

## The Presbyterian Review.

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Toronto, August 29, 1895.

### Suggestions to Ministers and Elders.

THE Reports on the State of Religion have for many years past complained as to the difficulty experienced in getting answers to questions touching family worship. Some ministers have regarded the question dealing with family worship inquisitorial and have simply resented it. Others more desirous of doing what might be regarded as properly within their province have been found asking for light in Presbyterian Conferences on this and other subjects, "How can we find out whether our families have family worship or no? How shall we go about it?"

Now, no minister who understands the work to which he has been called can question the propriety of the question, either in the home or in the Report on the State of Religion. Indeed, duty in either case would be imperfectly done without this question being asked. It is a central question. It deals with the very core of religion in the family, and in the Church, and in the world. Let religion die out in the family and where then may we find it. Is not the promise: "In Thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Why "the families?" Because they are the original founts of national life. Whatever finds a place in them of necessity finds a place in society, in the Church, and in the nation at large. To get the family right is to get the nation right: but if the family is wrong the nation must be wrong. To save the nation we must save the families that compose it. The blessing of all the families of the earth means at once a large and a perfect blessing. One that leaves none untouched. One that like the wind enters into every accessible place, and searches out those that are hidden away out of sight. Our Lord's work is to have no trace of imperfection about it. And since He works through His ministers, their attention to the family life must be careful and close. They must watch for souls as those who shall give account. And how shall this be done? A book recently issued from the English Press, namely "Reminiscences of Andrew Bonar, D.D.," edited by his daughter Marjory Bonar," furnishes the answer.—It goes without saying that anything coming from that quarter must be good. And this is a golden volume. It is full of precious things. For a minister it is simply invaluable. It is a quickening cordial. It rouses the heart. It is a box of stored up electric force which shall give life and action to many a beautiful piece of machinery now standing stock still. It preserves the spirit of the man for the benefit of coming generations. It is closely akin to McCheyne's Memoir. It discovers to us a man who carried out literally the words of the second verse of the first psalm—"His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night." The Word of God created for Andrew Bonar the atmosphere in which he

lived, and through which he looked upon everything, and in which everything stood forth in its true dimensions, and in its right relations. God's thought about things became his, so far as that thought is revealed. Bible teaching in all its doctrine—Bible history in all its events—Bible characters with all their destructive features stood forth clearly to his mind's eye, and were all his own in the most familiar way. He thought through them. His mind was full of them. They stood ready to answer at his call. And he was most apt in their use. Nourished as he was on Bible truth we can understand how his love and faith would grow, and how he would live in the Spirit, and how he would breathe a purer atmosphere than most men, and find it easy to talk of spiritual things. He lived in the presence of the King, and he carried the radiance of that presence always with him, so that he found no difficulty at all in speaking of things concerning the King wherever he went. "When visiting his people," Marjory tells us, "he used to ask,—'Do you read regularly through the sixty-six books of the Bible, and not trust to little text books? Have you got a letter from the King to-day?' was a favorite question, when he wanted to introduce a conversation on that morning's portion of Scripture. On another occasion speaking with other ministers he said: 'I find it a good plan to ask when I am visiting, What was your chapter at family worship this morning? In this way I find out whether they have family worship, and if they have paid attention to it.'" There are wise suggestions for ministers and elders in getting at that which many find so difficult to reach. Just think of this; How honored shall the people feel when it is taken for granted that they do observe family worship? They will say within themselves; my minister thinks well of me, I must try to live up to his thought. And so they will be affected as a flower is by the sunlight, caused to unfold and put forth the best in them.

When we want to compass an end there is usually no difficulty too great to overcome. As Andrew Bonar observes: "There is more originality in a full heart than in anything else."

Ah, but there may lie the trouble, the "full heart" is lacking. The heart full of love and prayer and faith and joy and scriptural truth. It was with a heart of that kind that Andrew Bonar set out to work. "Never go to the Lord's work with meagre preparation," was one of his maxims. He got his heart on fire and whatever he touched he kindled with the flame. His shrewd observations were like nails in a sure place. If there is in our honored ministers and elders this mind that was in Andrew Bonar, the matter of family worship will not be uncared for, or left untouched in pastoral visitation, or slightly treated in answers to the important question: How is family worship observed in the families of your congregation? It will receive the attention everywhere that it deserves, to the manifest advantage of the Church at large.

### Children's Day.

We have great pleasure in publishing the following circular regarding Children's Day, just received from the Rev. T. F. Fotheringham.

The last Sabbath in September has been set apart by the General Assembly as "Children's Day," when special services are to be held in connection with Sabbath Schools and a collection taken up in behalf of the Assembly's Sabbath school funds. Last year over 300 schools observed the occasion and made use of 44,500 copies of the special service prepared by the Sabbath school Committee. A much larger number is expected