

instructive character, deserving and demanding the attention, and not seldom heavily taxing the reflective powers of the catechumens. There was no tolerance for inattention or indifference, and scant enough patience with those who manifested anything like obtuseness of mind. Perceiving clearly himself, the examiner seemed to think (which was only very human) that others should discover the relations and results of doctrines as readily and vividly as he did. The rebukes at times administered for inattention, or unthoughtful, stupid answers were of crushing character and not easily forgotten. Though constitutionally kind and generally considerate, his authority was towering and imperative. Alas for the victim of his few but withering words of merited rebuke. And yet these words did not excite enmity or ill will, though assuredly they humbled, and profoundly deepened respect for him who uttered them.

Though doctrines were the staple in these Sabbath evening instructions, yet their application—their influence on the heart and life—were not neglected. Toward the close there were usually questions put and remarks made about practical and personal religion, that not unfrequently caused some of us to keep our eyes fastened on the floor the while, lest they should meet the keen searching glance of our earthly parent,—aware that we were spiritually far from what we should be, and I trust, wished to be. “Conscience makes cowards of us all!” I can yet almost feel the burning blush that must then have mantled my face when some close pressing question about personal piety was put to me. And that blush might not ill-befit me even at this late day of my life; for I have to say with far more painful truth than he who first employed the words, “I have not attained, neither am I yet perfect.” But I do desire to follow after, &c.

After putting a few simple questions, and tendering some good advice to the mere juveniles of the household, and hearing them repeat the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed, and the verses of the Psalm and Chapter committed to memory during the day, the “big ha’ Bible” was taken down and opened, and family worship engaged in as usual, only, if possible, with a deeper solemnity, induced by engagement in the services of the sanctuary and the immediately preceding exercises in the family. After reading the verses of the psalm to be sung, a short prayer was offered up for Divine aid in worship,—a most becoming practice, and one that I like exceedingly, though through the influence of current christian custom, I have in general dispensed with it, but not with the entire approbation of my own mind. The psalm on Sabbath evening was generally sung to some plaintive air, such as Coleshill, and the exercise was peculiarly sweet and solemn. The father’s manly but not unmusical voice guiding and blending with the voices of the large family God had given him,—some of them mere children, and others often men and women grown, constituted music to the mind and to the ear worth learning and remembering, and which I doubt not was graciously heard in heaven. Suppose that psalm coming in course on a sabbath evening, and it is by no means unlikely, which says—