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FAMILY WORSHIP.

THE letter of Rev. Dr. Jenkins, as Moderator of the General Assembly, directs special attention to the subject of Family Worship. It is a word in season. It is all the more rendered necessary by the conclusion arising from the reports made by the Assembly's committee upon the state of religion, that "in some families of our Church, Christian worship and religious instruction are wholly neglected; while in other families, these duties, though they receive recognition, are irregularly and inefficiently discharged. It is surely unbecoming in members and adherents of the Presbyterian Church to be remiss or careless about a well-understood and generally acknowledged duty. They are not true to the traditions of their Church, if they do not maintain the highly prized exercises of family devotion. In many instances they must be conscious that they are wandering from the examples of their parents, who sought to fill their homes with the odors of the saints. On the part of those who were brought up in the old country, where family worship has always been warmly commended and held to be the foundation of national prosperity, it is to say the least, almost unpatriotic to let the fire on the domestic altar thus die out, and have nothing in its place but the chaos of ashes and darkness.

At the same time, it is pleasant to know that this matter is not altogether ignored. On the contrary, there are many families in which the reading of God's word and the offering up of prayer are daily rendered. The parents have deliberately entered into covenant, and have inscribed on their banner the words of Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." They delight, in company with their children, to wait at the footstool of the throne. Their reading of God's word is regular, intelligent, and devout. It is their delight to open the hallowed Book and receive from its pages the hidden manna of the divine truth. With all that may be said about grouping subjects, about Bible readings, or about special lessons, we do not believe in giving up the old-fashioned method of reading the Scriptures from beginning to end; if practicable in the morning, a chapter from the Old Testament, and the evening one from the New. But there is nothing to hinder Bible readings when there is time for them. We are accustomed to speak of these, as if they were something new and original in the Church. They are as old as Christianity itself, for we read of the Bereans that these were more noble than the Christians of Thessalonica, "in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were

so." A morning or evening Bible reading on Sabbath would be a delightful family exercise. The child just learning to speak might be taught to recite an appropriate verse, while the more advanced children along with the parents could read aloud the portions they have selected as suitably bearing upon the subject. At the same time, it should be remembered that the Bible is a history. It should, therefore, be read in books and chapters. As the gradual unfolding of the mind of God to man, there is no part of it to be overlooked. Used in this way, it will often speak as with the authority of God to children upon subjects of a delicate, but momentous nature. This is a valuable end gained by regular consecutive reading of the word of God, for we have no faith in that false modesty which says there are portions of the Bible which ought not to be read in the family or in the Church. As the revelation of God's will, the whole is to be read, and that publicly, in order to emphasize the terrible heinousness of particular sins in the sight of God. It gives parents an opportunity of solemnly impressing their children with the evils by which they are surrounded in the world.

Family worship is essential to a well ordered house. Where it is not maintained, or where it is observed partially and irregularly, there are two classes of consequences that may be noted. First, there is the want of reverence for the Bible, there is the neglect of prayer, there is consequent ignorance of God's law, there is the mental, moral, and spiritual degradation which is sure to follow. Then again, we will always observe in the family that has no altar such results as these: want of parental authority, or despotism taking its place, a non-obedient spirit showing itself in the children, or a slavish fear consequent upon parental tyranny; the use of irreverent words, worldly conversation, and irregularity in the household economy. This must be so, when we consider the natural effects of a father, priest-like, bowing in prayer before God, of the Bible being honoured with a prominent place, of the Sabbath consequently coming in for more than a double share of religious exercises. There is a felt heavenly atmosphere in such a household. The bread of life is honoured above the bread that perishes. The whole household seems to be a living embodiment of the principle, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these shall be added unto you." First God, then man; first heaven, then earth; first the garment of righteousness, then the bodily covering; first bread for the soul, then bread for the body; first living water, then the water to cool the tongue—that is the divinely appointed order, and that, carried out from the domestic altar to the every-day life and calling, will wonderfully affect the entire membership of the household. Regularity of habit, economy and industry will in general mark the homes of conscientious Christians.

There is one thing which we cannot but regret in connection with this subject, and that is, the neglect of the songs of Zion as an element in Family Worship. The general practice is to observe the two parts of prayer

and reading, but singing is overlooked. Nor is this confined to those who do not sing. But it is seen in families who are naturally gifted in the musical line, and whose children are being educated to sing and play at great cost and pains. How exquisite it is to see the devout father judiciously selecting a psalm or hymn, and giving it out by using the time honoured formula, "Let us worship God!"

ERSKINE CHURCH, MONTEAL.

THIS congregation has long enjoyed an enviable reputation as to the liberality of its members, especially in connection with the great mission schemes of the Church.

Recently it has taken a "new departure" and adopted a system of church finance which is worthy of careful consideration by the office-bearers of all our churches. Pews rents, special collections, and even to some extent the ordinary Sabbath collections are done away with, and in their room is substituted a system whereby the trouble and annoyance of collecting rents and missionary monies is saved, and contributions obtained, without personal solicitation or undue pressure of any kind.

In the beginning of December, after the adoption of the system at a congregational meeting, blank schedules were placed in the pews of the church with the request that members and adherents would fill them up and put them in the collection plate the next Sabbath. The following is a copy of the schedule:

WEEKLY OFFERING, ERSKINE CHURCH.

Name of contributor.....
Address.....
Pew No..... Sittings occupied.....
Total amount of offering per week \$.....
Viz., for ordinary expenditure \$.....
"Missionary and Benevolent objects. \$.....

N.B.—Should any contributor desire to apportion the amount they intend giving for Missionary and Benevolent objects, they may do so by marking the same opposite any one or more of the objects noted below, all of which are included under this heading; but all not so indicated will be divided in the usual manner by vote at the Annual Missionary Meeting.

Home Missions.	Widows' and Orphans' Fund.
Foreign Missions.	Assembly and Synod Fund.
College.	City Missions.
French Evangelization.	Records.
French Canadian Missionary Society.	Sabbath Schools.
	Juvenile Missions.

Thus before the end of December each contributor pledged himself to give during the ensuing year a certain sum *weekly* for all purposes, including congregational as well as missionary objects. Prior to the first Sabbath in January every subscriber received a large envelope containing thirteen smaller envelopes, dated January 5th, January 12th, January 19th, and so on to the end of the quarter. Besides the dates, the envelopes have printed upon them a number corresponding to the contributor's number in the Church Treasurer's books. Every Sabbath the envelope of that date, containing the amount pledged, is put into the collection plate. If a contributor, from any cause, has been absent some Sabbath, the envelopes tell their own story. The ones not used are filled and together with the envelope for the day put into the plate. We are glad to learn that the scheme has thus far proved most successful in Erskine Church. The total amount pledged is considerably in excess of the total