

of the year. We are told that this is a growing evil. In former days family prayer in Christian homes was the rule. Now it is thought to be the exception. If this is true, it is an alarming truth. One needs to inquire no further to understand what is the matter with the churches. If family religion is declining, all religion must decline; and if this decline shall continue, the time is not far distant when the churches will be empty and conversions will cease.

In former days pastoral visits meant more than they do now. The old Methodist or Presbyterian pastor went to the homes of the people, not to talk on secular questions or enjoy a social hour, but to inquire into the religious state of the family, to give counsel and stimulate religious life. Men now living can remember the time when the pastor was wont to ask the head of the family whether family prayers were maintained regularly in the home. There may have been something embarrassing in such questions. It would seem now as though this were going too far. Perhaps the present generation would not tolerate such inquiries. But have we not gone to the opposite extreme? Could not the pastor do much to aid parents in maintaining family religion in the home? Is the indifference of pastors to this important feature of Christian life justifiable? If pastors should set about the work diligently, conscientiously, and persistently, could not hundreds of broken-down family altars be rebuilt? Could they do a better work?

Daily devotional services in the home tend to familiarize the children with religion. It is to them a part of their family life. The domestic affections and memories are insensibly mingled with religious emotions. The son who is brought up in such an atmosphere will feel a golden chain about his

spirit wherever he may go in the world, holding him to the best things. He may wander, but this hallowed influence will not forsake him. Memories of home and religion are inseparably united in his mind. Many a wayward son has been brought back to the paths of virtue and religion by the sacred memories of the family altar, and thousands of others have been kept from wandering by the same holy influence.—'Christian Advocate.'

**Some Notions of Self-sacrifice.**

(By Elizabeth Patterson, in 'Forward')

Life is not personal property to spend or hoard, and every healthy pleasure is like a bit of sunshine which makes it more round and complete, and by just so much as the life is capable of being broadened in just such a degree is the holder of it responsible. The more joy and gladness we absorb, the more joy and gladness we have to give out, and the stronger are we to help others. All round us are sacrifices which are noble and good, and which tend to grander, more consecrated lives; but all round us, also, are sacrifices which are wrong in their inception, wrong in their progress, and calamitous in their ending. Every one of us knows of lives,

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alas! sacrificed to no end, yet which were strong and capable of being broadened into infinite usefulness. It is just the poor deluded martyrs who are often most needed by the world. A life that is sacrificed for some great good, or some real usefulness, we can spare; but not one that is thrown away.

I have in mind, a strong, bright, ambitious girl who has just died. She was the only girl in a large family of boys, and had been trained in the ways of an unwise mother, whose life was but a machine to care for and indulge her sons. The family were well to do, and lived on a small farm, and the girl was in the habit of getting up before light to begin the endless round of farm chores and housework, while her brothers—all of whom were young men, and much better able than

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