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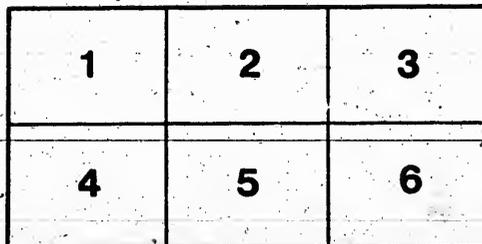
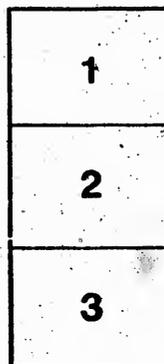
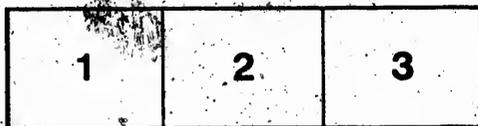
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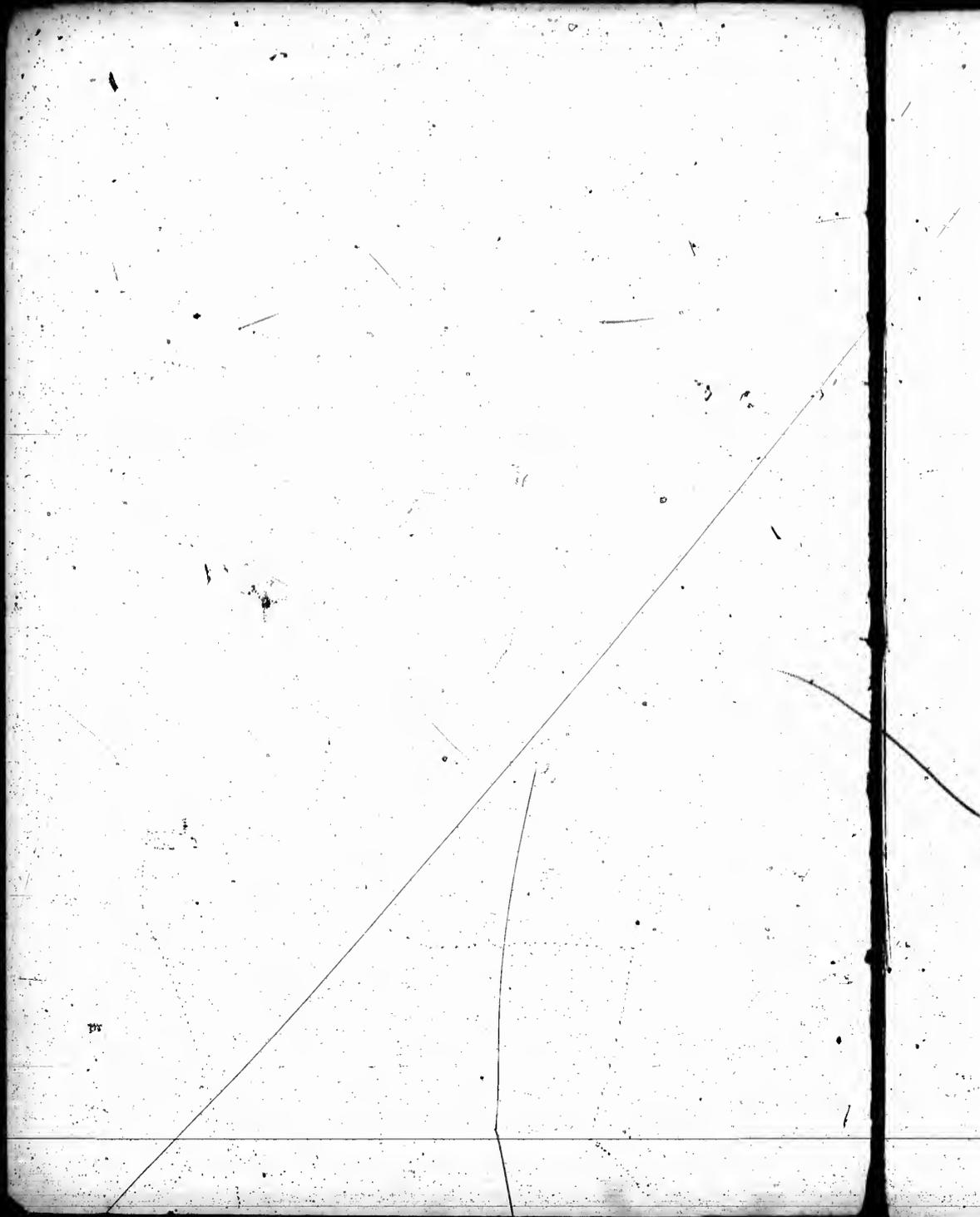
Delivered before the Synod of Hamilton and London

AT ITS MEETING IN APRIL, 1878,

BY REV. JOHN LAING, M. A.,
RETIRING MODERATOR.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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1878.



