

THE WORKINGMAN'S HOME.

NO. XI.—FAMILY TRIALS.—Continued.

Family trials serve important purposes in the government of God, and are often productive of the richest family blessings. They strengthen the bonds of family unity, and call into exercise the finer sympathies and affections of our nature. Every family has its own peculiar trials, which the world knows nothing of; yea, each individual member has his own peculiar grief—some cankered care wounding the heart, which no earthly balm can heal. Some one may be the victim of unfaithful friendship or slighted love, or the subject of some physical or mental infirmity, the thought of which preys upon the mind and saddens his journey throughout life. The grief may be too deep even for a parent's, a brother's, or a sister's sympathy to assuage, although certainly not too profound for the help and sympathy of the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." We have said that every family has its own peculiar trials and afflictions to endure. Some are called to mourn over the waywardness of a wandering and erring child, for whose return to the paths of rectitude they have long waited and prayed. Another family, through sickness or loss of employment, is called to battle with pecuniary difficulties. Gaunt poverty, that lean and much dreaded guest, enters the dwelling: every countenance wears a look of sadness and despondency; the house presents a cold and cheerless appearance; the few expiring embers in the fire or stove seem fit emblems of the hopes in the breasts of the inmates, and the unfurnished table shows that they now know and feel what it is to want a crust of bread. Sad as the picture may be, it is home still; for loving hearts meet there, whose affections and sympathies pinching poverty cannot extinguish. Uncontrollable circumstances may launch the workingman's family into such a position as this; but it is well to meet the trial with a bold and united front, and, as far as possible, to be the bearer of one another's burdens. It may be the messenger of death enters the poor man's habitation, and lays on some loved one his relentless hand—it may be on the little fair-haired boy, the laughing child, the light of the dwelling and the joy of the fireside, the object of the many hopes and dreams destined never to be realized. There is a place to fill in the grand choir of heaven, and he is sent there to render service, and those he leaves behind know to their sad experience what it is to mourn for an only son, and to be in bitterness for a first-born; but, as with gentle hands they lay his little body in the sable coffin, or in the cold grave, their grief is mitigated by the thought that a tie is now formed which connects the home on earth with the better home above. Again, the same unwelcome messenger enters the poor man's dwelling; his stern mandate must be obeyed, and the stricken flock has to mourn a parent dead. A blank is thus made in the household which none but the orphan's God can fill. Amid trials and desolations such as these, we may well ask the question, How can the workingman's home be made happy? If we turn to philosophy, or scepticism, we get no satisfactory answer there; the consolations, which they afford are cold and cruel as the very grave itself. The Bible only points to the true source of comfort in the hour of trial. Faith, resting on the promises of God's word, can take a loftier flight than mere unaided reason ever attempted, and in the midst of severe calamities can say: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." It is the duty of households to endure with patience and submission the afflicting hand of God, and to learn the lessons which the trying dispensations of His providence are designed to teach. At the same time, the most severe troubles can ever be alleviated or perhaps overcome by united effort. In this lies the secret of home strength. A family with one heart, one hope, and one aim, and where each seeks the other's welfare, is proof against many a trial which would entirely prostrate a family less united.

A WORKINGMAN.

PEOPLE seldom improve when they have no better model than themselves to copy after.

ENCOURAGE YOUNG WORKERS.

MR. EDITOR,—For a length of time I have felt that in our congregational work there is not enough of responsibility laid upon our young men. Nor is there sufficient consideration given to their education and encouragement in healthful Church work. Modern times have introduced young people's associations, and while in some instances beneficial results may accrue, in most cases they are a hurt instead of a help, as they only tend to vitiate the taste, and give the impression that the Church of God is a worldly concern, and as such must cater to the amusements and frivolities of her children. And the more closely allied to the world, the more popular is the society. In the face of such facts that is not the training needed for young men, who must ere long assume responsibilities in our congregations. What is necessary is more consideration on the part of our ministers, superintendents of Sabbath schools, and directors of Church work, to find places for our young men in active Christian duty. Give them something to do. Recognize them as helpers. Let them understand they are part and parcel of the congregation, and that they are not ignored. Both in the secular duties and spiritual concerns of God's kingdom there are places for them to fill, and it should be the special duty of the pastor to increase their efficiency. There is no good reason why at our prayer meetings only elders and a few privileged men should lead our devotions. Why should not our young men assist? Would it not be infinitely better to let our elders remain silent if our army of young men were being trained, and in the official positions youth should not be a barrier to fitness?

An active young Methodist in the West (the son of an elder) on being asked by the writer why he had left the Church of his fathers said he could get no work to do, and as a consequence went where he could. This stinging reproof must be met, and while I am aware many of our ministers are keenly alive to the encouragement of the class I speak of, there is not that anxiety on this point which the circumstances demand from many others. Can you, Mr. Editor, direct attention to this important subject, so that in our congregations we shall have our young men, with all the ardour and enthusiasm of their nature, rising up to fill places of trust with the consciousness that they belong to a Church which recognizes the humblest as well as the highest, and that there is a work for the young man and aged sire alike.

