

from the cool fountain that sparkles at its roots, so doth God's wayfarer draw his morning supplies from the unexhausted spring. Morning is the golden hour for devotion. The mind is fresh. The mercies of the night provoke to thankfulness. The buoyant heart, that is in love with God, makes its earliest flight, like the lark, toward the gates of heaven. Gratitude, dependence, love, faith, all prompt to early interviews with Him who, never sleeping and never slumbering himself, waits on his throne for our morning orisons. We all remember Bunyan's beautiful description of his pilgrim who "awoke and sang" in the *Chamber of Peace*, which looked toward the sun-rising. If stony Egyptian *Memnon* made music when the first rays of the light kindled on his flinty brow, a living Christian heart should not be mute when God causes the outgoings of his mornings to rejoice.

3. Closet devotions are the precursor to family worship. Family religion underlies the commonwealth and the church of Christ. No Christian government—no healthy public conscience—no Bible-philanthropies—no godly church-life, can exist without their roots beneath Christian hearth-stones and family altars. The "*tutamen et decus*" [the defence and adornment] of dear old Scotland is found in those scenes of fireside worship which Burns has so sweetly pictured:

"From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,

That makes her loved at home, revered abroad."

No prelude to the day is so fitting, so impressive, so powerful in its sacred influence, as the union of household hearts around the throne of grace. When a cheerful morning hymn is sung, even the "wee bairnies" can join their carol; and what might be tortured into a penance is transformed into a delight. Morning worship at the family altar is a "strong seam" well stitched on the border of the day, to keep it from raveling out into irreligion, indolence, contention, and sin.—Wise is that Christian parent who hems every morning with the Word of God and fervent prayer!

4. When the early devotions of the day are over, and a distinct plan of useful labour laid out, then let us shoulder up

the day's load *cheerfully*. God will make the load light if we ask him. And the happiness and serenity of the whole day depend much upon a cheerful start. The man who leaves his home with a scowl on his brow, with a snap at his children, and a tart speech to his wife, is not likely to be a very pleasant companion for any one through the day, or to return home at night less acid than a vinegar-cruet. But more than cheerfulness is needed for some days, whose advancing hours come loaded with unexpected sorrows. For such days let us make ready *every* morning by putting ourselves under the wing of a Saviour's loving care. We know not how soon the last sunrise may light us on our way, nor how soon we shall hear on earth the last "good morning."

THE MESSAGE UPON THE THORN.

ONE day a lady called at a cottage in a retired village of Devonshire, seeking for Bible-subscribers. She was a stranger there, and the dwelling looked poor, and unpromising enough for her object. A cheerful "Come in, ma'am," however, encouraged her to state the object of her visit; but she was not prepared for the earnestness which met her application.

"Want a Bible! To be sure we do! one with big letters. 'Tis the very thing we have been talking about, and asking for, these years!"

"You are able to read, then?" asked the lady. Reading in those days, when Sunday schools were new inventions, was not so common as now, when each little one may learn, "without money and without price," to read for himself the wonderful works of God in the Scriptures of truth.

"Well, ma'am, *he* can't see to read now at all. His sight is gone with old age; but I can."

The person intended in her reply was an old man in bed, in a sheltered, but dark nook of the draughty dwelling. "I can't read to him, but now I can't see so well as I did, and the print in our Bible is too small. We was just saying, ma'am, we could spare a penny or twopence a week out of our parish to pay, for a big Bible, if only somebody would come and get it rag'lar, like. Somehow, when we keeps it ourselves, it melts away in a bit of tea and sugar."