THE FAMILY.
GOD'S APPOINTED INSTITUTION
FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT
AND MAINTENANCE OF TRUE RELIGION.

An occasion like the present affords a favorable opportunity for directing attention to some living question which affects the welfare of the Church of God, and in my opinion ought to be so improved. Since the era of the Reformation no period has witnessed as much as the present, the rise and earnest discussion of all-important subjects. The recent rapid advance made by men of science and scholars in experimental philosophy and historical criticism, has changed very much the habits of thought among men, and has modified and unsettled many opinions which were regarded as established. Thus the general diffusion of knowledge, resulting from a more liberal and all but universal education of our youth, and the abundance of literature, which, in daily and weekly newspapers, in monthly, fortnightly, bi-monthly and quarterly magazines and reviews, popularizes scientific and critical results, has brought important questions affecting morals and religion under the notice of readers of every class and age.

To whatever side we turn ourselves, whether we look at the revived interest and activities of the Church of God as manifested in missionary operations, in councils held with a view to the attainment of greater unity of organization and action among the Reformed, the Anglican, the Greek, the Romish communions, and in doctrinal discussions; or watch with religious anticipation the progress of political events, which are gradually upraising nations long crushed beneath the heel of tyranny upheld by superstition, and are enlarging the sphere of enterprise for our Christian civilization; or hearken with anxious concern to the clamorous assaults made on our blessed faith in the name of advanced thought and liberal enquiry; we find that there is no lack of themes well worthy of attentive consideration. But I must make a selection. In doing so I purposely pass over what are unquestionably the most prominent subjects; inasmuch as they affect the foundations of our faith, such as the Personality of God; the possibility and fact of a Revelation of that God; the Divine origin and authority of Holy Scriptures. I do this because these subjects require a treatment too full for a single discourse, and because my audience must be supposed to consist of men whose minds are at rest on such subjects, and who can say, we know these fundamental doctrines to be true: "We believe and therefore we speak."

But it is not always nor only that which attracts notice that is important. Results and phenomena depend upon little, and perhaps despised, but potent agencies. The

millions of the human race show a deep interest in the growing crop, on the success or failure of which each year depends their sustenance; but how few among these millions think of the unseen agencies by means of which the God of providence is preparing their food. Silently and noiselessly the invisible vapour is distilled and borne over cloudless skies to gather in mists, to descend in rain, or to be treasured in snow fields and thus to afford the moisture without which the field, tilled ever so diligently, would remain a desert, and the seed sown would yield no return. Even so the God of grace in the economy of redemption ceaselessly and noiselessly makes use of agencies but little thought of, to prepare the fertilizing streams which are to turn the spiritual wilderness into a garden of the Lord; and by them from age to age he refreshes his heritage when it is weary. Nevertheless when we rejoice in hope or stand disquieted and appalled before the ominous changes which are passing over the moral and spiritual world and feel the importance of earnest, diligent effort on the part of man, we are in danger of making too small account of God-appointed instrumentalities, on the proper use or neglect of which, success or failure in the highest interests of man depend.

To one of these divine institutions, most potent and constant in its benign influence, I now invite your attention—to the *Family* as ordained and used by God for the establishment and maintenance of true religion among the children of men.

If in accordance with use and wont my theme should be stated in the language of Scripture, I may give as my twofold text, Malachi ii. 15 "And did He not make one? Yet had He the residue of the spirit, and wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed," and Acts xvi. 31 "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house." The first passage shows the importance attached by God to the family, as intended to prevent the social disorder and confusion which invariably accompanies polygamy; and the high moral and spiritual design of the institution, viz., the securing of godliness in each succeeding generation. The second passage shows that in the Christian Church the family, as such, is to be recognized; and that the salvation of the household is connected with the faith of the head in such manner that the children "are not unclean but holy," or to use the language of our Westminster Confession that the visible Catholic Church "consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children."

