

I can't say whether I am converted or not, but I feel certain"—and he stopped—"certain that I feel to ward God as I feel about father. I want to do what He would like me to do above all things else."

"That is enough," said the pastor, feelingly. "You have a good father. He is a true priest in his house." "Oh, father, sir, he always helped us just where boys need help. We were always free to talk with him. If it had not been for father—"

Father! Yes, we believe in such fathers, and only wished they were multiplied in a thousand-fold; fathers who take pains to keep close to their boys hearts and confidence; fathers who do not think that providing for bodily wants embraces the whole duty of man; fathers who do not leave all the counsel and correction of the children to mothers, who do not wait to be summoned in great disciplinary crises only, but whose wise and firm government controls and blesses every hour; who do not believe that a "word and a blow" are the best persuasives to repentance and amendment, or that easy neglect will foster only that which is good; fathers who do not leave all the Christian influence of the household to wives, but share it, taking their full share; fathers responsible for the Christian growth of their children.

Fathers often excuse themselves and are excused from family duties by the stress and hurry of business, as if mothers had not worries and anxieties torturing their nerves, crossing their tempers, and grieving their hearts. The mother cannot excuse herself if she would; and if she would, think of the sermons and homilies taking her to task and instructing her in maternal duties!

"I cannot talk religion into my children," said a father in excuse for their waywardness, just as if it should be done or could be done? The discernments of youth are quick enough to discriminate between formality and earnestness, and as naturally they revolt against the one and are won by the other.

Religion cannot be talked into children. It can be talked out of them. It must come like the rain and sunshine on young grasses, entering into the growth of every day, naturally, lovingly, penetrating the atmosphere of home with its life-giving power, so that when children come to the crisis of life, choosing for themselves, they choose thoughtfully and willingly Christ and His grace and truth, as the saving and uplifting elements of their character.

The best means of Christian nurture reside in the family. Pastors can do something; Sabbath school teachers can do something. These are everything to the young who have no one else to care for them; but in Christian households these are but supplementary to parental instruction and influence. At the family altar, the daily meals, the evening hours, the shifting scenes of work and play, are the real opportunities for sowing the seeds of eternal life in young hearts and exercising that spiritual husbandry which will nurse their growth and mature the fruit.

There is nothing more painful or surprising than the godlessness often seen in Christian families, children growing up careless, irreverent, hard, opposed to religious counsel and observances, and leaving home without the strengthening fellowships of the Church. "Why is this?" we once asked, referring to one of this character.

"It is probably a case of praying mothers and 'professing' fathers," was the answer. They don't draw together, and this variance, be it ever so silent, tells. It is hurtful, sometimes destructive."

Are there not many praying mothers and "professing fathers,"—fathers who think lightly of the family altar, easily set it aside or neglect it altogether, the wife ever seeking to excuse and make up for the delinquency? Yet, what father disregards the children will easily break from. This is all the sadder, because the family altar, divested of formality, is the real spring of household piety.

It cannot be too sacredly cherished. Care must be taken that both petition and thanksgiving be simple and direct, expressing real and specific things. Devout exercises should never be vague or unreal; they should impress the family with being what they really are, a part of holy living; for unless they exist together, it is to no purpose they exist at all. To separate them is to destroy religion.

Three times a day a family is quite sure to sit side by side together. Table manners and table talk are the index of the family atmosphere. Whose influence is likely to be in the ascendant? Father is the greatest stranger. He is the houseband, he is the bread winner, he is the expected one, waited for and waited on. Father! Does his approaching step spread gladness round? Does he not come with a pleasant smile, a kind word with hearty inquiries about this and that, which lend fresh interest to the common employments of daily life? Or does he come in and sit down silent and preoccupied, or impatient and fault finding, or moody and indifferent?

"I get my taste for such books from father's table-talk," said a young man, or a friend expressing surprise at the fine choice which he had made.

A service of good humour, good manners, intelligence and sympathy is the best table service in the world. At our eating and drinking there is an education constantly going on for passion, appetite and

selfishness, or for self-government, temperance and courtesy.

As children are stepping on the threshold of manhood and womanhood, is father still by with vigilant affection, watching how they lay hold of the new issues and uses of life and opportunity? Is he helping them in their supreme choice? Have they learned that noble living is the true and only end of Christian education, and that this is to be attained not by steadfastness in the virtues which are easy and pleasant, but by a surrender of the whole life to the will of God in faith, affection and loyalty? Have they been taught by father's example that the wages of truth and virtue are not paid in this world's goods, that strength, health, prosperity, riches, however good in themselves, are not the best or the fitting recompense for purity, self-surrender and spirituality? Their true recompense is imperishable and eternal.

Happy and honoured is the father who has imprinted these lessons on his children.—*Christian Weekly*.

PRAYER.

I ask this gift, dear Father:

It seemeth good.

Yet if my sight were clearer,

All understood.

This prayer may not have been begun.

If wrong, hear but—"Thy will be done."

This tender pleading, Father,

Is but a song

My foolish heart is making,

Deep and strong,

In melody life's currents run,

O, hear that first—"Thy will be done."

I feel I need it, Father,

This pure, sweet balm.

Yet as the restless ocean

At heart is calm,

Beneath desires that, one by one,

Rise wave-like is—"Thy will be done."

I wait with faith, dear Father,

And yet I will

Ask Thee very softly

This cup to fill;

O, Best Beloved, Holy One,

This is my prayer—"Thy will be done."

—Myra Goodwin.

GOD AND CÆSAR.