AN ELDER.

CHURCH UNION.

MR. EDITOR,—Mr. McMullen takes exception to my assertion that, with the Church of England, Union means that all other bodies should conform with her in doctrine and practice. The grounds on which I make this assertion will be found on page twelve of the Bishop of Algoma's sermon on "Church Union," where he says: "The ministry; to this, in our peculiar form of it, we cling with tenacity, fortified as we are in our grasp of it by the unbroken, exceptionless history of 1,500 years, and firmly convinced that it is an invaluable channel for the preservation of the truth, and the perpetuation from age to age of the continuous, corporate life of the Body of Christ." Also, on page fourteen, where he says: "Might not the very breadth and comprehensiveness of our Church commend her highly in the eyes of all who yearn, with loving, longing hearts, for the healing of 'the hurt of Zion'?" (The italics are mine.) It is but fair to say, with regard to the sermon on the whole, that the sack is not like the sample. With the exception of one or two pages it is excellent, and might be read with profit by every Presbyterian interested in the subject.

Aylwin, Que., Oct. 30, 1886.

W. S.

GOSPEL WORK.

During a recent Gospel meeting a letter was received from a wife, giving thanks for conversion, on behalf of herself and her husband, both Church-members. The writer said for substance: "For years we have been religious (as we thought), minding always to read and pray with our family and ourselves; but, alas! always coming short in faith, trying to be good and feel that we were safe. But now we see it all. Jesus has died and done all for us, and now, by simply believing, we come to Him, and His word assures us that we are accepted." We speak of this because

we fear there are many very good people who are religious, who go to church, read their Bible and say their prayers, and try to feel that they are safe, when, as a matter of fact, they are simply going about "to establish a righteousness of their own, not submitting themselves to the righteousness of God." To be religious, to read and pray, and try to be good, are all things to be commended, but they are of the superstructure of the Christian life, and not of the foundation. Christ "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," and to Him we must go to be saved.

A young convert recently went home to her mother, who was a very regular sort of a Christian, and, in the fulness of her joy and assurance, said: "Oh mother, I have found the Saviour; He has forgiven all my sins, and I am so happy in the thought of His great salvation." "Well," said the mother, "I am very glad you are becoming interested in these things; but you must not be too sure that you are saved." "But, mother, His promise says that if I believe on Him, and confess Him, He will save me, and all His Word tells me that if I believe I have everlasting life." "That, my child, may all be very true, but, at the same time, it is not well to be too confident." In other words, that cautious mother said to her child that the Word of God was not worthy of full credence; that God's promises were good in a way, but were not to be trusted and relied upon implicitly. No wonder she was a "regular sort of a Christian," who had herself no joy or assurance. Let all who trust Him for salvation rely upon His word implicitly, and give the lie to every suggestion of doubt that assails your heart, whether the temptation comes from within or from without. This distinction must be heeded: We know we are saved by the Word, but we know we are Christians by our heed to the Work.

A recent conversation with a gentleman of great intellectual ability, a lawyer of highest standing, with a mind thoroughly trained to frame and understand all manner of propositions, a man who, meantime, has all his lifetime been a church-goer and a most scrupulous observer of the forms of Christianity, and with a sincere desire to be saved and honour the Lord in his life, developed the fact that he was in total ignorance of the way of salvation. He hadn't the faintest conception of the place the atonement occupied in God's plan of salvation. His whole thought was of commending himself to God by good works. There was no peace or joy in his life; he had no assurance for the reason that, as he said, "Do what I can, I am so far short of being what I ought to be." But the marvel was that with his clear and trained mind, the revelation of the righteousness of God, through Jesus Christ, was a matter that he could not take in. He was practically as much in the dark as to this as if he had been reared in China. Two things suggest themselves to us as the result of that conversation. First, that we are not to take for granted that because men are intelligent they understand the Gospel. And we sometimes think the more brilliant their minds, the more highly cultivated they are, the more they need to be dealt with as little children, both from the pulpit and in personal intercourse, especially in the matter of the Gospel.—*Words and Weapons.*

TO YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

More than fifty years ago the late Dr. Bacon closed a sermon to young Christians with the following appeal, the spirit of which was grandly illustrated in his after life:

"Would to God I could make you know what results are depending upon you; what interests of the Church and of a dying world are involved in your future character and efforts. When I look at the young Christians of this age, and reflect that they are soon to sustain the ancient glories of the Church of God—when I look abroad on the earth and see the crisis that is at hand—when I listen to the cries that come from every quarter of the world, summoning the people of God to new effort and more splendid exhibitions of piety—I seem to see the hoary generations that are passed rising up from their repose to watch over the young followers of Christ; I seem to hear the voices of blessed spirits from above cheering them on in the career of piety; I seem to see a world of misery, turning its imploring hands to them, and beseeching them to be worthy of their name, worthy of their privileges, worthy of their noble destiny; I seem to hear, I do hear, God Himself speaking from the heavens, 'Ye have chosen the better part; be faithful unto death, and I will give you crowns of life.'"