

## Pastor and People.

### GRANT US THY PEACE.

Grant us Thy peace throughout the day,  
Though well or weary, sail or way;  
Speak to the soul, bid turmoil cease  
Grant us Thy peace!

Grant us Thy peace throughout the night,  
When lonely thoughts the soul affright;  
Touch us anew, bid slumbering cease  
Grant us Thy peace!

Grant us Thy peace in joy supreme,  
Turn Thy rare light on life's dear dream,  
Quiet the soul, bid fever cease  
Grant us Thy peace!

Grant us Thy peace in heavy loss,  
Help us to bravely hold the cross;  
Strengthen the soul, bid sinking cease  
Grant us Thy peace!

Grant us Thy peace in dark suspense,  
When eyes are blind and clouds are dense;  
Hold fast the soul, bid striving cease  
Grant us Thy peace!

Grant us Thy peace when swiftly dart  
Temptation's arrow to the heart;  
Cleanse out the soul, bid weakness cease—  
Grant us Thy peace!

Grant us Thy peace in death's stern hour,  
When earthly moorings lose their power;  
Call to the soul, bid terror cease—  
Grant us Thy peace!

### PARENTAL INFLUENCE.

The deep and tender interest which parents feel in their children makes home-training the most powerful of all the agencies for securing the well being of individuals and the advance of our race. This is the sphere in which, even above all others, we must desire to see wisdom in growing insight as to diversities of disposition, and a true, living sympathy with every phase of young life. We are not forgetting what is required for success in business, for the good of society, and for the progress of the Church. A healthy family life brings its free contributions to all of these. The French philosopher gave evidence of true penetration who regarded the family as the unit in social organization. Yet France cannot boast of the family life which has brought blessings of the richest kind to our country. It may be that the remark savours of partiality, and ready belief, springing from national sentiment. But we have our basis, in fact, to which we can point, and there are living memories deep in the hearts of many which powerfully support the claim. Long may this silent, yet effective testimony to the power of early training live in the hearts of our people! Burns' "Cottar's Saturday Night" has historic as well as poetic value. Sabbath evening exercises for the children tell further the story of Scotland's training when Bible and catechism were repeated, sometimes with little sense of meaning among the little ones, but gradually with more of the sense, ultimately with treasure in mind and character. Show us the teaching, or the preaching, or the Christian associations which can take the place of this. Blessed are the people who have these four all in line. Give us onwards, in our people's history, these Sabbath evening family gatherings, with God's work in the midst, memory work lightened by singing of favourite hymns, and the sunshine of love everywhere. May such Sabbath influence be as a fountain of happiness, sending a pleasant stream of joy through all the week. Influence in such forms is deep and lasting. The logic of consistency convinces without talking. A true-hearted life is light and joy and hope all in one, spreading the influence of all these into the hearts around. These are the thoughts we put foremost in attempting to say a few helpful words as to parental influence.

It is a strong love which moves in the heart towards the children, who are part of our own life. Sustained by such love, there is a mighty power in the lives of father and mother, whose looks and words and acts reckon for the guidance of the young lives around. Within the door which closes in the home within whose shelter the family gathering is daily complete, there is a dignity of influence, a power to dispense blessings, a pledge of future greatness in the wise and sympathetic life of the parents, which no other form of government can equal. On this account mighty importance must be attached to the conception which parents form of the ideal of home life. To have such an ideal, and to aim at it, is the first thing; to have it as a living reality, embodied in one's daily thought, and brought up betimes as a silent test of how things are going, is a second thing, and more precious. Even the fitting of some ideal before the mind has real value, though it be as the vanishing circular light, which returns to the line of vision only after a period of darkness; better still if it is as the fixed light which shines without flickering with its long pencil of brightness across the sea of life.

But men and women are apt to be too hurried, too burdened, too hustled, too full of care to think of ideals. The word sounds as something too "superfine" for the work-a-day life of an ordinary household. This is one of the popular delusions with which our ears are growing familiar in this busy, bustling age. There is a snare hid under this soft excuse. Every family circle has its ideal fixed by those who rule it—in some cases a lofty one—towards which honest

efforts are made; in other cases, a common-place "ordinary" one, when things get on "as well as can be expected," and movement is like that on the dead flat of a canal. A true, honest Christian ambition is needed to put outside the door anything which may be convicted of the evil spirit of contentment with little things. Yet nothing is easier than that custom should rule the family life by ruling its rulers. So it happens that common-place becomes fixed. And parents see it at times, and feel a sense of disappointment, too, yet do not effect the needed revolution in their ruling, though the reins are in their own hands. It is not that men and women are unwilling to be convinced; it is rather that it seems to them as if there were no room for change.

