

THE FAMILY ALTAR AND ITS INFLUENCES.

At no time does the family below present to my mind so faithful and striking a type of the family above, as when with one accord they have met in one place, to offer united praise to the Father of mercies. True it is with this, as every other illustration of life in that better country, much imperfection is mingled. A large share of our devotional exercises consists of confession of sin, and supplication for strength against the time of temptation; besides which, wandering thoughts and the fatigue of jaded spirits too often mar our worship, and render our solemn service vain. Yet, nevertheless, the family has been repeatedly used by God himself, as an emblem of his triumphant Church; and scarcely could one have been selected which would appeal so forcibly, because so sweetly, to the hearts of all men, in all ages.

I have been led to these remarks, by reviewing some of the occurrences of a varied life, and contemplating the vast power the domestic altar retained over me in my youth, even when far removed from the place of its erection.

The residence of my father was inland, and remote from facilities for acquiring a commercial education. After mature reflection, my parents consented that I should follow the bent of my own inclination, and seek such advantages in a distant city.

The history of my first year was similar to that of many other ambitious youths. I was acquiring a knowledge of men and manners, but the narration how is not material.

About this time a fit of sickness rendered it necessary for me to seek maternal care, under whose blessed influences health soon returned. The day before I again left home, to plunge more extensively than I had hitherto done into the whirl of business, I was sitting by my mother, and pouring into her willing ears some account of my cares and annoyances. She heard me patiently, and when I had concluded my story, put her arm around my neck, and kissing my forehead, said, "My son—my dear son, never think yourself forgotten by us. Your father mentions your name night and morning."

I understood this perfectly. From my earliest infancy I had heard fervent petitions offered at such times, for the temporarily absent one, and now I was going out into the world—perhaps never to return—the remembrance of this circumstance was a comfort to me. I knew the paths of youth were slippery, for I had seen sufficient of the world, even in a year, to be well aware of the fact, and in some degree realized the privilege of being so remembered.

Years rolled on—business nearly engrossed the whole of my secular time, but I never forgot my mother's impressive speech. Occasionally, anxiety would prevent me from offering more than the merest form of prayer myself—then would I think of my father's earnest petition, offered for me that morning, and in strength granted, in answer to it, rise beside the trial, if not immediately victorious over it! Sometimes pleasure would lure, by her siren voice, to a participation in unholy amusements, but the charm was powerless when I thought of my father's prayer.

I have been young, and now am old, yet those words still ring in my ears, and influence my conduct. The lips which then supplicated for me have exchanged supplications for everlasting praises; yet, in times of sorrow or perplexity, I feel my mother's lips on my fevered brow, and her words are a cordial to my heart. In times of joy and prosperity I remember them, and they act as a moderating agency to the sanguine restlessness of ambition.

Parents! throw around the hearts of your children a similar indestructible chain. At the family altar, teach them, by suitable petitions, that you sympathize with them, in their feeble attempts to do right; there, let confession be made for family sins, and grateful praise returned for family mercies; then may you hope for a reunion of your dispersed families, in a better country.—Family Jour.

A Mother's Prayers.

Forty years ago on the mountains of western Massachusetts, a mother with eight children, five of them under the age of fourteen, was left to trust in the widow's God and the Father of the fatherless. She called them around her regularly, and led them in family worship; and often at the dead of night her low voice was heard calling on her heavenly

Father to have mercy upon them. Before the youngest had reached 21, all except one son had hope in Christ. That son early in life left the family to learn a trade: but on becoming of age, he found himself amid the outpouring of the Spirit; the sound of his mother's voice at midnight when he slept in the chamber with her, reached his heart. He too found peace in Christ, and has long been a pillar in the church and superintendent of the Sabbath-school in a new settlement. The mother still lives in peace and quiet, waiting till her change come; her children are supposed to be all yet living, handing down her influence to the third generation, and willing to aid their mother; but she has a competence of this world's goods. Such is the history of a praying widow and her children for forty years.

The Jesuit and the Puritan.

We give an extract from Dr. William's Miscellanies, comparing the Jesuit and the Puritan.

