

The family idea is a favourite one with God. He himself is a Father. He has a household, and all parental tenderness and affection have their source in him. He is engaged to be a God to all the families of *Israel*. The covenant made with Abraham was one embracing all God's riches of mercy and grace. The Saviour, the Holy Spirit and Heaven—all were made over to faithful Abraham, and to all who inherit his faith and devotion. Then what a divine treasure is bequeathed to the family—"I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." "On every dwelling-place on Mount Zion a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night."

Social worship, for many centuries, was confined to the family. And when men more publicly called upon the name of the Lord, what was the congregation but the expansion of the family. There is, therefore, a sacredness connected with the word home. Alas! that there should be so many homes without God, over every one of which these terrible words hang as a flaming sword—"Pour out Thy fury on the families that call not upon Thy name." Parents whose hearts are right before God require no arguments to prove that it is their duty and privilege to unite in worshipping Him. They see proof of domestic worship pervading the whole Bible. All believers are made priests unto God. "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacle of the righteous." The true worship of God in the family may be said to regulate all its movements and transactions. Its influence on the parents is incalculable. It sweetens temper, allays irritation, regulates the conscience, and brings near eternal realities. How often the soul, when downcast and perplexed, experiences something analogous to what the Prophet *Isaiah* felt, when the angel with a live coal from the altar came to him with a message of grace. Parents taking hold of God's covenant promise, and appreciating the sign between God and them—that He will be a God to their seed—are anxious that their offspring from their birth should be the Lord's. What more likely to secure so desirable an end than to begin with object lessons? The

Bible in hand, voices raised sweetly and solemnly in praise to God, parents and all under their roof bowing before God—these exercises are calculated to make an abiding impression on a child's heart. In an island containing 4,000 inhabitants there was at one time neither tree nor shrub to be found, and planting invariably proved a failure. A man of means ordered a trench to be dug opposite his house, and when finished had it half filled with the soil, and then water made to flow through. There he planted willows, and beautifully they grow. The water courses beside which God would have our plants grow are, doubtless, the Family Altar—parental instruction and holy example. Children should be taught by example as well as precept, that reverence is due to the Lord in every act of worship. If the Divine blessing and aid are not invoked in a few words ere engaging in worship, there might be a moment of silent prayer by all.

Healthy family piety is seen in the regularity with which the household attends the house of God; worship made interesting at home, children will have delight in attending church service. Some families betray great want of that ardent desire God plants in the heart of every parent living near to Him—the desire to see his children lambs of the flock. Wherever Jesus is, children should be brought, and the promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," ought to satisfy parents that this is the proper place to bring their dear little ones to Him. Many of God's children remember the gentle knockings of Jesus at the door of their hearts in His name, when they, *Samuel-like*, knew not it was Jesus. Let children grow up to ten and twelve years of age, as many allow them to do, before they are seen in the house of God, and the devil has done what no parent can undo. Specially let them be led to the prayer-meeting—of all places the place of *power*. Thousands of children have been born again in that hallowed place, and trained to love and frequent the prayer-meeting through life. In our prayers let us not forget the little ones.

Next to the worship and Word of God,