Three types of family life may stand out clearly before our view, for aid in reaching a reasonable conclusion as to what ought to be aimed at in family history. Even with such contrasts there lies deep in the hearts of all parents a true desire for their children's good. First, there is the home life, tolerably quiet, evenly and smooth-going, in which there is a pleasant sense of daily interest in each other, but where parental life and child life are in great measure apart from each other. There is a daily meeting time, longer or shorter, the mother is oftener with the little ones, and that of necessity, finding some considerable part of her work among them, so that her life is, as it were, a bridge between two experiences, pretty widely sundred. There is a meeting in the morning and in the evening, and as a rule there are common meals. Happy is the family whose common meals mark the ordinary course of life. But in this household we are depicting the parents have no deep, constantly living interest in their children; the children never feel as if there were any such sharing of their joys and sorrows; and they get to feel as if it were not possible that such sharing could go on, any more than the children would think of sharing an apple with their parents. They know a good deal of their mother's love, and some considerable share of their father's; but their parent's life is not in theirs, not with theirs, but only alongside of theirs, so as to touch theirs occasionally. Second, There is the home life, in which old and young are much farther apart. The parents are mostly out of the way, and when the parents are present they are rather in the way, because putting restraint on the merriment of the youngsters. The children are a trouble to the parents, and, as naturally follows, the parents are a trouble to the children. There is a tacit regard on both sides to the possible rise of trouble, so that both are disposed to keep at a respectful distance. The attitude is friendly enough for the most part, but it is a kind of "armed neutrality," and this phase becomes increasingly marked as the young people advance in life. In early life the children are sent out, if the family be in humble circumstances; in better rank, they are sent to the nursery. For later life, results depend largely on what the lessons of the streets are with which they grow familiar, or what is the type of nursery rule. Third, There is the home life in which parents and children are much nearer each other, the older and younger really entwining together, as in the growth of a common stock, each branch in the tree receiving its share, and yielding its share. The genealogical tree, which families often delight to trace as a representation of their ancestry, is a natural and fit emblem of family life. The tree well indicates what the family life should be. As stem and branches are truly one, so ought parent life and child life to be one. In such a case there is a living mutual interest, sympathy and regard; all these being unceasingly active. The young contribute to the life happiness of both parents, and the superior wisdom and larger experience of the parents open the way for the children, providing daily help.

These are three types of family life which stand out to view with sufficient vividness. Each includes many varieties, but the distinctiveness of the three is unquestionable, and it is full of suggestiveness for all fathers and mothers who aim at doing their part, making the home a delight, and future life a witness to the value of home training. How are the two first types to be shunned? How is the third to be secured and fixed in the history of a family?

This question will be most readily answered by considering how the best development of young life is to be provided for. The best thought and purpose of the parents must become part of the life of the children. The family likeness apparent in the countenance must come out in the character. And this can be secured only in a natural way; never in a forced way. It is easy to command or issue orders, but mere authority cannot gain the desired result. This can come only as a natural growth in the young life, aided by the genial companionship of the parents. Parental life and child life grow together, and they grow of the same type. There is no other law of growth and no other product than is implied in saying, "Like produces like." There is nothing worse than taking children by the shoulders and bundling them out of the way; there is nothing better than taking children to your heart, and helping them on the way. But there is a plan in helping which must be understood and stuck to, if we are truly to aid as we wish to do. Let us give children outlet for their energies; let us have regard to differences of physical constitution and sensibility and mental bias; and, more than anything else, let us enter into the moral difficulties and conflicts of our children as if these were our own. Our eyes must see for them more than they see; our understanding must measure the range of difficulty they do not comprehend; our purpose must outstretch theirs, so as to work out a bigger result in the future than children consider, as they are engrossed with the present. These are the things that go to make up training—without these aids children are not getting

"home training." If I could speak directly into the ears of the father and mother of a family, these last sentences, if taken in their full range of meaning, express what I would desire to say. They indicate our real task as parents, provided it be recognized that the end of all the forethought is not money, nor position, nor fame, but character—a high life worthy of our nature, and of our calling as Christians. This is the grand end, and it is the common end for all parents, as it is for all children. All classes are on the same level in respect of the grandest things in life. If this only be clearly seen, and if the one grand end be honestly sought, we may walk trustfully as to "the good things of this life," when we so describe food and clothing, home comforts and social influence. If these things are settled and clear to the mind and heart of parents, the main requisite is secured for a wise home training.

