children are there who, in such circumstances, would have escaped undeserved punishment.

These illustrations are sufficient to show the importance of making allowance for ignorance, and for accidents. And they also show how frequently children suffer, when they are not to blame. If a child is punished when innocent, as well as when guilty, the distinction between right and wrong is obliterated from his mind. Hence it becomes an important rule in family government—never to punish when the child has not intentionally done wrong.

3. Never think that your child is too young to obey. We are ingenious in framing excuses for neglecting our duty with our children. At one time they are too young—at another time they are too sick. Some parents always find an excuse, of one kind or another, for letting their children have their own way. A child may, at a very early age, be taught obedience. We can easily teach a kitten, or a little dog, that it must not touch the meat which is placed before the fire, that it must leave the room when bidden, and a thousand other acts of ready obedience. A Frenchman has recently collected a large number of canary birds for a show. He has taught them such implicit obedience to his voice, as to march them in platoons across the room, and directs them to the ready performance of many simple maneuvers.

Now, can it be admitted that a child, fifteen months or two years of age, is inferior in understanding to a canary bird? And must the excuse be made for such a child, that he does not know enough to be taught obedience? A very judicious mother, who has brought up a large family of children, all of whom are now in situations of respectability and usefulness, remarked that it was her practice to obey her children for the first year of their life—but ever after she expected them to obey her. She, of course, did not mean by this remark, that the moment the child was one year of age, a sudden and total change took place in her management. During the early months of its infancy she considered it to be her duty to do every thing in her power to make the child comfortable and happy. She would endeavor to anticipate all its needs. She would be obedient to the wishes of the child. But, by the time the child was one year of age, she considered it old enough to be brought under the salutary regulations of a well disciplined family.

I am aware that many parents will say that this is altogether too early a period to commence the government of a child, and others equally numerous, perhaps, will say that it is too late; that a beginning should be made at a much earlier period. In fact, the principle which really ought to guide in such a case, is this—that the authority of the mother ought to be established over the child as soon as it is able to understand a command or prohibition expressed by looks and gestures. This is at a much earlier period than most parents imagine. Let the mother who doubts it try the experiment, and see how easily she can teach her child that he must not touch the tongs or andirons; or that, when sitting in her lap at table, he must not touch the cups and saucers. A child may be taught obedience in such things then, as well as at any period of its life. And how much trouble does a mother save herself, by having her child thus early taught to obey! How much pain and sorrow does she save her child by accustoming it, in its most tender years, to habits of prompt obedience.

4. Guard against too much severity. By pursuing a steady course of efficient government, severity will very seldom be found necessary. If, when punishment is inflicted, it is done with composure and with solemnity, occasions for punishment will be very infrequent. Let a mother ever be affectionate and mild with her children. Let her sympathize with them in their little sports. Let her gain their confidence by her assiduous efforts to make them happy. And let her feel, when they

have done wrong, not irritated, but sad; and punish them in sorrow, but not in anger. Fear is a useful and a necessary principle in family government. God makes use of it in governing his creatures. But it is ruinous to the disposition of a child, exclusively to control him by this motive. How unhappy must be that family where the parent always sits with a face deformed with scowls, and where the voice is always uttered in tones of severity and command! Such parents we do see. Their children fear them. They are always under restraint in their presence; and home becomes to them an irksome prison, instead of the happy retreat of peace and joy. But where the mother greets her children with smiles; and rewards their efforts to please her, with caresses; and addresses them in tones of mildness and affection, she is touching those chords in the human heart which vibrate in sweet harmony; she is calling into action the noblest and the loveliest principles of our nature. And thus does she prepare the way for every painful act of discipline to come with effectual power upon the heart. The children know that she does not love to punish. In all cases in which it can be done, children should thus be governed by kindness. But when kindness fails, and disobedience ensues, let not the mother hesitate for a moment to fall back upon her last resort, and punish as severely as is necessary. A few such cases will teach almost any child how much better it is to be obedient—than disobedient. By being thus consistent and decided in government, and commencing with the infancy of each child, in all ordinary cases great severity may be avoided. And it is never proper for a parent to be harsh, and unfeeling, and forbidding, in her dealings with her children. The most efficient family government may be almost entirely administered by affection, if it be distinctly understood that disobedience cannot pass unpunished. I cannot but pity those unhappy children who dare not come to their parents in confidence and love; who are continually fearing stern looks and harsh words; and who are consequently ever desirous to get away from home, that they may enjoy themselves. Every effort should be made to make home the most desirable place; to gather around it associations of delight; and thus to form in the mind of your child an attachment for peaceful and purifying enjoyments. This will most strongly fortify his mind against vice. And when he leaves the paternal roof, he will ever look back with fond recollections to its joys, and with gratitude to those who made it the abode of so much happiness. In future years, too, when your children become the heads of families, they will transmit to their children the principles which you have implanted. Thus may the influence of your instructions extend to thousands yet unborn.

How little do we think of the tremendous responsibilities which are resting upon us; and of the wide influence, either for good or for evil, which we are exerting! We are setting in operation a train of causes which will trickle down through all coming time.

Long after we have gone to our eternal home, our words and our actions will be aiding in the formation of character. We cannot then stop the causes which our lives have set in progress, and they will go on elevating immortals to virtue and to heaven—or urging them onward in passion, and sin, and woe!

2.03 The Mother's DIFFICULTIES

THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER by John Abbott, 1833, Worcester, Mass. Published by the American Tract Society The Mother's DIFFICULTIES The remarks which have already been made are so obvious, that one is led to inquire, why is family government generally so defective? Why do so few succeed in obtaining prompt obedience? There are many causes operating to produce this result. The rules of discipline may be simple and plain—and yet many motives may influence us to shrink from enforcing them.

1. One great obstacle is the lack of SELF-CONTROL on the part of parents. How few persons are there who have gained that conquest over self, which enables them to meet the various vicissitudes of life with calmness and composure! How few are there who are not, occasionally at least, thrown off their guard, and provoked to the exhibition of excited and irritated feeling! And can a mother expect to govern her child—when she cannot govern herself? Family government must most emphatically begin at home. It must begin in the bosom of the parent. She must learn to control herself; to subdue her own passions; she must set her children an example of meekness and of equanimity, or she must reasonably expect that all her efforts to control their passions will be ineffectual. A child gets irritated and strikes his sister; and the mother gets irritated and whips the child. Now, both mother and child have been guilty of precisely the same crime. They have both been angry, and both in anger have struck another. And what is the effect of this sinful punishment? It may make the child afraid to strike his sister again; but will it teach that child that he has done wrong—that it is wicked to be angry? Can it have any salutary effect upon his heart? He sees that his mother is irritated, and thus is he taught that it is proper for him to be angry. He sees that when his mother is irritated she strikes; and thus is he taught that the same course is proper for him. The direct effect of the punishment is to feed the flame and strengthen the inveteracy of passion. In such a course as this there is no moral instruction—and no salutary discipline. And yet a mother who has not conquered self, who cannot restrain the violence of her own passions, will often thus punish. When we see such a mother with passionate and turbulent children, no second question need be asked why they are not gentle and obedient. And when we reflect how very seldom it is that we see an individual who may not be occasionally provoked to act from the irritation of the moment, we cannot wonder that the family so often presents a scene of uproar and misrule. This self-control, at all times, and under all circumstances, is one of the most important and most difficult things to be acquired. Many parents have, from infancy, been unaccustomed to restraint, and they find a very great struggle to be necessary to smother those feelings which will sometimes rise almost involuntarily. But we should ever remember that this must be done, or we cannot be faithful to our children. We must bring our own feelings and our own actions under a system of rigid discipline, or it will be in vain for us to hope to curb the passions and restrain the conduct of those who are looking to us for instruction and example. There will many cases occur which will exceedingly try a mother's patience. Unless naturally blest with a peculiarly quiet spirit, or habituated from early life to habits of self-government, she will find that she has very much to do with her own heart. This point we would most earnestly urge, for it is of fundamental importance.

Anger is temporary insanity! And what can be more deplorable than to see a mother in the paroxysm of irritation, taking vengeance on her child? Let a mother feel grieved, and manifest her grief when her child does wrong. Let her, with calmness and reflection, use the discipline which the case requires. But never let her manifest irritated feeling, or give utterance to an angry expression. If her own mind is thus kept serene and unimpassioned, she will instruct by example as well as precept. She will easily know, and more judiciously perform her duty. And the superiority of her own conduct will command the respect and the admiration of her children. And until this is done, it will be impossible for a mother to enforce the rules of discipline, simple and obvious as those rules are.

2. Another great obstacle in the way is the lack of RESOLUTION. It is always painful to a parent's feelings to deprive a child of any reasonable enjoyment—or to inflict pain. Hence we are ingenious in framing apologies to relieve ourselves from this duty. Your child does wrong, and you know that he ought to be punished—but you shrink from the duty of inflicting it. Now, of what avail is it to be acquainted with the rules of discipline, if we cannot summon resolution to enforce those rules? It will do no good to read one book and another upon the subject of education, unless we are willing, with calm and steady decision, to punish our children when the occasion requires. It is this weak indulgence, this wicked refusal to perform painful duty, which has ruined thousands of families. A mother will sometimes openly remonstrate with a father for punishing a stubborn child. She will call him cruel and unfeeling, and confirm her child in his willfulness, by her wicked sympathy and caresses!

What can be expected from such a course as this? Such a mother is the most cruel and merciless enemy which her child can have! Under such an influence he will probably grow up in wretchedness, not only to curse the day in which he was born, but to heap still bitterer curses upon the mother who bore him. You can do nothing more ruinous to your child; you can do nothing which will more effectually teach him to hate and despise you; you can do nothing which will, with more certainty, bring you in sorrow and disgrace to the grave, than thus to allow maternal feelings to influence you to neglect painful but necessary acts of discipline.

I would ask the mother who reads this book, if she has not often been conscious of a struggle between the sense of duty and inclination. Duty has told you to punish your child. Inclination has urged you to overlook its disobedience. Inclination has triumphed; and your child has retired victorious—and of course confirmed in his sin. Be assured that thus, in your own heart lies one of the greatest obstacles to your success; and until this obstacle be surmounted, everything else will be unavailing. It would by no means be difficult to fill this volume with cases illustrative of this fact, and of the awful consequences resulting. A few years since, a lady was left a widow, with several little sons. She loved them most devotedly. The affliction which she had experienced in the loss of her husband, fixed her affections with more intensity of ardor and sensitiveness upon her children. They were her only hope. Sad and joyless as she was, she could not endure to punish them—or to deprive them of a single indulgence. Unhappy and misguided woman! Could she expect to escape the consequences of such a course? She was living upon the delusive hope that her indulgences would ensure their love! And now one of these sons is seventeen years of age—a stout, and turbulent, and self-willed boy. He is altogether beyond the influence of maternal restraint. He is the tyrant of the family, and his afflicted mother is almost entirely broken-hearted by this accumulation of sorrow. The rest of the children are coming on in the same path. She sees and trembles in view

of the calamity, which it is now too late to avert. It would be far happier for her to be childless, as well as a widow. Her children are her oppressors. She is their slave. It is impossible now to retrace her steps, or to retrieve the injury she has done her children and herself.

Hardly any situation can be conceived more truly pitiable. And what has caused this magnitude of sorrow? Simply the mother's reluctance to do her duty. She looked upon her poor fatherless children with all the tender emotions of a widowed mother, and could not bear to throw around them necessary restraint, and insist upon obedience to her commands. She knew perfectly well, that when they were disobedient, they ought to be punished; that it was her duty to enforce her authority. It was not her ignorance which caused this dreadful wreck of happiness; it was the lack of resolution—that fond, and foolish, and cruel tenderness, which induced her to consult her own feelings rather than the permanent welfare of her children. The reader will, perhaps, inquire whether this statement is a true account of a real case. It is a true account of a thousand cases all over our land. Mothers, we appeal to your observation, if you do not see, every where around you, these wrecks of earthly hopes. Have we not warnings enough to avoid this fatal rock? And yet it is the testimony of all who have moved about the world with an observing eye, that this parental irresolution is one of the most prominent causes of domestic afflictions.

There must be sufficient force in the punishment—or acts of discipline will be so inefficient as to do more harm than good. The spirit will be irritated, but not subdued. Punishment becomes a petty vexation, and its influence is most decidedly pernicious. It is of the utmost importance, that when it is inflicted, it should be serious and effectual. And it is certain that the mother who adopts prompt and decisive measures, will go forward with far less trouble to herself and her child, and will, on the whole, inflict far less pain—than the one who adopts the feeble and dilatory measures which we so often see. While the one must be continually threatening, and inflicting that 'mockery of punishment' which is just enough to irritate the temper and spoil the disposition; the other will usually find her word promptly obeyed, and will very seldom find it necessary to punish at all.

Real benevolence prompts to decisive measures. The mother who first coaxes; then threatens; then pretends to punish; then punishes a little—is only making trouble for herself and sorrow for her family. But, on the other hand, if she promptly meets acts of disobedience with firmness, and inflicts necessary punishment decidedly, and at once, she is, in the most effectual way, promoting her own happiness, and the best welfare of her child. A parent is much more prone to be thus fatally indulgent, if a child is of a feeble and sickly constitution. Such children are very generally spoiled. How strange, when God, in his mysterious providence, lays his hand upon some little one, and causes it to languish in weakness and in suffering, that the parent on that very account should neglect that child's welfare, and allow its passions to grow unchecked, its will to be stubborn and unsubdued! The mother perhaps is willing to do her duty with her more robust son. She will do all in her power to control his passions, and make him a good and happy boy. But the poor little sufferer she will indulge in all its caprices, till passion is strong and irritability is unconquerable, and the deeper sorrows of the mind are thus added to the pains and weakness of the body.

O how much cruelty there is in the world which goes by the false name of tenderness or love! Mother, have you a sick and suffering child? You are to that child a guardian angel, if with mild and affectionate decision you enforce your authority. Punish that child if it be necessary to teach him habitually and promptly to obey. If you do not do this, you are the bitterest enemy your child can

have. You are doing that which has the most direct tendency to perpetuate its feebleness and to promote its misery! And yet I know that some mothers will still say, "What, speak authoritatively, and even punish a poor little child when sick! How unfeeling!" There, there is the difficulty. Unkind to do all in your power to make your child patient and happy! A little girl we will suppose cuts deeply her hand. Her mother is so kind that she will not let a physician be called, for fear he should hurt her daughter in probing and dressing the wound. Day after day this kind mother beholds the increasing and extending inflammation. She strives in her ignorance to assuage the agony of the wound, till, after many days of excruciating suffering, the physician is called to save her daughter's life by amputating the limb. When the accident first occurred, a few moments of attention and trifling pain would have prevented all these dreadful consequences. But the conduct of that mother is far more cruel, who will allow the mind's inflammation to increase and extend unchecked; who, rather than inflict the momentary pain which is necessary to subdue the stubborn will, and allay irritation, will allow the moral disorder to gain such strength as to be incurable. The consequences thus resulting are far more disastrous. They affect man's immortal nature—and go on through eternity. There is no cruelty so destructive as this!

Yet let it not be supposed that SEVERITY is recommended. This is unnecessary, and is always to be avoided. Let the tones of the voice be affectionate and soothing. Let the mother sympathize with her whole heart in the trials and sufferings of her child. Let her be ingenious in devices for its amusement. But let her not ruin her precious treasure by indulging it in peevishness or disobedience. Your child cannot possibly be happy, unless taught to subdue his passions and to be obedient to your will. We would have kindness, and gentleness, and love, ever diffusing joy through the family circle. But if you would see your children happy, and be happy yourself, you must, when your children are in sickness, as well as when they are in health, summon sufficient resolution to ensure propriety of behavior and obedience to your commands. Be firm then in doing your duty invariably. Never refrain from governing your child because it is painful to maternal feelings. It is certainly wisely ordered by Providence that it should be painful to a parent's heart to inflict suffering upon a child. He who can punish without sympathy, without emotions of sorrow, cannot punish with a right spirit. Even our Father in heaven does not willingly afflict his children. But does he on that account withhold his discipline, and allow us to go on in sin unpunished? We must, in earnest prayer, look to him for strength and wisdom, and unreservedly do our duty. We must be willing to have our own hearts bleed, if we can thus save our children from the ravages of those passions which, unchecked, will ruin their usefulness and peace! A child, a short time since, was taken sick with that dangerous disorder, the croup. It was a child most ardently beloved, and ordinarily very obedient. But in this state of uneasiness and pain he refused to take the medicine which it was needful without delay to administer. The father, finding him resolute, immediately punished his sick and suffering son. Under these circumstances, and fearing that his son might soon die, it must have been a most severe trial to the father. But the consequence was, that the child was taught that sickness was no excuse for disobedience. And while his sickness continued, he promptly took whatever medicine was prescribed, and was patient and submissive. Soon the child was well. Does any one say this was cruel? It was one of the noblest acts of kindness which could have been performed. If the father had shrunk from duty here, it is by no means improbable that the life of the child would have been the forfeit. And this is the way to acquire strength of resolution, by practicing strength of resolution in every case. We must readily and promptly do our duty, be it ever so painful.

3. Another great obstacle in the way of training up a happy and virtuous family, is the lack of harmony between parents on the subject of discipline. Sometimes, when a father is anxious to do his duty, the mother is a weak and foolish woman, who thinks that every punishment, and every deprivation of indulgence, is cruelty to her children. And when any one of them is punished, she will, by her caresses, do away the effect of the discipline, and convey to the mind of the child the impression that his father is cruel and unjust. A man who has formed so unhappy a connection is indeed in a deplorable condition. And if his wife is incapable of being convinced of the ruinous consequences of such a course, he must take upon himself the whole duty of government. But as I am not now writing to fathers, I must turn from this case to another.

It frequently happens that a judicious and faithful mother is connected with a husband whose principles and example are anything but what she could desire. In such cases, not only does the whole government of the family devolve upon the mother, but the influence of the father is such as, in a great degree, to counteract all her exertions. This is indeed a trying situation. It is, however, far from being a hopeless one. You must not give up in despair, but let the emergencies of the case rouse you to more constant watchfulness, and more persevering and vigorous effort. If a wife be judicious and consistent in her exertions, a father, in almost all cases, will soon feel confidence in her management of her family, and will very gladly allow her to bear all the burden of taking care of the children. Such a father is almost necessarily, much of the time, absent from home, and when at home, is not often in a mood to enjoy the society of his family. Let such a mother teach her children to be quiet and still when their father is present. Let her make every effort to accustom them to habits of industry. And let her do every thing in her power to induce them to be respectful, and obedient, and affectionate to their father. This course is indeed the best which can be adopted to reclaim the unhappy parent. The more cheerful you can make home to him, the stronger are the inducements which are presented to draw him away from scenes into which he ought not to enter.