Some will say: There are in politics certain moral questions to which religion cannot remain a stranger. Who will deny this? It is self-evident that politics are closely allied with ethics, and their touch has many a time inflicted most cruel wounds. Party spirit inevitably stuns the conscience. It has been asked, How many clever people are required to make a silly crowd? We might ask, How many honest folks would be required to form an unscrupulous coalition? Many a man who would be personally incapable of breaking his word, and for whom calumny or menace would be an impossibility, is loud in remorseless applause when the most odious deeds are performed collectively, and serve his interests. For many, the question is far less to ascertain if the law has been violated than to know by whom and in what intention it has been broken. It is the eternal maxim of the end justifying means which causes all parties to be blinded by passion. I do not ask that religion should keep silent in presence of the immoralities of politics. Far from it. But I would it kept outside of the political arena, for whenever it is suspected of speaking not in the name of conscience, but in the name of a party, it is nothing more than an extra voice in the discordant strife.

Let us here take an example to which we should often revert. We have all admired the conduct of John the Baptist at the court of Herod, and the firm and dauntless courage with which he says to the guilty king: It is not lawful for thee to do such a thing. But let John the Baptist, instead of being the prophet of conscience, become a tribune of the people, then all his authority falls, for behind the denunciation we perceive a political purpose and the triumph of a party. Again I say to all those whose honour and privilege it is to those who represent the Church. Never endanger your cause by engaging it in the conflicts to which it must remain a stranger. Its greatness and strength is to be the voice of eternal right and of universal justice.

If you have understood the thought of Christ, you will easily discern the duties which it imposes upon each of us. Do not confound that which Jesus has separated. But in both the spheres which are open to you, do your duty. Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's.

Cæsar is the impersonation of civil society; it is no longer, as in the days of Jesus, the foreign and despotic power which crushed the Jews; on the contrary it is, and must ever be, the grateful and protecting State, the nation governing itself, society respecting conscience, and requiring of the individual only that

which he is expected to give to the body of which he is a member; for instance, his share of taxes, obedience to the laws, the sacrifice of his time and strength for the common weal. To determine exactly what belongs to Cæsar is one of the most, difficult yet necessary of tasks, formerly Cæsar's portion was unmeasured; Cæsar was the supreme proprietor, the absolute master, everything proceeded from him. His sphere has become narrower under the action of progress, and that of the individual has enlarged. The State tends more and more at becoming a society. Well! to this society you must bring your intelligent, loyal and devoted aid. Some think it is the Christian's duty to become indifferent to human things and social interests. There have been times when demoralization was so profound, so universal, that we can easily understand pious souls dreaming only of heaven, but this asceticism is not willed of God, it is false in its essence, and we look upon it as a fantastical perfection and nothing more. As men, we owe ourselves to our fellows; every noble, generous, liberal cause must find its advocates in each one of us: progress under all its forms must be dear to our hearts; and it were strange indeed if, expecting as we do the full blossoming of truth and justice, we could remain indifferent to their triumphs here below.

But, while you render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, render also unto God the things which are God's. Now that which belongs to God is your whole soul. That soul is made for Him. Christ said to the Jews: Show me a penny, and I will let you see the image of Cæsar graven upon it. We likewise may say: Show me a human soul and we will let you see the image of God graven upon it. True, this image is often effaced, tarnished and well-nigh blotted out by the deleterious influence of the world and sin. But look at it closer; the marks of its divine origin are still discernible upon it, and St. Paul is able to remind the idolatrous Athenians that they are of divine race. Render unto God the things which are God's; render Him the homage of your reason, which so often bows before its intellectual idols; render Him the homage of your will, which has long been placed in the service of your own interests; render Him the homage of your heart, so long given up to creature-love, and which unworthy passions have perhaps become sullied. Let God become the end of your daily activity; offer Him the "reasonable service" of which the Apostle speaks, and which is the noblest exercise of which you are capable. The day is drawing near when, in the eternal fatherland, He will be for you the sole and true King, and when your supreme felicity will consist in rendering to God the things which are God's. Rev. Eugene Bersier, D.D., in *Theological and Homiletic Magazine*.

COMING TO THE FRONT.

There can be no mistaking the growing power of the prohibition cause. Its friends may differ as to the best modes of pushing it, but they are united and earnest in the determination of pushing it through in the best form possible. Just now, as never before, they are making themselves felt in favour of absolute prohibition. Moral suasion, of course, can go on with its work, and every other form of suppression, local or partial in effect, may be sought; but the grand rally is to be for complete and universal suppression, so far as laws, constitutional or statute, can effect it. County and State conventions, larger and more enthusiastic than the old political ones, and composed of men of higher character in intelligence and morality, are voicing the principles and purposes of the new party. Adroit politicians, forecasting the danger, begin to trim their sails as for a coming storm. The liquor men see it and are forming their leagues against it. They could not better help the cause. They are making the crisis that will bring their overthrow. It is very manifest that the party of power for the future will be the one that seeks, not exclusively it may be, but prominently and determinedly, the suppression of the liquor traffic and the attendant evils which make it the great curse of the time.—*United Presbyterian*.

SAVED BY KINDNESS.

A Southern lady of large fortune would never see a human being suffer without attempting relief. Riding in the country one day, she saw a young man drunk. His face was covered with flies, and the hot sun beat upon him. She stopped her carriage, and looked on the prostrate form before her. The young man was well dressed and evidently accustomed to good society. She dipped her handkerchief in a stream near by, wiping his face, covered it with her handkerchief, and driving back to town, she notified the police. A week afterward, a stranger called and sought an interview. "I am ashamed to say," he said, "I am the young man you cared for. The name on the handkerchief revealed my benefactress. I thank you for your kindness. I have signed a pledge, with my hand on my mother's Bible, God being my helper, that I will never taste another drop." That vow he never broke. Prominent in church and as Attorney-General, he became one of the most eminent men of the nation.