

— Guest Editorial —

THE CHRISTIAN HOME

P. W. Thomas, "Pilgrim Holiness Advocate"

A well-regulated Christian home is important. This is one of the truths that many come to understand and evaluate after it is too late.

Centuries ago, the Lord said of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Gen. 18:19). Wherever the patriarch pitched his tent, there he built his altar. There he and his family worshiped the living God. The passing of the centuries has not lessened the importance of the godly home.

The church is God's messenger in proclaiming the truths of salvation and calling men to worship, but if Christianity is to be effective in the lives of growing children, the home must teach and apply the principles of revealed truth to everyday living.

This is true from the standpoint of time. A child is in Sunday school one hour a week. In some instances he may attend church one or two hours longer. He spends 40 hours a week in day school. To sum up these hours is to see how heavily the balance is tipped on the side of the home. And this is one good reason why parents cannot expect the minister and the teachers of the church school to make up for the spiritual training of the children when it is neglected at home.

Looking at it from the standpoint of the child's emotional life, the home again has the advantage. A teacher is, at best, but a friend and an instructor. But parents and children are of one flesh and blood. There in the home loyalties and affections are kindled which give training a drive and an authority not easily found elsewhere.

It is in the home that the children learn from real life situations. And it is agreed among the best of teachers, that a life situation is the best setting for an education. Such situations are artificially created in school, but it is in the home that the question of manners, of generosity, and other fundamental qualities of character are hammered out bit by bit on the anvil of daily living. The art and adventure of living together, the need of the strong carrying the burdens of the weak, are what the scientists call "constants" in the home. Here it is that the foundations for sturdy Christian character are laid.

Years ago, the celebrated newsman Henry M. Grady visited Washington, D. C., and when he went back to Atlanta, Georgia, he wrote an editorial about the Capital, describing it beautifully, and called it the home of this great nation, the center around which the nation moves. Some months passed, and he went back to his old home in Georgia. And then he returned again to Atlanta, where he wrote another editorial. In it he said that he made a tremendous blunder when he wrote that first editorial. This time he indicated that the vital center of this country is not in the United States Capitol, but it is in every home of the land where there is a family altar.

What Mr. Grady might write now, with the American home so largely in the state of spiritual collapse, we do not know. But certainly one of the darkest chapters in the current story of American life is that of the Christless home—so often the broken home.

We do well to see to it that holy fires of Christian love and devotion are kept burning upon our home altars. And surely there is nothing more needed than that kind of a revival that will rebuild the altars of the Lord in homes where they have been thrown down by carelessness and sin.

The King's Highway

HOW GOD ANSWERED MY PRAYER

by Evert vander Linde, Black's Harbor, N. B.

as told to A. D. Cann

"O God, please help us and do not let us get caught by the German soldiers."

My first fervent prayer was uttered from a bull pen where I was hiding from German bayonets. It was a winter night of February, 1945 in Friesland, Holland during the German occupation.

My second sincere petition was fifteen years later in the Reformed Baptist Church in Black's Harbor, N. B., Canada. God answered my first prayer and saved my life. This led to my second petition which saved my soul.

We were brought up in Holland to believe in God, to believe the Bible and believe in the power of prayer.

For three years our faith was under test. All our young men from eighteen to thirty-five years were arrested and sent to a labor camps in Germany. Day and night my younger brother and I were on the watch expecting our turn next. They were days of tension for all our household, which included—my wife, my parents, my grandparents, my uncle and two refugees.

Father had a sick horse. We went to the barn that night together. "Hold it," I said, "somebody is out there."

From a distance I saw light reflecting on helmets. Immediately we put out our light and my brother and I took refuge in the bull pen. Weeks before we dug two deep holes in the manure, long enough and wide enough for us to hid, in case of emergency. "This is it," I said as father covered us with straw and dung and then fled to the house.

Eighteen or twenty soldiers with rifles and bayonets surrounded the house and barn. Search was made inside and outside. Many a night refugees slept in the open fields, old boats etc. Guerilla warfare was not uncommon. Inside the barn bayonets poked in the oats, straw and hay.

We both were frightened. My younger brother became panicky and threatened to give himself up. "Shut up," I said, "or I will knock you cold." Had we been caught then we might have been shot on the spot.

At this point I prayed with all my might. Immediately a calm flooded my soul. The big holstein bull sniffed one side of the pen and then the other. Wonder of wonders, he then laid down between us. I was sure now God answered my prayer. Indeed, not my prayer only, but the united prayers of our entire household.

After a long, fruitless search, the soldiers gave up. But not until they delayed an extra hour to make sure we were not beating them in the game.

At length our safety signal was given and we came forth. My prayer was answered, our lives were saved and that is why I believe in God. However, that is not the only reason why I believe in God.

On February 9th., 1960, just fifteen years later, I did the hardest thing I ever did in my life. When the invitation to receive Christ as Saviour was given, my wife and I left our seats and went to the altar of the church. The Lord Jesus came into our hearts. My knees trembled that night equally as much or more than they did back there in the bull pen listening to the German soldiers.

It is a wonderful thing to escape as a prisoner of war, but it is a more wonderful thing to escape the prison house of sin. We have six children and we desire to bring them up in the fear of the Lord. This is how God answered my prayer.