It is true there is no situation more difficult than the one we are now describing. But, that even these difficulties are not insurmountable, facts have frequently proved. Many cases occur, in which the mother triumphantly surmounts them all, and rears up a virtuous and happy family. Her husband is most brutally intemperate; and I need not here depict the scenes through which such a mother is called to pass. She sees, however, that the welfare of the family is dependent upon her, and accordingly nerves her heart, resolutely, to meet her responsibilities. She commences, in the earliest infancy of her children, teaching them implicit obedience. She binds them to her with those ties from which they never would be able, or desirous, to break. The most abundant success rewards her efforts. The older her children grow, the more respectful and attentive they become, for the more clearly they see that they are indebted to their mother for salvation from their father's disgrace and woe. Every sorrow of such a mother is alleviated by the sympathy and affection of her sons. She looks around upon them with feelings of maternal gratification, which no language can describe. They feel the worth and the dignity of her character. Though her situation in life may be humble, and though her mind may not be stored with knowledge, her moral worth, and her judicious government, command their reverence. In a family of this sort, in a neighboring state, one cold December night, the mother was sitting alone by the fire, between the hours of nine and ten, waiting for the return of her absent husband. Her sons, fatigued with the labors of the day, had all retired to rest. A little before ten, her husband came in from the neighboring tavern, where he had passed the evening with his degraded associates. He insisted upon calling up the boys at that

unseasonable hour, to send into the wood lot for a load of wood. Though there was an ample supply of fuel at the house, he would not listen to reason, but stamped and swore that the boys should go. The mother, finding it utterly in vain to oppose his wishes, called her sons, and told them that their father insisted upon their going with the team to the wood lot. She spoke to them kindly; told them she was sorry they must go; but, said she,

"Remember that he is your father." Her sons were full grown young men. But at their mother's voice they immediately rose, and, without a murmur, brought out the oxen, and went to the woods. They had perfect confidence in her judgment and her management. While they were absent, their mother was busy preparing an inviting supper for them upon their return. The drunken father soon retired. About midnight the sons finished their task, and entering the house, found their mother ready to receive them with cheerfulness and smiles. A bright fire was blazing on the hearth. The room was warm and pleasant. With keen appetites and that cheerfulness of spirits which generally accompanies the performance of duty, those children sat down with their much-loved parent to the meal she had provided, and soon after, all were reposing in the quietude and the silence of sleep.

Many a mother has thus been the guardian and the savior of her family. She has brought up her sons to industry, and her daughters to virtue. And in her old age she has reaped a rich reward for all her toil, in the affections and the attentions of her grateful children. She has struggled, in tears and discouragement, for many weary years, till at last God has dispelled all the gloom, and filled her heart with joy in witnessing the blessed results of her fidelity. Be not, therefore, desponding. That which has once been done, may be done again. From what has been said in this chapter, it appears that self-control and resolution are the two all-important requisites in family government. With these two qualifications, which a person is inexcusable in not possessing, almost every other obstacle may be surmounted. Without these, your toil and solicitude will, in all probability, be in vain. Your faithful exertions, attended with God's ordinary blessing, will open to you daily new sources of enjoyment in the unfolding virtues and expanding faculties of your children. Your decisive government will, most undoubtedly, be rewarded with the affection and respect of those whom you are training up to usefulness and happiness. And when old age comes, your children will welcome you to their homes, and rejoice to give you a seat by their fire-side, and by unremitting attentions will do all in their power to prove how deeply they feel that debt of gratitude which never can be fully repaid. Such joys will obliterate the remembrance of all present toils and sorrows. Let these hopes cheer you to go on rejoicing in the path of duty.

2.04 The Mother's FAULTS and ERRORS

THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER by John Abbott, 1833, Worcester, Mass. Published by the American Tract Society FAULTS and ERRORS

There are many faults in family government, which have been handed down from generation to generation, and have become almost universally diffused. They are so general, and we have been so long accustomed to them, that their glaring impropriety escapes our notice. The increasing interest now felt in the subject of education, by leading parents to read and to think, has taught many to avoid those errors which still very generally prevail. There are many parents who have not facilities for obtaining books upon this subject, and who have not been led to reflect very deeply upon their responsibilities.

Some of these errors are such, that an apology seems almost necessary for cautioning mothers against them, since common sense so plainly condemns them. But let it be remembered, how large a portion of the mothers of our land are, by their situation, deprived of those sources of information and excitements to thought, which God has conferred upon others.

1. Do not talk about children in their presence. We are very apt to think that children do not understand what we say to one another, because they are unable to join in the conversation themselves. But a child's comprehension of language is far in advance of his ability to use it. I have been much surprised at the result of experiments upon this subject. A little child creeping upon the floor, and who could not articulate a single word, was requested to carry a piece of paper across the room and put it in a chair. The child perfectly comprehended the direction, and crept across the room, and did as he was bidden. An experiment or two of this kind will satisfy anyone how far a child's mind is in advance of his power to express his ideas. And yet, when a child is three or four years old, parents will relate in their presence shrewd things which they have said and done; sometimes even their acts of disobedience will be mentioned with a smile. The following conversation once passed between a lady and a mother, whose child, three years of age, was standing by her side.

"How is little Charles doing?" said the lady.

"O," replied the mother, with a smile, "he is pretty well, but he is the greatest rogue you ever saw; I can do nothing with him."

"Why?" said the lady; "he does not look like a stubborn child."

"No," the mother replied, "he has not a bad disposition, but," she continued, smiling, "he is so fond of mischief that I can never make him mind me. He knows that he must not touch the andirons, but just before you came in he went and put one of his fingers on the brass, and looked me directly in the face. I told him he must take off his hand; and he put another finger on. I tried to look cross at him; but he, instead of stopping, rubbed his whole hand over the brass, and then ran away, laughing as heartily as he could. He did it, I suppose, on purpose to plague me, he is such a

rogue."

We insert this rather undignified story, that the mothers who may read this chapter may know exactly what we mean by the caution we are urging. Now, to say nothing of that maternal unfaithfulness which would permit such acts of disobedience, how ruinous upon the mind of the child must be the effect of hearing his conduct thus spoken of and applauded! This perverse little fellow was more interested in the narration than either mother or visitor, and the impression produced upon his mind was stronger. The child was taught a lesson of disobedience—not soon to be forgotten.

There are many little artifices which a child will practice, which are decidedly to be discountenanced, but at which a parent can scarce refrain from smiling. These proofs of mental quickness and ingenuity are gratifying to parental feelings. They give promise of a mind susceptible of a high degree of cultivation, if properly guided and restrained. And there are playful and affectionate feats of childhood which are pleasing on every account. They show good feelings, as well as an active intellect. Parents will speak to one another of those innumerable little occurrences which are daily gratifying them. But if these things are mentioned in the presence of the child, and applauded, its little heart is puffed up with vanity! How slight a degree of flattery will often awaken emotions of the most disgusting self-conceit, even in individuals of mature minds! How few people are there who can bear praise! Vanity is almost a universal sin! None are so low, and none are so high, as to be freed from its power. And can a child bear, uninjured, that praise which has ruined so many men? Here lies one cause of the self-conceit so often visible in the nursery. We flatter our children without being conscious that they are so greedily drinking in the flattery! A mother will often talk as unguardedly in the presence of her child, who is three or four years of age, as she did in the presence of her infant of so many months. The necessity of caution upon this subject will be obvious to every parent upon a moment's reflection. Let nothing be said in the hearing of a child that would tend to excite its vanity! Guard against the possibility of his supposing that he does and says remarkable things, and is superior to other children. But though a parent may restrain her own tongue, it is more difficult to restrain the tongues of others. Many visitors make it a constant habit to flatter the children, wherever they go. Regardless of the ruinous effects upon their tender and susceptible minds, they think only of pleasing the parents. Beautiful children are thus peculiarly exposed. How common is it for a child of handsome countenance to be spoiled! This is so frequently the case, that many persons have supposed that "spoiled beauty" are words never to be separated. I once knew a little boy of unusually bright and animated countenance. Every one who entered the house, noticed the child, and spoke of his beauty. One day a gentleman called upon business, and being engaged in conversation, did not pay that attention to the child to which he was accustomed, and which he now began to expect as his due. The 'vain little fellow' made many efforts to attract notice, but not succeeding, he at last placed himself fully in front of the gentleman, and asked, "Why don't you see how beautiful I am?" The feeling, it is true, is not often so openly expressed, but nothing is more common than for it to be excited in precisely this way.

It is surely a duty to approve children when they do right, and to disapprove when they do wrong. But great caution should be used to preserve a child from hearing anything which will destroy that most lovely trait of character—a humble spirit. It is, on this account, often a misfortune to a child to be unusually handsome or intelligent. It is so difficult to preserve it from the contaminations of

flattery, that what might have been a great benefit, becomes a serious injury.

2. Do not make exhibitions of your children's attainments. And here we must refer again to the danger of exciting vanity. There is no passion more universal, or with greater difficulty subdued. An eminent clergyman was once leaving his pulpit, when one of his parishioners addressed him, highly commending the sermon he had just uttered. "Be careful, my friend," said the clergyman, "I carry a tinder-box in my bosom!" And if the bosom of an aged man of piety and of prayer may be thus easily inflamed, must there not be great danger in showing off a child to visitors, who will most certainly flatter its performance? You have taught your daughter some interesting hymns. She is modest and unassuming, and repeats them with much propriety. A friend calls, and you request the child to repeat her hymns. She does it. Thus far there is, perhaps, no injury done. But as soon as she has finished, your friend begins to flatter. Soon another and another friend calls, and the scene is continually repeated, till your daughter feels proud of her performance. She becomes indeed quite an actress. And the hymn which was intended to lead her youthful heart to God, does but fill that heart with sinful pride! Must it not be so? How can a child withstand such strong temptations?

Parents may show their children that they are gratified in witnessing their intellectual attainments. And this presents a motive sufficiently strong to stimulate them to action. But when they are exposed to the indiscriminate and injudicious flattery of whoever may call, it is not for a moment to be supposed that they will retain just views of themselves. It must however be allowed, that, with some children, the danger is much greater than with others. Some need much encouragement—while others need continual restraint. Who has not noticed the thousand arts which a vain child will practice, simply to attract attention? Who has not seen such a spoiled child take a book and read, occasionally casting a furtive glance from the page to the visitor, to see if the studious habit is observed? And can such a child be safely exhibited to strangers? It may, perhaps, at times, be an advantage to a modest child to repeat a hymn, or something of that nature, to a judicious friend.

If your pastor feels that interest in children which he ought to cherish, he will regard all the little ones of his congregation with parental affection. He ought not to be considered as a stranger in the family. Children may appear before him with confidence and affection, and if he has the spirit of his Master, he will cautiously guard against flattery, and endeavor to improve the occasion by leading the mind to serious thoughts. But the practice of making a show of children, of exhibiting their little attainments, is certainly reprehensible—and it is, we fear, not only common, but increasing. The following remarks upon this subject are from the pen of an individual who combines much shrewdness of observation, with extensive experience.

"I always felt pain for poor little things set up before company to repeat verses, or bits of plays, at six or eight years old. I have sometimes not known which way to look, when a mother, (and, too often a father,) whom I could not but respect on account of her fondness for her child, has forced the feeble-voiced 'eighth wonder of the world' to stand with its little hand stretched out, shouting the soliloquy of Hamlet, or some such thing. I do not know anything much more distressing to the spectators than exhibitions of this sort. Upon these occasions no one knows what to say, or whither to direct his looks. If I had to declare, on my oath, which have been the most disagreeable moments of my life, I verily believe that, after due consideration, I would fix upon those in which

parents whom I have respected, have made me endure exhibitions like these; for this is your choice—to be insincere, or to give offence. The plaudits which the child receives in such cases puff it up in its own thoughts, and send it out into the world stuffed with pride and insolence, which must and will be extracted from it by one means or another. Now parents have no right thus to indulge their own feelings at the risk of the happiness of their children."

Scenes similar to those above described will at once occur to the recollection of the reader. And the fact that such are the feelings of many strangers, in general, is of itself amply sufficient to discountenance the practice.

There are two extremes which it is necessary to avoid. The one is that of secluding children altogether from society; the other is, of wearying our friends by their presence and their ceaseless talk. If we consider our children as troubles, to be kept out of the way whenever we wish for social enjoyment; if the entrance of a few friends to pass the evening is the signal for their immediate departure to another room, how can we expect them to improve, or to become acquainted with the proprieties of life? They must listen to the conversation and observe the manners of their superiors, that their minds and their manners may be improved. Not long since I heard a gentleman speaking of an unusually interesting family he had just visited. It was known that he was coming to pass the evening. As he entered the room he saw three little children sitting quietly and silently by the fire. The mother was sitting by the table with her sewing. The father was rising to receive him. The children remained for an hour or more, listening with interest to the conversation which passed between their parents and the gentleman. They made not the least interruption, but by their presence and cheerful looks contributed much to the enjoyment of the evening. At eight o'clock the mother said, "Children, it is eight." Without another word, they all rose and left the room. The mother soon followed, and after being absent a few moments, returned.

Now how much enjoyment is there in such a family as this! And how much improvement do the children derive from being accustomed to the society of their superiors! In this way they are taught humility, for they see how much less they know than others. They gain information, and their minds are strengthened by the conversation they hear. Their manners are improved, for children learn more by example than precept. If you would enjoy these pleasures, and confer upon your children these benefits, it is indispensable that they be habitually well governed. Nothing can be more hopeless than to expect that children will conduct themselves properly when company is present—if at other times they are uncontrolled!

Some parents, feeling the importance that their children should enjoy good society, and at the same time having them under no restraint, deprive themselves and their visitors of all enjoyment, and their children of all benefit! We do not like, even in imagination, to encounter the deafening clamor of such a scene. Some are crawling about on the visitor; some crying; some shouting. The mother is pulling at the gown of one, and scolding at another. The visitor, distracted with the noise, endeavors in vain to engage in conversation. The time, and attention, and patience of the parents are absorbed by their undisciplined family. The visitor, after enduring the uproar for half an hour, is happy in making his escape! Where can there be pleasure, and where can there be profit in such a scene as this?

There are many advantages in encouraging an inquisitive spirit in a child. It has entered upon a world where everything is new and astonishing. Of course it is hourly meeting with objects upon

which it desires information. But as soon as a child finds that his parents encourage him in asking questions, he begins to think that it is a very pretty thing. He will be incessantly presenting his inquiries. His motive will cease to be a gratification of a reasonable and commendable curiosity, and he will desire merely to display his skill, or to talk for the sake of talking. It is very necessary to restrain children in this respect. Their motives are generally distinctly to be seen. And if the motive which prompts the question is improper, let the child receive marks of disapprobation, and not of approval.

"Mother, what is the coffee-pot for?" said a child of three years, at the breakfast table.

"It is to put the coffee in," said the mother.

"And why do you put the coffee in the coffee-pot?"

"Because it is more convenient to pour it out."

"And what," said the child, hesitating and looking around the table to find some new question; "And what—are the cups for?"

"They are to drink from."

"And why do you drink out of the cups?" In this manner the child, during the whole time allotted for the breakfast, incessantly asked his questions. The mother as continually answered them. She had adopted the principle—that her child must always be encouraged in asking questions. And by blindly and thoughtlessly following out this principle, she was puffing up his heart with vanity, and making him a most unendurable talker! The common sense principle, to guide us upon this subject, is obvious. If the motive be good, and the occasion suitable, let the child be encouraged in his inquiries. If otherwise, let him be discouraged. A child is sitting at the breakfast table with his father and mother. The mother lifts the top of the coffee-pot, and the child observes the contents violently boiling. "Mother," says the little boy, "what makes the coffee bubble up so?"

Here the motive is good, and the occasion is proper. And one of the parents explains to the child the process which we call 'boiling'. The parents have reason to be gratified at the observation of the child, and the explanation communicates to him valuable knowledge. But perhaps a stranger is present, with whom the father is engaged in interesting conversation. Under these circumstances, the child asks the same question. It is, however, unseasonable. He ought to be silent when company is present! The mother accordingly replies, "My son, you should not interrupt your father. You must be perfectly silent, and listen to what he is saying."

She does not, however, forget the question, but embraces some opportunity of again alluding to it. She gives him an answer, and shows him that it is very impolite to interrupt the conversation of others, or to engross attention when company is present. Much pleasure is destroyed, and much improvement prevented, in permitting the conversation of friends to be interrupted by the loquacity of children!

Some parents, to avoid this inconvenience, immediately send their children from the room when visitors arrive. This is treating children with injustice, and the parents must reap the mortifying consequences in their uncultivated manners and uncultivated minds. Hence, in many gentlemen's families, you find awkward and clownish children. If children are banished from pleasing and

intelligent society, they must necessarily grow up rude and ignorant. The course to be pursued, therefore, is plain. They should be often present when friends visit you. But they should be taught to conduct themselves properly—to sit in silence and listen. They should not speak unless spoken to. And above all, they should not be thrust forward upon the attention of visitors, to exhibit their attainments, and receive flattery as profusely as your friends may be pleased to deal it out!

3. Do not deceive children. Many are unaware of the evil consequences which result from this common practice. A physician once called to extract a tooth from a child. The little boy seeing the formidable instruments, and anticipating the pain, was exceedingly frightened, and refused to open his mouth. After much fruitless solicitation, the physician said, "Perhaps there is no need of pulling the tooth. Let me just rub it a little with my handkerchief, and it may be all that is necessary—it will not hurt you in the least. The boy, trusting his word, opened his mouth. The physician, concealing his instrument in his handkerchief, seized hold of the tooth and wrenched it out. The parents highly applauded his artifice. But the man cheated the child. He abused his confidence; and he inflicted an injury upon his moral feelings not soon to be effaced. Will that physician get his handkerchief into the mouth of the child again? Will he believe what the physician may hereafter say? And when told that it is wicked to say that which is not true, will not the remembrance of the doctor's falsehood be fresh in his mind? And while conscious that his parents approved of the deception, will he not feel it to be right for him to deceive, that he may accomplish his desires? This practice is attended with the most ruinous consequences. It unavoidably teaches the child to despise his parents. After he has detected them in one falsehood, he will not believe them when they speak the truth! It destroys his tenderness of conscience; and it teaches arts of deception. And what are the advantages? Why, in one particular instance, the point is gained.

Let compulsion be resorted to when necessary—but deception never. If a child cannot place implicit confidence in his parent, most assuredly no confidence can be reposed in the child. Is it possible for a mother to practice arts of deception and falsehood, and at the same time her daughter be forming a character of frankness and of truth? Who can for a moment suppose it? We must be what we wish our children to be. They will form their characters from ours! A mother was once trying to persuade her little son to take some medicine. The medicine was very unpalatable, and she, to induce him to take it, declared it did not taste bad. He did not believe her. He knew, by sad experience, that her word was not to be trusted. A gentleman and friend who was present, took the spoon, and said, "James, this is medicine, and it tastes very badly. I would not like to take it, but I would, if necessary. You have courage enough to swallow something which does not taste good, have you not?"

"Yes," said James, looking a little less sulky. "But it is very bitter indeed."

"I know it," said the gentleman, "Perhaps you never tasted any thing much worse." The gentleman then tasted the medicine himself, and said, "It is really very unpleasant. But now let us see if you have not resolution enough to take it, bad as it is." The boy hesitatingly took the spoon.

"It is, really, very bitter," said the gentleman; "but the best way is to summon all your resolution, and down with it at once, like a man."

James made, in reality, a great effort for a child, and swallowed the dose. And who will this child most respect—his deceitful mother, or the honest dealing stranger? And who will he hereafter

most readily believe? It ought, however, to be remarked, that had the child been properly trained, he would at once, and without a murmur, have taken what his mother presented. It is certainly, however, a supposable case, that the child might, after all the arguments of the gentleman, still have refused to do his duty. What course should then be pursued? Resort to compulsion—but never to deceit. We cannot deceive our children without seriously injuring them, and destroying our own influence. Frank and open dealing is the only safe policy in family government, as well as on the wider theatre of life. The underhanded arts and cunning maneuvers of the deceiver are sure, in the end, to promote his own overthrow. Be sincere and honest—and you are safe. The only sure way of securing beneficial results, is by virtuous and honorable means.