In treating of this subject we naturally make our first inquiry as to the Origin of the family institution. Here we have two distinct and antagonistic theories. *First*, that God instituted the family when he created man. *Second*, that the family has been gradually evolved or developed; and is the result of the so-called laws of social differentiation, integration and disintegration according to the varying environment of the human race in its past history. The first is the simple, sublime and satisfactory doctrine of Revelation. The second is the doctrine of speculative science and philosophy. The one excludes the other. The former is purely theistic; the latter as purely naturalistic, ignoring the Creator and denying supernatural revelation.

It may not be without profit to state the latter—the scientific theory—a little more fully. Mr. Spencer in the development of his so-called social science is the leading supporter of this theory. As his philosophy is now becoming well known and is exerting no small influence on modern thought, we may take his account of the matter. Of course revelation is summarily set aside as a mere delusion. Guided by inductive science alone, affecting to have the certainty of experience as a guide, the enquirer seizes the dim torch of reason, and following the too often misleading clue of history and travel, plunges into the darkness of the prehistoric past. After diligent search and the collecting and arranging of a vast mass of information regarding the various races and tribes of mankind in past and present times with a laborious diligence worthy of all praise, our philosopher reaches the result of what must be acknowledged to be a somewhat wide, though necessarily, a very defective induction. It is as follows:

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The history of man reaches back through incalculable time; and man is the highest form which has been reached in the evolution of the universe. The first man was born of a brute, and was scarcely distinguishable from his progenitors, removed but one short step from the chimpanzee or orang. There may have been some half brutish association among these progenitors of the race, but man was not born in the family nor did he then form one. By slow changes and in virtue of the accumulation of inherited qualities, through habits of instinct transmitted by each successive generation to its progeny, and being continuously modified by this environment, these half brutes became men. But they were savages of the lowest type. Still there was no family, only the females obeyed and labored for their masters and cared for their young. They were, to use Mr. Spencer's language, "an aggregate of males and females without settled relations." These savages, delighting in war and recognizing no right but that of might, as a race passed into a state of militancy. Then wars lessened the number of males and gave to the strong and victorious the women as captives and slaves, the property of the warrior. "The family remained vague and incoherent and the individual man was the unit of society." No marriage bond was known, no filial relation or duty was recognized.

Next came the nomadic condition, when individual men with their female companions wandered apart and pastured their flocks and herds at a distance from their fellows. Each of these became a patriarch, the head of a clan, and the tribal institution sprang up or was evolved. This was no family, properly so called; but a tribe, with its head having many wives and their descendants subject to his authority. Gradually the nomadic state passed into one of fixed habitation and industrial employments. Then society was further disintegrated. The labor of the male became valuable as well as that of the other sex, and woman, associated with man in labor and in care, became more his companion than his slave. As peace succeeded war the number of the sexes became more nearly equal, and as the result of these environments the monogamic family institution was evolved, peculiar to a higher civilization and settled industry.

This, we are told, was the *genesis*, or the manner of production of the human family. Parental, filial, and conjugal love slowly and gradually emerged out of brutish appetites and instincts. The ideas of authority and responsibility appeared along with intelligence and morality as man rose in the scale from a warlike savage through the restless nomade into the polite inhabitant of the commercial or manufacturing city; and the intelligent yeoman of an agricultural community.

Nor do our philosophers speculate only as to the past, they forecast also the future and predict that, as under the influences of industrial civilization the tribe has become disintegrated till the family proper of the present time is recognized as the unit of society, so we may expect to see further disintegration until the family shall disappear and the individual man and woman shall be regarded as the unit of society. Nay, this idea has been carried so far that we are told that hereafter "we will not see it, but the busy millions treading upon our dust, will, if we are remembered at all in the dim past, consider us a lower order of being from which they sprang."

Mr. Spencer does not go this far in prediction, but he says: "In the more advanced nations already there have taken place partial disintegrations of the family proper," and he particularizes as instances thereof the substitution of individual for family responsibility in the eye of the law; State provision for neglected children and for the infirm and aged instead of support by parents and children; education under State control instead of parental direction; the use of police instead of parental discipline to impose obedience and school attendance; and to sum up in his own words, "this recognition of the individual man when he is a child as the social unit, has gone so far that by many the parental duty of the State is assumed as self-evident, and criminals are called 'our failures.'"

