

Family Reading.

PRAYER.

PRAYER is the Spirit's gift to us
When other boons are failing,
The staff to help us on our way,
The bread to feed us day by day,
When on life's sea we're sailing.

And e'en when storm and breakers rise,
And fear our bosoms fill,
The Spirit in the form of prayer,
Comes to our hearts and nestles there,
And storm, and wave are still.

Oh blest and blessed privilege—
To all so freely given,
The beacon on life's troubled road,
The lightener of each weary load,
The stepping stone to Heaven.

M. P. Sarnia.

WAS IT CHANCE OR NOT?

A MAN WAS on his way to France. As he went on board the ship, he fell and broke his leg. So he could not go that day. Did it vex him? It did, no doubt, for a time. But soon he heard that the ship was lost on the way, and that all on board had lost their lives. Do you think that it was a chance that he was not lost too? Was it not more than chance? We need not say that God chose to drown the rest and save him: But we know that he was bound to praise God for his life, and to love God Whogiveth all good things.

A CREDIT TO ME.

Good fathers sometimes have bad sons, who spoil their hopes and fill their lives with grief. Bad fathers sometimes have good sons, who find it hard to keep the fifth commandment, and who are bowed with shame for what they look on as their own disgrace. Sons often fail through not keeping in their father's steps. Many fathers need to be warned from their ways of sin, to take pattern by those whom they ought to lead in the right paths.

A clergyman who was speaking to a parishioner whose idle, careless, drunken life showed darkly beside the life of his son. He said to him "Why don't you try to be like your boy? It is a strange thing to tell a father to learn from his child; but you know that you would be a new man, and would take a new place in the world, if you only did as he does." "Oh yes," said the man, "that lad is a credit to me." "A credit to you?" replied the clergyman. "What do you mean? He is no credit to you, though you are a disgrace and a heart-grief to him; you have had nothing to do with making him what he is. You have done all you could to make him as bad as you are. It is in spite of you, in spite of your bad example, and of your failure in a father's duty, that he is a good, honest fellow, respected by everyone, and sure to get on in the world.

The man had never seen the matter in this light before. He thought over it, and for a time it helped to keep him straight. His son's high character, of which he had been proud, was now a continual reproof; for he felt that it was high because it was unlike his own, and his example had not been followed.

THE ALTAR.

Why then so backward, O my soul! why so fearful to go to meet thy Saviour? Thou art not prepared: hasten others and prepare thyself. For this must be no pretence to keep thee away: since they who sent their excuses and made light of it, had as severe a doom as he that had not on the wedding garment. 'T is true, whosoever does his Lord's commands slightly and without heed, must expect punishment: and wilt thou therefore choose wholly to neglect it, and be the servant who knew his master's will, but did it not. St. Luke xii. 47. I may be prepared, if I will: I must therefore expect a double punishment, both for my want of preparation, and my absence to-day.

If an earthly prince orders me a speedy embassy, and at the time of my expected return comes in haste and demands an account of it: will it be enough to tell him that I was not yet set out, because I had not yet put on my travelling grab? Much less will such trivial pretences afford me any just excuses when I appear before the great God, who will take a severe account of my absence, and then, like him that would not prepare to come, I shall stand speechless.

Put on thy garments therefore O my soul, and haste away: for my Lord is importunate and stays expecting thee. Wilt thou send the King word that thou art neither ready, nor will prepare to be so? That will be such an affront indeed, as will make Him forever abhor thee, and stop all future invitations to His feast. Up then, O my soul, and call up all thy graces, and forthwith adorn thyself: for nothing will excuse thee in His sight, if His proffer be thus abused and slighted, since Himself and the guests are waiting with impatience for thy coming.

O my Lord, I come, I accept the offer, I can no longer resist so kind an invitation. And that I may not come unprepared, I here give up my whole self, both soul and body, to Thy service. And thus I now approach Thy heavenly temple in order to present myself at Thine altar.

PREACHING CHRIST.

WHAT is it to learn Christ? What is it to preach Christ?

These are important questions, for on their answer all practical religion depends. Some that learn Christ in a wrong way do not amend their lives: those that learn Christ in the right way do not "walk as other Gentiles walk."

It is not enough to say that we are not to learn Christainty or the doctrines of Christ, but Christ Himself. For some whose doctrines centres in Christ, and who desire to know Him and Him alone, may boast, "I am of Christ," and yet neither preach nor learn the truth.

What is, then, this learning of Christ? St. Paul explains it.—"If so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus."

