

his presence—greatly to the hurt of our own souls and the scandal of the cause of Christ.

I. *Unkindness.*—By unkindness I mean the disregard of the comfort of others, which is due more to thoughtlessness than to hardness or cruelty. Children are so often taken up with themselves and their schemes and companions as not to notice the fact that the mother's strength is failing, or that the father is over-burdened with anxiety. They do not take in the meaning of the weary look, the abstracted manner, the heavy sigh, and the deepening care-lines on the face—rather I shall say, they do not notice them at all—or if occasionally they are visited with a painful suspicion, they too easily turn to something else. Sons and daughters increase the embarrassment of the father by thoughtless extravagance, when a little economy would be an immense relief and assistance. They intensify the care and weakness of the mother by monopolizing public meetings, social gatherings, and the means of grace, largely depriving her of the change and social influence necessary to her freshness and vigor, and thus in sheer thoughtlessness making heavy drafts on the health and strength and love of parents whom they fondly love, and for whom, if once their conscience and affection were fairly roused, they would gladly lay down life itself. It may be asked, why do not the father and mother speak out? Speaking out lays them open to the suspicion of hardness. In their love they would bear all cheerfully for their children's happiness, and their own fondness makes them anxious to do more than they are really able. But children ought to see and think, and act for themselves. They ought to be sharp-sighted enough to see, and sympathetic enough to understand the signals which nature hangs out before their eyes, and which neither art nor affection can wholly conceal. This ought to be whether Christian or not. But how much more if Christian? The spirit of Christ is one of unselfish, self-denying, helpful love. The spirit of Christ delights to deny itself in order to promote the comfort and welfare of others. He gave himself a ransom for many, and himself bare our sicknesses.

There is no where under the sun so much room for quiet heroism as in the privacy of home. But it is heroism in little things, heroism in self-restraint, heroism in denying one's self, heroism in bending one's self to what may be sometimes the whims of others. And one must be content to do and suffer in silence, be satisfied with knowing that God knows all. It is the privacy and lack of recognition which make the task so hard. If it were some great thing—if only *somebody* recognized our effort