

## Now and Afterward.

Now, the sowing and the weeping,  
Working hard and waiting long;  
Afterward, the golden reaping,  
Harvest home, and grateful song.

Now, the long and toilsome duty,  
Stone by stone to carve and bring;  
Afterward, the perfect beauty  
Of the palace of the King.

Now, the tuning and the tension,  
Waiving minors, discord strong;  
Afterward, the grand ascension  
Of the Alleluia song.

Now, the spirit conflict riven,  
Wounded heart, unequal strife;  
Afterward, the triumph given,  
And the victor's crown of life.

Now, the training, strange and lowly,  
Unexplained and tedious now;  
Afterward, the service holy,  
And the Master's "Enter Thou!"

Frances Ridley Havergal.

## The Contrast.

I just called to see a young friend who had returned to her native city after an absence of eight years. I last saw her a lovely bride of eighteen, and I did not expect to see her greatly changed, as I had listened to glowing accounts from those who had visited her, of a "lovely home" and "devoted husband."

But when I was brought face to face with her it required great self control to disguise the shock I experienced as I saw the sad change in the young wife. Only twenty-six, yet she looked more careworn than most women at forty, and older, too.

As I talked, the froth of my thoughts, the undercurrent, queried the "why" of this transformation. I soon arrived at the conclusion that the "devoted" husband was a base deceiver, and in imagination was writing the epitaph of the long-suffering wife—"died of a broken heart"—when we were interrupted by the entrance of two children, who had been out with grandma for an airing. A most distressing look at once overspread the face of the mother, as she exclaimed in a tone plaintive enough for the most alarming state of things:

"O mother, why did you let them remain out so long? They are sure to have the croup."

The little boy of six and girl of four were the pictures of health, but in ready sympathy, I said:

"Are they subject to the croup?"

"O, no," she replied, "they never had it, but so many children die of it, you know."

I called the children to me for a little visit, but they had hardly reached my side before the voice of the mother now rasping instead of plaintive, called out:

"Leave the room this instant. She doesn't want to be bothered with you."

At little things they looked as sorry to go as I was to have them, but they were evidently ruled with a rod of iron, and they meekly left the room, and in plain sight, in the room adjoining, commenced quickly to play "house."

"What beautiful children!" I exclaimed, thinking, "She has much to live for, if he is breaking her heart." At my words the careworn face was made doubly so by the martyr-like look assumed as she said:

"Oh, yes; they are well enough, but I tell you, I was a fool to give up my life of ease to tie myself down to children. They are such a constant source of anxiety, I haven't taken a minute's peace since the first one was born."

"Why," I ventured, "you keep a nurse, and they look like healthy children?"

"Yes; they are not sick much, yet I never hear of a case of diphtheria or scarlet fever in town but that I am nearly beside myself."

Just then a noise in the next room which I scarcely noticed caused her to spring to her feet, exclaiming, "Oh, those children will drive me crazy!" Going to them she slapped right and left, at the same time saying, "What are you doing?"

"Nossin', mamma; des playin' house, and it tumbledled over," said the sweet girl, followed by:

"Johnnie, you go and stand in the corner."

The mother heeded not, "I didn't do it; truly, mamma," and Johnny was pushed into the corner for something he hadn't done, I know; for, listening to her woes, I had watched the building of the house and the fall thereof, and I thought somebody needed shaking, but not the children.

A silence painful to my ears followed, and the model (!) mother returned, saying:

"I let nothing interfere with the management of my children. Their grandma thinks I am too strict, and she tries to make amends by giving them all the playthings I had when a child, but I'll train them when I get back home."

As I rose to go, she said:

"I haven't asked half the questions I wanted to, but that is always the way; those children never give me a minute's peace."

I invited her to spend the day with me, but she said:

"I don't dare to leave the children, their grandmother humors them so."

"Why, bring them," I hastened to say.

