

## HOUSEHOLD.

### Build Thou an Altar for the Soul.

(By Mrs. Lisa A. Fletcher.)

Build thou an altar for the soul,  
O build it strong of faith and prayer  
And when life's tempest o'er the roll,  
And seemeth far away the goal,  
Remember, comfort lieth there.

Burn there the incense pure of life,  
A fragrant incense to the skies.  
Forgetting earthly care and strife,  
And all the grief of which 'tis rife,  
Uplifting heavenward thine eyes.

Low lay thy burdens there adown,  
So shall the shadows part in twain,  
And carking care forget to frown.  
While angels weave thee fairer crown,  
For grace that thou dost thus attain.  
—Observer.

[For the 'Northern Messenger.'

### A Three-fold Cord.

In this strain of busy life, when domestic help is so hard to obtain, it is to be regretted that so much of the mother's time has to be spent in meeting the physical needs of her children, while the higher needs of mind and spirit are too often left to the public school and the Sunday School.

The Sabbath School teacher has the child about one hour each week, and in the majority of cases we fear that the chief Bible or spiritual teaching is given in that time. One is astonished at the ignorance of the simplest and most interesting Bible history which is displayed by children and young people from Christian homes, who have attended church and Sunday School all their lives.

The public school teacher has the child for thirty hours each week, so that this influence over the child must be stronger. A teacher, to whom I was once speaking on the privilege of teachers in helping to develop character, replied, 'Oh, it is not character parents expect us to develop but to pass as many as possible through the examinations.'

We fear this is too true even in Christian Canada, where we pride ourselves on our excellent system of education, and our educational leaders are striving to do away with the cramming for examinations. Until parents have a higher ideal of the work of the teacher and more appreciation for true education; so long as they test the teacher's efficiency by the number 'passed,' there will be cramming rather than true mental and moral development.

When such a large proportion of our children's time is spent under the influence of the teacher, and of the pupils of the public school, there is great need of the wisest and friendliest co-operation between the teacher and the parents. No mother has the right to leave the intellectual and moral development of her child alone to the public school any more than she has to leave the spiritual development to the Sunday School. Every teacher knows that the pupils, who come from cultivated Christian homes, where they have been trained in obedience and conscientious principles, and encouraged in wise reading, prove the most efficient scholars, even to passing examinations, and are examples in order and good behavior.

When the Home, the Public School and the Church, the three living institutions of our land, unite in wise and intelligent co-operation, then may we expect to develop citizens of whom it may be said by all the world, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, that hath God so nigh unto them?'

The public school is a state institution and as such, one of its first duties is to develop intelligent and honorable citizens, but the 'corner-stone of the state is the hearth-stone,' and as Moses taught the children of Israel, the foundation of their national strength lay in obedience to the law of God as given in his Word, so the necessity of co-operation between all three.

'A three-fold cord is not easily broken'

One practical suggestion we would make toward this end is the establishment of mothers' meetings or societies to which both public school and Sabbath School teachers might be invited, and at which each should be free to present any difficulty or discouragement she had found in her work in the home, or at either school. A friendly discussion, or open parliament, upon various topics of interest in the training and teaching of children should help to effect a closer sympathy and interest between teachers and mothers, and each would be surprised at the information and points of difficulty presented by the other. Several topics I have seen discussed with great interest and helpfulness at such meetings are, 'Recreations and amusements for our children and young people,' 'Companionship of our children,' 'The Bible in the home.'

On the first subject a paper might be given by an intelligent teacher giving the science and ethics of play and games. Froebel teaches that games should have laws, so that children should learn to respect law and show honor and courtesy in their plays and games. All play should aim at development of either body, intellect or morals. A roll-call might be interesting on this topic in which each member should give the name of one game for either children or young people, one that would be free from objections and helpful on the best lines. On the second topic the language and habits that children learn from their companions at school might be freely discussed. Many mothers will not believe the conversation or habits their children may be acquiring without their knowledge. Only those who have held the confidence and sympathy of their children will be likely not to be astonished by revelations from the teacher, but these may be able to give helpful suggestions to the teacher. There are leaflets and books on social purity by standard authors such as Mary Wood Allen and Sylvanus Stall which should be read by every parent and teacher and might be discussed at these meetings. Though the Bible is usually read in schools, and Bible history is on the curriculum, there must be a sad neglect of these beautiful stories and this gem of all literature in the home. No mother should be willing to leave the teaching of this 'one Book' and its moral and spiritual lessons to the most enthusiastic teacher of either public or Sunday School. There is no danger of the children knowing too much, and the lessons they learn at the mother's knee will wield the strongest influence in the years that follow.

