

PARISH AND HOME.

It is a large-minded Christ and a large-handed Christ that meets us at the beginning of a new year. It is one who says, "I am come with both My hands full—with life, and all that belongs to life—that you may have abundantly."

YOUR OWN.

What if your own were starving,
Fainting with famine pain,
And you should know
Where golden grow
Rich fruit and golden grain;
Would you hear their wail
As a thrice-told tale,
And turn to your feasting again?

What if your own were thirsting,
And never a drop could gain,
And could you tell
Where a sparkling well
Poured forth melodious rain;
Would you turn aside
While they gasped and died,
And leave them to their pain?

What if your own were darkened,
Without one cheering ray,
And you alone
Could show where shone
The pure, sweet light of day;
Would you leave them there
In their dark despair,
And sing on your sunlit way?

What if your own were prisoned
Far in a hostile land,
And the only key
To set them free
Was held in your command;
Would you breathe free air
While they stifled there,
And wait and hold your hand?

Yet, what else are we doing,
Dear ones, by Christ made free,
If we will not tell
What we know so well
To those across the sea,
Who have never heard
One tender word
Of the Lamb of Calvary?

"They are not our own," you answer;
"They are neither kith nor kin!"
They are God's own,—
His love alone
Can save them from their sin;
They are Christ's own,—
He left His throne
And died, their souls to win.
—Author Unknown.

THE HOME LIFE.

By the REV. W. J. ARMITAGE, Rector of St. Paul's Church, Halifax, N.S.

"Show Piety at Home."—I. Tim. V. 4.

The home is the real theatre of the great drama of human life. There we are born, there we live,

there we play our part, there we find our highest happiness, there we face our deepest losses and meet our greatest sorrows, and there at last we hope to die.

The home was God's first Bible. He revealed Himself in that first and best of all Schools, and we reach no higher thought than God revealing Himself as Father, and the Saviour of mankind, as the Son and the Holy Spirit is indwelling in the heart, abiding as in a house. God gave our first parents a home in Eden, a garden of delights, and we look for the heavenly home beyond, in the City of God as the paradise of His love. The race began as a family; its highest development has been where the home has been purest, and the thought of brotherhood nearest to the Divine ideal.

The home was the first Church, where the first altar was erected, and the first priest led in holy service. The home was the first Kingdom, where order and rule had their first beginnings, and the thought still lingers in the old saying that every English man's house is his castle, and that in the home woman wields her mild sceptre as its queen.

The home is a natural result of the social instinct. The beginning of society, as every thinker on the subject recognizes, is the family life. Man has been well called a gregarious animal. Animals gather in herds, birds in flocks, and man finds the satisfaction of his being in family or social life.

We love to trace the first beginnings of family life to God Himself, Who gave Adam his life, and Whose richest gift is His children, the truest blessing to every home.

Home is the training school of character. There life is moulded and shaped for action. And just here we find the necessity for a true model. This God provides in His Word, and especially in Jesus Christ, the perfect pattern of a holy life. The Christ-life in the home is the blessed secret of the highest and the noblest character.

Home is the place of testing.

There we show ourselves as we really are. There is little or no disguise. We are natural in our homes if nowhere else. In the world we may act a part or wear a mask, but no one can do this at all times, and at home we act under impulse and without reflection, and thus discover our true character. Our religion is then tested and tried. The Apostle calls for piety as the leading principle, the pervading influence of the home life. Now piety looks in two directions. One eye is towards God, and it beams with love, and is marked by veneration for Him as Father. The other looks towards the homely circle and shines with reverence towards parents, and affection for the members of the family and devotion to their best interests.

The secret of a happy home is not hard to find. First, I would place the union of hearts, for love must reign, rule, and be the uniting bond of the home. Next there should be identity of interests. If division or discord are allowed to gain an entrance they will break down and destroy the home. Let the home be the centre of social life. Endeavour to find there your chief pleasures, and make it the happiest place in the world. Let it ever occupy the first place in your thoughts, and be the centre of your heart's best affection. The husband and father should there, above all places, be kind and considerate. He will find in his home the warmest of all welcomes, the truest rest, and the most precious sympathy. There are men who are seldom at home, and are but strangers or lodgers, or occasional visitors, but experience shows that no institute in social club or meeting-place can make up for the sacred associations of the home. The wife or mother should make home so bright and attractive that all other places seem cold and cheerless in the contrast. It is in the home that a woman's life finds its truest work and its richest rewards. Phidias, the greatest of Greek sculptors, when he depicted a woman, placed her sitting under a snail shell, meaning that, like