We see now whither this philosophical theory of the family tends, and how completely it subverts our received opinions. According to it the family institution is a product of natural evolution, a passing phase of society as it advances on its blind but triumphal march towards the perfection of humanity; or rather towards the evolution of a being as far superior to man as he is superior to the lowest acedlan. Without considering at length the fallaciousness of this theory we may before dismissing it from view, state a few things which must prevent its reception by ordinary men of intelligence, although it may be held by the few who professing themselves to be wise have become fools in this respect. This theory assumes the doctrine of evolution and is constructed in accordance therewith; while this doctrine is not established even in regard to material organisms, and is all but universally rejected as a satisfactory account of the origin of mental and moral phenomena, and of the spiritual nature of man. This theory also assumes that the primal state of man was savage; an assumption not sanctioned by history. History points to a high degree of civilization in the great centres of antiquity, which were the cradle of the human race; and many prehistoric monuments corroborate its teaching. The history of the Old Testament Scriptures also, (to which we bow with deference notwithstanding the sceptic's sneer), tell us of an industrial state of society, of cities and the arts of civilized life before the flood; but give no intimation of a barbarous and savage state. Also it must be admitted that at all periods of the past concerning which we have information from uninspired sources, as at the present time, savagism and civilization existed contemporaneously and side by side. And yet further, it is a weighty consideration forced upon the thoughtful student of history, that the tendency of mankind is towards degradation and not elevation; that there are not a few instances of a higher civilization and a purer faith being supplanted by barbarism, superstition and moral depravity; while there is not a single instance of a tribe or nation emerging from barbarism into monotheistic civilization without moral and spiritual forces being brought to bear upon it from without by a superior race.

Passing then from this theory of speculation, identified, as we have seen it to be, with the materialistic philosophy of the day, and having an important bearing upon social questions and the future of our race, we shall consider the Bible theory of the family institution as we find it presented there in sublime simplicity; and we shall also see how that institution is freighted with blessing for the race when it is maintained in its efficiency of love. The Scripture teaches that the family was instituted by God, and is coeval with the creation of man; that it is not the result of natural law or of inherited instincts confirmed by habit, but was authoritatively imposed upon man as necessary for his well-being, physical and moral; that it is not a stage of social growth doomed to pass away and give place to the higher results of civilized industrialism, but an abiding institution, which, as it has survived the abominations and degradations into which the heathen sank when they lost the knowledge and fear of the true God, is destined to be a chief instrument in the elevation and perfection of the human race and in bringing in the fulness of the reign of God upon earth.

The inspired account of the institution of the family is full of deep meaning. The first man created by the immediate act of God and declared to be very good was "put into the garden of Eden, to dress and to keep it. But for Adam there was not found a help meet." Among the lower animals no one was found fitted for companionship with the new creature who bore the image of God—none fit morally, mentally, physically to be the counterpart and companion of that lordly being who was invested with dominion over all that God had made. Then by a fresh exercise of creative power God made a help-meet. "He took a rib from the man's side and made of it a woman, and brought her to the man." Mark it well. That lovely form was not made independently of the man, but out of his substance. So Adam said "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman,"—womb-man—"Ishah, because she was taken out of the man," Ish. Thus the first man hailed his wife when the Creator gave her to him. Immediately thereon follows the authoritative institution of the family. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother

and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." According to revelation the conjugal relation precedes the parental; man was husband and wife before there were parents: man had not apes for parents. Again, the woman, not the man, is the centre round which the family is to be formed, the man cleaves to his wife, and they twain form from the first the social unit, "neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord." A single man and single woman thus united constitute the unit of human society; and this union is "a real physical, vital, and spiritual union, in virtue of which not merely in a figurative sense, but really, although in a mystical sense they become one flesh."

Such was the first family. Its centre was Eve, the mother of all living, typical of the true woman, who is the counterpart of man, and his complement; his inferior in physical strength, and courage, but indued with sensibilities more tender, with stronger instincts and finer emotions; rejoicing in the work of ministry, cherishing him on whom she leans, and forgetting self amid patient toil and long-suffering endurance. In the family woman reigns by love, brightening the joys, sharing the sorrows, lessening the burdens, and doubling the comforts of man's home. Around her gather the fruits of holy wedlock, a godly seed. In the family the noblest affections find exercise. Here man drinks the highest and purest joys. Here the devoted wife sustains in trial and scatters the clouds of trouble, while she encourages and helps in the accomplishment of great designs. Here in the mother is revealed the deep mystery of quenchless love which sheds its holy and benign influence on her offspring. Here ten thousand unuttered kindnesses of look and act make the name of wife and mother priceless, and stamp her image forever on the memory. Here sisters and brothers learn to love, to bear, to sympathize; and in due time they go forth from the sacred shelter of childhood, fragrant with love, to plant amid the rude scenes of earth's moral waste new families, thus reproducing the pure God-given bliss of home. How worthy of God is the family! Man's training school for time and eternity! The loved spot towards which, though oceans roll between, the heart of the lone wanderer turns with longing desire! The refuge for which the sick man pines, where he may feel the tender touch of wife or mother, satisfied if he can but breathe out life in their presence and die at home!