4. Do not be continually finding fault. It is at times necessary to censure and to punish. But very much may be done by encouraging children when they do well. Be even more careful to express your approbation of good conduct, than your disapprobation of bad. Nothing can more discourage a child than a spirit of incessant fault-finding, on the part of its parent. And hardly anything can exert a more injurious influence upon the disposition both of the parent and the child. There are two great motives influencing human actions—hope and fear. Both of these are at times necessary. But who would not prefer to have her child influenced to good conduct by the desire of pleasing, rather than by the fear of offending. If a mother never expresses her gratification when her children do well, and is always censuring when she sees anything amiss, they are discouraged and unhappy. They feel that there is no use in trying to please. Their dispositions become hardened and soured by this ceaseless fretting. At last, finding that, whether they do good or bad, they are equally found fault with, they relinquish all efforts to please, and become heedless of reproaches. But let a mother approve of her child's conduct whenever she can. Let her show that his good behavior makes her sincerely happy. Let her reward him for his efforts to please, by smiles and affection. In this way she will cherish in her child's heart some of the noblest and most desirable feelings of our nature. She will cultivate in him an amiable disposition and a cheerful spirit. Your child has been, during the day, very pleasant and obedient. Just before putting him to sleep for the night, you take his hand and say, "My son, you have been a very good boy today. It makes me very happy to see you so kind and obedient." This approbation from his mother is, to him, a great reward. And when, with a more than ordinarily affectionate tone, you say, "good night, my dear son," he leaves the room with his little heart full of feeling. And when he closes his eyes for sleep, he is happy, and resolves that he will always try to do his duty. The judicious exercise of approbation is of the first importance in promoting obedience, and in cultivating in the bosom of your child affectionate and cheerful feelings. Let your smiles animate your boy's heart, and cheer him on in duty. When he returns from school, with his clothes clean and his countenance happy, reward him with the manifestation of a mother's love. This will be the strongest incentive to neatness and care. A child often makes a very great effort to do something to merit a smile from its mother. And most bitter tears are frequently shed because parents do not sufficiently sympathize in these feelings. The enjoyment of many a social circle, and the disposition of many an affectionate child, are spoiled by unceasing complainings. Some people get into such a habit of finding fault, that it becomes as natural to them as to breathe. Nothing pleases them. In every action, and in every event, they are searching for something to disapprove. Like venomous reptiles, they have the faculty of extracting poison from the choicest blessings. Children are, very much, creatures of sympathy. They form their characters from those around them. And we must cherish in our own bosoms those virtues we would foster in theirs. If we would give them calm and

gentle and friendly feelings, we must first show them, by our own example, how valuable those feelings are.

2.05.1 The Mother's RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER by John Abbott, 1833, Worcester, Mass. Published by the American Tract Society RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Very great success has attended the efforts which have been made to collect children in Sunday schools for religious instruction. Maternal associations have been of inestimable value. But nothing can supersede the necessity of effort and instruction at the fire-side. The mother must collect her little flock around her and take upon herself the responsibility of their religious education. She may find enjoyment and improvement in associating with others for prayer; and if she is faithful, she will see that her children are punctual attendants of the Sunday school. But she will not regard these as exonerating herself in the least degree from her parental responsibility. The influence of Sunday schools has undoubtedly been to awaken more general interest at home in behalf of the spiritual welfare of children. Still there is danger that some parents may feel that the responsibility is transferred from themselves to the Sunday school teachers; and that they accomplish their duty in seeing them punctually at school with their lessons well learned.

1. It is, however, of the first importance that home should be the sanctuary of religious instruction. The mother must be the earnest and affectionate guide to the Savior. She must take her little ones by the hand and lead them in the paths of piety. No one else can possibly have the influence which a mother may possess, or the facilities which she enjoys. She knows the various dispositions of her children; their habits of thought; their moods of mind. Thus can she adapt instruction to their needs. She alone can improve the numberless occurrences which open the mind for instruction, and give it susceptibility to religious impression. She is with them when they are in sickness or pain. She can take advantage of the calm of the morning, and of the solemn stillness of the evening. In moments of sadness she can point their minds to brighter worlds, and to more satisfying joys. God has conferred upon the mother advantages which no one else can possess. With these advantages he has connected responsibilities which cannot be laid aside, or transferred to another. At home, and by the parents, the great duty of religious education must be faithfully performed. The quiet fire-side is the most sacred sanctuary; maternal affection is the most eloquent pleader, and an obedient child is the most promising subject of religious impressions. Let mothers feel this as they ought, and they will seldom see their children leave the paternal roof unfortified with Christian principles and sincere piety.

2. Parents must have deep devotional feelings themselves. It is certainly vain to hope that you can induce your children to fix their affections upon another world, while yours are fixed upon this present world. Your example will counteract all the influence of your instructions! Unless Christian feelings animate your heart, it is folly to expect that you can instill those principles into the hearts of your children. They will imitate your example. They confide in your guidance. That little child which God has given you, and which is so happy in your affection, feels safe in cherishing those feelings which it sees you are cherishing. And, mother! can you look upon your confiding child and witness all her fond endearments and warm embraces, and not feel remorse in the consciousness

that your example is leading her away from God—and consigning her to ceaseless sorrow?

You love your child. Your child loves you, and cannot dream that you are abusing its confidence, and leading it in the paths of sin and destruction. How would it be shocked in being told that its mother is the cruel betrayer of its eternal happiness! O unchristian mother! You are wedded to the world. You have not given your heart to God. Not content with being the destroyer of your own soul, you must carry with you to the world of woe, the child who is loving you as its mother and its friend! O there is an aggravation of cruelty in this, which cannot be described. One would think that every smile would disturb your peace; that every proof of affection would pierce your heart; that remorse would keep you awake at midnight, and embitter every hour. The murderer of the body can scarce withstand the stings of conscience. But, O unchristian mother! you are the destroyer of the soul. And of whose soul? The soul of your own confiding child!

We cannot speak less plainly on this topic. We plead the unparalleled wickedness to children—betrayed by a mother's smile and a mother's kiss. Satan led Adam from Paradise. Judas betrayed his Master. But here we see a mother leading her child, her own immortal child, far from God and peace—to the rebellion of worldliness—and to the storms of eternal retribution. That little child following in your footsteps, is the heir of eternity! It is to survive the lapse of all coming years; to emerge from the corruptions of the grave; to expand in spiritual existence, soaring in the angel's lofty flight—or groping in the demon's gloom! You, O mother! are its guide to immortality—to heaven's green pastures—or to despair's dreary wastes. If you go on in unrepented sin, your child, in all probability, will go with you!

We have heard of a child, upon her dying bed, raising her eyes to her parents and exclaiming, in bitterness of spirit, "O my parents! you never told me of death, or urged me to prepare for it; and now," said she, bursting into an agony of tears, "I am dying, and my soul is lost!" She died. Her sun went down in darkness. What were the feelings of those parents! What agony must have torn their hearts! How must the spectre of their ruined daughter pursue them in all the employments of the day, and disturb their slumbers by night. But you must meet your children again. The trumpet of judgment will summon you to the bar of Christ. How fruitless would be the attempt to describe your feelings there! That dreadful day will surely come! The appointed hour makes haste! Death is followed by judgment—and judgment by eternity! If you are the destroyer of your child, through eternity you must bear its reproaches. You must gaze upon the wreck of its immortal spirit, while conscience says that, if you had been faithful, yourself and your child might have been reposing in heaven. Think not that you can go in one path, and induce your child to walk in another. You must not only "point to heaven," but "lead the way." The first thing to be done, is for a mother to give her own heart to God. Become a Christian yourself, and then you may hope for God's blessing upon your efforts to lead your child to the Savior. We do entreat every mother who reads these pages, as she values her own happiness and the happiness of her children, immediately to surrender her heart to God. Atoning blood has removed every difficulty from the way. The Holy Spirit is ready, in answer to your prayers, to grant you all needful assistance. Every hour that you neglect this duty, you are leading your children farther from God, and rendering the prospect of their return more hopeless.

3. Present religion in a cheerful aspect. There is no real happiness without piety. The tendency of religion is to make us happy—both here and hereafter; to divest the mind of gloom, and fill it with

joy. Many parents mistake in this respect. They dwell too much upon the terrors of the law. They speak with countenances saddened and gloomy. Religion becomes to the child an unwelcome topic, and is regarded as destructive of happiness. The idea of God is associated with gloom and terror. Many parents have, in their latter years, become convinced of the injudicious course they have pursued in this respect. They have so connected religious considerations with melancholy countenances and mournful tones of voice, as to cause the subject to be unnecessarily repugnant.

We may, indeed, err upon the other extreme. The nature of sin, and the justice of God, and the awful penalty of his law, should be distinctly exhibited. The child should be taught to regard God as that being who, while he loves his creatures, cannot look upon sin but with abhorrence. If we speak to children simply of the Creator's goodness, as manifested in the favors we are daily receiving, an erroneous impression of God's character will be conveyed. It is to be feared that many deceive themselves in thinking they love God. They have in their minds "a poetic idea of an amiable and sentimental being"—whose character is composed of fondness and indulgence. Such people are as far from worshipping the true God, as is the Indian devotee or the sensual Moslem!

God must be represented as he has exhibited himself to us in the Bible and in the works of nature. He is a God of mercy—and of justice. He is a God of love—and a consuming fire. He is to be regarded with our warmest affections—and also with reverence and godly fear. Let, therefore, children distinctly understand that sin cannot pass unpunished. But it should also be understood that judgment is God's strange work. Ordinarily speak of his goodness. Show his readiness to forgive. Excite the gratitude of the child by speaking of the joys of heaven. Thus let the duties of religion ever be connected with feelings of enjoyment and images of happiness, that the child may perceive that gloom and sorrow are connected only with disobedience and irreligion. There is enough in the promised joys of heaven to rouse a child's most animated feelings. This subject has more to cheer the youthful heart than any other which can be presented. Appeal to gratitude. Excite hope. Speak of the promised reward. Thus may you most reasonably hope to lead your child to love its Maker, and to live for heaven.

Reserve the terrors of the law for solemn occasions, when you may produce a deep and abiding impression. If you are continually introducing these motives, the mind becomes hardened against their influence; religion becomes a disagreeable topic, and the inveteracy of sin is confirmed.

4. Improve appropriate occasions. We all know that there are times when there is peculiar tenderness of conscience and susceptibility of impression. These changes come over the mind, sometimes from unaccountable causes. One day the Christian will feel a warmth of devotional feeling and elevation of spiritual enjoyment, which the next day he in vain endeavors to attain. The man whose affections are fixed upon the world, at one time will be almost satisfied with the pleasure he is gathering. The world looks bright; hope is animated; and he rushes on with new vigor in his delusive pursuits. The next day all his objects of desire appear as vain shadows. He feels the heartlessness of his pleasures; his spirit is sad within him; and he is almost resolved to be a Christian. With these changes nearly all are familiar. Sometimes they may be accounted for from known external causes. At other times the causes elude our search. A mother should ever be watchful to improve such occasions. When she sees her child with an unusually tender spirit, with a pensive countenance and subdued feelings—let her then look to God in fervent prayer, and with all the persuasions of a mother's love endeavor to guide her child to the Savior. When the mind is

in such a state as this, it is prepared for religious instruction. It then can be made to feel how heartless are all joys, but those of piety. Its hold upon the world is loosened, and it may more easily be led to wander in those illimitable regions where it may hereafter find its home. O how sweet a pleasure it is to present the joys of religion to a child whose feelings are thus chastened; to behold the tear moistening its eye; to see its little bosom heaving with the new emotions which are rising there! If there be a joy on earth, it is to be found in such a scene as this. The happy mother thus guiding her young immortal to its heavenly home, experiences a rapture of feeling which the world knows not of. Such occasions are frequently arising, and the mother should endeavor always to have her heart warm with love to Christ, that in such an hour she may communicate its warmth to the bosom of her child.

There are certain seasons also which are peculiarly appropriate for guiding the thoughts to heaven. Our feelings vary with scenes around us. Upon some dark and tempestuous night you lead your little son to his chamber. The rain beats violently upon the windows. The wind whistles around the corners of the dwelling. All is darkness and gloom. The mind of the child is necessarily affected by this rage of the elements. You embrace the opportunity to inculcate a lesson of trust in God. "My son," you say, "it is God who causes this wind to blow, and the rain to fall. Neither your father nor I can cause the storm to cease, or increase its violence. If God wished, he could make the wind blow with such fury as to beat in all the windows and destroy the house. But God will take care of you, my son, if you sincerely ask him. No one else can take care of you. I hope that you will pray that God will protect you, and your father, and me, tonight. When God commands, the storm will cease. The clouds will disappear; all will be calm. And the bright moon and twinkling stars will shine out again." In some such manner as this the child may be taught his entire dependence upon God. He cannot fail of obtaining a deep impression of the power of his Maker. You may say that God is omnipotent, and it will produce but a feeble impression. But point to some actual exhibition of God's power, and the attention is arrested, and the truth is felt. When the mother leaves the room, and her son remains alone and in darkness, listening to the roar of the storm, will not his mind be expanded with new ideas of the greatness and the power of his Maker? Will he not feel that it is a fearful thing to offend such a being? And if he has been rightly instructed to place his trust in God, the agitation of the elements will not trouble the serenity of his heart. He will feel that with God for his protector, he need fear no evil.

Some such simple occurrence as this may often be improved to produce an impression which never can be forgotten. Such thoughts as these, introduced to the mind of a child, will enlarge its capacities, give it maturity, lead it to reflection, and, by the blessing of God, promote its eternal well-being. One such transient incident has a greater effect than hours of ordinary religious conversation.

One of the most important duties of the mother is to watch for these occasions and diligently to improve them. Any parent who is faithful will find innumerable opportunities, which will enable her to come into almost immediate contact with the heart of her child. The hour of sickness comes. Your little daughter is feverish and restless upon her pillow. You bathe her burning brow and moisten her parched tongue, and she hears your prayer that she may be restored to health. At length the fever subsides. She awakes from refreshing sleep, relieved from pain. You tell her then, that if God had not interposed, her sickness would have increased until she had died. By pointing her attention to this one act of kindness in God, which she can see and feel, you may excite

emotions of sincere gratitude. You may thus lead her to real grief that she should ever disobey her heavenly Father. A child in the neighborhood dies. Your daughter accompanies you to the funeral. She looks upon the lifeless corpse of her little companion. And shall a mother neglect such an opportunity to teach her child the meaning of death? When your daughter retires to sleep at night, she will most certainly think of her friend who has died. As you speak to her of the eternal world to which her friend has gone—of the judgment-seat of Christ—of the new scenes of joy or woe upon which she has entered, will not her youthful heart feel? And will not tears of sympathy fill her eyes? And as you tell your daughter that she too soon must die; leave all her friends; appear before Christ to be judged; and enter upon eternal existence—will not the occurrence of the day give a reality and an effect to your remarks which will long be remembered? There are few children who can resist such appeals. A father once led his little daughter into the graveyard, to show her the grave of a playmate, who, a few days before, had been consigned to her cold and narrow bed. The little girl looked for some moments in silence and sadness upon the fresh mound, and then looking up, said "Papa, I now know what is meant by the hymn, 'I, in the burying place may see, graves shorter there than I.' My grave would be longer than this."

It is by introducing children to such scenes, and seizing upon such occasions, that we may most successfully inculcate lessons of piety. One such incident enters more deeply into the heart than volumes of ordinary conversation.

You are perhaps riding with your son. It is a lovely summer's morning. The fields lie spread before you in beauty. The song of the bird is heard. All nature seems uttering a voice of gladness. As you ascend some eminence which gives you a commanding view of all the varied beauties of the scene; of hill and valley, rivulet and forest, of verdant pastures and lowing herds, can you fail to point the attention of your son to these beauties, and from them to lead his mind to Him whose word called them all into being? May you not thus most effectually carry his thoughts away to heaven? May you not lead his mind to the green pastures and the still waters, where there is sweet repose forever? May you not introduce him to that kind Shepherd, who there protects his flock, gathering his lambs in his arms, and folding them in his bosom? May not a mother's or a father's tongue here plead with an eloquence unknown in the pulpit? By carefully improving such occasions as these, you may produce an impression upon the mind, which all future years cannot remove. You may so intimately connect devotional feelings with the ever-varying events and changing scenes of life, that every day's occurrences will lead the thoughts of your child to God. The raging storm; the hour of sickness; the funeral procession; the tolling death-bell, will, in later life, carry back his thoughts to a mother's instructions and prayers. Should your son hereafter be a wanderer from home, as he stands upon the Alps, or rides upon the ocean, his mind will involuntarily be carried to Him who rules the waters and who built the hills. With all those occasions then, which produce so vivid an effect upon the mind, endeavor to connect views of God and heaven.

There is hardly any person so reckless of eternity, so opposed to piety, who will not at times listen to religious conversation. A Christian gentleman was once a passenger on board a vessel where his ears were frequently pained by the profane language of a crude and boisterous cabin boy. He resolved to watch for some opportunity to converse with him. One evening the gentleman was lying, wrapped in his cloak, upon the quarter-deck, with a coil of ropes for his pillow, enjoying the beauties of ocean scenery. A gentle breeze was swelling the sails and bearing the ship rapidly

over the undulating waters. The waves were glittering with their phosphorescent fires, and reflected from innumerable points the rays of the moon. Not a cloud obscured the thousands of lights which were hung out in "nature's grand rotunda." The cabin boy happened to be employed in adjusting some ropes near the place where the gentleman was reclining in the rich enjoyment of his wandering thoughts. A few words of conversation first passed between them, upon some ordinary topic. The attention of the boy was then, by an easy transition, directed to the stars. He manifested increasing interest, as some simple but striking remarks were made upon the facts which astronomy has taught us. From this the mind of the boy was led to heaven. He stood gazing upon the stars, as the gentleman spoke of the world of glory and the mansions which Christ has gone to prepare. He listened with subdued feelings and breathless attention, as the conversation unfolded to him the dreadful scene of judgment. By this time his mind was prepared for direct allusion to his own sins. He was attentive and respectful, while he was kindly but most earnestly entreated to prepare to meet Christ in judgment. The effect produced upon the mind of this wicked lad was evidently most powerful. Whether it were lasting or not, the gentleman had no opportunity to ascertain. But by taking advantage of the stillness of the evening, and the impressiveness of the scene, the turbulent spirit of that boy was, for the time at least, quelled. Religious instruction was communicated to his willing mind. And probably he will often, while a wanderer upon the ocean, gaze upon the stars in his midnight watches, and think of judgment and of heaven.

How often can a mother seize upon some similar occasion, and instruct, while at the same time she most deeply interests and most effectually impresses the mind of her child!

5. Avoid introducing religious subjects upon inappropriate occasions. There are times when serious injury is done by urging the claims of religion. Your child is angry. His flushed cheek and violent motions show the sinful irritation of his mind. Shall the mother now converse with him upon the wickedness of these feelings and God's displeasure? No! It is unseasonable. It would be as unavailing as to converse with a madman, or one intoxicated. Punish him for his irritation in some way which will soothe his feelings and lead him to reflection. But wait until these passions have subsided before you attempt to reason with him upon their impropriety, and to lead him to evangelical repentance. Kneel by his bedside in the silence of his chamber, and in the pensive hour of evening. When his mind is calm, and passion is not triumphing over reason, he will hear you, and may be melted to contrition. When Peter denied his Master, he did it with cursing and swearing. But when his fears had subsided, and the hour of reflection came, with a sad heart he entered the hall of Pilate. Then did a single glance from the Savior pierce his heart, "and he went out and wept bitterly." A child is highly excited with pleasurable emotions. His attention is so highly engrossed by the immediate object of his enjoyment, that it is almost impossible to draw his thoughts to any other subject. If, under these circumstances, an effort is made to convince him of the uncertainty of human enjoyments, of his own sinfulness, of the need of a Savior, the effort will not only, in all probability, be unavailing, but the subject will be so unwelcome as to excite disgust. There are times when the mind is prepared with gratitude to receive religious instruction. Let such occasions be improved. There are others when the mind is so manifestly engrossed in one all-absorbing subject, that it is in vain to present any other. If you would not connect religion with unpleasant associations, and excite repugnance, do not on such occasions intrude spiritual subjects.