Bent on being a martyr mother, she made answer:

"Oh, no; I can't think of it; they would be sure to get into mischief, and so spoil our visit."

I did not urge the matter. I had seen enough to convince me that the visit would be spoiled, but not by the children, for whom my very heart ached.

As I left I mused:

"Oh, the pity of it! There is a woman so blind that she is robbing herself and all about her of happiness by needless fretting and nagging. No wonder she is aged, but she alone is responsible, not Father Time nor her husband; how I pity him!"

Wishing to efface if possible the sad picture, I called on my way home on another young wife and mother, knowing just how I should find her.

She answered my ring herself, and in her cherry way said:

"Come right into the nursery and work-room combined."

Gladly I entered, and noted that the sewing table was covered with work, while in the "nursery corner" of the room two happy children were building a "tower." The mother said laughingly:

"I must look rather littery to one who hasn't any children, but I can work better to the music of their playing."

To make amends to my motherless self for my former visit, I seated myself on the floor, and divided my attention alternately between the girlish, happy-faced mother and her comforts.

Thinking of that other mother, I queried:

"Isn't it hard to be tied down to these children? Don't you sometimes long for the freedom of your girlhood?"

Ah, how eloquent was her answer! Snatching up her baby, she hugged it to her bosom, saying:

"Give up my sweet children and kind husband? Not for the wealth of the world!"

"But," continued I, "they are a constant worry to you, aren't they? They are so liable to go astray or die."

"Why, no; not to the extent of needless anxiety. I do the best I can for them to-day and leave tomorrow with the dear Father, who 'lent' them to me. He knows what is best for them and me; so I just take comfort with them every day, regardless of the possible future."

The contrast in these two mothers was so striking that I wish I might make a pen picture of it so vivid that many a young wife and mother might profit thereby.—Mrs. H. H. THOMAS, *In Christian at Work*.

## Home Religion.

The Bible is in a very special sense a book for the home full of sweet pictures of home life, and counsels how to make home happy and holy. In the Old Testament we have glimpses into the home in Eden, where Adam had fellowship face to face with God; the home of Abraham, where Isaac was nurtured into piety; the home of Jacob, in which Rachel was the sunshine and the quail of the children the cloud; the home of Jesse, where David learned how to sing and how to do deeds of bravery, and the home of Hannah, where Samuel grew up in an atmosphere of faith and prayer, which made him strong for a great life work. Equally beautiful are the revelations of the home life of the New Testament. The home of Bethany, in which the Savior always found rest and sympathy; the home of Timothy, where mother and grandmother taught the child the Holy Scriptures; and, above all, the home of Nazareth, where the Son of God, incarnate in the flesh, spent his boyhood, suggest pictures to the Bible student which abide with him as a delight and inspiration. One of the reasons, and not the least of them, why the Bible should be a well thumbed and much prized volume in every fireside circle is because it is so distinctively a home volume.

In the home are the beginnings of life, social, national, and ecclesiastical. So it comes about that the religion of the home enters into the religion of the Church and the state as a determining factor. The Bible has much to say about the religion of the homes it describes. Family worship in some form it emphasizes from the very dawn of family life. Patriarchal customs, as depicted in the chronicles of the Book of Genesis and the Book of Job, found a place for home religion. It is very significant that the only acts of worship we read about in the Book of Job are family sacrifices offered by Job on behalf of his children, sacrifices which correspond to the family worship of the Christian dispensation. It was in the capacity of heads of their respective households that Noah and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in all their journeys, reared altars to Jehovah. The patriarchal religion was particularly and emphatically home religion. The father of the family was always the priest of the household, and the most eminent commentators are of the opinion that the sacrifices they offered were distinctly family sacrifices of thanksgiving for family blessings, or of petition for the removal of family afflictions. When the family organization widened into the tribal organization, the old arrangement still held good the head of the enlarged family being at once chief and priest of the tribe. Thus Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of the most high God. The heads of the families and the chieftains of the tribes remained priests of their respective household and tribes until the giving of the law, when Aaron and his sons were consecrated and the tribes of Levi set apart to priestly functions. Home religion sanctified the family life from its very foundation.

