

## Do You Have A Family Altar In Your Home?

A moment in the morning, take your Bible in your hand,  
And catch a glimpse of glory from the peaceful promised land;  
It will linger still before you when you seek the busy mart,  
And like the flowers of hope will blossom into beauty in your heart  
The precious words, like jewels, will glisten all the day,  
With a rare, effulgent glory, that will brighten all the way.

"The father to the children shall make known thy truth" (Isaiah 38:19).

Richard Baxter was one of England's greatest ministers. In early life, he went into a large parish and a community which was composed almost entirely of rich, cultured people. He found that the congregation was cold, and all was not as he had expected it to be in the ministry. He was disappointed and disheartened. The young pastor said, "The way to save the church and this community is to establish religion in the homes of the community and to build the family altar." Thus Baxter spent three years in his visitation and in his determination to establish a family altar in every home in that community. He succeeded amazingly, and this condition in the homes was the fountain head that filled his church to overflowing, and started that magnificent ministry and life. Fundamentally, religion must involve the family relationship. You cannot even build a church altar that is an attractive center, without the family altar. Baxter was right and proved it.

Now I will take you to the opposite side. Thomas Boston was likewise a great minister, but, unlike Baxter, he spent the years of his early ministry in the slums of a city among the poor people. There he discovered the same condition—the church was cold and empty. He had no influence. He was disheartened and discouraged. He said that the only way to save the church is to save the family. And he went all through that poor community and established family altars where they worshipped God in the home every day in the week. He built up the altars, and he says he spent three years doing it. And then Thomas Boston's church started to revive, and the community was filled with spiritual power and influence.

### Family Altars and Missionaries

One of the noblest of missionaries was John G. Paton. No man evidenced more heroism and sacrifice than did that kingly, wonderful soldier of the cross. Read the biography of this devoted missionary. You will find on the first page the secret of that life of service, the one memory around which all the rest of Paton's ministry centers: The recollection of his father with his old family Bible twice a day at the family altar, children all around him hearing the message of God, then down on their knees together. Paton says that in that home his father's influence made him all he was, and started his missionary life and work. As you read the rest of his biography, you will find this spiritual influence in operation all through his life.

Henry M. Grady visited Washington, D. C., and when he went back to Atlanta, Georgia, he wrote an editorial about the Capitol at Washington, described it beautifully, and called it the home of this great nation, the center around which the nation moves. Some months passed by, and he went back to his old home in Georgia. And then when he returned to Atlanta, he wrote another editorial, and in it he said he made a tremendous blunder when he

wrote that first editorial. He said that the center of this country is not in the United States Capitol—it is in the hovels and in the cottages and in the farm houses and in every home in this land in which there is a family altar. The Christian home is in the center of the American life, from which all the rest of it moves and radiates. And Henry M. Grady was justified in apologizing for his mistake.

### A Precious Heritage

I know two men that lived in a country home in their boyhood, and became rich men when they went away from home. Occasionally they returned to visit their father and mother living in the old home. Finally the father and mother went to heaven. The sons did not know what to do with the home. One of them said to the other, "If you'll set out your interest in me, I'll tear down the house and build a summer home there, and let you come out to it when you want to." Accordingly they took a trip out to the old homestead to tear it down. Around that spot there swept many sacred memories.

These two brothers, past middle life and rich, went into the house and looked around through it. One walked up and down in front of the old fireplace, and the other sat down. Finally one said:

"You know, Bob, what I'm thinking about? I've changed my mind since I've been here. We're not going to tear down this old house. This house is going to stand here; it's not going to be torn down."

"That is a strange thing," the other brother said, "because when I was walking up and down in front of the fireplace, that is the same thing I was thinking about." He looked over at the chair in which his father used to sit. "Here is the old chair that father sat in when he read the Bible, when we had family worship—the chair around which we knelt as father lifted our hearts to God."

They stayed there two hours talking things over and before they left both men got on their knees by the old chair, repented and wept their hearts out before God. They went back, saved men, and gave both their money and their lives to God.

And the old house stands. It was too sacred to touch, because the family altar had stood there. It is a great thing to go back to the old house. If you cannot go back any way but in memory, go back.

I can make such a journey tonight. I am back there now, on the banks of the Hudson River, in that old farmhouse, in that old kitchen, around that great fireplace—father, mother, twelve children, twice a day the old family Bible, and the wonderful prayer lifted to God! I am remembering that old house, that old center, that marvelous influence.

Do not be surprised when I tell you that every one of those children was saved by the grace of God. Four of them became ministers of Jesus Christ, all the rest of them Sunday-school teachers and God's chosen men and women. And they all found that inspiration and life at the family altar when father opened

## PRESERVED BLAMELESS

By David B. Updegraff

"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."—I. Thess. 5:23.

In a Methodist meeting, when more than thirty years old, God met me in wondrous power. I thank God for the depth and pungency of old-fashioned conviction. I was converted through and through and I knew it. Justified by faith I had peace with God. His Spirit bore witness to my spirit that I was a child of God.

Nevertheless, as time went on, I learned a great deal of myself. I was troubled by people and circumstances around me—but I discovered an uncrucified Self that gave me more trouble than all others.

This "old man and his deeds" had never been put off. He was within me to "war against the law of my mind" and bring me into captivity to the law of sin. I hated pride, ambition, evil tempers and vain thoughts but I had them and they were still a part of me.

I began to cry to God to cast them out. As I did this there came a great hunger and thirst after righteousness, that I might be filled with the fullness of God. I longed for a clean heart and a right spirit.

I went to my knees with the resolute purpose of presenting my body a living sacrifice to God. Every vile affection was resolutely nailed to the Cross. Denominational standing, business, reputation, friends, time, talents and earthly store were irrevocably committed to the sovereign control and disposal of my Almighty Saviour. It was easy to trust Him then and I had no more taken Him at His word and reckoned myself dead unto sin and alive unto God than the Holy Ghost fell upon me.

Instantly I felt the melting and refining fire of God permeate my whole being. Conflict was a thing of the past. I had entered into rest. I was nothing and nobody, and glad it was settled that way. It was a luxury to get rid of ambitions. The glory of the Lord shone round about me, and I was lost in wonder, love and praise.

I was deeply conscious of the presence of God within me, and of His sanctifying work. Nothing seemed so sweet as His will; His law was written in the heart after the chaff had been burned out.

It was no effort to realize that I loved God with all my heart, mind and strength, and my neighbor as myself. My calmness and absolute repose in God was a wonder to me. But I cannot describe it all. It was a weight of glory.

O matchless bliss of perfect love,

It lifts me up to things above.

the Bible and then lifted his heart to God. That is the greatest heritage in this world.

The greatest inheritance is the influence of Christian blood and life, moral character, and spiritual uplifting power. Now if your old home gave you that, you do not need to have a dollar. My father and mother never left me a dollar, but they left me the greatest riches in the world.—Selected from a sermon by Cortland Myers.—(In Wesleyan Methodist).