If a gunner should enter a forest and walk along loading and firing at random, he might accidentally get some game, but most assuredly he would frighten away far more than he would secure. If a parent, with blind and unthinking zeal, is incessantly throwing out random remarks, she may by chance produce the desired effect. She will, however, more frequently excite opposition, and confirm rebellion, than lead to penitence and prayer.

Guard against long and tedious conversations on religious subjects. The mind of a child cannot be fixed for any great length of time upon one subject without exhaustion. Every word that is uttered, after there are manifestations of weariness, will do more harm than good. If a mother will exercise her own judgment, and gather wisdom from her own observation, she will soon acquire that facility in adapting her instructions to the occasion which will have the best tendency to improve her child. No rules can supersede the necessity of personal watchfulness and reflection.

6. Make the Bible your text book in the religious instructions of your children. Few moderns have attained greater celebrity than Lamartine. As a poet, a statesman, an orator, he has filled the world with his renown. When a child, his mother was his intellectual guide, and the Bible the book from which she taught him. She inspired him with all that is noble in his nature, arousing his affections, enkindling his mind, guiding his thoughts, forming his tastes. The Bible was her text book. Under its guidance, she led her noble and ardent boy through the groves and by the crystal streams of Eden. With her he gathered the fruit, and plucked the flowers, or listened to the songs of Paradise. He saw depicted before him Adam and Eve in their innocence and bliss, and in their condition and history he saw and felt the beauty of holiness. The Fall came with its gloom and withering curse. In the howling tempest, the desolation of the garden of Eden, and the weary wanderings of our first parents when ejected from their early home—he saw the hatefulness of sin. The Deluge then follows with its blackness of darkness, and its surging billows overwhelming a struggling world. The heart of the child throbs in the conception of the dreadful scene as a mother's lips tell the tale. His mind is expanded, and his whole spirit elevated by the terrific idea. Babel rises before his eye. The story of Joseph and his adventurous life inspires him with lofty desires. Daniel, the heroic and the noble, awakens in his bosom the firm resolve that he also will be a Christian hero, daring to do and to suffer, though the famished lion roar, and the heated furnace glow. The Savior, in all the perfection of moral loveliness, and in all the grandeur of moral sublimity, becomes the object of his youthful love and admiration. His bosom glows with lofty emotions at the recital of the eventful lives of the Apostles. His character is thus formed upon the model of the sacred heroes. The mother, with the Bible, aided by God's blessing, has ennobled and saved the boy. At length, she dies and molds to the dust. Life, with its tempests, rolls over her son. Temptations crowd around his path in blooming youth and in vigorous manhood. But there is a guardian angel ever hovering over him. That gentle and familiar voice which taught him in infancy never dies upon his ear. That sweet maternal smile never fades from his eye.

After long years of toil and conflict have passed away, Lamartine resolves to visit in person the land to which the instructions of his mother had so often led his youthful mind. The evening twilight is just settling down over the hills of Judea as he catches the first dim glimpse of their outline. The fresh breeze urges the ship over the blue expanse of the Mediterranean, and the moon rises brightly over Carmel and Olivet and Lebanon. His mother first guided his spirit to the Holy Land. And now his thoughts involuntarily turn to her. "My mother," he says, "surely looks down at such an hour as this upon her happy son." With a soul swelling with emotion, with eyes swimming in

tears, he looks upon the unveiled Heavens above him and exclaims, "Mother! dear, dear mother! here am I drawing near to your own loved Jerusalem. I am to weep upon Olivet and upon Calvary. Upon the shores of the river and the lake I am to tread in the footsteps which your Savior and my Savior have trodden. Mother, dear mother! I know that you are with me, and that you sympathize in the joy of your child."

Thus does the spiritual sympathy which binds the heart of a child to a mother, survive, and continue to exercise its power, long after that mother has been slumbering in the grave. The Bible is the strongest of all influences in the creation of that sympathy. There is, in its relations the union of all that is intellectually exciting, and all that is spiritually sacred. Its narratives, its imagery, its precepts, its thrilling and heroic incidents, all more powerfully move the human heart than any other agency.

We have not sufficient faith in the potency of the Bible. It should be to the parent her manual, her armory, a treasury for her of every blessed influence. The infant mind eagerly listens to the recital of the biography and the history with which its pages are filled. Tell your child the stories of Eden—of the Fall, and of the Deluge—of the cities of the plain, wrapped in fire—of Samuel, and Joseph, and Moses, and David, and Ruth, and Daniel. Read to them these narratives in the beautiful simplicity with which the pen of inspiration has recorded them, and you will awaken a strong and abiding interest in his mind; you will fortify him against the wiles of infidelity, with arguments more potent than all the demonstrations of philosophy; and you will ally your name, a mother's name, with the Bible, with angels, with heaven, with God. The mother must not surrender the instruction of her children in the narratives and truths of the Bible, to others—to the Sabbath-school teacher or her pastor. Grateful as she may be for the Sabbath school, and the church, and all the kindhearted influences which they exert—it is her privilege, her peculiar privilege, her inestimable privilege—a privilege of which no one may deprive her, to take her child by the hand herself and lead him to the Savior. She must reveal to the tender and awakened spirit—death and its struggles—the grave and its corruption—the archangel's trumpet—the morning of the resurrection—the sublimity and the terror of the final judgment. A mother's loving voice must guide the mind to the garden of God on high—its blessed mansions—its still waters—its green pastures—its fullness of never-fading joy. A mother's gentle tones must reveal all that is dreadful in the retribution of a righteous God—and the remorse and the despair, which, like an undying worm and a quenchless flame, must consume the sinner's heart. In doing this, the Bible should ever be the parent's storehouse of religious influence. It is the mighty power of God.

7. In teaching children from the Scriptures, aim at interesting them in the moral truths and sentiments which the narratives convey. In fact, upon a proper use of the sacred volume, a great deal depends in respect to the success which is to be obtained through its instrumentality. There are some parts of it which children can at a very early age understand and appreciate. Others, from their style or subject, will act efficiently on mature minds alone. From the former, which ought to be early read and explained, an immediate and most important religious influence can at once be exerted. Selections from the latter should be fixed in the memory, to exert an influence in future years. For the former of these purposes the narrative parts, if judiciously selected, are most appropriate in early years. But great care ought to be taken to select those which may be easily understood, and those in which some moral lesson is obvious and simple. Let it be constantly borne in mind that the object in view in teaching the Bible to a child, is to affect his heart—and it

would be well for every mother to pause occasionally, and ask herself,

"What moral duty am I endeavoring to inculcate now? What practical effect upon the heart and conduct of my child is this lesson intended to produce?" To ask a young child such questions as, "Who was the first man?" "Who was the oldest man?" "Who slew Goliath?" may be giving him lessons in pronunciation, but it is not giving him religious instruction. It may teach him to articulate, or it may strengthen his memory—but is doing little or nothing to promote his piety. I would not be understood to condemn such questions.

I only wish that parents may understand their true nature. If the real or supposed dexterity of the child in answering them is not made the occasion of showing him off before company—thus cherishing vanity and self-conceit—it may be well thus to exercise the memory; and some facts which will be useful hereafter, may be fixed in this way. But it must not be considered as religious instruction—it has not in any degree the nature of religious instruction.

What, then, is the kind of instruction which is to be given from the Bible? I will illustrate the method of supposing a case which may bring the proper principles to view. We will imagine the child to be two or three years old.

"Come," says its mother, "come to me and I will read you a story." It is Sabbath afternoon we will suppose; the mind of the child is not pre-occupied by any other interest.

"Sometimes," continues the mother, "I tell you stories to amuse you. But I am not going to do that now. It is to do you good. Do you understand how it will do you good to hear a story?"

"No, mother."

"Well, you will see. It is the story of Cain and Abel. Do you know anything about it?"

"Yes, Cain killed Abel."

"Do you know why he killed him?"

"Because he was wicked."

"No, I mean what did Abel do to make Cain angry with him? Did you ever see anybody angry? Were you ever angry yourself?"

"Yes, mother."

"And I suppose you had some cause for it. Now I will read the account, and see whether you can tell what made Cain angry—'And Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.' Do you know what the fruit of the ground is?"

"No, mother."

"It means anything which grows out of the ground. Cain was a farmer; he planted seeds and gathered the fruits which grew from them, and he brought some of them to offer them to God. 'And Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock.' Do you know what that means?" The child hesitates.

"Abel did not cultivate the ground like Cain. He had great flocks of sheep and goats, and he brought some of the best of those to offer to God. So that you see that Cain and Abel did almost

exactly the same thing."

"Now, God does not notice merely what we do—but how we feel, while we are doing it. If I would ask you to go and shut that door when you are busy, and if you should go immediately, but feel angry, God would be displeased. He looks at the heart. Do you ever feel angry when I wish you to do what you dislike?"

"Yes, sometimes."

"Now Cain, I suppose, did not feel pleasantly when he brought his offering—and God was dissatisfied with him. But God was pleased with Abel's offering, and accepted it. Would you have thought that Cain would have liked this?"

"No. Did he like it?"

"No, he did not. He was very much displeased; and it is very remarkable that he was displeased, not only against God, but he was angry with his brother, who had not done him the least wrong. That is the way with us all. If you should do wrong, and your sister do right, and I should blame you, and praise her, you would be tempted to feel angry with her, just because she had been so happy as to do her duty. How wicked such a feeling is!"

"Cain, however, had that feeling; and little children have it very often. It shows itself in different ways. Cain being a strong man rose against his brother in the field and killed him. But young children who are weak and small would only strike each other—or say unkind things to one another. Now God is displeased with us when we have these feelings, whether we show them by unkind words or by cruel violence. There is a particular verse in the Bible which shows this. Would you like to have me find it?"

"Yes, mother."

"I will find it then. It is in Matthew 5:22. Our Savior says it. It is this,

'Whoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whoever shall say, You fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.' This is not the whole of the verse. I will explain the other part some other time." The reader will perceive at once that the kind of instruction here exemplified, consists in drawing out the moral lesson which the passage is intended to teach, and in giving it direct and practical application to the circumstances and temptations of the child. The views which are generally entertained of heaven, as described in the Bible, are far more indefinite than they ought to be. This home of the blessed is described in the Scriptures with the most magnificent imagery that nature affords. Heaven is spoken of as having a distinct locality, like any place on earth. We hear of the splendor of the golden city, adorned with every beauty with which the hand of Omnipotence can embellish it; of the mansions glittering with architectural magnificence. We are informed of the social enjoyments of that world. The Christian is introduced to the society of angels; converses with them; unites in their enjoyments; becomes a beloved member of their happy community. We are informed of the active delights of heaven. Angel bands fly to and fro, the rejoicing servants of God. They unfold their wings and take their rapid flight where all the glories of the universe allure their curiosity, and where no darkness follows the splendor of ceaseless day. The eye gazes full and undazzled upon the brightness of God's throne. The ear is charmed with melody. The body of the Christian is to arise from the grave, incorruptible

and immortal. There is the union of soul and body in that happy world. There we meet our Christian friends; recognize them; rejoice in their love. Thus we pass our eternity with songs, and everlasting joy upon our heads, where sorrow and sighing forever flee away.

How vivid and impressive are the views which the pen of inspiration gives of the Christian's future abode! Yet the very common idea entertained of heaven is, that it is a vast aerial expanse, where shadowy and unsubstantial spirits repose in mysterious and indefinable enjoyment. There is, indeed, with many individuals, an impression that it is wrong to associate ideas of joy with which we now are familiar, with that celestial abode. But is it not safe, is it not a duty, to be guided in our instructions by the Bible? Admitting that the descriptions of the Bible are figurative—as they of necessity must be—still these are the figures which God has employed to convey to our minds an idea of the joys of heaven. And God would surely select the most appropriate figures, and those which most nearly resemble the enjoyments to be illustrated.

8. It is our privilege and our duty, therefore, to describe heaven to our children, as God has described it to us. Thus may we give it vividness in their minds. Thus may we excite in their youthful bosoms the most intense desire to enter that happy world. And why has God unfolded its glories—but to allure us to holiness and entice us home? Your son has an unusual thirst for knowledge. His curiosity is ever on the alert. He is prying into nature's mysterious movements, and asking questions which the human mind cannot answer. Tell him that there are no limits to human improvements; that the grave cannot enchain the energies of the mind; that time cannot circumscribe its range, that eternity cannot weary its powers; that it will advance in its acquisitions, and soar in its flight, long after suns, and moons, and stars shall have waxed old and decayed. Tell him that in heaven he shall understand all the wonders of God's works, and experience the most exquisite delight, as he looks into and comprehends all the machinery of nature. And then you can tell him of the Savior, who died that he might introduce him to this happy world. Your daughter has an ear charmed with the melody of sound. Music is to her a source of exquisite enjoyment. Is there no music in heaven? Is there no melody in the "chorus of the skies?" Is there nothing enrapturing to the soul while uniting with angelic choruses in their hallelujahs? God has thus described heaven to us. Why should we not then animate our children with the same description?

You may, in familiar language, carry the thoughts of your daughter away to companies of happy angels, with celestial harps and divine voices rolling their notes of joy through heaven's wide concave. Thus will she have some definite idea of the enjoyments to which she is invited. The joys of heaven will be to her intensely alluring; and she will be led to inquire more earnestly into the way of salvation, and with more fervor to implore God's aid to overcome sin and prepare her for a heavenly home. Your child has an affectionate disposition, a heart open to receive friendship, and to pour forth its love. Tell him of the love of heaven, of God, of the angels. Tell him of the love which animates the bosoms of those noble spirits who have not a single fault to repel attachment. Tell him of again meeting all his friends who love the Savior, in that world where an unkind word, or an unkind look, or an unkind thought is unknown. And as you dwell upon the proofs of a Savior's love, his heart may be melted. Is your child passionately fond of nature's scenery? Does he look with a poet's eye upon the ocean, upon the starry canopy, upon the gilded clouds of sunset? There surely is magnificence in the scenery of heaven. There is splendor worth beholding in the visions of angels, the throne of God, the widespread universe of countless worlds. What is the ocean but a drop sprinkled from the almighty hand? What is Niagara, to us so magnificent, but a

tiny rivulet rippling over its pebbly channel? Animate your child with the description of those glories of heaven, before which all the sublimity of earth sinks to insignificance. Fear not that this will extinguish in his bosom a taste for nature's beauties. It will, while increasing the enjoyment which he derives from these sources, refine and elevate his mind, and give him ardent desires to be prepared for this world of glory.

Fear not that this will strengthen in his heart the principles of selfishness instead of leading him to piety. If God had felt such fears, he never would have presented us the allurements of heaven, or the terrors of hell. Present these joys, that your child may be induced by them to repent of sin, to trust in the Savior, and to consecrate life to his service.

These descriptions are necessarily in some degree figurative, and we must so instruct our children. But we must not neglect the use of these figures, for they convey to the mind the most correct conception that can be attained of the enjoyment of the future world. The fact that God has selected them, proves that no other language can be equally appropriate. They describe, as perfectly as human language can describe, the nature of heaven's enjoyments. But they do not come up to the reality—for eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor human heart conceived, the joys which God has prepared for those who love him.

God knows how to adapt instruction to the human mind. We must imitate his example. And we must present heaven to our children as God has presented it to us—crowded with images of delight. The purest and noblest joys that we experience on earth, will be found again in that world—only infinitely elevated and refined. And he must adopt singular principles of interpretation, who does not read in the Bible, that in heaven we shall find splendor of scenery, harmony of music, congeniality of companions, ardor of love, delight of activity, mansions of glory, and homes of never failing bliss. Let us urge these views upon our children until their hearts are warmed by them. Nothing can have a stronger tendency to convince them of the folly of laying up treasures upon earth. And this will lead them to listen with interest to your instructions in order that they may learn how salvation is to be obtained.

9. Next to the Bible, as a means of religious influence, we must place the careful culture of our own hearts. The parent must strive to be herself, just what she wishes her child to be. She must cherish in her own spirit those virtues and those graces, which she desires to see as the embellishments of the character of her child. Our children have more right to expect that we shall be model parents—than we have to require that they shall be model children. Their temptations are as severe for them as ours are for us. We are apt to think their burdens light, because upon our mature minds they would press with but little weight. And thus most erroneously we excuse ourselves for defects, which we censure severely in them. Would you have your children look to God sincerely, affectionately, cheerfully—as their Father and their friend—their sympathizer in joy—their comforter in sorrow? Lead them to do this—by your example. Let them see this spirit in you. When you bend over the cradle of a dying child—when disaster comes and sweeps away your means of luxury and even of comforts—when disease takes you from the busy cares of the household and you languish in debility and pain upon your bed—then is the time in which to show the loveliness and blessedness of confidence in God. A smile upon your countenance, a glance of confiding affection in your eye, a word of calm submission from your full heart, will then go to the hearts of your observing children, with great and effectual power.

Words alone are air. They fall upon the ear, and are forgotten. But who ever forgets abiding, consistent, unvarying example? What child ever ceases to remember the life—the daily life, of its father and mother? The ornaments and graces too, of the natural character as well as the principles of piety, can best be inculcated upon children through the influence of example. Would you have your daughter learn to control her passions, and cultivate a subdued, gentle, and submissive spirit? Would you have her speak soothingly to her little brother, when he is irritated, and bear her own little troubles without fretfulness or complaining? Show her how to do it by your example. When the careless maid drops the china vase, or spoils the dinner, or breaks the lamp of oil upon the carpet—then is the time, in which to teach your child how to govern herself. This is your hour of conflict. Gain the victory yourself, and your child will gather strength from your success to struggle with her own temptations and sins.

Say not that the annoyances and trials which you have to bear, are too great to be always endured with equanimity. God lays upon his children no intolerable burdens. We need such discipline as these things bring that we may be able to sympathize with our children in their trials. And we surely ought not to be surprised to find that our children get vexed and angry at the disappointments and injuries which befall them, if we lose our own tempers and resent with ruffled feelings and angry words the acts of carelessness on the part of others by which we are annoyed.

Parents should never, especially in the presence of their children, give way to feelings of irritation and anger. Even when a child does wrong, there should be no expression of resentment or vexation in our looks or in our words. We may act firmly on such occasions, and reprove effectually—while yet we maintain throughout, the quiet, gentle, and peaceful spirit by which the conduct of the Christian ought at all times to be characterized. In fact, the efficiency of parental discipline will depend in a great measure upon the mildness and gentleness of the form it assumes; while at the same time, by assuming such a character, it makes the subject of it gentle and mild. In the same manner, feelings of benevolent regard for the happiness of others, and all other right moral sentiments of heart, can be best cultivated through the influence of parental example. Would you cherish in your child, a heart to feel for others' woes—a generous spirit, active in the relief of distress? Take your son or your daughter with you, as you grope through the dismal passageway, to the room of sickness and poverty. Let him see the scanty furniture, the thin clothing, and the feeble flame dying on the hearth. Let him carry, himself, the basket which conveys comforts to the desolate—and the spirit which glows in your bosom, will warm his also—and the spirit of benevolence which Christ has enkindled in your bosom, will diffuse its warmth into his youthful heart.

