

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A HOME.

Am I not warranted in saying that these are two—*love and order*?

The fire burning on the hearth may be bright and warm, but without love the house is but a house; it is not a home. I have pictured the loneliness of the man without the congenial answering half: cannot many a one understand this who is living drearily enough, in lodgings "without cheer of sister or of daughter, without stay of father or of son?" But there is a far, far worse kind of loneliness. To be joined formally to another, to have the tie of outward relations whilst the soul is dwelling all the while apart, the advance of years only witnessing the upgrowth into ranker and ranker luxuriance of some root of bitterness, the sweet wine of affection changing into the sour gall and vinegar; to be living day by day with one whose intimacy cannot be shaken off, but is there only to irritate and wound—oh! surely of all types of wretchedness that is the wretchedest; the most arid desert were social compared with that. But it is not that which is realized, alas too often! in gilded palace and lowly cot? A house with all the signs of a home, but wanting the other thing, love, what better is it than a prison in which the deepest nature of man or woman is immured, left slowly to die, "abiding alone?" Whatsoever cuts love's golden cords, destroys home. The relations that are not love's cords are mere bands of iron.

The home must be founded on love. I have heard of persons who married without love, and, as the result of intimacy, grew into each other's affection, and lived joyfully all the days of their life. This is possible; it is a *may be*; but the *may not be* is quite as likely, and the risk is one which ought not to be run. Build up as you found in love. Remember, pure love, as distinct from mere passion, or mere fondness, as supposing spiritual affinity, belongs to a higher clime than that of earth. It has a marvellous vitality. "Many waters cannot quench it; neither can the floods drown it." But it needs the food convenient to it; though waters cannot quench it, it will die if left to feed on itself. A hasty word, which no sooner uttered you would give worlds to recall, may prove the beginning of its end. Let us, above all, take care of temper. Temper is the east wind of home. Ill-natured or peevish ways are the gales which wither the flowers that are proper to the fireside. Love cannot thrive except where there is mutual forbearance, mutual kindness, mutual consideration. Its life is sacrifice, each taking the other to its heart, and all bearing as one the burden. Sacrifice is the *beauty*, the very *being* of home.

And love is the parent of *order*. It was Love brooding over chaos, moving on the face of the waters, that made a world. Love is always orderly, because it is always dutiful. We recollect that Wordsworth describes Duty as the "stern daughter of the voice of God." But what does he add?

"Stern lawgiver, yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benign grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face;
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens through thee are
fresh and strong."

This duty which comes of love and is realized in order, is the light—the unerring light and security—of home. When its wand ceases to wave, the fireside, instead of being a world becomes a chaos. Order is truth; every one in the right place, parent in the place of parent, child in the place of child, master in the place of master, servant in the place of servant. Harmony is the soul of music, and there is no music, no peace, nothing right, where there is disorder. It is a grand word that of King Lemuel with regard to the blessed woman, "In her tongue is the law of kindness." Kindness, you see, but *the law* of kindness.

Ah! it is a sight to make angels weep, when all order is traversed by the moral disorder introduced through one or another of the fireside group; when it is the head, fitful in temper, irregular in habits, across whose bleared and bloated face are being written the awful characters, "Drunkard;" when it is the child whose evil ways are turning the dark hair of the parent into gray, and bringing that gray hair with sorrow to the grave! How terrible when the glare of another fireside—that which is lighted of hell—is cast across the kindly light of the fireside at home! That light which has most of heaven on earth in it, whose kindness our peasant-poet has expressed in lines which the child of toil can so well understand—

"His wee bit ingle blinkin' bonnie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's snile.
The lispin' infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labour and his toil."

Let me conclude with a gospel-picture. It bid us away to a quiet village nestling on the slope of Olivet. In one of its houses, live a brother and two sisters united in dearest sympathy and affection. They are seated enjoying the cool evening breeze, when a stranger approaches. It is He of whom they have heard so much, and about whom they have spoken so often to another. "Would he come into their house?" He pauses near the entrance. Instantly the elder of the sisters opens, "Master, enter." And he enters, and first he says, "Peace to this house." "The Son of Peace" is there, and his peace remains. Henceforth in that home he is the Lord. Around him the three are wont to group. How they listen, their souls bursting as beneath the breath of spring, while, his life-giving words flow over them. He is the all in their all, the subject of the most joyful conversations, the one centre of their thought and life. Is not this the sketch of a home in which Christ's peace is dwelling? His presence its light! The sweetest fireside talks those which are fullest of him! A new tenderness in all affections! A new feeling woven into "the aggregate of little things!" The atmosphere purer! Joy and pastime

