

THE HOME CIRCLE.

BY M.

NO. 3—THE FAMILY ALTAR.

The most lovely spot on earth is the home of the young family consecrated by piety, love and prayer. Here an incense well pleasing to God ascends from the family altar at the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and of praise. Here the Holy Spirit loves to dwell, forming a canopy of sanctity, protection and of peace. It is an oasis where the weary traveller may safely turn to rest. Here woman, truly virtuous and benevolent, sensible of her obligation and her influence, occupies that position the Creator designed she should, viz., queen of home, and man's only true help-meet. Strength and honor are the clothing of such a household. "The husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land." Children are here as olive plants around the table, rising up and calling their parents blessed. Who can estimate the value of such a home? Its "price is far above rubies." Here mutual confidence, forbearance, cheerfulness, clarity, kindness, prudence, peace, and the fear and love of God are manifested as the embellishments of the true home. If the christian home be otherwise, well may it be asked, "Is there not a cause?" On the other hand, no place so melancholy as the abode, where these essentials to true happiness are lacking. The curse of the Lord is in such a dwelling. Its inmates "are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest." "The way of peace they know not." There is no recognition of the Most High in all their doings. They have no family altar to constitute a bond of union and hence they have no protection. Living without God, they enjoy no peace here, neither have they any hope beyond the grave.

"'Tis religion that can give sweetest pleasure while we live,
'Tis religion must supply solid comfort when we die."

If we would have a happy home on earth and an eternal home in heaven, we must endeavor that our household be right with God. Our sincere resolve should be that of Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." It is only in the way of appointed means that we can expect a blessing. Every house should be a sanctuary, and every parent a minister in holy things to its members. God's word should be the rule of faith and practice in every family, and wherever man has a tent, God should have an altar. Such is a duty enjoined by God and cannot be discarded. Man's responsibility and God's sovereignty are here unfolded. The family demands prayer as much as our nature demands home. It is the channel through which blessings descend. Communion with God constitutes a part of the intercourse and society of home. The first family began to call upon the name of the Lord. The first parent acted as priest of God in his family. Family religion is therefore of ancient origin. We find it not only in Eden, but in the tents of the

Vol 1, no 3, 1880