It is a beautiful arrangement of Providence, that requires that the great work of the formation of the character of children should be done in the heart of the parent herself. I am to teach my child to avoid vanity, and pride, and selfishness—by cultivating within myself, with never-tiring industry, the spirit of lowliness, of humility, of self-sacrifice. It is thus, more effectually than in any other way, that I am to reach and influence his heart. So I am to curb the impetuous passions of my child, mainly by gaining the victory over myself, and bringing all my own passions under perfect control. It is thus within myself—it is in my own heart, that I can work most effectually in molding the character of my children; for in promoting their moral progress I must go before them and lead the way.

What fearful questions, then, arise in the mind of every parent? Am I what I wish my child to be? Am I grateful, submissive, cheerful? Have I conquered my passions, obtained weanedness from the world, and am I daily, in my life, presenting an example such as my child may safely imitate? Here lies the great work of parental faithfulness. Here is to be laid the deep foundations of all salutary family discipline. Thus did our Savior plead. Such was the influence he wielded. Persuasive as were his words, infinitely more persuasive was the power of his example.

10. Dwell particularly upon the Savior, in the religious instruction of children. The Scriptures declare that the preaching of Christ crucified is the great instrument which God uses in convincing of sin, and leading the soul to penitence and gratitude. And the history of the church in all ages has shown that the history of a Savior's love and death will awaken contrition and melt the heart, when all other appeals are in vain. Your child will listen, with tearful eye, while you tell of the Savior's glory in heaven—of his becoming man—of the sufferings and persecution of his life—and of his cruel death upon the cross. And when you tell your child that it was 'God' who thus became manifest in the flesh, and suffered these indignities that he might redeem his sinful creatures from woe—you will convey to the tender mind such an idea of God's kindness, and the ingratitude of sinners, as nothing else can produce. The philosopher may admire the noble conception of the eternal, incomprehensible, invisible Spirit. But it is God, as manifested in the compassionate, gentle, and suffering Savior—who attracts the sympathies of the heart. A definite idea is introduced to the youthful mind, when you speak of him who took little children in his arms and blessed them. Every Christian can judge, from the effect produced upon his own heart by the recital of a Savior's love—of the tendency it has to awaken in the bosom of a child the deepest emotions of contrition and gratitude. It is very observable, in all the accounts of youthful piety, that the Savior is the prominent object of affection.

Any person will be interested, in turning over the pages of almost any pious child's biography, to witness how strong the impression which a Savior's love produces upon the heart. Even under the most adverse circumstances, the youthful heart has found its way to him. Not a few instances have occurred, in which parents, who have not been accustomed to give prominency to the Savior in their instructions, have been surprised to find that Jesus Christ is the sympathizing friend to whom a child, in sickness and in suffering, has most affectionately clung. God, in Christ, has attractions which nothing else can have! When little Nathan Dickerman was asked, "What do you love to think about most when you are in pain?"

"The Lord Jesus Christ," he answered. At another time his biographer records—Nathan is very sick tonight. His heart is beating most violently and rapidly, while the pulse can hardly be perceived at the wrist. But he says he is more happy than usual. I asked him why. He replied, "Because my Savior is near." Being asked which was his favorite hymn; he reflected a moment, and repeated, "One there is above all others well deserves the name of friend; His is love beyond a brother's—costly, free, and knows no end. Which of all our friends, to save us, could or would have shed his blood? But this Savior died to have us reconciled in Him to God." The remembrance of what the Savior suffered sustained him in all his sufferings. Redeeming love was the theme of his sweetest meditations.

One day, someone was mentioning in the room, that his disease was of such a nature that he would probably die suddenly. Nathan heard it, and rising up in the bed, clasped his hands

together, and repeated the verse—

"Jesus can make a dying bed feel soft as downy pillows are— while on his bosom I lean my head, and breathe my soul out sweetly there." And after sitting a few moments in silence, he added another—

"Jesus, my God, I know his name, His name is all my trust; Nor will he put my soul to shame; Nor let my hope be lost."

"Isn't that a good hope, mother?"

We might open to almost any memoir of early piety, in illustration of this principle. And indeed everyone who is familiar with the characteristics of devotional feeling, as they are exemplified in the mind of a child, must have observed the wonderful adaptation of religious truth to our weakness and frailty.

Let parents, therefore, imitate the apostles, and preach to their children a suffering Savior. Show them God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. This is the simplicity of the Gospel. Indeed, we can hardly conceive it possible for the affections of a child to cling with ardor to any object, of which it cannot form some definite conception. Tell your child of Christ—who created him; of Christ—who became man, and suffered and died to save him; of Christ—before whose judgment seat he soon must appear; of Christ—whose praises the Christian will sing in heaven, ages without end. This is God, if I may so express it, simplified to the comprehension of the child. The mother who does not often present this Savior, and dwell upon the story of his sufferings and death, has not yet learned the simplicity and power of the gospel. All other motives are feeble, compared with this. You may search the world of fact and imagination in vain for any motive calculated to produce so deep an impression upon the mind. And everything in this astonishing occurrence has a tendency to promote humility, penitence, and love. I dwell the more earnestly upon this point, for it appears to me of primary importance. The gospel is the all-availing instrument which God has given to subdue the power of sin in the heart.

Pray with your children. It is not only the duty of a mother to pray for her children, but when they are young, to pray with them. Let them hear your fervent supplications that God will make them his friends. Let them see that your desires are intense that they may be preserved from sin—and prepared for heaven. The feelings which animate the bosom of the mother will, by sympathy, in some degree, be transferred to the bosoms of the children. These scenes of devotion will long be remembered. And even if your efforts and your prayers are not answered with the early evidences of your children's piety, these hours of devotion will leave a trace upon the memory never to be effaced. Through all succeeding years they will operate as restraints from plunging into guilty excess, and as monitions of conscience calling loudly to repentance and virtue.

It is reported of a man, notable for his talents, his elevated situation in life, and his wicked life—that one evening, while sitting at the gaming table, he was observed to be unusually sad. His associates rallied him upon his serious aspect. He endeavored, by rousing himself, and by sallies of wit, which he had always at command, to turn away their attention, and throw off the transient gloom. Not many moments transpired before he seemed again lost in thought, and dejected, by some mournful contemplations. This exposed him so entirely to the ridicule of his companions, that he could not defend himself. As they poured in upon him their taunts and jeers, he at last

remarked, "Well, to tell the truth, I cannot help thinking, every now and then, of the prayers my mother used to offer for me at my bedside when I was a child. Old as I am, I cannot forget the impressions of those early years."

Here was a man of highly cultivated mind, and of talents of so high an order as to give him influence and eminence, notwithstanding his dissolute life, and yet, neither lapse of years, nor acquisitions of knowledge, nor crowding cares, nor scenes of vice, could obliterate the effect which a mother's devotions had left upon his mind. The still small voice of a mother's prayers rose above the noise of guilty revelry. The pious mother, though dead, still continued to speak in impressive rebuke to her dissolute son. Many facts might be introduced illustrating the importance of this duty. The following is so much to the point, and affords such cheering encouragement, that I cannot refrain from relating it. A few years since, a gentleman from England brought a letter of introduction to a gentleman in this country. The stranger was of accomplished mind and manners—but in sentiment an infidel. The gentleman to whom he brought letters of introduction, and his wife, were active Christian philanthropists. They invited the stranger to make their house his home, and treated him with every possible attention. Upon the evening of his arrival, just before the usual hour for retiring, the gentleman, knowing the peculiarity of his guest's sentiments, observed to him that the hour had arrived in which they usually attended family prayers; that he would be happy to have him remain and unite with them, or if he preferred, he could retire. The gentleman intimated that it would give him pleasure to remain. A chapter of the Bible was read, and the family all knelt in prayer, the stranger with the rest. In a few days the stranger left this hospitable dwelling, and embarked on board a ship for a foreign land. In the course of three or four years, however, the providence of God again led that stranger to the same dwelling. But O, how changed! He came the happy Christian, the humble man of piety and prayer. In the course of the evening's conversation he remarked that when he, on the first evening of his previous visit, knelt with them in family prayer, it was the first time for many years that he had bowed the knee to his Maker. This act brought to his mind such a crowd of recollections, it so vividly reminded him of a parent's prayers which he had heard at home, that it completely absorbed his attention. His emotion was so great that he scarcely heard one syllable of the prayer which was uttered, from its commencement to its close. And God made this the instrument of leading him from the dreary wilds of infidelity—to the peace and joys of piety. His parents, I believe, had long before gone to their rest; but the prayers that they had offered for and with their son, had left an influence which could not die. They might have prayed ever so fervently for him, but if they had not prayed with him, if they had not knelt by his side and caused his listening ear to hear their earnest supplications, their child might have continued through life unreconciled to his Maker.

There is efficacy in prayer. God hears and answers our requests. But he does this in accordance with the laws which he has established. It is presumption to expect that he will interrupt the harmony of those laws. He acts through them. And we should endeavor to accommodate all our efforts to the known habits and laws of mind; to present those motives which have a tendency to influence. God answered the prayers of these pious parents; but he did it through the instrumentality of the very effort which they were making in asking him to bless their son, though their efforts seemed for a time to lead to no result.

12. Teach your children to pray themselves. It may be very useful to teach a child the Lord's prayer and other simple forms. And a child may thus really pray—give utterance to his own

feelings in the language of another. But this cannot supersede the necessity of teaching him to go himself to thank God for all the nameless enjoyments of the day, and to ask forgiveness for the various faults he may have committed. The minds of children dwell upon particulars. They are not in habits of generalizing. It requires but little feeling to confess that we are sinners. But to specify individual acts of wickedness demands a much greater exercise of humility. And a general recognition of God's goodness affects the mind very differently from the enumeration of particular mercies. It is therefore important that your child should be taught to review the events of each day at its close. He should be reminded of the mercies received, and the faults committed—and be taught to express gratitude for the one, and implore pardon for the other. The return of a father from a journey has given your children an evening of very unusual enjoyment. When they retire for the night, allude to the happy evening they have passed. Tell them it was God who preserved their father's life, and returned him safely home. And having thus excited real gratitude in their hearts, lead them to express this gratitude in their own simple and artless language. By thus pointing their attention to prominent facts and individual blessings, they will not only acquire facility in prayer, but be most effectually taught their entire dependence upon God.

Care should also be taken not to overlook the ordinary blessings of life. It is a rainy day. Show God's goodness in sending the rain. Let them see distinctly that their Father in heaven does it that his children may have food to eat. It is night. Show them the consequences which would result if God would never again cause the sun to rise and shine upon them. They have received some needful clothes. Show them how God makes the wool grow, that they may be warm. Every mother can easily present to them such contemplations, which will enlarge their field of thought, increase their knowledge of God, promote gratitude, and give a facility in prayer which will be to them a permanent and valuable acquisition.

Let it not be said that to impart such instructions as these requires a degree of knowledge and skill which but few parents possess. The chief difficulty to be surmounted is the feeling which so many parents entertain that they have not time. But the mother who feels the importance of this subject as it deserves to be felt, will find time to be faithful with her children, whatever else she may be under the necessity of neglecting. The same course should be pursued in confession of sin. By pointing to these mercies you may easily convince your child of its lack of suitable gratitude. Perhaps he has, during the day, been guilty of falsehood, or disobedience, or anger. Point to the definite case, and lead your child to confess it before God, and ask forgiveness. We will suppose that your son has been irritated, and struck his sister. Before he falls asleep, you remind him of his sin. Show him how wicked it was, and how displeased God must be. Tell him when he is asleep he will die—unless God keeps him alive. Under such instructions, almost every child would desire to ask forgiveness, and probably would offer some such prayer as this: "O God, I am very wicked. I struck my sister. I am very sorry, and will never do so again. O God, forgive me, for Jesus Christ's sake." This would be prayer, if offered from the heart; and if, after it had been offered, the mother would kneel by the bedside, and confess the sin of her child, and pray that God would forgive him, in all probability the intended effect of prayer would be accomplished. The offender would be penitent, and the sin forgiven. For these reasons, it is a most obvious duty to teach children to express their own feelings in their own language. And the careful mother may make this exercise one of the most efficient instruments in teaching her child obedience here, and in training it up for holiness and happiness hereafter.

Parents are apt to smile at the childish expressions which children make use of in prayer, and sometimes fear that their language is irreverent. But God looks simply at the sincerity of the petition, at its importance in the mind of the petitioner. A little child of two and a half years prayed, "Lord, help me to laugh and not to cry when mother washes me in the morning." And does not God look with as kind a regard upon the humble request of this little child, as he does upon the fervent petitions of the man who implores support under some painful operation, or strength to overcome an irritable spirit? Such a request, coming spontaneously from the heart of a child, is genuine prayer, and it shows a state of feeling which ought at all times to be cherished.

2.05.2 The Mother's RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

13. Expect that your child will become a Christian. That heart which is susceptible of sorrow and love—is capable of evangelical repentance and love to God. No one can doubt but that, at a very early period in life, a child has all the powers which are employed in the exercise of true religion. Neither can there be any doubt that at that early period the mind is more susceptible of impression, the hold of the world is more feeble, and the current of affection may be more easily turned to God. And facts do hold forth most abundant encouragement. How many little memoirs have recently been issued from the press, which have told the affecting tale of youthful piety! Children of five or six years of age have given the most gratifying evidence of attachment to the Savior. They have endured pain, and met death, sustained by the consolations of religion. Such facts have been too numerous and too decisive to allow unbelief to be longer excusable. And yet it is to be feared that many parents do not feel their immediate responsibility. They still cherish the impression that their children must attain maturity before they can be decidedly penitent for sin, and the friends of God. But the mother who entertains such feelings as these, is guilty of the most cruel injustice to her child. It is almost impossible that she should be vigilant and faithful in her efforts—unless she expects success. Every mother ought to engage in the duties of religious instruction, with the confident expectation that God will accompany her exertions with his blessing. She ought even to feel that, if her child does not give early evidence of piety, much of the responsibility rests with her. The Christian experience of the child will undoubtedly differ from that of the man who has passed many years in sin, whose habits are firmly fixed, and whose affections have long been flowing in the channel of worldliness. With such a person the struggle of turning to holiness will often be great, and the sense of sin distressingly intense. But the period of your child's conversion may be at so early a stage of its existence as to leave no trace by which the time of the change can be remembered. The struggle will be comparatively feeble, and penitence will be manifested by the tearful eye and the sad heart—and not always by that deep agony of spirit which not infrequently marks the change of those who have grown old in sin.

Much injury is often done by laying stress upon the time when one becomes a Christian. Past feelings are at best but an uncertain test of Christian character. The great object of inquiry should be as to present feelings and conduct. Is the life now in accordance with the requirements of the gospel? Is the heart now affected with humility, and patience, and gratitude? Is the resolution now strong to live for God? If the sun is shining warmly upon us, it is of but little consequence at what moment it arose. There are many Christians who cannot recollect the time when they became subjects of the new birth. Be not, therefore, anxious upon this point. Indeed, by directing the attention of your child to any particular time when it became a Christian, there is danger of leading the mind to rely upon the supposed experience of that moment, rather than upon continued penitence and devotion. And therefore let every mother do all in her power to awaken the bosoms of her children emotions of sorrow for sin, and reliance upon Christ. And when she finds these feelings in the heart, and controlling the life, let her thank God, and take courage. She must watch with maternal solicitude, that temptation be avoided, and that the feeble flame burn brighter and

brighter. Christ has entrusted this beloved object to your guardianship. Why should not a mother confidently expect this result to follow her efforts? Has not God encouraged her thus to hope, by promising to aid with his blessing? Has he not encouraged, by again and again crowning such efforts with success? Away then with unbelief. To doubt is to distrust the promise of God. Instruct your child, and pray for your child, and look for an immediate blessing. Thus, in all probability, will your heart be made glad by the fruits of early piety at your fireside—grateful children will honor you through life—and the joys of heaven will be magnified by meeting your loved ones there.

14. Do not speak to others of the piety of your child. Great injury is thus often done. A child becomes deeply interested in the subject of religion, and his friends are encouraged to hope that he has really become a Christian. They speak of it to others. It is soon publicly known. He receives much attention—he is caressed and flattered. Thus is this little child thrown at once into the very hottest furnace of temptation. We might refer to many painful illustrations of this truth in the memoirs of early piety.

Says the biographer of little Nathan Dickerman, "His feelings were often wounded by the injudicious conversation which was frequently held in his presence."

"Kind friends indulged in perhaps what were well-meant, but sadly ill-judged remarks in his presence. And it is most deeply to be regretted that parents and friends so often, inconsiderately no doubt, speak before children in praise of their persons, in a manner that inevitably fosters vanity—which injures their usefulness and happiness as long as they live."

"Nathan's ear was often greeted with—beautiful boy! Remarkable boy!

What a fine countenance! Certainly the most wonderful case I ever heard of! The half had not been told me."

It is remarkable that, while exposed to such temptations, real humility could have been preserved. And though the grace of God sustained this lovely child, but few would have escaped uninjured.

How often is even the Christian minister sensibly affected by flattery! And can a child safely receive such adulation? An honest development of facts, upon this subject, would be exceedingly painful. Humility is one of the cardinal virtues of Christianity. The moment an impression is conveyed to the mind that there is something remarkable and meritorious in penitence for sin, and love for God—the heart is elated with pride. And then things are said, and actions performed, to attract attention. Prayers are offered, and feelings of piety expressed, from the love of ostentation—and the child is "spoiled." Preserve your child from these temptations, by giving no publicity to his feelings. Carefully cherish at home the flame which is kindled in his bosom. Under your protection, let him acquire strength of principle and stability of character. Gradually introduce him to the more public duties of the Christian life. Teach him humility. Preserve his childlike spirit. In this manner you may lead him along to be a humble, and, at the same time, an active and ardent follower of Christ.

2.06 FRUITS of PIETY

THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER by John Abbott, 1833, Worcester, Mass. Published by the American Tract Society

FRUITS OF PIETY

Nothing will conduce more effectually to a mother's success in the work of training up her children to be consistent and useful Christians, than right ideas of true fruits of piety. We must know what fruits the true spirit of piety will produce—for our own sakes and also for our children. We must know what points we are ourselves to aim at attaining in cultivating the Christian character, and also in what direction we are to lead our children. I propose in this chapter to consider what the true fruits of piety, as developed in a Christian family, properly are.

1. A DEVOTIONAL SPIRIT. A spirit of habitual and sincere devotion is so directly implied in the very idea of piety, that it seems scarcely proper to enumerate it as one of the fruits of piety. And yet the importance of direct and constant efforts to cultivate such a spirit, is often overlooked. By a devotional spirit is meant a spirit of sincere and fervent prayer, and a disposition to associate the thoughts of God and his providence with all the occurrences and events of life. Cherish now this spirit in yourselves and inculcate it upon your children. Teach them, for example, that when their father, or you yourself, assemble them for morning or evening prayer, it is not a mere form, or a duty that they are to witness merely, but to take part in. Teach them, on the other hand, that they have themselves an active and important duty to perform at these seasons.

"When your father reads the passage of scripture," you can say to them, "you must not be inattentive, but must fix your thoughts upon what he reads, and to apply the instructions to your own case. And as he addresses God in prayer, you should silently repeat after him all the words of his petition, trying to make them your own. And thus you should make the season of family prayer, a season in which you not merely listen to your father's prayer, but engage in devotion yourselves."