all the brighter, and care's heavy burden lightened, and even sorrow's bitter cup made sweeter! Who shall say that this is but a fond imagination, but an empty dream? It has been realized; some of us, looking back to childhood's days, can answer *thine happy they who can!* "Such a home we recollect." It may be, will be, realized whenever love and order are truly "in the Lord," wherever parent or child who form the fireside will do as Martha did, receive this Jesus, this Prince of Peace, into their house! May those who read this paper make haste to do so!

ADVENT SONG.

BY FRANCIS RIDLEY HAYBERGAL.

Thou art coming, O our Saviour!
Thou art coming, O our King
In Thy beauty all resplendent;
In Thy glory all-transcendent;
Well may we rejoice and sing
"Coming! In the opening east,
Herald brightness slowly swells,
Coming! O my glorious Priest,
Hear we not Thy golden bells."

Thou art coming, Thou art coming!
We shall meet Thee on Thy way,
We shall see Thee, we shall know Thee;
We shall bless Thee, we shall show Thee
All our hearts could never say!
What an anthem that will be,
Ringing out our love to Thee,
Pouring out our rapture sweet
At Thine own glorious feet.

Thou art coming! Rays of glory,
Through the veil Thy death has rent,
Touch the mountain and the river,
With a golden, glowing quiver;
Thrill of light and music blent,
Earth is brightened when this gleam
Falls on rock and flower and stream;
Life is brightened when this ray,
Falls upon its darkest day.

Thou art coming! At Thy table
We are witnesses for this,
While remembering hearts Thou meetest,
In communion clearest, sweetest,
Earnest of our coming bliss,
Showing not Thy death alone,
And Thy love exceeding great,
But Thy coming and Thy Throne;
All for which we long and wait.

Thou art coming! we are waiting
With a hope that cannot fail;
Asking not the day or hour,
Resting on Thy word of power,
Anchored safe within the veil,
Time appointed may be long,
But the vision must be sure;
Certainty shall make us strong,
Joyful patience can endure.

O the joy to see Thee reigning,
Thee our own beloved Lord!
Every tongue Thy name confessing,
Worship, honour, glory, blessing,
Brought to Thee with glad accord.
Thee our Master and our Friend,
Vindicated and enthroned:
Unto earth's remotest end,
Glorified, adored and owned.

THE OFFERED SPIRIT.

You utterly mistake the matter, if you think that Christ here offers to put you under a system of strictness and restraint—you utterly mistake the matter, if you think the gift of the Spirit is to make you walk in ways of preciseness and of pain; for the whole Bible testifies that the ways in which the Spirit leads us are ways of pleasantness and peace. Suppose a man happened to be so foolish and inconsiderate as to have an invincible relish for some poisonous drug, because of the sweetness and agreeableness of the taste; and had formed the habit of making such constant use of it that death would, through time, be the inevitable consequence. I can imagine two ways in which the friends of that inconsiderate man, anxious for his life, might cure him of his strange and most destructive appetite. 1st, They might forcibly restrain and keep him away from the use of the poison, forbidding it even to be brought within his sight. This would be the system of restriction—the *appetite would remain*, but it would be crossed and denied. Or 2dly, Instead of forcibly taking away the poison, they might bring new and wholesome objects before him, the taste of which was far more agreeable and excellent; so that, when once he had tasted these, there would be no fear of his so much as desiring the poison any more. A new taste has been introduced, so that the drug which seemed sweet and agreeable before, seems now no longer palatable. Now, though this illustration be a very imperfect one, yet it shows distinctly the one feature in sanctification which I wish to bring into view, namely, *its pleasantness*. The Spirit which Christ offers sanctifies us—never in the first way, but always in the second way—not by restraining us, but by making us new. By nature we love sin—the world and the things of the world—though we know that the wages of sin is death. Now, to cure this, I can imagine a man setting himself down deliberately to cross all his corrupted passions—to restrain all his appetites—to reject and trample on all the objects that the natural heart is set upon. This is the very system recommended by Satan, by Anti-christ, and the world. But there is a far more excellent way, which the Holy Ghost makes use of in sanctifying us—not the way of changing the

