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For Sunday Reading

THE HOME.

A Sermon by the Rev. Jas. Simpson.

"I will therefore that the younger women, marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." 1 Tim V. 14.

This Sunday by the general consent of our Bishops is being observed throughout the Anglican Communion as a day of special intercession for Sunday Schools, and our spiritual fathers have advised us, in this connection of bringing the subject of the religious training of our children before our respective congregations.

I suppose the most sanguine and enthusiastic believers in Sunday Schools will be prepared to admit that be the teachers ever so faithful and efficient, and the scholars ever so attentive and interested, one short hour once a week is entirely inadequate for the instruction of our children in the things belonging unto their eternal salvation.

I fear, too, that all those who have to do with the secular education of the young must confess that the majority of their pupils display a most lamentable ignorance of God's Holy Word. They may tell something about the flood because they have played with Noah's arks, but beyond that the simplest Bible stories, either in the Old or the New Testaments, are too frequently almost unknown to them.

Now if this be the case—if the Sunday School cannot provide all the necessary religious instruction for the child, and if the child shows a deplorable lack of knowledge about spiritual things—we can only conclude that the home is to blame. It is then of the home and its training I would speak to you to-day.

WHAT IS THE IDEAL OF HOME LIFE? Does wealth create it? Do we say that home is truly happy and blessed where there is plenty of money, so that there may be luxurious furniture and rich food and numerous servants to answer every beck and call? Alas! the revelations of the Divorce Court teach us that riches of themselves cannot make a home.

Does mutual love satisfy the ideal? Do we not all know many love matches which have proved failures? It seemed such a happy marriage, we say; husband and wife were adapted to each other in every way, in mind and taste and character. There was sufficient means, there was everything necessary for felicity. But after a while all was changed. Disenchantment, quarrels estrangement took the place of former happiness because love unsanctified by religion was unable to respond to the repeated self-sacrifices which married life demands.

IN THE IDEAL HOME LOVE AND RELIGION

must go hand in hand. The principle of family life is from the Almighty Himself. In the beginning God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, so he gave him a companion, a helpmeet not such a one as himself—not one of his own sex possessing the same disposition, the same bodily power. "God" (says an ancient writer) "took not the woman from the man's head to be his ruler, nor was she made from his feet to be his slave, but from his side to assist him, and from under his arm to be protected by him and from near his heart to be beloved of him." She was not man's double, but his complement, to fill up that which was lacking in his perfection. So we are told "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created" (Gen V. 1, 2).

God, you see, called them both Adam, and it was not until after the Fall that the woman received a separate name. When God brought her unto the man he said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." (Gen II. 23, 24.)

Such was Home Life in its inception. The man and the woman living in a perfect union blessed by the Almighty and begetting children to be brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

And from this model is taken that English Home Life which is the wonder and admiration of the world.

WHAT A PICTURE IT IS. We see husband and wife exercising mutual love and affection in constant

acts of self-sacrifice, being "each to other a comfort in sorrow, a strength in need, a counsellor in perplexity, a companion in every enjoyment." We see the children taught about God and His Holy Word at their mother's knee; we see the family assemble together day by day for worship, we see the father going forth to his work, the mother occupied in her household duties and their children attending their school; we see the happy re-union at the end of the day, the evening meal, the lessons duly learnt, with aid, when needed, from the parents, and the hours recreation of social chat before retiring.

We see, on Sundays, the family at church, kneeling together at God's altar to receive the Holy Communion—we see them joining in prayer and praise and listening to God's Holy Word;—we see the quiet little home, the well spent afternoon, the joyous evensong, and the evening happy and hallowed by the devotions of the day.

And so on year after year, the changing seasons bringing their varied pleasures and varied duties in their train. We see the children, in due time, going forth to fight the battle of life, or to form homes of their own, or called, perchance, out of the world to that everlasting home above, but absent in body, they are present in spirit, and their memories are still fondly cherished in the family circle, and their names still brought before God in the family prayer.

Such homes may be found by the thousand in England to-day. Can the same be said of Canada.