It is instructive to notice that even after the establishment of the Levitical priesthood, exercises of family worship had their own place and value. There were frequent family festivals which partook of a religious character. "Our family had a sacrifice in the city, and my brother, he had commanded me to be there." These family sacrifices are supposed to have been continuations of patriarchal customs incorporated into the Levitical ritual, and served not only to cement into hallowed unity the friendships of the household, but also to preserve the individuality of family religion.

Over and over again in the later history of the Old Testament do we meet with hints of the existence of home religion as distinct from the national religion of the children of Israel. Thus, for example, we read that at the close of the solemn celebration of the bringing of the ark into the city of David, "all the people departed, every one into his own house; then David returned to bless his own household." What is the meaning of the italicized phrase but, to quote the words of a capable commentator, "that at the close of a day of great public interest, after he had as king taken part with his people in the national rejoicing, David returned to unite with those who called him by the more sacred name of father, in rendering more special thanksgiving for what was indeed a blessing to all the people over whom he ruled, but a peculiar blessing to the family of which he was the head."

Home religion is then inseparable from the home life of Bible homes. The father is the priest of the household, and in every home there ought to be an altar on which sacrifices of thanksgiving and petition ought to be offered. This is, we fear, a neglected truth in our day; and because it is neglected the vitality of the religion of the Church and the state is seriously threatened. As water cannot rise above its level, no more can the religion of a country rise above the religion of the families which make up the population of the country. Of all the problems of our ages not one is more important or urgent than the preservation of the religious exercises of the home in their primitive purity and power. Back of all social and political questions stands this question of home religion, holding in it the key of the position. There can be no doubt that if all our homes were really Christian, the Christianizing of the rest of life would be an easy task. Homes are the need of the world, and the supreme force in home-making is the religion of Jesus Christ as an atmosphere to pervade and an influence to mold the life of the fire side. The highest patriotism seeks the best welfare of the state, and that best welfare is inseparable and universal practice of home religion.—*New York Observer*.

## Afraid of a Shadow.

In a report of a sermon by a young Scotch minister, we find the following beautiful incident:

His text was the twenty-third Psalm, of which he gave a running commentary. When he came to the verse, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," he abruptly paused and said:—"I am a Scotchman; let me tell you a little incident which occurred not long ago in the Scottish parish where I was laboring." He leaned from the pulpit, and with the sweetest of Scottish accents, began in a low tender voice:

"I was sitting in my study one Saturday evening when a message came to me that one of the godliest among the shepherds who tended their flocks upon the slopes of our highland hills was dying, and wanted to see the minister. Without loss of time I crossed the wide heath to his comfortable little home. When I entered the low room, I found the old shepherd propped up with pillows, and breathing with such difficulty, that it was apparent that he was near his end. 'Jean,'

he said, 'gie the minister a stool, and leave us for a bit; for I wad see the minister alone.'

"As soon as the door had closed, he turned the most pathetic pair of gray eyes upon me I had ever looked into, and said in a voice shaken with emotion, 'Minister, I'm dying, and—and—I'm afraid.'

"I began at once to repeat the strongest promises with which God's word furnishes us; but in the midst of them he stopped me.

"I ken them a', he said mournfully. 'I ken them a'; but somehow they dinna gie me comfort.'

"Do you not believe them?"

"Wi' a' my heart," he replied, earnestly.

"Where then is there any room for fear with such a saving faith?"

"For a' that, minister, I'm afraid, I'm afraid."

"I took up the well-worn Bible which lay on his bed, and turned to the Psalm which I have read to you to-day.

"You remember the twenty-third Psalm?"

"I began—"

"Remember it?" he said, vehemently. "I kened it every word afore ye were born?"