objects, but the way of changing the affections—not by an *external* restraint, but by an *internal* renewing. As it is said in Ezekiel. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Ah! then, brethren, if there be one poor sinner here who has been deceived by the detestable heresy of the world—as if the keeping of the commandments by the saints were a grievous and unwilling service—let that man, this day open his eyes to the true nature of Gospel holiness—that God does not offer to work in you to *do*, without first working in you to *will*. He does not offer to pluck from you your favourite objects; but he offers to give you a new taste for higher objects; and just as the boy finds it no hardship to cast away the toys and trifles that were his bosom friends in childhood, so the believer feels no hardship in casting away the wretched playthings that so long amused and cheated the soul; for behold, a new world hath been opened up by the Spirit of God, to his admiring, enamoured gaze.—*McCheyne*.

CHRIST THE ONLY REVEALER OF THE FATHER.

It is written that "no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

The eye of mortal man has never beheld God the Father. No man could bear the sight. Even to Moses it was said, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me and live." (Exod. xxxiii. 20.) Yet all that mortal man is capable of knowing about God the Father is fully revealed to us by God the Son. He, who was in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, has been pleased to take our nature upon Him, and to exhibit to us in the form of man, all that our minds can comprehend of the Father's perfections. In Christ's words, and deeds, and life, and death, we learn as much concerning God the Father as our feeble minds can at present bear. His perfect wisdom,—His almighty power,—His unspeakable love to sinners,—His incomparable holiness,—His hatred of sin, could never be represented to our eyes more clearly than we see them in Christ's life and death. In truth, "God was manifest in the flesh," when the Word took on Him a body. "He was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person." He says Himself, "I and my Father are one." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Coloss. ii. 9.) These are deep and mysterious things. But they are true. (1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. i. 3; John x. 30; xiv. 9.)

And now, after reading this passage, can we ever give too much honour to Christ? Can we ever think too highly of Him? Let us banish the unworthy thought from our minds for ever. Let us learn to exalt Him more in our hearts, and to rest more confidently the whole weight of our souls in His hands. Men may easily fall into error about the three Persons in the holy Trinity, if they do not carefully adhere to the teachings of Scripture. But no man ever errs on the side of giving too much honour to God the Son. Christ is the meeting-point between the Trinity and the sinner's soul. "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which sent Him." (John v. 23.)—*Ryle*.

A PROBLEM.

A young man distinguished for his mathematical attainments, was fond of challenging his fellow students to a trial of skill in solving difficult problems. One day a class-mate came into his study, and laying a folded paper before him, said: "There is a problem I wish you would help me to solve," and immediately left the room.

The paper was eagerly unfolded, and there instead of a question in mathematics were traced the lines, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

With a gesture of impatience he tore the paper to atoms, and turned again to his books. But in vain he tried to shake off the impressions of the solemn words he had read. The Holy Spirit pressed home his conviction of guilt and danger, so that he could find no peace, till he found it in believing in Jesus. He subsequently became a minister of the gospel he had once despised, and his first sermon was from the words, so eminently blessed to his own soul; "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"—*American Messenger*.

I HAVE known a luxuriant vine swell into irregular twigs and bold excrescences, and spend itself in leaves and little rings, and afford but trifling clusters to the winepress, and a faint return to his heart which longed to be refreshed with a full vintage; but when the lord of the vineyard had caused the dressers to cut the wilder plant and make it bleed, it grew temperate in its vain expense of useless leaves, and knotted into fair and juicy branches, and made account of the loss of blood by return of fruit.—*Jeremy Taylor*.

DID it ever strike you that there were necessary blessings as well as necessary evils in this world; certain good things that we cannot escape any more than we can certain so-called evil things; benefits that we accept with the same lack of responsibility, something of the same spirit of resignation, that we do the trouble we are called upon to bear? Sombre indeed would be the round of the seasons to some of us were it not for the pleasures that needs must be devised and entered into for the sake of friends and guests beloved; and oh, the delicious holidays of convalescence! Are there not those who know the blessed relaxation of some morbid self discipline, through the interposition of a master soul; those who perplexed and irresolute while duty and desire depart at the parting of the ways, have joyfully welcomed the clear decision that directs them at last into the path leading through the green pastures and beside the still waters!—*From "The Old Cabinet," in Scribner's for August*.