It will not be sufficient to inculcate such a lesson as this upon your children by precept alone; you must lead them to such duties by your example. They must see the evidence of a sincere spirit of devotion in you. To this end you must be diligent in secret prayer, confessing your own sins, and imploring God's assistance to enable you to resist the peculiar temptations to which you are exposed. Social prayer is a great source of spiritual improvement and enjoyment. But it can never take the place of secret prayer. There are sins and temptations to which we all are exposed, which we cannot confess in the presence of anyone but God alone. In our secret prayers, therefore, we should be particular, mentioning by name our secret sins, and our constitutional imperfections.

Teach your children these truths. "At the close of the day," you may say to them "when you retire to your chamber for the repose of the night, and before you close your eyes in sleep, retrace, with your thoughts, the scenes of the day. Recall to mind all the duties that you have faithfully performed, and also all the duties that you have neglected, and the temptations to which you have

yielded. Among your sins of omission, you see, perhaps, that you did not improve your time in school as well as you ought to have done. Your mother found it necessary to censure you for leaving your clothes in your room in disorder. You also remember that you felt irritated at some little annoyance from your sister, and though you had sufficient self-restraint to refrain from speaking angrily to her, your feelings were for some time so ruffled as to make you quite unhappy. Reflect upon these faults until you feel how sinful they were in God's sight. You must then confess all these and other similar sins to God, and ask his forgiveness for them."

It is thus that you must watch over your own spirit, and teach your children to watch over theirs day after day, and year after year, that you and they may grow in grace. It is only by this spirit of particular and secret prayer, that any one can make any rapid or sure attainments in the divine life. Nothing can be substituted for faithful prayer. The moment that you begin to neglect it, your heart begins to grow cold, and you become the victim of spiritual desertion. But if you are faithful in devotion, your path through life will be "as the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day." You will soon, in this way, gain such a conquest over all sinful passions—that serenity and peace will be the habitual state of your mind.

2. CHEERFULNESS. A cheerful spirit is so specially enjoined in the Scriptures that it may almost be considered a sin to be melancholy. It is a duty to be happy. Gloom and despondency are not only the consequences of sin—but they are sinful states of mind. They prove ingratitude, and lack of submission to the government of God. I will not say that there may not be particular seasons in life, in the history of individuals, in which they must unavoidably be borne down with sorrow. Now and then, there comes upon an individual a dreadful calamity, and the strongest mind and the strongest faith are prostrated by it. But, even in these cases, it is certain that it is the duty of the Christian to feel such perfect confidence in the wisdom and the benevolence of God's government, as to illustrate the truth of the promise, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you."

There can, however, be no question but that it is our duty under all ordinary circumstances, to have a mind serene and peaceful. And while admitting that there may be a great difference, in this respect, in the natural disposition of children, nothing is more certain than that we can cultivate, in them as well as in ourselves, the habit of looking upon the bright side of every object, and by this cultivation, with more or less difficulty, a spirit of almost uninterrupted tranquillity and happiness may be acquired. Young people, and indeed many older people, are apt to imagine that, if they are of a melancholy temper, it is their misfortune. But the truth is, in general, it is not their misfortune—but their sin. They indulge themselves year after year in those feelings which they know to be wrong, and which gnaw at the heart like a viper biting there.

Suppose when you awake in the morning, before offering your morning prayer, you think of all the blessings with which you are surrounded. You reflect how many people, during the past night, have tossed upon beds of pain. "How many have died," you say, "and find themselves this morning in the eternal world—unprepared for its awful scenes! My Heavenly Father has kept me alive, and another day is now given me in which to prepare for Heaven. The Lord has provided me with all necessary clothes to wear, and food to eat. I have kind friends around me; opportunities for doing good opened before me; and if I am faithful in duty this day, how happily may its hours glide along! And above all—blissful thought—if the Lord should see fit to take me from the world today, I

cannot doubt that he has, for my blessed Savior's sake, forgiven my sins, and that he will take me to Heaven. Every day is carrying me nearer to eternal holiness and happiness. O, how much occasion have I for a heart overflowing with gratitude! I shall indeed be inexcusably ungrateful to my heavenly Father if, when crowned with all these blessings, I have a sad and murmuring heart.

"Heavenly Father," you say, in meditative prayer, "help me this day to manifest my gratitude to you by happy love. May I so love you, and serve you, and have such confidence in your goodness, and so subdue all those passions which are sinful, and consequently disturb one's peace, and so perform all my duties that I may have a tranquil heart all the day long." In your morning prayer, you pray for a cheerful spirit, as one of your most important duties and blessings. You then go fortified by prayer from your chamber to the family below, with a tranquil countenance, and a still more placid heart. If any domestic annoyances arise, you are thus prepared to triumph over them. And there is a mysterious influence by which the serenity and good nature of one heart are transmitted to all surrounding hearts. As you speak in kind and pleasant tones to the family; as you are continually active in making peace and in keeping peace; in preventing, as far as possible, all occasions of annoyance; and in sacrificing, with alacrity, your own ease and your own rights to make all things go smoothly—you maintain an unruffled state of mind, which most richly compensates you for every act of self-denial. The reward comes with the duty. It is surprising what an influence one really warmhearted, cheerful, unselfish person may thus have upon a whole family. I once heard it said of a certain child, "There can be no sorrow where she is. She has the faculty of making everything go pleasantly, and everyone feel happy." This should be the character of every Christian child; and how much more effectual, in disseminating an atmosphere of enjoyment, may be the efforts of a Christian mother.

If any mother will set out perseveringly and prayerfully, in this course of life, resisting every emotion of discontent, cultivating, day after day and hour after hour, a cheerful and happy spirit, contending against every wrong feeling, and cherishing everything that is lovely and of good report, with an effort, never intermitted, to keep a smile upon her countenance and peace in her heart—she will soon gain such control over herself, and get into such a habit of being happy, that hardly anything can interrupt her joy. If she is sick, she will be happy. If well, happy. She will be happy at home or abroad, at work or at rest, alone or in company. When young she will be happy, and when old she will be happy. And when a dying hour comes, and she looks forward to a home in heaven, while others weep—she will rejoice.

"Rejoice always," says the apostle Paul. This is a divine command; but is one that we cannot obey without making direct efforts to cultivate the spirit that it enjoins. The mother must then carefully and prayerfully cultivate this spirit of joy. A depressed and gloomy spirit she must resist. It is the spirit of Satan—not of God. It is the element of the world of woe—not of the home of the angel. It is said of the celebrated Wilberforce, that he so carefully, in the early part of his life, watched over his own heart, carefully subduing all emotions of vanity, ambition, selfishness, and irritability—that in the latter part of his life he seemed to have risen above temptation. In respect to those sins which so much disturb the peace of ordinary minds, the struggle with him seemed to be almost over, and the victory complete. The closing years of his life were like the calm and golden glory of a summer's evening. Not a cloud obscured the horizon of his joys. He was just as happy as the days were long. His children and his grandchildren clustered around him, feeling that his presence dispelled almost every sorrow. His favorite passage of Scripture was, "Be anxious for nothing, but

in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ." Now, I cannot doubt that it is in the power of almost every person, by the same culture, to attain the same rich and heavenly joy.

Many people are unhappy who are surrounded with almost every earthly blessing—and many are very happy, who are deprived of almost every earthly good. Our happiness depends far more upon the state of our hearts than upon anything else. Cultivate, then, a right state of heart—and you will almost surely have a happy life. And do not think that you have any right to be unhappy. If you pass an unhappy day, in gloom and depression, you should repent of it, and ask God's forgiveness, and seek his aid, that you may sin thus, no more. Such a day must be a misspent day. Your gloom must have dishonored the religion you profess. It must have marred the happiness of your friends, your husband, your children, and of all your domestic circle. And it must not only have prevented the possibility of any vigorous efforts of doing good—but the influence of your gloomy example must have repelled others from religion.

Therefore make it a daily duty to be cheerful. Pray that you may be cheerful; meditate upon your blessings; look upon the bright side of everything; and carefully study your own heart, that you may ascertain what those feelings are which disturb the tranquility of your mind, and should therefore be checked—and what those emotions are which are satisfying and pleasurable, and should therefore be cultivated. You probably have no idea how much your usefulness and happiness depends upon the careful cultivation of a cheerful spirit.

3. KINDNESS. The spirit of religion is the spirit of self-sacrifice, of giving up our own convenience, and relinquishing our own rights—that we may promote the happiness of others. We are thus to endeavor, not only to secure the happiness of those we love—but also to promote the happiness of those who are unkind to us, whose characters and manners are disagreeable. We are instructed in the Bible, that we must in this respect imitate God, "who makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Now we must diligently practice this sentiment ourselves, and diligently inculcate it upon our children. Teach them that it is by no means enough, that we love those who love us—that we are kind to those who are kind to us. Our kindness must be a state of the heart—an established principle of universal application. Wherever we can confer a favor, we must do it gladly, whether they who receive it are deserving or undeserving—and we must thank God for the opportunity to thus doing good.

We must remember that an act of kindness however small, if it proceeds from sincere goodwill is pleasing to God. We must teach this truth to our children. A little child, for example, is seated at a corner of the fireplace, on a cold winter morning. It is a snug corner—the pleasantest seat in the room. With an entertaining book in her hand she is enjoying her pleasant position. Her brother comes in from the cold. At once, perhaps, the thought arises in her mind, "I got this seat first, and have a right to it. It is so comfortable that

I cannot think of leaving it." This is the selfish spirit of earth and sin. But she repels this thought. The spirit of Christianity and heaven springs up in her heart, and, immediately rising from her seat, she affectionately says, "Here brother, you look very cold. Take this warm seat. I am quite warm, and will move a little further from the fire."

Now, God looks down upon that act, and is pleased with it. It is acting like God. Angels look down and love such a spirit, and say, "That is the spirit of heaven; there is a child whom we should wish to have associated with us here." This spirit you should manifest at all times, and on all occasions, and thus set the example of it to your children. Teach them to be ever ready to do all in their power to make others happy. When with their brothers and sisters, or with their associates at school, they must be ever ready in all things to relinquish their own plans to gratify others. A plate of apples is brought into the room. One is larger and more luscious than the rest. Teach them not to choose that one for themselves—but to select it kindly though unostentatiously, for their brother, or their sister, or the friend who has come to visit them. Some play activity is proposed. Teach them to relinquish their own preference, for the choice of others. So, in everything in which it is not wrong to yield, teach them to give up their own wishes—that they may gratify others.

We must be careful, however, that this amiable and yielding disposition does not degenerate into indecision and fickle-mindedness. We are never to yield in the least degree where it is wrong to do so. Whatever we think to be our duty, that we must mildly and kindly, but firmly resolve to do—at all hazards. We must not say, "It is a little sin, and I will indulge in it to gratify others." Remember that the time is near when we must appear before God's judgment—and he will not deem it an excuse for displeasing him, that we did it to please our friends or associates. These temptations we must resist—and God exposes us to them that by resistance we may strengthen in our hearts the principle of obedience to him. A person may have the most amiable disposition in the world—the kindest and the most gentle—and yet possess such a degree of decision of character as to be willing to encounter any opposition and any ridicule rather than do the least wrong. This was the character of our Savior. He was willing to leave heaven, and all the joys of heaven, and to suffer and die upon the cross, that he might do us good. All this he could do for those who did not love him; who were his enemies, and who, with hatred and insult, nailed him to the cross. Such fearful sacrifices as these our Savior could make to promote the happiness of others. And yet there never was any other person in the world, who had so much decision of character as he. No earthly motive could induce him to do anything in the least degree wrong.

We must all possess the spirit of Christ, if we would be his disciples. We must imitate him in his self-denying kindness—in his forgetfulness of his own comfort, that he might promote the happiness of others—and also in his conscientious discharge of duty at all hazards. To cultivate this disposition, is one important part of the Christian conflict.

4. **POLITENESS.** Some people may be surprised in finding politeness mentioned as one of the fruits and evidences of piety. You have, perhaps, ever been accustomed to regard politeness as one of those fashionable graces which belong rather to the gay and thoughtless—than to the serious and devotional. But the truth is, that politeness is one of the most important of Christian virtues. "Be courteous," is one of the injunctions of the Bible. Indeed, the Bible contains the most perfect rules of politeness known in the world; and it enforces the observance of those rules, as of infinite importance. The most perfect definition of politeness that I have ever seen, is "real kindness, kindly expressed." Politeness does not consist in flourishing manners and airs, artificially acquired. It is the natural expression of amiable feeling. If we carefully cherish the feelings to which I have alluded under the head of kindness, and, with real and unostentatious benevolence, treat all with whom we associate according to these principles—we shall be truly polite. Our manners will be pleasing to all people. And people who have not these feelings, and wish to

appear polite, will attain only to the empty and lifeless form. Indeed, it is hard to conceive how one can be a Christian, who is not polite. The Christian character is certainly very defective, where this grace is lacking—for it implies the absence of the most lovely traits of the mind and of the heart. A writer says, "A gracious word is better than a gift;" and it is indeed true, that some people will confer a favor in so repulsive a way that it gives you pain rather than pleasure to receive it. Our real kindness must be kindly expressed. If it be not so, we shall often give more pain than pleasure by that which we intended as kindness.

Let the mother than teach her children, both by precept and example—to be always polite. Let her feel real kindness for all, and express the kindness that she feels, in a kind manner. Let her inculcate these principles upon her children. Show them plainly that both points are essential. It is not enough that there should be a substantial feeling of kindness in the heart—it must be kindly expressed. On the other hand it is not enough that there should be kind expression of words or acts—there must be kind feeling in the heart. This distinction may be made very clear to the youngest child by the following example. I was once riding with a clergyman, when we met a poor, lame man walking along the road. The clergyman thought it would be a deed of kindness to help him on his way, and stopping his horse, said,

"Here, you lame man, get in here!" The poor man was glad for the ride, and got in. The clergyman took no further notice of him, but employed his mind with his own thoughts. Occasionally the poor man would make some remark; but no attention was paid to what he said, unless it was necessary to answer him, and then the reply was a short yes or no. At length we arrived at the place where the man wished to get out. As he left the carriage, he very warmly thanked the clergyman for his kindness in giving him the ride. Not a word, however, was said in reply to his thanks; but the clergyman merely drove on. Now, the unkind manner in which this favor was conferred, undoubtedly gave far more pain to the poor man than the ride gave him pleasure. It was, indeed, conferring a favor in an extremely unfeeling and unchristian way. The clergyman was exceedingly impolite.

Suppose now that he had added to the substantial favor which he intended to confer the charm of kindness of manner in conferring it. He would have said,

"Friend, I have a spare seat in the carriage here—will you not get in and ride a little way?" He would then have cheerfully and socially conversed with the man, and manifested some interest in his history. And when the man left the carriage, and thanked him for the ride, he would have replied, "You are very welcome, sir." This manner of conferring the favor would have cheered and gratified the lame man, and he would have gone to his home with happy feelings.

It is surprising what a vast amount of happiness may be conferred in a long life—by a kind manner of doing kind things. It is by a careful attention to these little things, as some consider them, that we are to make those happy who are around us. As our whole life is made up of such little things as moments, so is the happiness or the unhappiness of life dependent upon the pains or pleasures with which these swiftly-flying moments may be filled. And it is invariably true, that, that person is the happiest who does the most to promote the happiness of others. A selfish man is always an unhappy man. And a selfish child is always an unhappy child—as she sits alone in her corner, eating her apple, which she refuses to share with brother or sister—as she eagerly takes the most comfortable chair in the room—as she grasps the new book, resolved to have the pleasure of

reading it first—she is, and must be unhappy. Conscience within her is disturbed, and her countenance shows in its unamiable expression what an uncomfortable heart she has. And just so it is with those, who have passed the period of childhood. The man or woman who has grown up with a selfish spirit—is friendless and joyless. Such people are often to be seen. They live as if they were alone in the world. They love no one—and no one loves them. And, after a heartless life, they die—and no one laments them.

Let children be trained up then to cultivate a courteous spirit—to speak in kind tones of voice—to use a gentle and pleasant way of doing kind things—and it will promote their happiness every day that they live. It will tend to make all around them happy. Others will imitate their example—and imbibe their spirit. The spirit of politeness will vastly increase our influence also, in turning others to the Savior. It will confer honor upon the religion of Christ; for the world judges of Christianity—not so much by the teachings of the Savior—as by the lives of its professors!

There is nothing in this world worth having which can be attained without effort. If you would possess the grace of Christian politeness—you must make it a part of your Christian duty and a subject of prayer. You must resolve in the morning, that you will endeavor through the day kindly to manifest kind feelings. And at night, in self-examination, you must inquire where you have failed in this duty—what opportunities you have enjoyed where you might have contributed to the happiness of others, but in which you have failed to do so. This is the true spirit of heaven. If we are ever to enter heaven, we must have this spirit. And it is here, in this world of sin—that we are to triumph over temptation—and subdue passion—and attain all those lovely traits of character which will make us happy companions for angels, and for the spirits of the just made perfect.

5. Faithfulness in LITTLE DUTIES. One great error which nearly all Christians fall into, is not being sufficiently punctilious in the performance of what are usually called the little duties of life. We are not sufficiently careful to carry out the principles of Christianity into all our relations as husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, parents and children, neighbors and friends. If you, my reader, whatever your situation in life may be, have sincerely commenced a Christian life, you must make it your daily effort to please God in the performance of every duty—small and great. And it is by your attention to things which many people deem trivial, that you can most effectually glorify God.

Children particularly are apt to imagine that religious obligation is something far removed above all the ordinary duties of life. They seldom connect the idea of Christian duty with such subjects as order, personal neatness, politeness, and other similar points of what are called sometimes 'minor morals'. But you cannot too assiduously teach them that the principle of piety, if they possess it at all—is to regulate all their conduct—and lead them to do right in little things as well as great things. In fact, the little things, with children, are the great things—for in their various bearings and relations they involve the highest moral principles. Here is a boy for instance, whose mother has appropriated to his use a couple of drawers, in which he is to keep his clothes; and she has enjoined it upon him to have his clothes neatly folded, and always placed in order. Some day she goes into his room, and, as she opens the drawers behold, everything is in disorder. In haste to get some article of clothing, the boy has crudely drawn it out, and thrown other things in, unfolded, and now everything is in confusion. The mother is deeply pained that her son should be forming such negligent habits. It has sent an emotion of real unhappiness to her heart. Her own valuable time is occupied in repairing the effects of his indolence and neglect, and the boy himself is

growing up with habits which will extremely diminish his efficiency and usefulness as a man. And now that cannot be called a little sin, which produces such consequences, which makes a mother unhappy, and increases her cares and labors, and which is forming in the child habits which will render him unfit for the future duties of life. As well may a man who sets fire to a city, say that it is a little sin, because he merely kindled a very little match. Teach children then that the eye of God is upon them in everything that they do—and that if they really love him, and wish to please him—they will endeavor to be faithful in all their duties—in small things as well as great. The mother must feel this truth herself also and apply it to her own case. Few people imagine how much one's usefulness and happiness in life depend upon their cultivating a habit of neatness, order, and system, in all that they do.

Some ladies will accomplish twice as much all through life as some others, simply because, in their childhood, they acquired the habit of keeping everything in its proper place. Go into their house, and everything appears in order. There is no hurry or bustle. There seems to be no effort in keeping things in order. Other ladies, who have been trained up under different habits, either give up in despair, and indolently sit down in the midst of the confusion which reigns in their house—or they toil and hurry through life, never enjoying any quietness or leisure—and always engaged in putting things in order, but never able to keep them so. Do not, then, allow children to imagine that it is a little sin to be untidy or negligent. It is one of the most important of their duties to cultivate correct habits in these respects. Teach them that they may thus please God, gratify their parents, adorn religion, and not only prepare for future usefulness—but be useful every day and every hour.