But we have not heard the voice of the Lord. He did not personally instruct us. What then? We must see our position as it is described in the second chapter of the Epistle to

the Hebrews: if we have not heard what "began to be spoken" by the Lord, that teaching has been "confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." Hebrews ii. 3.

Are we, then, at a disadvantage, because we have not heard the voice of the Lord? Let us see. The commissions to the Apostles was this.—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." St. Matt. xxviii. 20. Here are two words translated "teach" in our Bibles. And they are, in the original Greek, two different words. The first "teach" does not mean "instruct" in Christ's school; it means simply "make disciples of" by bringing into the school. And the second "teaching" does mean "instruct." The order of the "learning" of Christ is this: First comes a preliminary teaching of necessary things, and among them an instruction as to the need of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Then without delay the candidate is baptized. Afterwards, as a baptized Christian, the pupil goes into his class for regular instruction, and is to learn to do all things which Christ has commanded, among these things the need of obeying the precept concerning the celebration of Holy Communion. "Do this in remembrance of Me."

Now at this stage of our meditations it is most important that we should consider how we "learned Christ," how far we have learned Him aright, and how much we may have still to be taught.

For this is the point to which we have arrived. We want to know, in the first place, about the foundation which has been laid. And next we want to know what we may build thereupon. First, we must look back a little, and see whether "the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God" has been duly laid: and then we must see as clearly as we can the part of the foundation which consists "of the doctrine of baptism and of laying on of hands."

We have spoken of repentance, faith, and baptism. The true way of "learning Christ" in which the Church instructs us will now lead us to the subject of "laying on of hands" after baptism, and to the doctrines connected with it.

But it is not safe to pass on rapidly. We must make our ground sure, that we may not slip, or let any useful teaching slip from us. Our best plan at this point is to obey the precept of St. Paul:—"Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and has been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." 2. St. Timothy iii. 4.

"Ye have not so learned Christ." How have we learned Him? What is the order and plan of instruction which the Church uses in our case? We must take care that we "learn Christ" aright. We must see that it is a plan of teaching which will preserve us from all that is unchristian and wrong.

The course of instruction to be followed by the children of the Church is contained in the four questions asked in the service for the "Public Baptism of Infants, with their answers. The same questions and answers are given with little variation in the ser-

vice for the Baptism of those of Riper years. And the whole teaching is summed up in the one question asked by the bishop to the candidates for Confirmation, at the beginning of that service, as you find it in the Book of Common Prayer.

If you go through those questions and their answers, observing their order and connection, you will find what you seek. You will "learn Christ" there. The Church will teach you to forsake sin, to believe in God, to frequent the Sacraments, and to follow holiness.

CRUEL PARENTS.

PARENTS often wonder how their children have learned evil. They say that they have "only taught them what is good," and yet faults grow in them, and they turn out badly. They forget that children's eyes and ears are always greedy, that their thoughts are always busy, and that they begin by taking their elders as models from which to copy. Ah! fathers and mothers, think you that your boys and girls only attend to you during the few minutes, now and then, in which you give them good advice in words? They watch you, they listen to you. They think over your words and what you do: they know whether you follow yourselves the counsels you give them. They will tell if you are surly and passionate, or slothful, or selfish, or anything else that you warn them not to be, and perhaps punish them for being. They know if you live without prayer, and as if the God you talk to them about had nothing to do with grown-up people. What good is it to be careful to teach them good, and not to teach them evil by precept, if all the while, your example makes your words seem to them nonsense, and lead them wrong. You love your children, whom God loves and has given to your care. You toil for them, and would face any trial to save them from worldly harm. At the same time, if you are not godly, so far as you are not faithful and consistent, you are, by the power of the love and respect they have for you, hindering God's work in them, and handing them over to God's foe and theirs.

ON TERMS.

NELSON found that two of his captains were "not on terms." It was just before a great battle. The great Admiral said to them, "Terms! shake hands, gentlemen! yonder is the enemy!"

A very wise word. While we are disputing, the devil, the world, and the flesh are triumphing. We are not on terms with one another; meantime the enemies of our souls are getting strengthened against us all.

"Children of one family" should not "fall out, and chide, and fight." Those who kneel at the same altar and feed on the same Holy Sacrament, should be on "terms" of peace and love. "Charity with all men" must grow from "Charity at home."

"Make no friendship with an angry man." Thus saith the Scripture. Beware especially of religious or irreligious strife. Let us all work as hard as we can. God will help each of us to mend his own faults, and to live peaceably with all men.