

was of the utmost importance. My father always had family worship, reading the Bible through in course, never dividing a chapter, be it ever so long, nor omitting one even if it was made up of hard names that the children stumbled over. When I was seventeen or so, and it was what we called "catching weather" in haying, that is, frequent showers, early in the morning of a day that promised to be fair the neighbors would be called in to help. Father would always ask them in to prayers, and because he had an audience that did not often hear the Scripture read, he would always take more time than usual, expounding and enforcing the truths written, while we boys were fidgeting and chafing at what seemed to us a waste of time and money. But I have thanked God a thousand times since for that very thing in my father.

"When I went away from home a little later, still unconverted, it was to Boston. My business called me with others to New York, and twice a week, regularly, we were accustomed to take the night boat through the Sound, and card-playing was our favorite evening pastime. But at last my parents' prayers were answered, and I came into the fold. My first trip after my conversion was a dreaded time.

"I suppose now you've got pious, Blair, you won't take a hand at cards any more," was the sneering remark of one as the usual crowd gathered round the table after supper.

"They all laughed at this and at my reply, "No, no more cards for me; I have found something better."

"There were a great many thrusts and hits given to me as they played, while I took my Testament and read. But all the time I was thinking, When it is bedtime how can I get down on my knees and pray before them all? And Satan suggested to me that I needn't do it; it might seem to them to be putting on a show; I could pray to God as well in my berth. Then I thought of my father and his testimony of prayer before his neighbors, and that saved me in this crisis. I knelt before them all, and from that time I was never chaffed nor teased; in fact, several of the crowd became Christians before the winter was over."

While others gave their experience my mind took me back to one brilliant young professor in one of our Western colleges. He had mingled with skeptical men and scientists, and the unwavering faith of a long line of godly ancestors seemed to be broken in him. He married a beautiful girl; their home was pleasant; and, perfectly happy in his domestic life and absorbed in his scientific pursuits, he had come to feel that he could get along without God. But after a time the thought of having a child born into a prayerless house troubled him. "My father's and mother's prayers at the family altar night and morning kept me from a great deal of temptation and sin," he said to his dear little wife, "and we want our children girded with all good influences."

So for the sake of the child that was to come the family altar was set up, and this communion with God brought him back to the safe moorings of faith and love, so that when lingering and finally fatal diseases came, three years later, with no shadow to dim his assurance he passed away, confidently leaving his wife and children in the hands of a covenant-keeping God.—Illustrated Christian Weekly.

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A Second-hand Thanksgiving

(Rev. William T. Gunn, in the 'C. E. World'.)

It was the Rev. Roderick MacKenzie that preached the Thanksgiving sermon in our church in New Edinboro; and it was a good sermon, too, if he had just come from the Highlands of Sutherlandshire, and was none the worse for that, though the English was maybe a little strange to him. And this is the sermon he preached:—

'You will see that my sermon has four heads and three tails,' said he, and I saw Sandy Campbell smile, and indeed I wondered myself what sort of a beastie that would be.

'My first head is, "Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely." (Ps. cxlvii, 1.) It is a pleasant thing to sing praises; and there's nae doot that it is considered to be comely; that is, the respectable thing to do. If that brought you here, it's better than if you hadna come.

'But my second head is, "O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Ps. cvii, 8.) Now this is what brought most of you here to-day; for indeed the good crops that you have had this year, and the comfortable homes you are going to, and the good dinner that will be waiting you, all should make you thankful to Him who gave them.

'But there is a better reason still, for my third head is, "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endureth for ever." (II. Chron. xx., 21.) For you all will be saying that if it had not been for His mercy we had all been consumed. We will be, then, thankful this day for the "unspeakable gift" of God in Jesus Christ. There will be only one thing this day or any day that will be in our hearts beyond that for filling our mouths with praise.

'My fourth head, then, is this: "Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good." (Ps. cxxv, 3.) For behind all our mercies and the cause of them all is the goodness of the Lord, the good character of our God. Many a time I have been thinking if we had a God such as the heathen think they have, what a wild and terrible thing it would be. But it is not so, and in the storm and darkness, the fiery trial and the overwhelming waters, I have said to my soul, "It is all right; God is good; He will bring it to pass."

'But now we come to the three tails, for the tail is that which logically follows the head. In all my four heads we have had one word, "praise," but how shall we do that?

'The first tail, then, is this: Praise God by singing hymns of praise unto Him and by saying in your prayers, 'Thank you,' for all His great mercies as you do this day in the church and at your family altar. This is well.

'But for the second tail I will be asking you to think how God gave you all these things you are thankful for. Did your crop come down all threshed and in bags from an opening in the clouds? Did your education come to you from a voice out of heaven? Do the angels come and make you a comfortable home, and get you three meals a day, and wash the dishes, and go back unseen? Did God teach you the truths of eternity and build up your soul by a miracle? No. You are saying God does these things not through miracles or by Himself directly, but through His servants. The crop came by my servants and my horses. The home came through my dear old father and my beautiful mother, or my sweet wife or sister. My education came by some of His patient, wise, and noble teachers; and my soul was built up and taught

by my teacher, or a grand old elder or my own dear minister.

'Then, friends, if God sent His blessings through these, what I will be saying to you this day, and what I am wanting you to do, is to send back the thanks to Him the way He sent the blessing to you. Now has He not said, "Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye do it unto Me"? Wherefore,

'My second tail is this: Go you home this day, and, if you have never done it before, think what blessings God has given you in and through your father and mother and brother and sister, your husband or wife or your children. Then just you tell them and thank them for it, and it will warm their hearts and your heart, and God's heart, too.

'But my third is this: There may be some so far away you cannot speak to them. Then take your pen and ink, and sit ye doon this very afternoon, and write a letter and speak out all the gratitude that has been in your hearts. They will maybe weep tears of joy when they get it, and will put it in the old Bible, where they can see it often. Ay, and some of them will keep it near them when the eyes can see no more and the hands grow cold. Moreover, God will be well pleased.'

Well, that was the end o' the sermon wi' its fower heids and three tails; and I thocht I'd try it. When I got hame, I praised the dinner and my wee wife; and they both deserved it, but she wasna used to it, and told me to behave myself before folks. Ay, but behind their backs she gave me a bit kiss and said it warmed her heart to hear me. Then I sat down and wrote to father and mother. Dear old folks, they died just a wee while after, and we found the letter in the family Bible. O man, wasna I glad I had told them how good they had been to me and how thankful I was? I have a letter from them both that they wrote in answer, but there's no one'll ever see it.

Then I wrote to my old teacher that had loved me, and skelpit me, and taught me when I was a wild laddie in the old home land. He hadna heard of me in thirty years; but he wrote back that when he got my letter he was sair handen wi' a bad attack o' the grip, and says he: 'Your letter did me good; for I was blue, and it was better than a tonic. It made me well.'

My minister, too, and my old chum at school, and my Sunday school teacher, and the man I worked for first, and my Aunt Janet, and—O, but there was no end; for that Thanksgiving Day lasted the whole year, and I'm no dune yet. You may say it's no verra orthodox to give God thanks second-hand; but, O man, just try it and see. It maun please Him, for of things to warm a man's heart I never got anything like the wild Highland lad's 'three tails' and his 'second-hand thanksgiving.'—Embryo, Ont.

Thanksgiving Day Thoughts.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And all that is within me, bless His holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits;
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;
Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies;

Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things,
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

* * * * *

O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon His name,

Make known His doings among the peoples.
Sing unto Him, sing praises unto Him,
Talk ye of all His marvellous works.

* * * * *

O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good
For His mercy endureth forever.