

# THE WESLEYAN.

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"LET US CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER TO PROVOKE UNTO LOVE AND TO GOOD WORKS."—HEBREWS x. 24.

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## DIVINITY.

### FAMILY RELIGION.

"I will walk within my house with a perfect heart."  
PSALM ci. 2.

MANY families, even in Britain, where religious knowledge is more widely spread than in any other country, are as destitute of religion, as the numerous herds of cattle that roam upon the forest. How can we account for this? May we not justly blame the masters of those families? How unlike David, who, amidst all the great duties of a public life, resolved to walk within his house with a perfect heart.

Let us consider, the walk of a pious man within his house; and the probable effects which his walk may produce in his family.

#### I. THE WALK OF A PIOUS MAN WITHIN HIS HOUSE.

There is, too frequently, a great difference between a man's walk before the world, and his walk within his house. Before the world, he appears prudent, just, and good: but within his house, imprudent, unjust, and wicked. Public opinion weighs more with him than the opinion of his family. Hence he studiously deceives the public; but throws off the mask before his domestics. His family, influenced either by natural affection, or a fear of his resentment, conceal his real character, and help him to deceive the world. But a wretch of this description, though unknown to men, is fully known to God, who will "appoint him a portion with hypocrites: There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew xxiv. 51.

The walk of a man within his house, includes his whole conduct, both civil and religious, in the bosom of his own family. There, could we follow him, we should be able to develop his real character; as his tempers, words, and works, within his house, are generally without disguise. Every one in his house, except the undiscerning infant, witnesses, from day to day, his rising up and lying down; his going out and coming in; and all the steps he takes, both in temporal things, and in those things which relate to the eternal world.

To walk with a perfect heart, implies genuine simplicity, and godly sincerity. A pious man professes obedience to God; love and respect to his family; and a desire to do good to all men. The sincerity of his profession appears evident, in his daily walk within his house; and those who know him best, admire him most. Under his roof, God is honoured; peace and happiness abound; and plans of public usefulness are formed.

David resolved to give his family a proof, that he loved and served God himself. They neither heard any thing from his lips, nor saw any thing in his life, which clashed with the laws of his God. Both his tempers and conduct harmonized with the profession which he made before men. How admirable is consistency between profession and practice! Where this is found, calumny itself cannot fix a stain.

Thus, the man who walks within his house with a perfect heart, is a bright example of religion to his family. They see religion exemplified, and finely illustrated, in every action of his life. All its divine charms appear in their native lustre, and produce admiration and love. There cannot be a greater blessing to any family, than a master who conducts himself upon these principles. Compared with this, the finest gold, in point of real value, is but dross and dung.

Such a man will institute in his family those forms of religion, which may appear best calcu-

lated to lead his family to God. He will frequently call them together, to read the Holy Scriptures, to sing hymns of praise, and to offer up prayer and supplication to God. And that these forms may prove useful, he studies to make them, in every respect, as agreeable as possible; knowing how many, by severe forms, have created disgust against all that is good.

These forms are accompanied by prudent and interesting instructions, upon general and important subjects; and, in addition to general instructions, a pious man often instructs each individual of his family apart, in those particular duties which are absolutely and essentially necessary to salvation. His own mind being richly stored with religious knowledge, he imparts it freely to every one who is placed under his care.

The instructions of such a man are followed by commands. It is said of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Gen. xviii. 19. Parental authority, wisely directed, has great influence. A pious parent insists upon outward decorum, while he recommends the life and power of vital godliness. He cannot give spiritual life to his family: But he uses the means, and leaves the rest to God.

If commands and well-timed advice fail, a man of this description adds *reproofs* and *corrections*. Solomon says, "He that spareth his rod, hateth his son: But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." Prov. xiii. 24. His corrections, however, are prudently administered. They are inflicted at proper times, and are proportioned to the crimes which may have been committed. Want of caution, in these respects, frequently defeats the designs of corrective punishment.