We are very apt to think that if we were in some situation different from that in which we are actually placed, we might do a great deal of good. The young often suppose that if they were out in the world, they might, in various ways, as men and women, serve their Maker—but they imagine that they cannot do much, if anything, to serve God and promote his glory, unless in some important station. But God wishes to have His friends placed in all the different positions in society—that the power of religion may be exhibited in all. He desires that there should be merchants, and mechanics, and sailors, pious fathers and mothers, and pious children. And the child who is pious, may as acceptably serve God in the situation in which she is placed—as any other people in the situation in which God has placed them. It is not the station in society that we occupy, to which God looks—but the faithfulness with which we discharge the duties of the position in which he has placed us. And the faithful, Christian conduct, even of the smallest child—is as acceptable to him, and perhaps as useful in the accomplishment of his purposes, as the zeal and energy of the most devoted Christian martyr.

Teach these things diligently to your children, and train them up in the habit of neatness and order in all that they do. When they come home from school, let them be taught always themselves to hang up the cap, the bonnet, and the cloak in their proper places—and to put their books away. Teach them to shut the door after them when they pass out or in. Teach them to keep all their picture-books and playthings in order. Show them that it is their duty to attend to all these little things, not as matters of trifling importance, but as Christian duties of the greatest significance, demanding constant watchfulness and care.

These are the ways in which God wishes that the young should evince the power of religion, and glorify him. It is by a conscientious attention to such duties as these, performed because they wish to do that which is pleasing in God's sight—that they are to exhibit the fruits of piety. They must aim, every day, to acquire a character of perfect fidelity in the performance of all these duties; remembering that nothing which tends to the perfection of character is too trivial to call for their efforts and their prayers. The best evidence which either the aged or the young can give of piety, is the conscientious endeavor to be faithful in the discharge of every duty, whatever it may be. Thus we glorify God, and honor the Christian religion—in the best manner. This is what is meant by the text, "By their fruits shall you know them." The way in which we are to judge of the piety of all people, is by their conduct. If a man or woman professes to be a Christian, and yet is unfaithful in the discharge of the ordinary duties of life, the profession is vain. It is so in youth—and is so in old age. The best evidence afforded by the devout Christian is the fidelity with which he performs all the duties of life, both great and small.

We continue in this chapter the enumeration of the several traits of Christian character, which the mother should endeavor to cultivate in herself—and in those under her charge.

6. Guard against a CENSORIOUS SPIRIT. A censorious spirit is a very common sin. And it is one to which females, from their comparatively retired mode of life, are peculiarly exposed. There is hardly any sin against which the Bible warns us in more earnest and impressive terms. The evils and mischiefs produced by an ungoverned tongue—the ruin it produces in alienating friends—kindling animosities—and disturbing in every way the peace and harmony of society—are topics which have called forth some of the most energetic expressions of the inspired penmen.

"The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. So is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell." "If anyone among you seem to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, this man's religion is vain."

Such are the terms in which the sacred writers speak of the importance of setting a guard upon one's tongue. One single person, of a censorious disposition, will often keep a whole church or neighborhood in turmoil. And every reader of this book has probably often seen great unhappiness produced by the unkind remarks or slanderous reports which others have circulated. Indeed, there are very few people who have not often had hours of suffering to bear in consequence of unguarded remarks which they have made, and which have, perhaps, been slightly exaggerated and carried to other ears—by those who are always ready to do mischief. Solomon tells us,

"Do not revile the king even in your thoughts, or curse the rich in your bedroom, because a bird of the air may carry your words, and a bird on the wing may report what you say." By which poetic expressions he would teach us, that there is always someone ready to carry evil tidings. If you say anything against another person, it is very probable it will be repeated, with exaggerations to that individual. One will repeat it to another, until the story, gathering in size as it goes like the balls of snow which boys roll together in the early spring, reaches the ear of the person against whom the remark was made. Then ensues recrimination, unkind treatment, a quarrel. Others are drawn in. And it may be truly said, in the language of the Bible, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles!" The amount of suffering which is caused in this world, simply by evil speaking, is inconceivable! Every school, every church, every neighborhood, is ravaged by it. A very little observation will show you how great is this evil.

Let a mother explain this subject to her children, and caution them against this danger. Lead them to form the resolution that they will never allow themselves to speak against anyone—unless it is clearly their duty to do so. Set them a good example, too, yourselves in this respect. Resolve that you will nip a censorious spirit in the very bud. If you do this, it will save you hours of suffering. If, on the other hand, you allow yourself to speak freely of the faults of others—if you report the various stories you hear—you will be continually in trouble yourself, and will always be involving other people in difficulty. Resolve that you will not say anything against any absent person—except in cases where it is most undoubtedly your duty to do so—which you would be willing to have repeated to that person.

There are cases in which it is our duty to speak of the characters of others, and, if their characters are bad, to say so. It may be our duty to warn our children against a vicious and dangerous acquaintance. And when such an occasion clearly arises, we must faithfully perform the duty, however unpleasant it may be. But such cases are comparatively rare—while the fault of evil speaking is one of the most general and inexcusable in the world. When this habit has once been formed, it is almost impossible to eradicate it. A person who has become a thorough gossip, retelling all the slander which she can collect, is almost beyond the hope of amendment. She will, with out the least compunction of conscience, throw suspicions upon the fairest reputation. No character is secure from her backbiting assailment. She becomes blind to her own degraded character—as the village gossip and slanderer. It is surprising how unconscious such a person may be of her odious fault. When she hears anything about evil speaking, she has been so much in the habit of looking at the faults of others, and not at her own, that she does not think of making any self-application—but looks around to see upon whom of her neighbors she can lay the charge.

We have all so many faults of our own to mourn over and to correct—that we should be exceedingly tender of the failings of others! And when we see anything in the conduct of our friends or acquaintances, which is wrong or disagreeable—we should try to avoid those things ourselves, and at the same time be very careful not to mention them to others. It is one of the best compliments which can be paid to any lady—to say of her that she was never known to speak badly of others. Resolve, with the grace of God assisting, that this shall be your character—and make every effort to form the same character in your children. Show them that such a habit will multiply their friends—that it will save them many hours of heartache—and that, all their life long, it will greatly add to their usefulness and their enjoyment.

7. Teach your children to cultivate, as one of the fruits of piety, scrupulous delicacy and PURITY of mind. The conscience of children will be a very sensitive guide upon this subject—if it is in a healthy state. Teach them that any conversation which they would be unwilling to engage in, or to repeat in the presence of their mother, they ought to refuse to hear. If their associates at any time commence such conversation, they ought to leave them at all hazards—whether the others are offended by it or not. They cannot be too careful respecting the words that they use—or the ideas that they allow to enter their minds. The delicacy of the mind is very easily impaired, and, when once impaired, the injury is irreparable. Even in the higher walks of life, females are often met with who seem to have no sense of propriety. They are always introducing topics of conversation which are revolting to the refined mind, while they themselves have become so desensitized in their feelings, that they appear entirely unconscious of any impropriety. Other ladies have an instinctive modesty and delicacy—which is their brightest ornament. You never hear from them a word, or an

allusion, which is not pure and pleasing. The appropriate simplicity of their dress—the softened tones of their voice—the topics of conversation which they introduce—and the gentle expression of countenance—all unite in testifying the spotless purity that reigns in their hearts. Who can see such a lady, and not esteem and love her? The indecent of either sex are rebuked by her presence. Even indecent ladies (if it be not a perversion of language to call one a lady who has an impure mind) are careful, in her presence, to put a guard upon their tongues.

"Keep your heart with all diligence," is one of the cautions which God has given us, and the happiness of every young Christian depends more upon the cultivation of this virtue, than we often imagine. To find, as we go on through life, that our thoughts naturally dwell upon objects which are pure and pleasant—will be one of the richest sources of our earthly enjoyment. We must necessarily pass many—very many hours in life—with our own thoughts. If our thoughts are such that they give us uneasiness of conscience, and we must be continually struggling against them, we shall have many days of secret, but real sorrow. If, on the other hand, by a careful cultivation of the heart, we have cherished only those thoughts which conscience approves—we shall probably move about, in our daily employments, in tranquil happiness.

Explain these principles to your children, and endeavor to lead them to resolve that they will not at school, or anywhere else, engage in conversation, or listen to conversation, which they would not be willing to repeat in the presence of their father and their mother. Let that be with them the test of propriety. Say to them that if at any time they are in doubt, whether the conversation which they are hearing is proper or not, they must ask themselves, "Am I willing to repeat this to the family, at the supper table, this evening?" If they are not, then they must refuse to hear it. If they cannot turn the conversation to a more wholesome topic, they should leave the company. Teach them to remember that God is always present—that His eye is upon them—that He hears every word that is uttered—that He sees every thought of the heart—and that as they prize his approbation, they must resolve to cherish, with the utmost care, purity of heart.

8. A very scrupulous observance of TRUTH should be one of the prominent fruits of piety. To some it may seem that this is almost a needless direction. In fact parents are very slow to be convinced that their children ever tell falsehoods at all. It is an almost invariable rule, that all mothers believe that their children always speak the truth—and it is a rule almost equally invariable, that they are all mistaken. Children generally will say what is false, until they are taught to speak the truth. Sometimes they are thus taught very early, and in such cases the mother, forgetting the infantile falsehoods, says that she never knew her child to tell a lie.

Even in later years it will not do generally to trust to any 'natural love of truth', to save our children from the sin of falsehood. We must often, in our conversations with them, present this subject to their attention, not in the way of suspicion and fault-finding, but of confidence and goodwill. We must explain to them how God regards the sin of falsehood, and cite and explain those passages of Scripture which relate to the subject. The mother must herself, also, always be honest, and frank, and open, in all her dealings with all her children. Never combine, as many mothers do, with an older child, to deceive a younger one. If you do, you must expect that your children will combine together to deceive you! Be honest with them all, and in your dealings with your friends, and neighbors, and acquaintances—be open and sincere. Thus you will lead your children in the right way.

4. The spirit of FORGIVENESS is one of the fruits of piety. The mother must cultivate this spirit herself, and inculcate it upon her children. Teach them that the rule of Christianity is, "Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Pray for the happiness of those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn the other cheek. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. Give what you have to anyone who asks you for it; and when things are taken away from you, don't try to get them back. Do for others as you would like them to do for you." The mother must inculcate this principle, like all the others, by her own example. And next to her own example, the narration of instances of a forgiving spirit will have a greater influence upon children, than any general precepts or exhortations.

I will here, for example, relate such an instance. There was once a rich merchant who had many peculiarities of character which exposed him to ridicule. He was a benevolent man, but he was of such eccentric habits, that a witty writer could easily represent him in a ludicrous light. A certain neighbor of his, without any just provocation, published a most insulting pamphlet against him, calling him 'Billy Button', and holding him up to the laughter of the world, in the most contemptuous and ludicrous attitude in which he could be represented. The publication of such a pamphlet was as gross and cutting an insult as could be inflicted, for there is nothing that the human mind so much recoils from, as derision and scorn. The merchant read the libelous pamphlet, and simply remarked that the writer would probably live to repent of its publication.

Someone informed the writer of the pamphlet of the remark that the merchant had made. He considered it as an angry threat of vengeance, and said that he would take good care to keep out of the merchant's power. But in a few years, in the course of business, the writer of the libel unavoidably became deeply indebted to the merchant, whom he had so wantonly injured, and became a bankrupt. For unless the merchant would forgive the debt, the writer could never enter into business again, and must always remain a poor man. By much exertion and after many delays, the unfortunate debtor effected a settlement of his affairs, and obtained a release from his other creditors—but how could he go to the merchant whom he had made the laughing-stock of the town—and who had declared that the libeler would yet live to repent of his publication? It seemed folly to hope that he would forget the wrong, and forgive the debt. But the claims of a suffering wife and children at last compelled him to make the application. Humbled by misery, he presented himself at the office of the injured merchant. The merchant was at his desk alone, and as he turned around and saw his libeler before him, his first words were, "Take a seat, sir." The guilty man, trembling with apprehension of the repulse which he so richly deserved, told the piteous tale of his misfortunes, and presented his certificate of release, signed by his other creditors, though he had but a very faint hope of obtaining the signature of one he had so deeply wronged. The merchant received the certificate, and, as he glanced his eye over it, said, "You wrote a pamphlet against me once, I believe, sir." The wretched man could make no reply. The merchant, saying no more, wrote something upon the certificate, and handed it back to him. The poor debtor in despair received the certificate, expecting to find written upon it something expressive of indignation. But how great was his surprise to see, in fair, round characters, the signature of the merchant, releasing him from his debt!

"I make it a rule," said the forgiving man, "never to refuse signing the release of an honest man, and I never heard that you were anything else." The surprise and joy were too much for the poor creditor, and he burst into tears. "Ah!" said the merchant, "my saying was true. I said that you

would live to repent writing that pamphlet. I did not mean it as a threat. I only meant that some day you would know me better—and would repent that you had attempted to injure me. I see that you repent it now." "I do, indeed I do!" exclaimed the grateful man. "Well, well, my dear sir," said the merchant, "you know me now. How will you get on? What are you going to do?" The unfortunate man replied, that having obtained a release from his creditors, he had friends who would assist him in getting into business again.

"But how are you to support your family in the meantime?" asked the merchant. The man's answer was, that having given up every farthing to his creditors, he had been compelled to deprive his family of even common necessities.

"My dear sir," said the merchant, "this will never do—your wife and children must not suffer. Be kind enough to take this to your wife from me," handing him a fifty dollar bill, "and keep up a good heart. All will be well with you yet. Set to work with energy, and you may yet see many days of prosperity." The poor man was entirely overcome by his emotions. He could not speak. His feelings forbade all utterance, and burying his face in his handkerchief, he went from the room sobbing like a child!

Stories which afford practical illustrations of any moral principle, will generally exert more powerful influence upon the minds of children than general instructions. The minds of the hearers catch the spirit which the story exemplifies by a sort of moral sympathy. The mother who is aware of this, will, in her general reading, watch for incidents and passages which she can turn to good account in interesting and instructing her children. These she will read and explain to them at proper times, and enforce the lessons which they are calculated to teach, by additional remarks of her own.

Teach your children thus in every way to cultivate a forgiving spirit. Tell them that this is the spirit of the Bible—the spirit of Christ. No one who has any other spirit can safely offer the prayer, "Forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us."

10. Cultivate in your children a taste for pure and noble pleasures—instead of a love of worldly gaiety. Pure and noble pleasures last. They wear well. They leave no sting behind. The pleasures of worldliness and gaiety do not wear well. They exhaust the powers of body and mind, and all the capacities of enjoyment, prematurely—and leave a sting behind. That is the reason why the Word of God condemns them—and why Christians abstain from them.

There is hardly any reproach more frequently cast upon Christians than the charge of bigotry—because they refuse to unite with the world in these scenes of gaiety. They are invited to a ball, to the theater, or to a card party—and yet no persuasions can induce them to go.

"What can be the possible harm," it is said, "in going to a ball? We go to a brightly illuminated hall. We have pleasant music to gratify the ear. In graceful measures we beat time to its cadences in the exhilarating dance. After having thus passed a few hours of heartfelt hilarity, we retire unharmed to our homes. Now, what real objection can there be to this amusement," it is asked, "which is not founded on ignorance and superstition?" This is a very important question, and it deserves a very serious answer. To explain my views upon this subject, let me suppose that you have a son nineteen years of age—a very amiable, correct, and promising young man. He is the darling of the family—attentive to his father and mother—kind to his sisters—all love him. He is a clerk in a store, and is highly respected by his employers. As you have known many amiable

young men, in such situations, ruined by such worldly pleasures—you feel great solicitude for him. He has so little of selfishness in his nature, and is so willing to sacrifice his own inclinations to oblige others, that, while he thus promises to be one of the best and most useful of men, he is much exposed to be led away by temptation.

Like an affectionate and dutiful son, as he is, he comes to his father some day, and says to him, "Father, there is to be a ball tonight. All my acquaintances are going, and, if you have no objection, I would like to go also."

"Well my son," says his father, "what time does the ball commence?"

"Between eight and nine o'clock in the evening," he replies.

"And what hour will it close?" the father asks.

"They tell me," the son answers, "that they will probably go home between two and three o'clock in the morning."

"I suppose that wine will be circulated very freely on the occasion; will it not, my son?"

"Why, yes sir; I suppose so—but I hope that I have resolution enough not to be guilty of any excess."

"I trust that you have, my son. But do you know of any who are going to the ball who have the reputation of being intemperate?"

"Yes sir; there will be several there who are known to drink too much wine."

"Will there be many present who are considered generally dissolute in their habits—so much so that you would not like to have them for your acquaintances?"

"There will be some such, sir, I suppose."

"It is rather dangerous," the father rejoins, "for a young man to be thrown into such company, in the midst of all the excitements of music, and dancing, and wine. It will not be easy to shake off acquaintances you may necessarily form there."

"I suppose, of course, too," adds the father, "that they have card-playing in some of the rooms."

"Yes, sir."

"Do they play for money?"

"Some of them I believe do, sir—for small sums."

"It is not uncommon," the father replies, "under such circumstances, for people to commence with small sums and go on to greater. Under the stimulus of play and wine, they plunge deeper and deeper into the game, until the dawn of morning finds them still with the cards in their hands. Many a young man in these scenes, commences on the road to ruin. I have in my experience known a great number thus lost to virtue, and who have brought hopeless shame upon their parents and friends."

"You say, my son, that the ball will break up about three o'clock in the morning. You can, perhaps get home and to your bed at half-past three. You must rise at six o'clock in the morning to get the store opened in time. This allows you two hours and a half for sleep—sleep which, from the previous excitement must be feverish and unrefreshing.

"I counsel you therefore, my son," the father continues, "not to go. By going into such scenes, you will be exposed to many temptations—the excitement of wine—the excitement of many dangerous passions. You can hardly avoid forming many very undesirable acquaintances. You will be invited to the gaming table, and may thus commence the acquisition of a taste for all the excitements of gambling.

"Many may be there, who, having no pleasures except those of fashionable dissipation, will be glad to secure you as an associate. Invitations will multiply upon you. When a young man once enters this vortex—it is difficult to get out again. When you go to the store in the morning, you will be languid and melancholy—all your energies will be exhausted. With aching head, and bloodshot eyes, and trembling limbs, you will have a day of mental depression, which will much more than counterbalance all the enjoyment of the night—and which will greatly disqualify you from discharging your duty to your employers.

"It is for these reasons," the father continues, "that your parents are unwilling to have you enter such scenes. We are satisfied that, on the whole, instead of increasing, they greatly diminish, the amount of human happiness. It is on this account that we have always been desirous that neither you nor your sisters should acquire a taste for these worldly pleasures—for our own observation, as well as the testimony of the wise and the holy in all ages, has taught us that these amusements, by breaking in upon the regular and peaceful enjoyment of domestic life, expose those who engage in them to great temptation—and by prematurely exhausting the mental and bodily powers, and undermining the constitution, seriously interfere with future happiness, and lead to imminent danger!

"And when our neighbors have wondered that we should so carefully keep you away from such scenes of gaiety and worldly amusements which to them appear innocent and pleasing—we have replied, that we could make you far happier by cultivating in your heart a taste for a totally different class of pleasures.

