

RELIGION IN THE HOUSE.

Every day brings to public notice some new prescription for the evils that are, and for those that are impending in the future. The vices of the times are justly the cause of alarm, and when the public and legally-appointed means of restraint and reform are apparently ineffectual, it is not without cause that the anxious Christian patriot asks if nothing more can be done? If indeed the ordinary means of grace are not now as efficient in converting sinners as they have been in previous years, if our youth are growing up in habits that would have shocked the parents of a past generation, while we view them with comparative unconcern, then it is our duty to look closely for the causes of this degeneracy, and to apply a remedy if one can be found.

It is confessed, we believe, on all hands, that a change has gradually come over the households of our land, in respect to the maintenance of family discipline and religion. Here and there are doubtless to be seen exceptions—families where the habits of former days are preserved with great strictness, and the children are taught to reverence the ways of their ancestors. Probably these exceptions are more numerous in the rural districts of New England than elsewhere. But even in the most religious portions of our land there is every reason to believe that a mighty change has come over the households, and the good old way of ordering one's family in the fear of the Lord, has ceased to be as common as it was fifty years ago. We would say a few words with the faint hope of rousing the attention of the heads of families to the importance of restoring some of those neglected customs, and of making the subject of religion, more than it is now, a household concern.

It has intimate relations to the civil government. In the prevailing disregard of human authority, the increased and habitual irreverence for law, that marks the times on which we have fallen, we discover one of the most obvious and natural results of the absence of domestic religious influence. It is truly said that a bad son cannot be a good citizen, and the way to make them good sons is to give them right training at home. The public means of grace are of inestimable value; the power of good books is incalculable; the example of great and good men is mighty in its power on the young, but one and all are not equal to the gentle influences of the domestic circle, in forming the character for this and the next world. And if we were now to point toward the most important agencies, to make the coming generation more mindful of its obligations to human and divine law, more patriotic and conservative in its devotion to our free institutions, we would not point to the pulpit or the press, but to the parental influences which might be exerted in all the Christian homes of our country, as the means on which, under God, we would the most hopefully rely.

The subject, also, has intimate relations to the temporal success in life of the young. Early religious training is the best safeguard for after life. If industry and integrity, with common sense, are the best securities of success in business, the bases of both must be laid in the culture of the child while yet under the parental roof. Here habits and principles are formed: not by the formal precepts of a lecture, but by the daily and hourly intercourse of parents with children; by those lines upon lines and precepts upon precepts, which are dropped almost unconsciously, but produce their effect, and like seed long buried in the dust, bring forth fruit after many days. These lessons, with an example consistent, and given with that love—which knows no change, and followed

with prayers which take hold on heaven, will make an ineffaceable impression on the heart. They are the last influences through which a youth will break. They will save him to society and his friends and himself, when he has forgotten all the formal exhortations to virtue that he ever heard.

And this brings us to the highest consideration, which is the intimate relation of the subject to the salvation of souls. The family was constituted with reference to the spiritual as well as the temporal interests of its members. The blessing descends to thousands of generations who love God and keep his commandments. As the holy family is the fairest emblem of heaven, so it is the place in which to train souls for heaven. Parents ought to labor for and expect the early conversion of their children, and in the use of means they will not be disappointed. The godly counsels and prayers of parental love will not fail of success, if faith in God attends the faithful performance of duty. Heaven is the inheritance of children early taught the right way of the Lord and brought up in his fear. The possession is worth an effort, begun in infancy and prosecuted with unceasing zeal as long as children are within reach.

These are some of the results to be anticipated from a revival of family religion. We would not detract from the attention now bestowed upon organized schemes for promoting religion, especially among the young, but we would rejoice to know that the usages of our fathers were more strictly observed in the instruction and discipline of the children at home. There are few who will deny that a change, and a change for the worse, has come over the habits of our Christian families in this relation. And he will be a reformer worthy of immortal honour who shall call back the people to a better state of things. We would have it deeply impressed on the parental mind, that no amount of Sabbath school instruction, no amount of pulpit labor, can compensate for the loss of daily religious instruction in the family. No voice has such power as that of the faithful parent. No words will be so long remembered as those that fall sweetly from parental lips. No prayers are purer, stronger, or more availing, than those which are prompted by parental anxiety and love. And finally no promises are more precious and sure than those which secure the blessing of God upon the children of believing parents.

Never did we press a more important subject upon the thousands of Christian households in which these lines will be read. Let them be as a summons to the families who may have become remiss in religious duty. If in one house the family altar has been neglected, let it be restored. Gather the children daily, and not for mere formal worship, but for serious instruction and earnest prayer. The time thus spent is better than that which is given to the world. Business may make the children heirs of riches; religion will make them heirs of heaven.—*N. Y. Observer.*

WITHOUT FRIENDS.

In a late notice of the suicide of an inhabitant of this city, the daily papers incidentally remarked that "the deceased had no friends." Such is a terrible record to place against the name of any man. And, as there are a great many persons who are coming, and will hereafter come into this city, as strangers, exposed to every vicissitude of fortune, it is an important question whether men ever need to be reduced here to the awful condition of having no friends. We think the world should have a lesson read to it upon this matter. For we believe, that a man need not live in this city long, and not have many friends.