

Family Reading.

THE RECITATION OF THE CREED

Our dear pastor has a flowing tongue, but speaks clearly. His rapidity, however, often discourages me in the responsive parts of worship; especially in the creed. His own faithful teaching has led me both to venerate this symbol, take great satisfaction in its use. But I need deliberation here; and too often, having begun with him, I am quickly left behind, while those who have an equal facility of speech rush on with him to the end, as an express train. You know I detest drawling and hesitation, and I know a devout expression may be given in a rapid utterance; but it seems to me a peculiar and distinct importance ought to be given to the saying of the Creed. When, as we are taught, the Creed once began with the first person plural, then some might speak for all; but this first person singular surely gives even the slow-tongued a right to confess the faith openly, and how can it be done with one accord except the leading voice be very deliberate? The mighty truths which set forth the Christian faith in one complete symbol, need to be distinctly recognized. Mark a recitation of the Creed in Church, and you will perceive the harm of neglecting this. "I believe," says the minister and the congregation with him; but if each believes only what he utters the creed of many is much shorter than his. To begin the second part with him, "And in Jesus Christ," some have to leave out "heaven and earth." Almost before all heads are raised from due and lowly reverence at the Adorable Name, the minister is saying "Pontius Pilate." In their eagerness not to be left, some believe that "the third day He rose from the dead He ascended." Others have quickly to choose what to say, it being impossible to pronounce every article in time. It is well that the Creed is used at both services, as the omissions of the morning may be said in the evening. In these days, the article "I believe in the Holy Ghost," might be profitably followed with a solemn pause; but it is a new start as it were after the space of a coupling, the whole train rushing through with the Amen as a last car, rather than as a solemn and confirming adjunct. Wherever there is haste, let deliberation mark the recital of the Creed. It is hardly possible that it can be rapidly uttered and each of its great verities distinctly recognized. Let any one try this in private. Shall we be hasty before God? If any of these remarks cause wounds, be assured they are faithful, and made by a friend.—*Episcopal Register.*

SHAM.

The time in which we live is most emphatically an age of sham. Falsity prevades our modern society to its core, and the good old time-honored ideas relative to honesty, whether of purpose, action or speech, are discarded by the average individual of to-day, as something obsolete—very pleasant to contemplate and talk about, but rather Utopian for the busy, progressive, exciting life of the present generation. This pernicious system of making things appear what they are not, like a poisonous canker, has gradually spread over the land until it has pervaded every branch of society, and even our churches are not free from its baleful influence. Let any one who has the moral courage and disposition to do so, tear away the thin mask of conventionalism with which modern society has covered itself, and he will find beneath a foul mass of uncleanness and hideous corruption which will make him shudder with disgust and fear, as he thinks of the danger of this unsound condition of things, liable at any time to nourish and bring into existence evils which will threaten all in a common ruin. There are some few left yet, thank God, who still have their feet planted on truth, and who, scorning to make use of sham in any form, stand out in bold relief, bright examples of integrity, holding the just confidence of those who can appreciate their stability, although they may be unwilling to make the attempt to imitate them. Sham appears to be the curse of our so-called superior civilization. The farther we progress in refinement and culture—as at present understood—being in many cases a synonym for luxurious voluptuousness—the more artificial and unreal becomes our life.

It certainly is not desirable nor is it necessary that we should go back to the rude habits of our forefathers except to adopt what was excellent in them; but

by imitating them in their regard for truth and substantial excellence, rather than by allowing the tinsel and noise of sham to captivate our judgment, we shall lay the foundation for the more healthful and satisfactory state of society. An agency, however, is necessary to bring about this desirable consummation; and what is more natural than to look to the Church for such help. Let her shake off the parasites who would clog her and use her in their interests; let her true children rally to the work of inaugurating this much needed reform by utterly refusing to take part in the many polite fictions society sanctions, and if they are earnest and consistent, their example will be found most potent in staying the evil. It is for just this refining and purifying influence that the Church exists; and did those whose duty it is as her members to do so, only serve her with half the zeal they serve the world, society would long since have felt the good effects of her influence in cleansing it from much that is pernicious.

WATCHING.

There lived in a big barn in the country a brown owl and her two little owls. The little owls were of a lighter brown than the mother owl, but each had great staring, yellow eyes like hers, and queer little feather points standing out over their ears, making them look like brown kittens, with beaks instead of noses.

I suppose you children know that birds' eyes cannot move quickly about in their heads as yours can. You can look up or down or sideways without moving your heads; but an owl must move its whole head when it wants to look even the least bit sideways, and yet there are few creatures which see more than, or as quickly as, an owl. At night they see as clearly as we do in the day, and in daylight they can see too; though not so well as at night, for the bright light hurts their eyes. Indeed, they would be blind in daylight if they had not an extra eyelid, made of very thin skin, almost like tissue paper, which they draw over their eyes, and can still see through it enough to know if danger is near.

But usually owls go to sleep in the daytime, and shut their real eyelids just as sleepy children do. I have no doubt that when sunrise comes the mamma owl says, "Children go to bed, or your eyes will hurt you to-morrow night;" and the little owls answer her, "Oh dear mamma let us stay up a little longer! We will shut our thin eye-lids and not hurt our eyes." For children of all kinds seem to hate bedtime, even when they are so sleepy that their eyes close up of themselves.

But little owls have to study and work for their living every night and all night. They must learn to fly without making the slightest noise. Few people have ever heard an owl flying; you can only tell it has left one tree by hearing it "hoot" on another. They must learn to be quick, too; oh so quick! else the little field mice, and moles, and ground squirrels would never be caught. And they must watch. All the time the little owlets must be thinking and watching and listening, or they would soon starve and die.