Thus in Eden for the good of man as yet unfallen was the family instituted by God, and had its place with labor and the Sabbath as necessary for the well-being and proper development of the human race. "Be fruitful," runs the first command, "and multiply and replenish the earth." Labour diligently that you may be blessed in the enjoyment of earth's precious fruits, is the implied language of God when he gave man charge of the garden of delights to dress and to keep it. Rest one day in seven that you may adore your Creator and perfect your spiritual nature by communion with your father in heaven, is the meaning of the ordinance of the Sabbath made for man. If man in innocence needed these institutions, much more fallen man. Into the gloomy scenes of sin and misery which fill our sin-cursed world, the happy family, honest toil, the holy Sabbath project the sweet light and heat of God's love. Thus He tempers the chilly atmosphere of guilty fear, holds in check the downward tendency to evil, and alleviates the fearful sorrows of our life below. Labour is a necessity; to refuse to labour and disregard its fruits is to do away with the rights of property; to be idle is to succumb to temptation, to make progress impossible, and to sink mankind to the level of the brute. The Sabbath is a necessity; to observe no holy rest is to undermine religion, to forget God, to lose all moral and spiritual character, and to take from man his highest and distinguishing glory. The family is a necessity; without it social confusion must ensue, and society itself become dissolved into an assemblage of selfish individuals, trampling each other ruthlessly down in the race of life, controlled only by fear, obedient only to brute force, without one generous emotion or ennobling affection.

Following scripture history we trace the family institution down through antedi-

Iuvian patriarchs, among the sons of God; we see it observed in salvation by the ark; confirmed in Abraham and his free-born seed; recognized in the law of Moses. Even where there are special provisions made for polygamous and other disturbances, which arose from the hardness of men's hearts, we find the authority and responsibility of the family head asserted, and a hedge of special enactments set round the institution for its protection. Onward it stretches down through changing dispensations until our Lord and his Apostles declare it anew, set aside the human accretions by which it had been abused and rendered inoperative, proclaim that marriage is honorable in all and its bond of obligation perpetual, and establish with New Testament sanctions the family, as it was in the beginning; husband and wife, parents and children—the christian household; the unit of the church, as of civil society.

Profane history confirms the sacred record. Notwithstanding that the great portion of mankind lost the knowledge of the true God and his law, and practising polygamy or tolerating promiscuous intercourse, razed the foundations of the family; still among the oldest and noblest nations, and in some of the most ancient writings, we find such references to family rights, privileges, and joys, as make clear the widespread remains of an original institution which at one time obtained among all races of men. And it is further worthy of notice that wherever the Gospel of Christ comes and proclaims the family as of God, there is a response in the human breast; as by intuitive instinct its claim is at once acknowledged, its benign sway is established, and the fountains of society are purified. The Mongol and the Malay, the Negro and the Indian, the Fejee savage and the degraded Bushman, the Esquimaux and the Aztec, quite as readily as the Hebrew, the Latin and the Greek, the Anglo-Saxon, the Teuton or the Celt, recognize what God declares to be the proper relation of husband and wife, of parent and child, with their respective privileges, responsibilities, and duties. Thus the voice of nature is found to re-echo and harmonize with the voices of revelation; while in one grand symphony they proclaim the family institution is from God, a necessity for the well-being and happiness of man.

Let us now glance at the purpose served by the family institution. The family is the great training school where, growing up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, men are to be prepared for the labors and trials of life. The family is the God-appointed nursery of the Church. It is matter of common remark that a great change comes over them when men and women feel the responsibility of family life. At the call for unselfish effort the higher and nobler features of character come forth. It is the rule among christian youth to find after marriage the unstable and adventurous, yea, even the blame-worthy young man, when happily married, become the steady, energetic and useful citizen. The gay and flighty girl forgets herself in living for others dearer to her than life itself, and is known as the kind-hearted, stayed matron, the prudent counsellor and ready helper of her fellows. The conjugal and parental relations are a potent factor in the formation of the highest type of manhood.