IS IT NOT A FACT THAT WE ARE LOSING OUR HOME-LIFE

as France and the United States have already to a great extent, lost theirs? It is true, we have not yet, in Canada, countenanced the divorce abomination which is the great destroyer of family life. It is true, we have not yet, in this town, instituted residence in hotels or boarding houses or apartment flats for the home. I say substituted, because you cannot, under ordinary circumstances, have real home life in any of these. You are spared a great deal of trouble no doubt. You have not to worry about domestics,—you have no marketing to do;—your rooms are heated at so much a year and you have not even to stir a fire;—your meals need not give you a single thought until it is time to eat them, and then you step into the elevator and descend to the common dining room. And I dare say many a mother, wearied with the anxieties of managing a household, thinks how very delightful! But delightful at what a cost? The sacrifice of the home. For is not the charm of the family circle broken by such a life? Can children be properly trained amid such surroundings? What fond recollections in after years could possibly be associated with Suite 3, No. 14, 121st Street? It only requires the children to be numbered instead of named to reach the depth of prosaic utilitarianism.

And all those troubles connected with housekeeping, unpleasant as they often are, are necessary for the development of character. The practising of those little economies, the planning to make both ends meet—the difficulties with servants—the endless mending and making of clothes—the yielding up of your wishes to the wishes of your husband or children—the constant self-sacrifices required, all help to strengthen and develop qualities and powers within you which would be lacking had you not this discipline.

You may smile at this and say you are quite prepared to risk it; or you may recall some acquaintance who had once a sweet and amiable disposition, but who has succumbed to the worries of housekeeping and motherhood and become a regular shrew. And no doubt there are many such. Yet it is because they have not taken advantage of their opportunities;—because they have yielded to temptation instead of resisting it, that the things which should have been for their wealth have become to them an occasion of falling.

But on the other hand, have you not known frivolous girls, who at one time thought of nothing but pleasure, but who have risen to the responsibilities of their married life and become staid, energetic and practical matrons?

God tries us to prove us, and He tries us not in ways external to us, but in things connected with our daily lives.

"The trivial round, the common task, Will furnish all we need to ask, Room to deny ourselves, a road To bring us daily nearer God."

And each temptation faced bravely, (and all the trials and anxieties of home life are temptations)—each temptation faced bravely goes to build up and develop the character—goes to make you more noble and Christlike.

THE NORMAL—THE ORIGINAL WORK OF THE WOMAN

was to look after the home. Modern civilization with its varied needs and requirements, has, of necessity, found many other occupations for her, but still the wife-mother is (under ordinary circumstances) the truest, noblest sphere of all.

But wifehood and motherhood bring with them the manifold duties of the home, and if these duties are shirked because they are distasteful, or because they interfere with the pleasures of society the character must suffer. To neglect the use of any God-given power whether of mind, body, or soul must result in the deterioration, the weakening and the final loss of that power. Indian Fakirs, you know, sometimes hold an arm above their head for

years until it becomes fixed, shrivelled and useless. The same process takes place in the minds of all those who refuse to do their duty in that state of life into which it pleases God to call them.

Of course, I speak here only in a general way. There are often cases which render housekeeping undesirable or even impossible. Ill-health, narrow means, the necessity of travelling about, the care of a parent or relative, these and such like obstacles may justify the temporary or continued adoption of some other mode of life. But those parents who, without adequate cause, avoid the burdens of housekeeping by retreating to a boarding house or an hotel always remind me of the hermit crab.

FOR THE HERMIT CRAB

Naturalists tell us, was originally like other crabs, that is to say, its ancestors were more or less perfect crustaceans, but becoming weary of the constant watch against their many enemies, they took refuge in the empty shells of whelks. "For generations and generations, accordingly, this creature has ceased to exercise itself upon questions of safety, and dwells in its little shell as proudly and securely as if its second-hand house were a fortress erected especially for its private use."

"Whether its laziness coats it any moral qualms, or whether its cleverness becomes to it a source of congratulation, we do not know; but judged from the appearance it makes under the searching gaze of the zoologist, its expedient is certainly not one to be commended. To the eye of science its sin is written in the plainest characters on its very organization. It has suffered in its own anatomical structure just by as much as it has borrowed from an external source. Instead of being a perfect crustacean it has allowed certain important parts of its body to deteriorate and several vital organs are wholly or partially atrophied." Its sphere of life also is now seriously limited, and by a cheap expedient to secure safety it has fatally lost its independence." (Natural Law in the Spiritual World p 322.)

However, this modern custom, of evading the responsibilities of the home, does not affect us here to any extent, and I only refer to it in the hope of getting you to look upon your household duties in a new light, of helping you to realize that with

(Continued on page 7.)

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