These were the lessons which the owlets studied, and the good mother helped them all she could. But one night the little owls learned a very bad lesson, which gave the mother owl much trouble. And who do you think taught the owlets this bad lesson? Two little children, who lived in the house to which the owls' barn belonged; two nice little children, with brown hair, and brown eyes, and red cheeks.

The mother owl and her owlets sat on a tree beside the open sitting room window, and this is what they saw and heard; Robbie sat kicking his foot against Mollie's chair. He seemed to think it a pretty noise. "Do be quiet Rob," said Mollie. Robbie's foot was quiet for one half minute; then he began again. This time Mollie gave his foot a push, which sent him rolling over backward, for he was sitting on the floor. This made a great noise, for both the children laughed as if two pieces of rudeness were very nice fun indeed.

The little owls looked at each other in surprise. They had been taught to keep quiet.

Presently Robbie got up from the floor, and, wishing to reach a book upon the table, stepped on Jip's tail, and then tumbled over papa's foot. "Robert, do learn to look where you are going!" exclaimed his papa.

Both little owls were surprised again, for they could plainly see Jip's black tail lying upon the light carpet, and papa's foot too, and they wondered how this boy could be so blind.

Soon after this the servant came in, carrying a tray, on which was a pitcher of lemonade, with some cakes and glasses.

Mollie jumped up directly. "O, mamma, let me pour it." Then Robbie came to help her, and both made a great clatter with the glasses, and spilled part of the lemonade on the table cover.

That made mamma leave her chair and come to wipe it up. "The cover is quite spoiled," said mamma, sighing. "Why is it that my children do so much mischief?"

"They never think," said papa; "they never look; they never are on the watch, except to do something to please themselves. Send them both to bed; they shall have neither cake nor lemonade."

Then the little owls were surprised again, for Robbie, who had just taken a cake, threw it down angrily upon the floor and began to howl and cry as if his heart was broken. His mamma took him by the hand and led him out of the room, while Mollie followed her, feeling very cross and ill used.

"See!" said the mother owl. "Those creatures can neither keep quiet, nor see anything, nor catch anything."

"One of them caught something," said a little owl; "but he let it go again while he made that great noise."

"I trust you children will never follow such a bad example," said the mother owl. "Let us go into the orchard now."

But the little owls had learned a bad lesson, and for many days after their mother had to reprove them for rustling their wings and hooting to each other when mice were in sight.

Up stairs in the house the other mamma knelt down by her two naughty children, and asked God to help them to watch over their thoughts and acts, that they might be guarded from falling into some great sin through carelessness. For carelessness is the key which opens the door of sin. *Erleup Muller.*

THE STRONG ARM

"Hold on! hold on!" was the strong ringing cry from the old voyager's lips, as amid the rolling and pitching and tossing of the storm, his lifeboat neared the desired port.

"Aye, aye!" was the sturdy response. Only from one little voice, away in the storm, came the cry with the sadness of despair in it: "I can't hold on!"

Another instant and the captain's arm was around the child, and he was safe.

So, often the strong Christian says to the little one, weak in faith: "Hold on to Christ!" But the cry goes up: "I can't! I can't! Hold me! save me, dear Jesus, or I perish!" And our blessed Captain's strong, loving hand is stretched out to rescue the fainting one.

Ah! this is a blessed thought, a thrice blessed truth, that when weary and worn and weak with life's tossing and tempests, with no more strength even to hold on to our only hope of safety, there is our Captain, not only strong, but willing to save, in whose mighty arm and blessed love we may gladly rest, with the trustfulness of a little child.

Never forget this, trembling child of God; if you can't hold on to Jesus, send but one heart cry to Him, and His arm will surely encircle you.

The hand that holds the water in its hollow, that cares for the sparrow, and clothes the grass of the field, is a resting place, large and strong, tender and loving enough, for all who seek its refuge.

THE VANITY OF LIFE

Though our own eyes do everywhere behold the sudden and resistless assaults of death, and nature assureth us by never-failing experience, and reason by infallible demonstration, that our times upon earth have neither certainty nor durability, that our bodies are but the unvils of pain and diseases, and our minds the hives of numbered cares, sorrows, and passions; and that when we are most glorified, we are but those painted posts against which envy and fortune direct their darts; yet, such is the true unhappiness of our condition, and the dark ignorance which covereth the eyes of our understanding, that we only prize, pumper and exalt this vessel and slave of death, and forget altogether, or only at our east-away leisure, the imprisoned immortal soul, which can neither die with the reprobate, nor perish with the mortal parts of virtuous men; seeing God's justice in the one, and His goodness in the other, is exercised for evermore, as the ever-living subjects of His reward and punishment. But when is it that we examine this great account? Never, while we have one vanity more left us; to spend! We plead for titles till our breath fail us, dig for riches whilst our strength enableth us; exercise malice while we can revenge; and then, when time hath beaten from us both youth, pleasure, and health, and that nature itself hateth the house of old age, we remember with Job that "we must go the way from whence we shall not return, and that our bed is made for us in the dark." And then I say, look overlate into the bottom of our conscience, which pleasure and ambition had locked up from us all our lives, we behold therein the fearful images of our actions past, and withal this terrible inscription that "God will bring every work into judgment that man hath done under the sun."—*Sir Walter Raleigh.*

Happy is the man who has learned this one thing—do the plain duty of the moment, quickly and cheerfully, whatever it may be.