Having so far passed by mere authority, as in a sense secondary to the ideal to be shaped aright, and represented year by year, I return upon it now to recall its real importance in its secondary place, which is still a necessary place in home training. An ideal must be a practical working power, else it is an imagination, and nothing more; in which case it will soon be regarded as a delusion or a dream. The ideal must work out in practise, else all our thought—and, we must add, all our prayer—will be in vain. God's blessing is promised to honest work, which must be persistent work, even when divine agency is promised, as it is in this case.

Government is everywhere the condition of order and progress. This law is for all life, individual and social. From the family to the State it holds, determining all results. Mere authority or force only puts down rebellion, clearing the ground for government. But wise government is essential for a true unfolding of life, and a steady advance in work. Love must fulfil the law; but law stands first, and love works the law into the life, so that bare authority of law, or forceful command, becomes a thing only dimly recognized in the rear. It may be needful for infancy; it should hardly be so for early womanhood and manhood. Yet love is never for us in itself a safe and sure guide. The love of father or mother is never like to the love of our Father in heaven, just because parents always need self-discipline as truly as their children do. But even of the perfect love of God we must remark that it ever works through law, and expresses itself in accordance with law. So it must ever be in the well-ordered family. Our affection is apt to identify itself with the pleasing; and whenever this is so, there is risk, and urgent need for sharp thought. The danger is plain enough. "The pleasing" is apt to be "the pleasant," as this seems to the children in their present mood; and if this be so, the children are ruling, not the parents; in which case the end is apt to be disappointing to the loving hearts of the parents, who are for the time pleased because things are going "so nicely." Law must rule the parents as well as the children. And if it do, there will be a big place for self-denial. To say No! firmly, in face of strong desires and supplications, will mean a good share of self-denial all round, for parents as well as for children. But let us be brave, and make our children brave also. We sorely need this virtue in the present day. There is no great achievement in moral courage without practise of self-denial from youth onwards. We grow strong by exercise of self-denial. The lesson stands before us everywhere. Let us have our eyes open to it, and our lives governed by it. Parents must in this as in other things, bear a share in their children's trials, and firmness will be one part of a parent's burden-bearing, and a necessary part too, if great results are to follow.

Now, we return to the other side of the truth—mere authority accomplishes little. Love must be in the authority, and must be always largely in it. All the family must know and feel that the law obeyed is law for parents and for children equally. These two texts must hang over against each other, as of equal application to old and young: "Hear ye one another's burdens;" "Every man shall bear his own burden." It is impossible to escape the burden of life—impossible to shun the sorrows—impossible to be excused from the struggle of life. This clear, the main question is how to help in meeting all the difficulties involved in doing duty.

The truest help is encouragement in meeting all that comes in the path. Training, to be of use in the world, must be training in self-government, and this must begin very early, as early as training can begin. The child should see from the first, and should see with increasing clearness as life goes on, that there is a law of conduct to which parents and children are equally subject. Whenever a young child understands this in some measure, and begins to shape action in acknowledgment of it, training is begun. Learning to walk alone is one of the exercises of infancy which amuses us all. That of which we are here speaking is a higher exercise of the same kind—it is a balancing of oneself, and learning to move with decision and security. Management of desires and dispositions comes after management of the limbs; it continues an exercise all life through, when we need little effort in directing bodily movement. It is of mighty consequence that self-government should begin early—at the very earliest stage when the young life comes to experience parental control. The best family government is that which is able increasingly to modify human command, because of its being merged in the divine—abating parental authority because the Divine will is being recognized—because "the voice of God" is being heard as the child Samuel heard it.

But parents must understand and measure difficulties, and must sympathize with their children, backing them, cheering