

THE MARKS...

OF A CHRISTIAN HOME

Some Things That Characterize a Home as Christian

In an exchange we read two questions that set us to thinking on this line. The questions are these: "Is a home really a Christian home if it has no family altar?" and "Can parents discharge their God-given responsibility to their children if they never gather the family for worship?"

The Family Altar, One Mark

From this we gather that, in the mind of the one asking that question, a home without a family altar suggests a doubt as to its being Christian. Reader, if you should go to a strange home and be entertained there for a week and observe that not once in all that time was the family gathered together for prayer, and the blessing not asked at the table, unless you asked it, what would you think of that home? How would you classify it? Now, turn the question on your own home: would a stranger entertained in your home classify it as Christian if you had no family altar and no blessing at the table? But it is true that there are multitudes of homes in the United States, whose occupants would resent being classified as not Christian, where the family altar, if it ever existed, has been abandoned. Is your home one of these?

The Bible, Another Mark

Suppose that you were in a home for a week as a guest, and saw no Bible anywhere in sight; you never saw a member of the family reading the Bible. You could find newspapers and magazines on the reading table piled deep, but no Bible either in top or under the pile. Would you think of the home as being ardently Christian? You can have a Bible in this country; you can read it every day. Did you read last week about people in Germany who have an opportunity to read the Bible only one day? Yet likely you have a Bible somewhere in the house. Do you treasure it? Honestly, are you very much of a Christian, and is your home very much of a Christian home, if the Bible is systematically neglected in favor of the newspaper and magazine?

What do you think of a home that takes a dozen secular papers and not a single religious paper? Can it be classified as actively Christian? Our experience as an editor of a religious paper, is that whenever money gets a little tight the first paper off the list, apparently, is the religious one. Many times when the secular paper increases its price, the subscription is renewed, but when the religious paper has to increase its price to live, it, too often, is stopped, as a luxury that can be dispensed with. Religious papers as a rule have a struggle to keep going, while newspapers earn money to pay all expenses and erect great and magnificent buildings from their profits.

What Does the Radio Say?

Does the radio in your home advertise the fact that your home is Christian? What would you think of a home, if you were entertained in it a week, where the radio, whenever it was turned on brought only the news, jazz, nonsense, advertisements of cosmetics, soap, football and baseball scores, and never a Gospel message? But there are homes, claiming to be Christian, whose neighbors are annoyed much of the time by nonsensical stuff that one would think only sinners would care to hear. What does your radio tell your neighbors and visitors about the condition of your home?

What Effects Have the Pictures?

Pictures and mottoes are silent witnesses of the character of a home. The pictures should be dressed as modestly as the standards of the home. Some calendars come out with pictures below Christian standards. They should be cut off in the Christian home. Mottoes are read by visitors. When mottoes hang on the wall the conduct of the inmates of the home should not belie the messages the mottoes convey.

The Use of Sunday

The Christian home takes it for granted that everyone goes to church and Sunday School on the first day of the week. In a Christian home the question ought never to be asked, "Who is going to Sunday School today?" unless there is sickness that requires some to remain because of being ill, or to wait on the sick who cannot be left alone. It is a mark to be admired when parents and children walk into Sunday school on time every Sunday. There are families so noted for this that their absence raises the question, "Are they sick?" But there is also more to Sunday observance than going to the meeting house in the morning. The ball and bat, the tennis racquet and the croquet set are better stored away Saturday night, and it might be well if the bicycle and the automobile were safe at home, in many cases. Read good books to the younger children, and cultivate a taste for good reading for the older ones so that Sunday may be a quiet day at home. Make a study of how to make the home the most attractive place in the world for the children every day, and on Sunday especially.

These are not all the marks of a Christian home. Would it not be a good thing for parents to study how to make the home a witness for the Lord, so that every person that comes into it will have a consciousness that God is honored in that home? It may mean the salvation of someone.

—The Gospel Minister.

SING HIS PRAISE

S. C. Bredbenner

"Behold, my servants shall sing for joy at heart," Isaiah 65:14.

"I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord," Psalm 104:33, 34.

A little boy was watching the birds in a field. At length a little songster perched itself on the limb of a tree. As the boy prepared to throw a stone, the little bird began to sing.

Slowly the boy dropped the stone. He listened till the song had ceased, and watched the bird fly away.

"Why did you not stone him?" asked a gentleman, "Couldn't," was the brief reply. "Couldn't, cos he sung so."

Thus the enemy of our soul is on the lookout to fire some poisonous dart of doubt or fear. Sing, sing, soldier, in the warfare! The trial may be fiery, the march may seem long; let the glory in your soul sing His praise. The devil will flee. He does not like songs of praise.

Jehoshaphat's armies marched to battle and victory with shouts of faith, and songs of praise. So today the joy of the Lord is an excellent equipment for the conflict.

Sing His praise in the early morning, in the heart of noonday, and surely He giveth songs in the night. You may meet some one on the

other shore who was helped by your song of praise.

"Sing on, O joyful pilgrims,
While here on earth we stay;
Let songs of home and Jesus
Beguile each fleeting day.
Sing on the grand old story
Of His redeeming love,
The everlasting chorus
That fills the realms above."

—Gospel Herald.

CAPITALIZING GUR CALAMITIES

By J. B. Chapman

A few days ago I read a sentence from Chappell in which he said, "Naomi had learned the art of capitalizing her calamities," and the saying stuck to me. A calamity, as I understand the meaning of the word, is the strongest in that list of synonyms which included disaster, misfortune, mishap, mischance, distress, affliction, and adversity. Its principal distinction in the list from which it comes is that it implies a somewhat continuous state as result from such causes as fire, flood, disease and bereavement. To capitalize it, therefore, one must not necessarily become reconciled to it. In fact if one becomes reconciled, the calamity disappears, and it is then too late to capitalize it.

A good Christian man told me he was much troubled with insomnia until he learned to use his wakefulness as an occasion for prayer. Since that he has learned to count the nights when he cannot sleep as the best nights of all, for they minister more fully to the good of his soul. John Wesley was still active with his travels, writing and preaching at eighty-five, and he credited his good health and unusual strength to "two fevers" which he had in early middle life which were the means of teaching him the value of health, and gave him motive to observe proper rules. Paul suffered some sort of physical infirmity which was painful and annoying. But when he prayed for removal of his "thorn in the flesh," he was just given more grace to bear, rather than deliverance from the distress against which he prayed. Henceforth, finding that his infirmity was the occasion for spiritual blessing, he came to where he could "glory in the things which concern mine infirmities," seeing that "when I am weak, then am I strong." Certainly one has capitalized his calamity when he has made it the occasion for obtaining more of the grace and blessing of the Lord.

We cannot invite calamity, for anything we could find it possible to invite would not be able to retain its character as calamity. But, like persecution, calamity will come soon enough and often enough, and all our efforts to avoid it cannot be permanently successful. But there is one thing we can do: when this unwelcome intruder does break through our bulwarks and find us out, instead of cringing and fleeing, we can reduce him from the status of master to the standing of servant. That which God will not take away in answer to our prayers He will compensate with grace. When He does not remove the trouble, "He giveth more grace."

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Paul).