

with prayerfully faithfully and lovingly, in order to bring him to a right state of mind and heart. Wilful neglect of this very precious means of grace, and of the Saviour's dying command, is surely evidence of a very low spiritual condition.

In reference to religion in the family, your committee find 1st, that

#### FAMILY WORSHIP

is very generally observed. In one congregation of nearly one hundred families, all but three are in the habit of gathering morning and evening around the domestic altar for the worship of God. In another "nearly all" are reported to have family worship. Some of the Presbyteries report very considerable improvement in this respect during the year. One says, "it is much better observed and on a wider scale than it used to be."

One Presbytery reports a congregation of over 200 families in which 84 family altars were erected within the year, and another still in which 20 such altars were reared.

These cases are cheering, but alas, they are exceptional. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact, that a large number of families in a majority of our congregations are still living in absolute neglect of family prayer. There is much work for sessions to do in this matter. In the language of our report, too much diligence cannot be used in pointing out the blessings to be secured by the people and diligent use of this ordinance, and the curse which must rest upon those who despise or neglect it.

#### THE SHORTER CATECHISM,

is still used in the homes of our people; but your committee fear that the good old custom of committing to memory and reciting this admirable summary of divine truth, on the Sabbath evening, around the fireside, is not as prevalent as it was in years gone by. This is to be deeply deplored. Sessions should take steps to have this custom revived, where it has fallen into abeyance, and stimulated where it still exists. Its universal adoption would turn every home into a theological school, with the parents as professors, the children as students, and the Shorter Catechism, as the text book. With such theological institutions in operation, twelve months in the year, all over the land, there would never be a dearth of Godly students in our college at Pine Hill, of devoted and successful ministers in our pulpits, of intelli-

gent and pious men and women in our pews, nor of missionaries for both home and foreign fields.

The catechism is taught in most if not all our Sabbath Schools. This is well, but the instruction given in the Sabbath School can never make the children of our church as familiar with this priceless little book as they ought to be. Such instruction must be supplemented by home instruction, in order to be of any permanent value to the coming generation.

#### Concerning the

#### OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH,

although there is more or less complaint made by all the Presbyteries and many sessions, still there is much ground for thankfulness that the Lord's day is so well kept in these provinces.

The complaints come chiefly from towns and cities, and from places situated along railway lines.

In the country districts, especially, where the means of grace are regularly and frequently kept up, the day of rest is very well observed.

The tendency however is to laxness in this matter, and the present generation is certainly not as strict in their observance of the Sabbath as their fathers were. This tendency must be faithfully guarded against. The Sabbath is a bulwark of divine construction which it is all important to preserve intact in these days of excessive devotion to material interests. If this God built breast work to piety and godliness be removed or even lowered, the incoming tide of worldliness will carry all true religion before it.

The Sabbath should be emphatically a family day. Its holy pause, affords an opportunity for parents and children, who are often necessarily separated during the other six days of the week, to spend the hallowed hours together in the Sanctuary and in the home, and if the sacred opportunities afforded by the Sabbath be improved by the family, the spiritual influence exerted on parents and children, must be of incalculable value in its bearing on the temporal and eternal interests of both.

#### COMMITTING THE SCRIPTURES TO MEMORY.

It does not appear that the scriptures are memorized in the homes of our people to any great extent. A few parents, no doubt, do their duty in storing the minds of their children with the word of God,