In this, his distinctive trait of character, the Jesuit stood as the moral antipodes of the Puritan, on the contrary, the society was comparatively nothing, and the individual all.—With him religion, was, in its highest privileges, and its profoundest mysteries, a personal matter. He studied his Bible for himself; to aid in turning its pages and loosing its seal, God the Son, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, stooped over him as he read; and to reveal its inner lessons, God the Spirit whispered in his heart, and brooded over the depths of his soul. He profited by the prayers and teachings of his pastor, gave liberally for his support, and received reverently at his hands the sacramental symbols; but he believed this his beloved guide, companion and friend, but a fellow-servant, whose help could not supersede his own private studies, and his individual faith. He valued his fellow-Christians communed with them, prayed with them, shared with them his last loaf, and falling into their ranks, raised with them the battle-cry, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" But, away from pastor and from fellow-Christian, the Puritan turned in the trying hour to his God. It was the genius of this system to develop the individual; and in every emergency, to throw him in the last resort upon the lonely communings of his own soul with his Creator. It taught him to make religion, in the affecting language of one of the later Platonists, "the flight of one alone to the only One." To the place of audience the petitioner went by no deputy; but the individual man was brought to confront for himself the one Mediator, and to hear for himself the response of Heaven to the prayer of faith.—When mind was thrown upon its individual responsibility, and came forth from its solitary meditations to a place of conference and action, there was frequent dissonance in opinion; and a collision in action, often more apparent than real, threatened at times to rend the social bonds, to break up all concert, and to destroy all power. Yet conscientious men were not likely to differ widely or long. And on the other hand take from such a community its spiritual guides, and how soon were they replaced. Persecute them, and how indomitable was their faith. Scatter them, and how rapidly were they propagated. Jesuitism gathered more numerous and united societies: but they were societies of men without consciences and without a will, whose judgments and souls were under the lock of the confessional, or were carried about under the frack of their Jesuit pastor. Kind he might be and faithful, but did death remove him, or persecution exile the shepherd, and disperse the flock, they had no rallying power. Like the seeds from which the industrious ant has removed the germinating principle, the largest hoard, when scattered, brought no harvest."

Christian Consistency.

Show us the Christian, who is thoroughly consistent in his character and conduct, whose words are not falsified by his deeds—whose profession is all the while confirmed by his practice, and we will show you one who is a man of influence, in whatsoever sphere of life he may be placed. For there is power in such a life—there is a force in such an example that cannot be resisted. We are little aware, practically, how closely our fellow-men watch us, and how thoroughly our characters are understood. We are read and comprehended when we are not sensible of it. This inspection, and it is in vain to hope

that what is seeming will pass current for what is real. It is in vain to hope that we can influence mankind, to any great extent, by good precepts, if there be not a corresponding practice. There must be this deep inward harmony between what is seen and what is unseen, else the unseen will soon make itself manifest in times and ways that we think not of. Many Christians are inclined to express themselves much more strongly in word than they are conscious of feeling or acting, and they do this in part with the idea, that they shall thus make their influence right, even though their practice is wrong. Now it is undoubtedly better, even for permanent Christian influence, that a man should seem to be just what he is—that he should make no pretensions to feelings and emotions which do not exist. A frank-hearted confession of indifference is worth more than the most intense expressions of feeling, which are falsified by the life. Thorough honesty is a fundamental element of Christian influence. It is well for every Christian to remember, how quickly he can detect the deficiencies of other men, and in view of this fact, to ask himself how he is known and regarded in the community where he dwells? What is the real estimate which men put upon his character? If he is satisfied in his own heart, that there is a real inconsistency between his profession and his practice, he may rest assured that the world is not unmindful of the same, and that his influence is to be measured accordingly.

Reliance upon God.

God fills his own work; he is not only over it, but he is also in it. If we ascribe to him the origin of this fabric and all things in it, it will be most absurd and inconsistent to deny him the preservation and government of it; for if he does not preserve and govern his creatures, it must be either because he cannot or because he will not; but his infinite power and wisdom make it impossible to doubt of the former, and his infinite goodness of the latter.

It is, to be sure, a very great miracle, merely to know so great a multitude and variety of things; not only particular towns, but also provinces and kingdoms, even the whole earth, all the myriads of creatures that crawl upon the earth, all their thoughts—at the same instant, to hear and see all that happens in both hemispheres. How much more wonderful must it be to rule and govern all these at once, and that with one glance of the eye!

It is a great comfort to have faith of this providence constantly impressed upon the mind, so as to have recourse to it in the midst of all confusions and all calamities, whether from without or from within—to be able to say, "The great King, who is also my Father, is the supreme Ruler of all these things, and with him all my interests are secure—in every distress, when all hope of human assistance is swallowed up in despair, to silence all the fears with these comfortable words—"God will provide."—Leighton.

