

THE FAMILY ALTAR.

Home religion is as important as personal religion, and is essential to it. And yet there is no part of practical religion so woefully disregarded. Family prayer and grace at meals are rare even among those who are earnest in church work. How seldom where I visit in the family gathered at morn or eve to hear the father read God's Word or lead in prayer. How seldom at meals are heads bowed and thanks given. A little girl was impressed by a minister saying grace at a dinner party. A few days later her mother gave a lunch. She asked, "Mother, is the minister to come and pray before we eat?" "No," she answered, "this is just an informal lunch." She paralyzed the guests by saying, "Mamma says this is an infernal lunch, and we will not have prayer before eating it."

The reason why there are so many family quarrels, wandering children, divorcees, and trouble with servants is, that there is so little practical religion in the home. The early Christians counted God as ever with them. The Apostle wrote of "the church which is in thine house." The relationship between parents and children grows pure and dear when they all kneel together and ask the peace of God to rest on their home. Many of us remember the dear old days when at the family altar morning and evening prayers were offered together; and the Sunday evening hour, when we sang hymns, each choosing a favorite. I remember visiting where a husband and wife, lately married, knelt together at the same chair and held each other's hands as they sweetly solemnized their family worship. Its influence too, on servants when they are made part of the family circle at prayer, as they are in England, is untold. Such homes are not vexed as in America by the "Servant Problem." A word of prayer for "the stranger within our gates" has set many a man to thinking about God.

Through the whole community the influence of a Christian home spreads. The town seems purer, the birds sing more sweetly, the flowers bloom more radiantly. Joy sings such anthems in such a home as it sings in no other place. And, if this blessedness is to continue, we must shut out all unkindness, bitterness, an injustice.—Floyd W. Tompkins, D. D., in Ram's Horn.

CHRIST IN THE HOME.

There is no place where a man's religion is so valuable as in his own home. Many a man appears very religious on Sunday, but if you could see him at home with his family, at the table or when he loses his temper over some trivial thing, you would not wonder when he says he cannot do personal work, and it would not do any good for him to speak to his own children about becoming Christians.

A man in Iowa had been storming at his family, especially at his poor wife, one day, until he had spoiled the pleasure of everybody in the home for that day at least. Then he went out, slamming the door behind him. His little boy had stood off at one side listening to it all. He looked into his mother's face and tearful eyes, and, coming across the room, took her hand in his own and exclaimed, "Mother, we made an awful mistake when we married father, didn't we?"—Dr. Torrey.

He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.—Ps. 145:19.

Let him who will investigate the processes of nature; the processes of grace will ever be found the most helpful and worthy of exploration.

Though you and I are very little beings, we must not rest satisfied till we have made our influence extend to the remotest corner of this ruined world.—S. T. Mills.

THE MEANING OF THE CROSS.

Dr. Alexander Whyte relates how, one morning at family worship, he had been reading about the "Cross," and he stooped down and whispered to his little four-year old boy at his knee:

"Do you know what a cross is, my boy?"

"Oh! yes, father," was the reply; "it's just the thing we climb on when we go to heaven."

"Could even John Calvin have given a better definition?" asked the delighted preacher.

"Ah! my little boy," he continued, "when you are as old a sinner as your father, you'll know experimentally the truth of your words."

There is much more in the lad's reply, imperfect though it is, than he knew; but the main thought in his mind was that the death of Christ, in its atoning value, was the medium by which he was to reach eternal happiness. The cross is the medium through which all heaven's blessing comes to us.

THE TRUE ESTIMATE.

We estimate a man by what he has done. God estimates a man by what he desires to be and is striving to become. If one, in his heart of hearts, longs to be one with God, to honor God in his doing or not doing, and to serve God faithfully in serving others, even though that one he hindered or kept back or kept down by obstacles or opposers, God sees the mark at which he aims and the ideal to which he aspires, even though one's fellows note only that which has been already realized. We have indeed reason to be grateful that our judgement is with our ever-loving and our all-seeing Father, and not with our imperfect and short-sighted human fellows.

We are told that the distribution of the Bible by missionaries in Armenia is very difficult. However, when the Bible gets into the possession of the natives, they eagerly read it. One of the Bible men states that a copy of the Bible was given to a patient in the Armenian hospital, and by him carried to his home in a certain village. An Armenian priest took it from the man, tore it to pieces and threw the pieces into the street. A grocer picked up some of the pages and took them to his shop, where he began to use them as wrapping-paper. So for a time olives, cheese, candles and other things sent forth from that store were wrapped in pages upon which were the "words of life." The Bible, in this way, was scattered about through that village and was read by many whose interest was so far aroused that they began asking for more of the same book. As a result one hundred Bibles or parts of the Bible were sold in that village on the next visit of the colporteur. The word of God spread; north, south, east and west. No ground is too barren for its seed.