Through the long period of infancy the child feels the influence of the family. The needy pleadings of helpless innocence open the fountains of parental love, and as the precious streams of self-denied affection ceaselessly flow forth, they bless alike the ministers and the recipients of the holy influence. Now is the time for training a godly seed, while sheltered from the world's chill blasts and as yet unexposed to the poisoned exhalations of its corruption. Now the knowledge of God's law and the way of salvation is to be pressed home; now the opening intellect is to be directed aright, and proper enquiry is to be stimulated; now evil tendencies are to be nipped in the bud or firmly restrained, bad habits are to be prevented, and gracious aspirations are to be cherished. Thus respect for superior authority and a sense of duty and obligation are produced, the will is subjected to wholesome control, till self-control, the noblest of virtues, is attained, and self-willed pride is overcome. Warmed by the

beams of a wise love, and nurtured in the fear of God, rewarded or punished, borne with and forgiven, cheered and comforted, encouraged or restrained as circumstances require, the growing youth is gradually prepared for leaving home, when he must undertake the stern duties of life, and fulfil the high end of his being.

No class of citizens is so law-abiding, loyal, and patriotic; no friends so valuable, sincere, and constant; no portion of the community so clear-sighted, cautious, trustworthy, useful, and ready for commendable enterprise, as those who have learned in the family to obey, to honor, to trust, to love, to help, to endure, and to labour with and for others in the happy home of childhood.

Nay, we may go further. The family of man naturally leads up to the invisible prototype, the family of God. The parent is to the child in the place of God. The more of God that the growing youth sees manifested in the life and character of his earthly parent, the easier will it be for him to know his father in heaven. The youth who has learned to subject his will to that of a father on earth and to give him reverence, trusting his love, owning his superior wisdom, and leaning on his upholding arm, will almost instinctively bow with holy fear and humble trust before the great Father of spirits; and the sweet experience of a mother's self-sacrificing love, and of a sister's or a brother's sympathy, will make him long for the love of that Elder Brother who gave himself for us, who sympathizes with us and loves us with more than a mother's love. Thus the godly family becomes in the hand of God's spirit a means of leading men into the family of heaven, where they can participate in the riches of God's redeeming grace.

Here also we may take into account the natural law of Heredity: that is, that parents transmit to their offspring many of their qualities, physical, mental and moral. According to this law the children of religious parents are by nature religiously inclined; their natural taste and inclination is towards virtue. In our zeal to maintain the sovereignty of God's elective grace and to vindicate the truth that his people "are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," that grace does not descend from parent to child, we should not overlook nor underestimate the other truth, that his covenant is with his people and their children in all succeeding generations of those that love him and keep his commandments. And let us try to appreciate the value of that promise.

There is what has been termed common grace, of which all who know the gospel partake. The enlightenment, moral restraint, proprieties, and amenities of life which christianity brings with it, are the result of God's spirit graciously exerting his influence among men generally though the truth. Under these influences men may attain to high degrees in knowledge of spiritual things, morality, natural benevolence, honourable feeling and general excellence, and yet not be true christians, united to Jesus Christ by a living faith. In like manner there are natural qualities inherited by children from their parents, both virtuous and vicious. But the possession of the inherited qualities neither in the one case ensures the attainment of true godliness nor in the other prevents it. The grace of God can convert the man naturally vicious and enable him to overcome his natural propensities; while the man of a naturally virtuous disposition may proudly reject the grace of God and remain without the kingdom.

Bearing this in mind we can see that a great deal is gained towards the realization of God's reign upon earth, when instead of each succeeding generation inheriting vicious, immoral, lawless, savage traits of character transmitted from ungodly parents, the uprising generations are men who have been nurtured in the christian family.

and have had inherited qualities of a virtuous tendency, fostered and developed; and when these manifest a respect for the things of God and lend their influence to the cause of Christ. It may be, alas! and we mourn as we say it, that some go no further, have no saving interest in Christ, and may at last be found to be only scaffolding which can have no abiding place, but must disappear from God's temple when it is completed. Nevertheless this natural effect of heredity is not to be overlooked; for although indirectly, yet effectually, it is used by God for the establishment of his kingdom among men.

The family institution being thus important, we are not surprised to find that the great enemy has ever been attempting its overthrow; and when in that he has failed has aimed at its perversion and corruption. Polygamy began with Lamech before the flood, and the only recorded cause of the incorrigible wickedness that brought down the vengeance of heaven in the deluge, was that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair and took them wives of all which they choose." The result of these unhallowed unions was a race of men characterized by lust and violence, who feared not God nor regarded man, who filled the earth with violence and corrupted the way of all flesh. Intermarriages between God's people and the surrounding heathen at a later period had a similar effect. And so has it ever been. The consequences of ill-assorted marriages have always been degradation, discord, crime. Oh! what misery have such unions entailed; what burning jealousies, broken hearts, deeds of violence and abominable crimes, have resulted from them! Alas! how often, when father and mother sinfully shrink from the labors and cares incident to the parental relation, do the children grow up neglected, untrained, abandoned, godless, to be pests to society, and to be carried down as waifs on the troubled waters of sin to a hopeless eternity. How often by reason of crimes not to be mentioned and unavenged, have whole communities brought down upon themselves the curse of heaven and perished under the weight of the wrath of God!