"Such worldly pleasures, too, always leave a sting behind them. Discontent and dissatisfaction always take possession of the soul after a scene of unseasonable and excessive gaiety. This is always the case—in all ranks and conditions of life. Madame de Geniis, who moved in the highest circles of Parisian life, and was familiar with the gaieties of the Royal Palace in the highest of splendor, remarked that the days which followed brilliant entertainments were always melancholy.

"Therefore, my son," the father continues, "I counsel you not to go! Persevere in the plan of life which you have heretofore laid down for yourself. Come home, and spend the evening in quiet enjoyment with your mother, or your sisters—or by the perusal of some interesting volume from the library—acquire a taste for reading, and store your mind with useful knowledge. At your usual hour, retire to rest. You will then rise in the morning fresh and vigorous, and in good temper you will go to your duties. And as you see your associate in the adjoining store, who attended the ball, dozing in dejection, and lounging the whole day at his desk—you will be thankful that you were

more wise than to sacrifice so much substantial good for a few hours of midnight merriment.

"By persevering in this course," the father continues, "you will more effectually secure to yourself the confidence of businessmen. Your credit will be better. Your prospects in life will be better. You will soon be able to have a home of your own. You will make that home more happy. Your life will glide away with far less danger of your falling before the power of temptation—and, consequently, there will be a far brighter prospect of your enjoying eternal happiness beyond the grave!" This is, in the main, the argument upon which Christians rely, and have relied, during all past ages, against the amusements and gaieties of the world. They are fully convinced that he who acquires a taste for such pleasures, will find his earthly happiness greatly impaired, and will be exposed to temptations which will greatly endanger his eternal well-being.

I have dwelt upon this subject more fully, because the young—inexperienced in the dangers of the world—often wonder why their pious parents are so unwilling that they should acquire a fondness for worldly amusements which appear so innocent and pleasing. But I think that any ingenuous boy or girl, of fourteen or fifteen years of age, may see the force of the above considerations, and may be satisfied that Christians have not, in their decision upon this subject, acted without good reasons. And here I do not intend to enter into the question whether these amusements might not be so far improved and refined as to obviate all objections against them. I wish to refer to them as they now are, and as they ever have been, and as there is every prospect that they will continue to be.

They are all of the same general character, leading to peculiar temptations, from the indulgence of bad passions, and the exposure of those who engage in them to unworthy associates. They all tend to destroy the taste for those quiet, domestic enjoyments, which, when cultivated, grow brighter and brighter every year, and which confer increasing solace and joy when youth has fled, and old age, and sickness, and misfortune come. Christian parents endeavor to guard their children against acquiring a taste for these worldly pleasures, because they foresee that these amusements will, in the end, disappoint them—and they can lead them in a safer path, and one infinitely more promotive of their happiness!

We have contemplated the influence of one of these scenes of gaiety upon a young man. Let us now consider its effects upon a mother of a family—or a young lady. In the first place in the mere preparation for any assembly of worldly gaiety and dissipation, many hours are taken from the peaceful routine of ordinary duties—in devotion to dress and appearance. Then the temptation is almost irresistible, from the strong rivalry which is called into exercise, to make expenditures which can not be afforded. And then, when the midnight scene of gaiety is at its height, and music's voluptuous swell is loudest, and the smile on every cheek is least clouded—how many secret sources of chagrin are necessarily fostered, though studiously concealed! The spirit of the occasion has the strongest tendency to call into exercise the sinful passions of envy and rivalry. The superior dress of one lady—and the superior beauty of another—the comparative neglect with which one is treated—and the excessive attention which another receives—constitute the most fruitful source of vanity on the one side—and of jealousy and envy on the other. The very nature of the enjoyment, and the whole spirit of the occasion, have the most direct tendency to call these feelings into active exercise. There is no place in which the wicked feelings of the heart are so frequently and so painfully excited—as in gay, glittering assemblies. To use the familiar language

of the poet, "Though the cheek may be tinged with a warm, sunny smile, The cold heart to ruin runs on darkly the while." And when, long after midnight, fevered with the heated room and exciting exercise, the young lady returns to her home—how poorly she is prepared for the duties of devotion! In how unsuitable a frame of mind is she, acceptably to commune with God, and to commend herself anew, with an affectionate and a humble heart, to His service! And then when another morning dawns, all the concerns of the family are in disorder. At a late hour she rises unrefreshed from her pillow. During the whole day she feels depressed in spirits, and unable to engage, with any satisfaction, in life's ordinary duties. It often requires one or two days of languor and melancholy for the system to recover its tone—from the exhaustion of the few hours of midnight revelry. Even allowing the pleasurable emotions of the convivial hours to be as great as anyone will venture to estimate them—the enjoyment must be considered as far more than counterbalanced, by the physical, moral and intellectual drawbacks which necessarily ensue. And when we go a little farther; when we consider the inevitable termination of this life of pleasure—when we contemplate the victim—for victim we must consider her—of a mirthful and fashionable life, after having passed through the period of youth and vigor, with her faculties to these excitements worn out—her mind and heart satiated with those pursuits—and yet with no taste formed for more solid and satisfying joys—we regard her with the deepest pity—as an impressive warning for all the young to avoid those quicksands, upon which her happiness has been so fatally stranded! When we turn to the Bible, to the character of our Savior and His apostles, we find these views confirmed by the weight of inspiration—so much so, indeed, that even the idea of our Savior, or the apostle Paul, taking an active part in such scenes, is so shocking to our feelings, that the very supposition is almost irreverent. And why is it that one shrinks from such an idea—but because the spirit of the Bible is so diametrically opposed to these amusements, that the mind recoils from the thought of connecting them with sacred personages? And when we inquire of Christian testimony, we hear but one voice, which comes down from all past time, and from every nation—in attestation of the folly of a life of worldly pleasure. There are thousands now in our churches, who were once the devotees of worldly gaiety; and they will tell you, without a contradicting voice, that, since they have abandoned their former pursuits, and sought happiness in different objects, and cultivated a taste for different pleasures, they have found peace and satisfaction, which they never knew before—and they have no more disposition to turn back to these gaieties, than they have to resume the rattles of babyhood!

It is quite important that the young should understand the true reason of the decision, to which Christians have come upon this subject. It is not a gloomy and morose spirit that dictates this decision—or any desire to prohibit real pleasures. But we see that these gaieties are, in the end, promotive of far more sorrow than happiness—and therefore, we wish all whom we love, to walk in those ways of wisdom, which are pleasantness, and in those paths which are peace. And hence, if parents would, in their own lives and in the lives of their children, bring forth the peaceable and joyful fruits of righteousness—they must avoid these scenes of gaiety! You must carefully guard against cultivating a taste for such worldly pleasures. There are, in this world, many avenues of enjoyment, where one may walk in safety. There are many joys which are improving to the heart, and which afford increasing happiness amid the infirmities of old age and approaching death—joys which, in the 'morning of life', are like the morning sunshine—and, in the 'evening of our days'—are like the serene and golden hues of a summer sunset. There are the joys of well-cultivated affections, of an improving mind, of friends, and love of home, of social converse at

the quiet fireside, of the flower garden, of the domestic animal feeding from the hand it loves, of the twilight walk in solitude or company, of visiting the sick, and cheering the desponding.

There are enough sources of enjoyment which God has opened to us in this world, which are purifying in their nature—and which leave no sting behind. It is not necessary for us to search for happiness in dangerous and forbidden paths. In all the ways pointed out in this chapter, the mother must endeavor to train up her children in the service of God. These are the practical duties of Christianity—duties which bring with them their own reward. There is no other path to heaven than that which is here pointed out—reliance upon an atoning Savior for the forgiveness of past sin, and faithful endeavors to live a devout and holy life. They who will diligently and faithfully pursue such a course, will find the Savior's yoke indeed easy, and His burden light. Duty will continually become more easy and more pleasant. The propensities and passions, whose unrestrained dominion so often mar the peace of others, will cease to trouble them—being subdued by divine grace—and they will go on their way rejoicing to the end!

2.07 RESULTS

THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER by John Abbott, 1833, Worcester, Mass. Published by the American Tract Society

RESULTS

Frequent allusion has been made in the preceding chapters, to the fatal consequences which must attend the neglect of duty. In view of this, some parents may have been oppressed and dejected. It is most surely true that the misconduct of children, subjects the parents to the utmost intensity of suffering. But it must be remembered, that when parental faithfulness is attended with its usual blessing—joys, nearer akin to those of heaven than of earth, are the result. The human heart is not susceptible of more exquisite pleasures than the parental relation affords. Is there no joy when the mother first presses her infant to her heart? Is there no delight in witnessing the first placid smile which plays upon its cheek? Yes! The very earliest infancy of the babe brings "rapture a mother only knows!" The very care is a delight. And when your little son has passed through the dreamy existence of infancy—and is buoyant with the activity, and animated with the intelligence of childhood—are not new sources of pleasure opened to your mind? Are there no thrilling emotions of enjoyment in hearing the hearty laugh of your happy boy—in witnessing the unfoldings of his active mind—in feeling his warm kiss and ardent embrace? Is there no delight in seeing your boy run to meet you, with his face full of smiles and his heart full of love—and in hearing him, in lisping accents, call you mother? As you receive daily new proofs of his affection and obedience—and see that his little bosom is animated with a generous and a noble spirit—you feel repaid a hundred fold for all your efforts, troubles and toils. After a few years your children arrive at maturity, and with that divine blessing which we may expect to accompany our prayerful efforts—they will be found with generous affections and established principles of piety. With what emotions do parents then look around upon their happy and prosperous family! They are receiving the earthly recompense of reward. What an affecting sight it is, to see an aged and widowed mother leaning upon the firm arm of her son, as he accompanies her to the house of God! And how many parents have had their declining years cheered by the affectionate attentions of a daughter! Who will so tenderly watch over you in sickness as a daughter—whose bosom is animated by the principles of piety which you have inculcated?

Among the sweetest earthly joys to be experienced in old age—is the joy of looking around upon happy and grateful children. The marks of esteem and love you receive from them, will daily be rewarding you for all your toil. And when your children's children cluster around you, giving unceasing tokens of respect and affection—you will find in their caresses the renewal of your youth. When all other earthly joys have faded—you will find in the little prattlers of the fireside untiring enjoyment! But there is a scene of still brighter happiness. The Christian family will meet again! Parents and children will be associated in heaven! And when the whole household are happily assembled there—when they sit down together in the green pastures and by the still waters—when they go in and out at the mansions which God has prepared for them—then, and

not until then, will they experience the fullness of the enjoyment with which God rewards parental faithfulness!

How full of rapture is the thought—that the whole family may meet again in the world of songs and everlasting joy—where sorrow and sighing shall forever flee away! As from that happy state of existence you look back upon your pilgrimage on earth, you can never regret—any amount of labor you have expended—any sacrifices you have made—any sufferings you have undergone—to train up your children to be with you the heirs of a glorious immortality. O there is enough, abundantly enough—to encourage every parent to unwearied exertions! As with the deep emotions of parental love, you look upon the obedient and affectionate children who surround your fireside—your thoughts may be carried away to enjoyments infinitely richer, and forever enduring, in the world to come!

We may be called upon to follow our children to the grave. And heart-rending is such an affliction. But if we have reason to believe that they have gone to the mansions which the Savior has prepared—much of the bitterness of the affliction is taken away. They have gone home before us! They are sheltered from every storm! They are protected from every sorrow! Soaring in angelic flights—and animated with celestial joys—they are ready to welcome us when God in his own good time shall give us entrance to those happy worlds! A gentleman was once asked if he had lost any of his children. "No," he replied, "I have two in heaven—but have lost none." To a truly Christian family, the death of any one of its members is but a temporary absence—and not an eternal separation.

1. Mothers have as powerful an influence over the welfare of future generations—as all other earthly causes combined. Thus far the history of the world has been composed of the narrations of oppression and blood. War has scattered its unnumbered woes. The cry of the oppressed has unceasingly ascended to heaven. Where are we to look for the influence which shall change this scene—and fill the earth with the fruits of peace and benevolence? It is to the power of divine truth, to Christianity—as taught from a mother's lips! In a vast majority of cases the first six or seven years decide the character of the man. If the boy leaves the paternal roof uncontrolled, turbulent and vicious—he will, in all probability, rush on in the mad career of self-indulgence. There are exceptions—but these exceptions are rare. If, on the other hand, your son goes from home accustomed to control himself—he will probably retain that habit through life. If he has been taught to make sacrifices of his own enjoyment that he may promote the happiness of those around him, it may be expected that he will continue to practice benevolence, and consequently will be respected, and useful, and happy. If he has adopted firm resolutions to be faithful in all the relations in life, he, in all probability, will be a virtuous man and an estimable citizen, and a benefactor of his race. When our land is filled with pious mothers—then will it be filled with virtuous men! The world's redeeming influence, under the blessing of the Holy Spirit, must come from a mother's lips. She who was first in the transgression, must be yet the principal earthly instrument in the restoration. Other causes may greatly aid. Other influences must be ready to receive the mind as it comes from the mother's hand—and carry it onward in its improvement. But the mothers of our race must be the chief instruments in its redemption. This sentiment will bear examining, and the more it is examined, the more manifestly true will it appear. It is alike the dictate of philosophy and experience. The mother who is neglecting personal effort, and relying upon other influences for the formation of virtuous character in her children, will find, when it is too late—that

she has fatally erred. The parent who hopes that schools and education, and the general diffusion of knowledge—will promote the good order and happiness of the community, while family government is neglected—will find that he is attempting to purify the streams which are flowing from a corrupt fountain!

It is maternal influence, after all, which must be the great agent—in the hands of God—in bringing back our guilty race to duty and happiness. O that mothers could feel this responsibility as they ought! Then would the world assume a different aspect. Then would we less frequently behold unhappy families and broken-hearted parents. A new race of men would enter upon the busy scene of life—and cruelty and crime would pass away!

O mothers! Reflect upon the power your Maker has placed in your hands! There is no earthly influence to be compared with yours. There is no combination of causes so powerful in promoting the happiness—or the misery—of our race—as the instructions of home! In a most peculiar sense God has constituted you the guardians and the controllers of the human family.

2. Perhaps someone asks, "Is there nothing for FATHERS to do?" There certainly is much—very much. But this treatise is prepared to impress upon the mind the duties of mothers. Yet, lest it should be inferred from what has been written, that the whole duty of family government rests upon the mother, I would briefly remark—that no father can be excusable for releasing himself from a full share of the responsibility. A father will often make many excuses to release himself from his duty, but alas! he cannot release his children from the ruin—or himself from the woe—which his neglect occasions. It will be a poor solace to him, as he goes in shame and sorrow to the grave—to reflect that he was busily engaged in other employments while leaving his children to develop for ignominy and disgrace! What duties can be paramount to those we owe our children? A clergyman sometimes says he has so much to do, his time is so fully occupied, that he is compelled to neglect his children. And who has the first claim upon his attention—his congregation or his children? God has placed him over a congregation, and has also made him the father of a family—and which duty does God regard as most imperative? And yet not a few instances might be pointed out, in which clergymen of devoted piety and extensive usefulness, have given their whole attention to the labors of the study and public duties—and have left their unhappy children to grow up unchecked and vicious! No one can enjoy the privilege of being a father—without having duties to perform which will require time and care. And can any time be more usefully employed than that which is passed in training up a family of children—who shall remain to do good in the world long after we are silent in the grave? Can we have any influence equal to that of pious sons and daughters? Can we bequeath the world a richer legacy—than the fervent piety and active usefulness of our children? O there is no sin which reaches so far, and extends such wide-spreading desolation—as parental neglect! No father can be guiltless in retiring from these responsibilities. The first duty enjoined upon us, is to keep our own hearts with diligence—the second, to lead our families to God—the third, to consult for the spiritual welfare of our neighbors—the fourth, to do all in our power to evangelize the world. And yet how many Christian ministers have paralyzed their influence, destroyed their peace of mind, and broken their hearts—by neglecting the duties they owe their children!

Many of the most eminent statesmen are thus afflicted and dishonored. And the affliction must be aggravated by the consciousness that they are reaping as they have sown! I would not willingly

inflict a pang upon the heart of any parent who reads these pages, but I cannot refrain from raising a warning voice, in a view of the destruction which has gone forth, and is still going forth, from the cause we are now contemplating. The temptation is very great, for men who are engaged in literary pursuits, and overwhelmed with public cares, to neglect their domestic duties. But how ruinous is this to usefulness and happiness! It is better to be a poor man, and it is better to be a humble man—than to be disgraced in life by the profligacy of those who call us father—and to have a dying pillow planted with thorns by our children's hands! Every man, whatever be his situation in life, is bound to regard the duties he owes his children as among the most sacred he has to discharge. If he neglects them, he must reap the bitter consequences.

One other remark I must here make, as it is intimately connected with a mother's duty. A father should always endeavor to teach his children to honor their mother. If the father does not do this, the difficulties of the mother will be vastly increased. But where harmony of design is seen to exist between the parents, authority is strengthened. There is something in loving and revering a mother, which exerts a delightful influence upon the heart—it refines and elevates the character—and is a strong safeguard against degrading vice. Boys in particular will not long respect a mother, if they see that their father does not treat her with kindness. You can hardly find a dissolute young man, who has been accustomed from infancy to look to his mother with respect and love. It is in disobedience to a mother that the career of crime generally commences. The way is thus prepared for the disregard of all parental authority. And then the progress is rapid to the boldest defiance of all the laws of God and man. Many an unhappy criminal has, from the gallows, traced back his course of guilt to the early periods of childhood, when he commenced with disobedience to a mother's commands—and he has felt and acknowledged that, had he then been habituated to obey, his whole following course of life had probably been different. It is therefore of the first importance that nothing should be omitted tending to give the mother great and unceasing influence over the minds of her children.

3. The subject of EDUCATION must be attended to with persevering study. And yet how many parents neglect this duty! Nothing surely can be of greater importance to the parents and child—than a correct system of family government. Every mother admits her need of information. There are many valuable books, easy of access, which will afford great assistance. A mother should consider it one of her first duties to inform herself upon this subject, as far as her means will admit. The art of influencing and guiding the youthful mind is susceptible of almost boundless improvement, and we are unfaithful to our children if we do not become familiar with the results of the experiments of others. We ought not to stumble in darkness, when light is shining around us. There are fundamental principles in operating upon the human mind, as well as in any other science. And many an anxious mother has committed error to the serious injury of her children, which she might have avoided, had she consulted the sources of information which are at every one's hand.

How great must be the affliction of that mother, who, in consequence of neglect, has been unsuccessful with her family! She looks upon her ruined sons, and reproaches herself with the just reflection, that if she had pursued a different course, they might have been her joy and blessing. Perhaps even they throw reproaches upon her, and attribute all their guilt and wretchedness to her bad parenting. Few more miserable men have passed through the world than Lord Byron; and he had distinctly attributed the formation of his character, and consequently all his crime and woe, to

his mother's unrestrained passions, and neglect of proper government.

How must such an incrimination from a dissolute son, pierce the heart of a pious mother! Knowledge of duty might have been attained, but she neglected to attain it, and through inexcusable ignorance ruined her child. An affectionate mother would be overwhelmed with anguish, if she had ignorantly administered some poisonous drug, and had seen her child in consequence expiring in agony. But how much more dreadful is it to see moral ruin caused by our own criminal ignorance! Who would not rather see a son or a daughter lie down in the grave—than see them in the wretchedness and disgrace of profligacy!

"Be an example . . . in speech, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity." 1 Timothy 4:12 "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6

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