Dr. Buckley, of the New York Christian Advocate says, that you can not imagine how many slanders there are on missionaries. Some people say that missionaries are rolling in wealth, and to my knowledge there are some missionaries who don't get as much salary as a hod carrier, who gets \$2.00 a day for 300 days, and sometimes \$3.00 a day, which comes up to the \$900 a year mark.

A lie is always like a flaw in the metal.

Luminous lives are the best witness to the brightness of the light of the world.

The Christian works with God and prays, and the more confidently he expects to realize the promises the more earnestly he prays.

There is no life so humble that, if it be true and genuinely human and obedient to God, it may not hope to shed some of his light. There is no light so meagre that the greatest and wisest of us can afford to despise it. We cannot know at what moment it may flash forth with the life of God.—Phillips Brooks.

HANGERS-ON.

Every movement that has life in it attracts attention from both the good and the bad, the good are attracted because they want to get good and do good, the bad because it affords an opportunity to pray upon the good. The holiness cause is alive and consequently attracts both of these classes, and it is often put in peril of its life by the bad men and women who are won to it. Some of them make it a cloak with which to cover their evil deeds, others are less vile but have nothing above selfish motives in seeking a place among the ranks of the holiness people, and others having been so mean and unconvincing as to find it impossible to live with any other set of people take advantage of the patience and good nature of the holiness people and come to take possession of all that they can worm themselves into. The cause suffers greatly from these people who simply come to hang on. It would not be right to indiscriminately drive off for in so doing some worthy persons would be injured, but it is also a great evil to permit these people who simply hang on for what they can get to have too large a place at the front.—Wesleyan Methodist.

JENNY'S LESSON.

"Jenny," said a very tired mother to her daughter one afternoon, "will you help me sew this braid on your sister's dress?"

"Oh, mother, how can you ask me to help you, when you know that it takes all my time to make those pictures?"

"What pictures," inquired her mother.

"Why, a lot of us girls met yesterday at Kate Easton's house and formed a club—we call it the 'Busy Workers,' because we will be always helping the poor. We are making pictures for the poor sick children in the New York hospital. Do you think it a good plan?"

"Perhaps it is," said her mother, absently.

So Jenny, leaving her mother to sew on the braid, started up-stairs to make pictures. She had not been up there very long when Katie Easton came in.

"Well, Katie," said Jenny, "I thought you were never coming."

"I would have been here sooner, but we had company for dinner, and Chloe had so many dishes to wash that I stayed to help her."

"Why, Kate Easton, you shock me! The idea of your helping her!" said Jenny, very much surprised.

"Now, look here Jenny, didn't we girls form a club, and each promise that she would do all she could to help others?"

"Well, that hasn't anything to do with helping servants to wash dishes," said Jenny.

"Yes, it has too. I could not go out trying to help other people, all the time knowing that mother or someone else at home would be glad of my help. Do you think you could?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Jenny.

After a pleasant afternoon, at tea time, Katie went home. As soon as she was gone, Jenny came down stairs and went to find her mother.

"Mother," she said, "have you the braid sewed on Nettie's dress yet?"

"No, replied the mother, "I have not been able to get it done."

"Then I'll help you, mother; and after this I mean always to help you first, and then work for any others I can help."

And after that Jenny always helped the people inside her home first, and then helped outside all she could.—Ex.

WHAT A SLAVE WOMAN DID.

A slave woman named Ogünro, living in the Ilale country west of the Niger, longed for freedom, and worked hard until she secured it.

Then she travelled to another region to enjoy life. There she was converted to Christ. This gave her a new longing. What she now longed for was to tell the Ilale people among whom she had been a slave, what good things she had learned.

She went back to Ilale, worked hard, earned money, got a church built, and late in 1903 she placed the church at the disposal of the nearest Christian pastor.

"LIKE AS A FATHER."

The life of a beautiful girl was nearing its close. The busy father, active in legal and political life, made short visits to his office to perform the most necessary duties, and hurried home again day by day to be near her in her last days. He spent every possible moment in granting every wish, and it was a comfort to him that his daughter was finding in her religion a source of strength that robbed approaching death of terror. He was an upright man, but one from whose busy life religion had been crowded out.

One day, as he sat by the bedside of his daughter, she asked him to read to her. He found a magazine and read her some bright bits of poetry and fiction. It pleased her, but she wanted something else.

"Father," she asked, "will you get my Bible and read from that?"

"Certainly, my dear," he answered, and was rather glad than otherwise of her request.

He was a strong man, with a clear voice and a good degree of self-control. He had mastered his own feelings in those days of patient and affectionate ministrations, that he might bring to the sickroom every element of cheer that was possible. And now, he began, calmly and quietly, to read the Sermon on the Mount. He knew where to find it, and he knew that it was good, and he read it with a growing appreciation of its beauty and its sublimity.

But the daughter grew more and more restless.

"Don't you like it?" he asked.

"O father," she exclaimed, "it isn't that I want, about our righteousness exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees! Can't you find the place where it says, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him?'"