#### II. THE PROBABLE EFFECTS WHICH HIS WALK MAY PRODUCE IN HIS FAMILY.

A family governed by a pious man, commonly prospers in temporal things. Every one is trained up in the habit of industry, frugality, and honesty. These habits promote health and wealth, and every comfort that this world can afford. Afflictions, for wise reasons, may be laid upon such a family; but, in general, they abound in the enjoyment of necessary good things. "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Psalm xxxiv. 10.

At the same time, religion frequently takes deep root in such families. They learn to love, honour, and obey their Creator; to be just in their dealings with men; and to be temperate, sober, and chaste. There is more truth in the words of the wise man, than many parents will allow: "Train up a child in the way he should go: And when he is old he will not depart from it." Prov. xxii. 6. There may be a few exceptions to this rule; but, generally, a prudent and pious education produces the most happy effects.

These things render a family useful in the world. Those who are connected with them, whether by blood, by marriage, by friendship, or by commerce, have cause to bless God. Their influence is extensively felt; and many are induced to follow their example. In this way, religion spreads from house to house; and the happy effects of one man's piety, through the blessing of God, may reach to thousands.

Reputation necessarily follows piety and usefulness. All, except the most worthless, both think and speak well of such families. They stand high in the esteem of wise and good men; the tongue of slander is silenced; and the vilest of men secretly admire them. Who would not wish to share these excellencies? The awful policy of wicked families to keep up their reputation,

proves how much real worth is estimated, even by those who dare not pursue its excellencies.

But what is of most importance, God approves of such families. He looks down from heaven, his holy habitation, with smiles of approbation. They are lovely in his sight, and are favoured with his special presence. When Jesus was upon earth, he honoured the pious family of Mary and Martha with much of his company; and when he comes again to judge the quick and dead, such families will receive peculiar tokens of his favour.

God, who approves of such families, sends down upon them the choicest blessings, both of providence and grace. He supplies their wants; protects them by night and by day; and will finally call them up to join the family of heaven. There their piety, friendship, and happiness, will be perfected. Death may separate them for a few years; but they will meet again, in a happier world, to part no more. While they live together here, the special presence of God, like the "ark of the covenant" in the house of Obed-edom, will secure them a blessing. "The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had." I. Chron. xiii. 14.

Masters of families, suffer the word of exhortation. Much, very much, depends upon you. Your families are either blessed or cursed through your instrumentality. Now begin to act wisely. You have a great and weighty charge committed to your care; and you will have an awful account to give on a future day. Success may not always follow your well-meant endeavours to promote the happiness of your families; but make the attempt in the name of the Lord, and say with pious Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua xxiv. 15. Amen.

From the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine.

## EASTERN ACCOMMODATION FOR TRAVELLERS.

"And laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."—LUKE ii. 7.

It is probable that few persons who read the above and parallel passages, form anything like a distinct idea of the lodging that was prepared for the infant Jesus, or of the circumstances connected with the place of his nativity. Not that any erroneous notions upon this subject are of the least consequence in a doctrinal or practical point of view; but there is something peculiarly interesting about every part of the history of our Redeemer, who visited the world in great humility, that he might save his people from their sins. A degree of ambiguity has also doubtlessly arisen in many minds concerning the angel's message to the shepherds of Bethlehem: "This shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger." (Verse 12.) For how would the shepherds understand by "a manger" the precise place where Jesus was lying, since there might be many cribs for cattle in the town of Bethlehem? Besides, our translation of the word with the indefinite article is so far incorrect; the proper rendering being "in the manger." A brief sketch of the common houses of accommodation for travellers in eastern countries, will easily explain the matter.

We are not to suppose that any places like our hotels are there to be found; and the Greek term here called an "inn," is elsewhere rendered by a "guest-chamber." (Mark xiv. 14.) Common travellers in the east usually find shelter in a khan; or, as the Persians call it, a "caravansery;" whilst others, especially foreigners, obtain a room in the Sheik's or Chief's house; or some more