Ridicule.

I know of no principle which it is of more importance to fix in the minds of young people than that of the most determined resistance to the encroachments of ridicule. Give up to the world, and to the ridicule with which the world enforces its dominion, every trifling question of manner and appearance: it is to toss courage and firmness to the winds, to combat with the mass upon such subjects as these. But learn from the earliest days to insure your principles against the perils of ridicule; you can no more exercise your reason, if you live in the constant dread of laughter, than you can enjoy your life, if you are in the constant terror of death. If you think it right to differ from the times, and to make a stand for any valuable point of morals, do it, however rustic, however antiquated, however pedantic it may appear—do it, not for insolence, but seriously and grandly,—as a man who wore a soul of his own in his bosom, and did not wait till it was breathed into him by the breath of fashion. Let men call you mean, if you know you are just; hypocritical, if you are honestly religious; pusillanimous, if you feel that you are firm; resistance soon converts unprincipled wit into sincere respect; and no aftertime can tear from you those feelings which every man carries with him who has made a noble and successful exertion in a virtuous cause.—Sydney Smith.

Scripture and the Church.

The Scripture is the sun; the Church is the clock, whose hand points us to, and whose

sound tells us the hours of the day. The sun we know to be sure, and regularly constant in his motion: the clock, as it may fall out, may go too fast or too slow. We are wont to look at, and listen to the clock, to know the time of day; but where we find the variation sensible, to believe the sun against the clock, not the clock against the sun. As, then, we would condemn him of much folly, that should profess to trust the clock rather than the sun; so we cannot but justly tax the miscredulity of those who will rather trust to the Church than to the Scripture.—Bishop Hall.

Twenty Questions for every Christian.

BY A MISSIONARY.

- 1. Are not six hundred millions of our fellow-men ignorant of the gospel?
2. Are they not in danger of perishing eternally for want of it?
3. Are they not dependent on us, under God, to supply them with this gospel?
4. Was not the Lord Jesus Christ, who died to provide salvation for us and them, directed us to convey to them the tidings?
5. Should we not be as willing to devote our lives to carrying or sending the gospel to those who need it, as Christ was to devote his life to making the provision?
6. If we refrain from many expenditures which fashion and taste plead for, will it cost us more than it did him to leave heaven and subject himself to contempt and insult and a public execution with criminals?
7. Does he not wish us to be as benevolent as he was himself?
8. Does he not then wish us to seek the salvation of the world more than conformity to fashion or even comfort and convenience?
9. Do you not commend the conduct of such men as Solomon Goodell, Normand Smith and David Mack, who have denied themselves greatly and given largely for benevolent objects?
10. Does not your sober reason tell you that you should imitate the conduct which you commend?
11. If you do not, and feel reluctant to do it, is it the new man or the old that is unwilling?
12. Which shall have dominion over you?
13. Is not the maxim of Howard a sound one? "Our pleasures should be sacrificed to the conveniences of others, our conveniences to their necessities, and our necessities to their extremities."
14. Would it be more painful to you to deny yourselves many comforts and conveniences for the sake of giving the gospel to the heathen, than for them to "have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone?"
15. Is not the indulgence of a desire for property, and of pride respecting dress, furniture, &c., a chief hinderance to the piety and efficiency of Christians in doing good?
16. If you do not deny yourself much for the sake of giving the gospel to the perishing, can you properly invite others to be followers of you, even as you are of Christ, in respect to your efforts to save men?
17. Do you not wish to be an exemplary Christian, so that you can invite others to follow you?
18. Are you willing that any of the heathen should die without the gospel because you do not do all you properly can to give it to them?
19. Would it be wrong for you to act according to the answers you have returned to these questions?
20. Will you act according to them?

Jour. of Missions.

Diversity not Discord.

He never was a good musician, builder, watchmaker, nor good at any art or science, that thought that all diversity was discord.—He that would with zeal and learning write a book, to prove that a lute or organ must not be tolerated if each string and key be not of the same sound; or that all the parts in a clock, watch or building, must be of the same shape and magnitude; or all men of one language or complexion, would scarce get so much credit as most of our heretics do, when they call for fire and faggot and jailors, as more meet and able confutors of error than themselves.—Baxter's True and only way of Concord.

CHRISTIANITY.—If ever Christianity appears in its power, it is when it erects its trophies upon the tomb; when it takes up its votaries where the world leaves them, and fills the breast with immortal hope in dying moments.—Robert Hall.