His voice trembled a little, but he said, "I will find it," and he turned to the concordance in the back of the Bible. But when he found the place and began to read, "Like as a father," he could bear no more.

"O my child," he cried, "if God cares for you as I do—"

He bent over the bed and wept.

"It is the verse we both need," she said, softly, after a few minutes.

And he knelt beside the bed and said: "Yes, my dear, that is the verse for us both."—Youth's Companion.

A LIVE WIRE.

A young lady in Morristown, N. J., grasped the guy wire on the electric-light pole in front of her father's house to see if she could get a slight shock. Her hand was suddenly contracted by a powerful current which swept through her body. The young girl screamed in agony. She writhed and twisted and fell to the ground, but she could not relax her hold upon the live wire, which was burning her hands, for she had reached up with her left to tear her right hand away. Men and boys ran toward her, but no one dared put out a hand to save the girl. Then her mother ran out. "O mamma," cried the girl, "save me! My hands are burning up!" The mother quickly grasped her daughter around the waist, and was hurled to the ground as if by a blow. Finally a man came up with presence of mind enough to take an ax and sever the wire. He was in time to save the girl's life, but she was fearfully burned. The incident suggests tragedies that are taking place every day before our eyes. Many people are willing to tamper with sin, and run the risk of a slight shock. A boy likes to drink a glass of wine that will make his nerves tingle, and many are asking themselves, How far can I go in the wrong way without being overthrown? That is the way the devil fishes for men and women. People grasp his wires and get a slight shock, and only laugh at danger; but some day they take hold of a live wire that has all the fire of hell in it, and they struck through and through with death. It is better not to play with the devil's wires at all.—J. Wilbur Chapman.

"No," she said, "I don't like cats. They're so cruel; they kill the dear little birds."

"Yes," replied the sarcastic man, "it's too bad you tender-hearted girls can't trim your hats with cats, isn't it?"—Ledger.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COLUMN.

A MOTHER'S CHOICE.

Yes, I know there are stains on my carpet,
The traces of small, muddy boots;
And I see your fair tapestry glowing
All spotless with blossoms and fruits!

And I know that my parlor is littered
With many old treasures and toys,
While your own is in faintest order,
Unharmd by the presence of boys!

And I know that my room is invaded
Quite boldly all hours of the day,
While you sit in your own unmolested,
And dream the soft quiet away.

Yes, I know there are four little bedsides
Where I must stand watchful each night,

While you may go out in your carriage,
And flash in your dresses so bright!

Now I think I'm a neat little woman,
I like my house orderly, too,
And I am fond of all dainty belongings;
Yet I would not change places with you!

No! keep your fair home with its order,
Its freedom from bother and noise!
And keep your own fanciful leisure;
But give me my four splendid boys!

—Sel.

PHILOSOPHICAL LITTLE TOMMY.

Did you ever hear about him?

Grandma once knew just such a little philosopher and he was the biggest little philosopher I ever knew. I do not think he ever cried, I never saw him cry. If his little sister found her tulips all rooted up by her pet puppy, and cried and cried—as little girls will—Tommy was sure to come around the corner whistling, and say: "What makes you cry? Can you cry a tulip? Do you think that every sob makes a root or a blossom? Here! Lets try to right them."

So he picked up the poor flowers, put their roots into the ground again, whistling all the time, and making the bed look smooth and fresh, and takes her off to hunt hen's nests in the barn. Neither did he do any differently in his own troubles. One day his great kite snapped the string and flew far out of sight. Tommy stood still a moment and then turned around to come home, whistling a merry tune.

"Why, Tommy!" said I, "are you not sorry to lose that kite?"

"Yes, but what's the use? I can't take more than a minute to feel bad. 'Sorry' will not bring the kite back and I want to make another."

Just so when he broke his leg.

Poor Tommy!" cried his sister, "you can't play any more!"

"I'm not poor either. You cry for me. I don't have to do it for myself, and I'll have more time to whistle. Besides, when I get well I shall beat every boy in school on the multiplication table, for I say it over and over again till it makes me sleep every time my leg aches."

Tommy was a little queer, certainly, but if a great many people were more like him they would have less troubles and would throw more sunshine in this world. We must cry, sometimes, but try and be as brave as possible.—Christian Work.

ON GUARD.

If you ever go to a fort, you will always find a soldier on guard. He is called the sentry, and it is his duty to see that no enemy enters the fort. If the sentry is caught off his guard, he may be put to death for neglecting his duty. This is necessary, for it is important that no enemy ever be allowed to enter the fort.

Every boy should always be on his guard, for there are enemies who are trying all the time to get into a boy's life. Some one has said that a boy should be ironclad in his whole body. His ears should be ironclad against impure words; his hands against wrong doing; his feet against going into bad company; his eyes against bad books and pictures; his tongue against evil speaking.

A boy who wants to guard himself against all these enemies needs Jesus Christ as his great Captain, and with his help, there will be no need to fear any foe, however strong.