"I slowly repeated the verse 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me.'

"You have been a shepherd all your life, and you have watched the heavy shadows pass over the valleys and over the hills, hiding for a little while all the light of the sun. Did these shadows frighten you?"

"Frighten me? he said quickly. 'Na, na! Dave Donaldson has Covenanter's blood in his veins, neither shadow nor substance could weel frighten him.'

"But did these shadows never make you believe you would not see the sun again—that it is gone forever?"

"Na, na; I cudna be sic a simpleton as that."

"Nevertheless, that is just what you are doing now." He looked at me with incredulous eyes.

"Yes," I continued, the shadow of death is over you, and it hides for a little the Sun of righteousness, who shines all the same behind; but it's only a shadow that will pass, and when it has passed, before you will be the everlasting hill in their unclouded glory."

"The old shepherd covered his face with his trembling hands, and for a few moments maintained an unbroken silence; then letting them fall straight before him on the coverlet, he said, as if musing to himself, 'A weel, aweel! I have conned that verse a thousand times among the heather, and I never understood it afore—afraid of a shadow! afraid of a shadow!' Then turning upon me a face now bright with an almost supernatural brightness, he exclaimed, lifting his hands reverently to heaven, 'Aye, aye, I see it a' now! Death is only a shadow—a shadow with Christ behind it—a shadow that will pass—na, na, I'm afraid nae mair.'

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The use of ardent feelings in religion is to take away the grievousness from the beginnings of obediences. Afterward comes the more sober and higher comfort resulting from that real love to religion which obedience itself will by that time have begun, and will afterward perfect.—*J. H. Newman*.

Some people speak as if hypocrites were confined to religion; but they are everywhere; people pretending to wealth where they have not a sixpence, assuming knowledge of which they are ignorant, shamming a culture they are far removed from, adopting opinions they do not hold.

There is but one failure, and that is, not to be true to the best one knows. To us and to our race there is but one failure, and that is sin.

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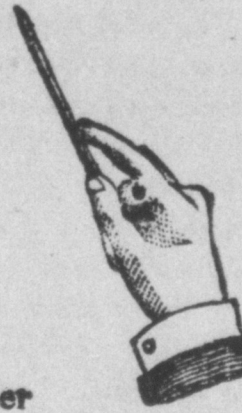
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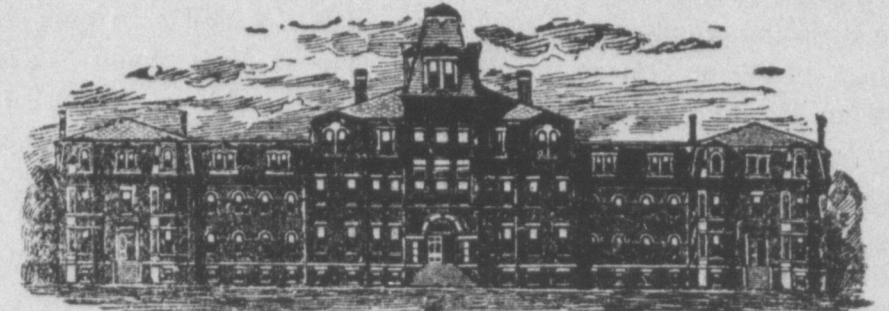
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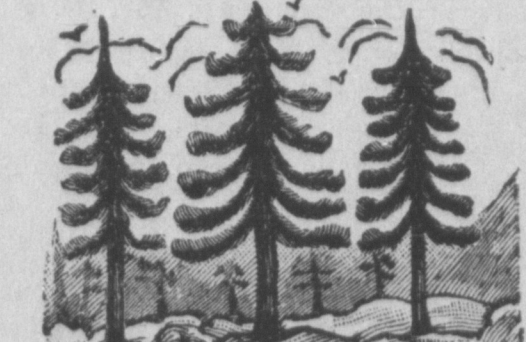
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