Lessons on hygiene, temperance and the choice of best books to read at home will form other topics of interest to all.

Mothers will take more interest in the teachers' work, and greater interest in the Sunday School, while the teachers will learn more of their pupil and the wisest way of managing them, from such friendly acquaintance with the mothers.—A. L. C. M.

### The Child and the Prayer Meetings.

(By Alice Freeman Firman, in the 'Congregationalist and Christian World'.)

I was waiting for a train one day at a little jumping-off place, a junction in Kansas. Vast prairies stretched out in all directions and the place looked as if there never had been a train there and never would be. Not a human being was in sight. As I waited, lonesome and hungry, I saw that there was one solitary man, the station agent, in the little depot. His back was toward me and he looked big and Western in his shirt sleeves. An ignoble thought passed through my mind of the possibility of his pulling out his revolver from that hip pocket and wiping me off the face of the earth, when he suddenly began to whistle:

'Love divine, all love excelling,  
Joy of heaven to earth come down.'

In an instant I seemed to see that great big burly station agent a little boy going to prayer meeting with a widowed mother in some far-off village. He didn't know what the words meant then, but he knows now. And often when he is alone and whistles one of those old hymns, instead of ragtime, his eyes get dim and he says to himself, 'What

wouldn't I give if I could be beside Mother again in the old vestry at prayer meeting!'

Are we making memories like that possible for our future men and women? Some one says, 'Would you take a child in these days to the church prayer meeting?' I certainly would. 'But the child would not be interested,' you remonstrate. He would if his father and mother were interested. 'But the child should be in bed,' another objects. Of course that is true of little children, but when a boy or girl is old enough to be out until nine or ten o'clock at an entertainment, or a band concert, or a little innocent party, then he or she is plenty old enough to be up as late as that for a prayer meeting occasionally.

Parents are so inconsistent. You ask some of them and see if you do not get the answer, 'Johnnie is so nervous, I should not think of letting him go to church in the evening,' and then you watch and see if nervous Johnnie isn't on the front row at some excitable show within a week. 'Mary has to study so hard I couldn't think of letting her go to a midweek meeting,' but Mary's studies seem to stand it if there is a birthday party in the next block which keeps her out till long after ten.

Children can get familiar with the Word of God and with precious hymns here as they can nowhere else. I heard a small boy say once after attending a midweek service, where there had been a great deal of Scripture reading in which he could take part, 'Why, Mamma, that was real interesting that we read; are there other places in the Bible as nice to read as that?' And I have often heard the remark, 'Oh, I just hope we'll sing Number 701 to-night, that's my favorite.' Seven hundred and one is, 'O Love that wilt not let me go.'

Now, Junior Endeavor meetings and all other kinds of services 'adapted' to children may be all right, but I like to have my boys and girls sit at the table with the rest of the family, after the babyhood is passed. Suppose they can't eat everything we eat, there's always something they can digest. Suppose they do not understand all the grown-up talk, they can absorb the love atmosphere, and it is home, and the family is together, God bless them every one! The Father's house ought to have a table spread and all the family ought to enjoy assembling around it.

In these days we hear so much of the strenuous life—the rush and hurry and divided interest. We hear people say that the children are not acquainted with their father—he is always at some board or club or something. If every busy father and mother would habitually go to prayer meeting and enjoy what they give and get there, and would, at least occasionally, take along the child, many things over which we shake our heads with lamentations would find a remedy. The fever of modern life, with its divided interests and the fear lest the children are slipping from the parental grasp, will be quieted down as all sing together:

'Drop thy still dews of quietness till all our strivings cease,

Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of thy peace.'

By and by it will be too late. The child will have 'passed.' And one of the best ways to keep 'close' will be forever lost by those who feel that there is no possible bond between the child and the prayer meeting.

### A Cement That Will Stick.

A capital cement for broken china and bric-a-brac that can be made at home is obtained by mixing half an ounce of gum arabic with half a teaspoonful of boiling milk and adding enough plaster of paris to produce a creamy paste. To use successfully have the pieces that are to be mended warm and apply the cement warm with a small brush. Objects repaired with this cement have to be set aside for a week before they can be used, but after that they can be washed in either warm or cold water with safety. Soaking, however, they will not stand.—North Western Advocate.