Scarcely less injurious in their effect upon the family institution have been enactments which relax the matrimonial bond and facilitate the separation of man and wife or make their interests different. Disastrous also have been the doctrine of the superior virtue of celibacy; and the artificial state of society which prevents or unduly delays marriages. Sad have been the results of these things in the past; nor can we forecast the future without seeing before us a state of society in which the ennobling influences and healthy stimulus of family life shall be largely wanting, with the gloomy prospect of yet more serious evil to follow.

From the nature of the family as well as by the express command of God, it is the duty of the parent to provide for and educate the child. But this is being overlooked and the responsibility is being transferred in some cases to the Church and in others to the State. Instead of dealing with the family in and through its head, the Church or State has put itself *in loco parentis*, and deals directly with the child. Nay, some political economists have gone so far as to claim for the state a paternal or patriarchal regime, and in some cases the laws seem to tend to the subversion of the authority alike of the husband and the father, if not directly to produce insubordination. Among ourselves so strongly has the idea of state interference in one particular aspect taken hold of the general public that it will appear to very many absurd to call in question the political dogma that "it is the duty of the state to provide a secular education for every child; while the parent and the Church shall attend to its religious education." Still do we arraign the dogma before the bar of christian truth and in the light of scripture declare it to be fallacious, and in its tendency subversive of the family as well as calculated to hinder the godly upbringing of the young. Not on the civil ruler but on the parent God has laid the duty and responsibility of

educating the child. The civil magistrate should take order that this duty is not neglected. But this is a very different thing from *providing* for each child an education, in the establishment and conducting of which the parent is not consulted, any further than when as a citizen he records his vote or pays his taxes, while the education of the children is really taken out of the parent's hands and entrusted to a department of the government, which alone decides what the children shall be taught, who shall teach them and what methods shall be employed.

Not less do we deplore the too generally prevailing opinion that the religious education of our children is the work of the Church; and that to a "colossal Sabbath School system" may safely be entrusted this most responsible parental duty. No sense of christian obligation can be successfully substituted for parental love as a motive; no school room however furnished can take the place of the christian hearth, however lowly; no teaching however earnest and according to the most approved method can equal a mother's or a father's loving advice; no occasional visit by the teacher, however devoted, can effect what God intended the parent to do for his children—teaching them diligently and talking with them when he sits in the house and walks by the way, when he rises up and sits down. The family is God's appointed institution for the godly training of the young, and to put any human institution in its place, no matter however excellent such institution may be, or to allow any institution to overshadow the family and deprive the parent of his God-given rights and the child of its God-given privileges, must lead, sooner or later, to mischievous consequences.

Perhaps less directly, but as it seems to me by no circuitous route, does the spiritless pauperism of the day follow from a weak sense of family obligation. "The world owes me a living," says the idler; "the town or county must provide for me," says the sturdy beggar, and he refuses to work. Instead of replying to him in Scripture language, "He that will not work shall not eat;" and "if any have children or nephews let them learn to show piety at home," (*i. e.* in the family,) and to requite "their parents," our modern philanthropists step in and by State interference save such from the consequences of idleness, extravagance, or waste. Thus are relaxed the loving bonds by which God intended that men should be knit together. The rich man can see his brother starve or his nearest relation depend on charity, unsmitten of conscience because forsooth he has paid his poor-rates; and the poor man receiving the dole of cold charity which has been grudgingly extorted by the tax gatherer, feels no gratitude, nay becomes exasperated by a sense of wrong and is turned into the envious enemy of the capitalist. Are not these things and the want of family—of humane affection, at the bottom of our social discontent? Under these influences is there not rising up a dangerous class, who have thrown off the fear of God and all religious restraints; who acknowledge no divine institutions of labor, worship or family; who propound communistic and socialistic theories of human rights; who form secret combinations, and only wait their opportunity to do away with property, family and religion in the name of liberty, equality and the universal brotherhood of man? Am I then wrong in affirming that to disregard of the family institution in its wide reaching influences may fairly be attributed in a great degree the ignorance of divine truth, the lawless insubordination, the recklessness and spendthrift want of oversight, the selfish neglect of kindred, and the ruthless heartlessness which are so loudly and so generally deplored, in the present day?

