

den and a yoke, but an inward and inspiring life.

*The discharge of parental duty and the cultivation of religious life in the family.*

"Here we lay our finger on the weakest spot, perhaps, of the whole religious life and experience of our people. From shore to shore a wail of sadness rises from deserted family altars, and from ten thousand homes where altars have never yet been reared. And were we to dogmatically assert that family religion can in no sense exist apart from the formal act of family worship, then might we shudder as we read the prophet's prayer, "Pour out Thy fury upon the heathen that know Thee not and upon the families that call not on Thy name."

But the cry arising from these reports is one of disappointment and not of despair. This beautiful social and public life that has been held up to our gaze, we instinctively feel, must root itself in much that is true and pure in private and domestic life. The Master Himself asserts that "by their fruits ye shall know them," and it holds in the spiritual sphere with all the force of a natural law, that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

If, therefore, the outcome of our domestic life is seen so largely in consistent Christian conduct, and in an almost universal recognition of a rising tide of spiritual life among the young, then we infer there must be wholesome religious influences in most of our homes, even though they should exist more in the spirit of devotion than in its outward act, and more in a winsome example than in formal instruction. While we deplore the comparative rarity of family worship, and would leave nothing undone to quicken our peoples' consciences in this regard, yet there is very much in the Home life of our people for which we may well bless God.

Even the family altar is by no means falling into desuetude, but is gradually, we think, becoming more potential and prevalent. *Sydney* says, "the reports concerning religious life in the family are generally more than encouraging." The Sessions of *Innocence* "are unanimous in the statement that family worship is generally observed morning and evening."

*Montreal* says the reports speak on this "generally in a disappointing tone," and refers to the suggestion of one Session that the General Assembly should be approached with the view of preparing a manual of devotion for use at family worship.

*Hamilton* reports that "only in a few cases are answers given that reveal a satisfactory state of things, or any improvement;" and sums up the subject thus: "The discharge of parental duties and the cultivation of religious life in the family call for our serious consideration. Parents woefully neglect their duty, and religion in the family is at a low ebb, if these reports are correct. Time occupied in dealing with this vital aspect of our work would be well spent."

*Iuron* says, "The honest ring about the answers may be judged from their general sadness in tone," though even that Presbytery can make some very precious and cheering quotations.

*Maitland* reports a "deepening sense of parental responsibility, an increased desire for its faithful discharge, and hence a consequent growing observance of the divinely recognized means of grace."

*Regina* has a congregation reporting morning and evening worship as established in almost every family.

And so the reports run, with many a friendly sunbeam amid the general gloom, many a single rose upon a heath where thistles and thorns abound. And yet we are encouraged to believe from these reports as a whole that the gloom is being slowly dispersed, and that the light that beams from Zion Hill is more and more illumining our home life, carrying with it the promise of that time when God "instead of the fathers shall take the children and make them princes in all the earth."

It is evident from many of the replies, as *Kingston* remarks, "that, despite unfavorable circumstances, the pressure of business, or the claims of pleasure, it is perfectly possible to have the home manifestly the dwelling of the righteous, with every member of the family a willing worshipper at the altar; and what is possible should be striven for till it becomes actual."

*The helpfulness of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies.*

Here again we have much information of