

How easy to listen to earnest and powerful sermons, and go away unprofited! Alas, the word too often hardens the hearer. Softened, warmed for a moment, he relapses into coldness and unbelief "and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."

Is there any sadder sight in this world of sin and sorrow than men with orthodox formulas on their lips, and with zeal so burning that they would crush out of being any one tainted with the faintest flavor of heresy, and yet living as if there were no God, no Heaven, no Hell?—living a cold, selfish, grasping life; ignoring, in fact, the authority of Him whom they in mere words so glibly acknowledge. A man may be a member of the Church in full communion for many years. He may be quite above the reach of church censures. There may be a Pharisaic correctness about his life. He may be an elder, or even a minister of the gospel, zealous for the joys and titles of an orthodox creed, and still be a stranger to "pure religion and undefiled."

Reader, you are a Presbyterian; you belong to the purest Church on earth. You hear the gospel truly and purely preached. Within the range of your knowledge are many shining examples of a living Christianity. How is it with you? Beware of a dead censorious orthodoxy. The devils believe and tremble. Your Presbyterianism, your orthodoxy, your fruitless faith will avail you nothing when the trial of the judgment day comes. We want living members of a living Church—living stones of the glorious Temple of which the Lord Jesus is the chief corner stone. Orthodoxy is very precious, but let it not come between you and Christ. Creeds, confessions, forms of government are good and necessary, but they are only means to an end. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without wrangling and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace to them that make peace.

## HOME RELIGION.

"Return to thine house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee," the injunction of Jesus to the cured and thankful demoniac, needs to be repeated in the ear of multitudes of professing Christians to-day.

Modern piety is very largely an outdoor affair. We live in a time of conventions, associations, evangelistic work, meeting of all kinds, and other forms of Christian efforts. Our Sabbaths are packed full of outside religious work and church services, leaving little chance for holy rest and retirement and the promotion of home piety. While none too much is done for Christ, there is danger that with these multiplied forms of Christian activity home religion may be neglected. There are, it is to be feared, too many like "Mr. Talkative," of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," "a saint abroad but a devil at home," or like an old painting which, at a little distance, seemed to represent a holy friar at prayer, with clasped hands and open book before him, but, on closer inspection, revealed a leech in his hands and a punch bowl in place of that which seemed a book.

Home is the place where an inconsistent or wicked life has wrought the greatest harm. Men are there best known, and their example, if evil, most destructive. A child can read a parent's character before it knows the alphabet. To a great extent it is in the power of the parent to decide what the character of his child shall be. The child is the canvas upon which the father and mother paint their own portrait. "I'll take what father takes," was a boy's unconscious testimony to the truth of this principle.

Parental and family ties form one of the most potent means God uses in converting souls. Home is also the nearest and most promising field of labor. Nowhere is consistent Christian living and godly example go so far as there. Many a one can trace his religious life to a mother's piety and earnest prayers. One need not go abroad for fields of heroism and fidelity. There are heroines of the home, the kitchen and the washtub, as well as heroes of the battle-fields. Many a Christian wife and mother has, in the face of opposition, with no sympathy or help from a Christian husband struggled on year after year to win her child for Christ. And then must bear in mind that home life is the best test of Christian character. Home is the hardest place to play the hypocrite. "Am I my wife if I don't live like a Christian?" was the well-put challenge of a candidate for church membership in a Congregationalist church, as he saw the brethren