Again, this is pre-eminently an age of associations and united action; and much good has been thus achieved. Still it is a fair question, which we dare not set aside unconsidered: May not the family institution be suffering through these combinations? If this is the case, the ultimate loss to mankind may more than countervail the present

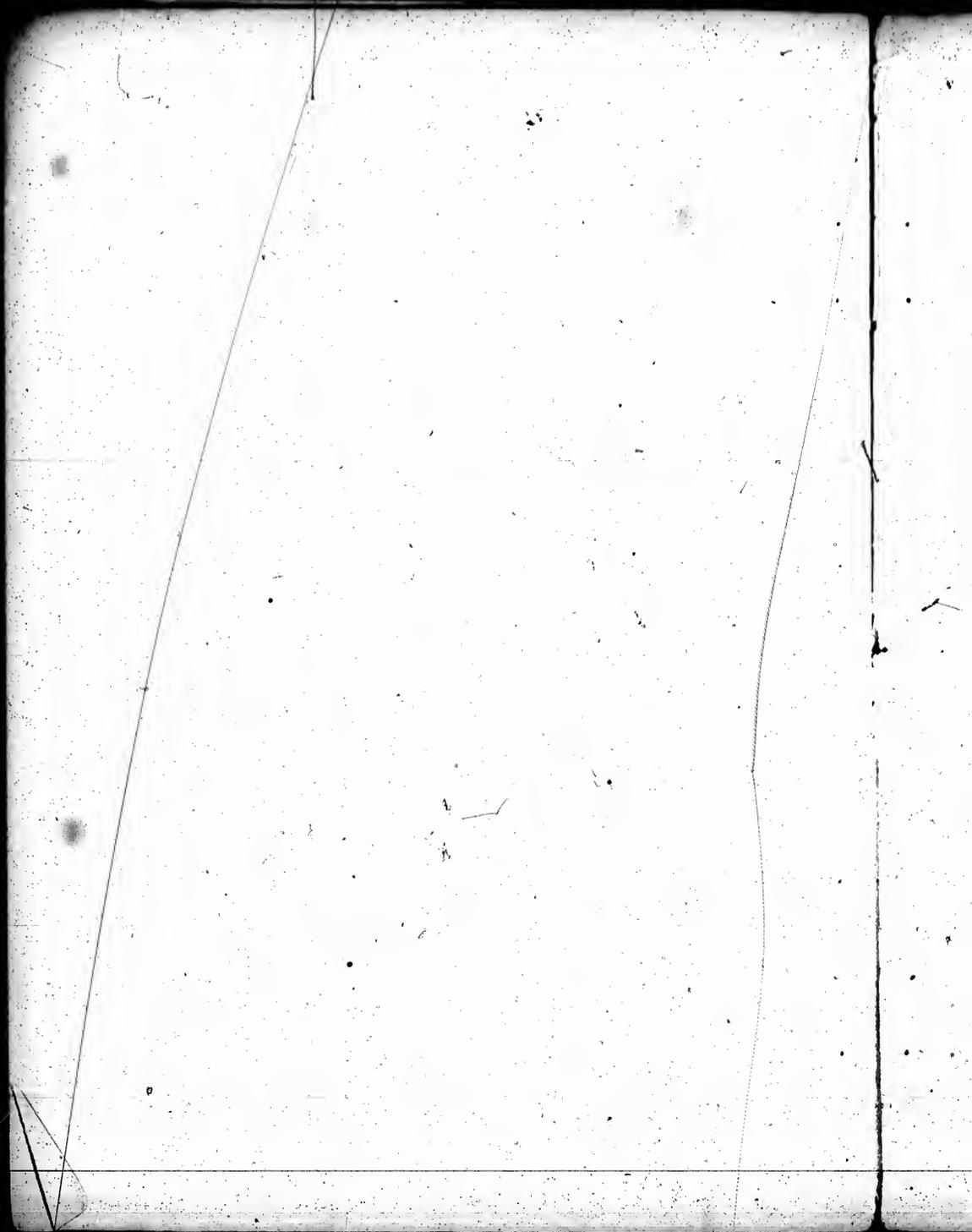
gain. Have not the ties of societies, associations and clubs, whether their object be religious, political, social or moral often proved too strong for the family tie? Have not children been set against their parents, husbands hopelessly separated from their wives, and brothers and sisters bitterly alienated by reason of obligations which such associations impose? Have not the natural obligations of the family been thus made void?

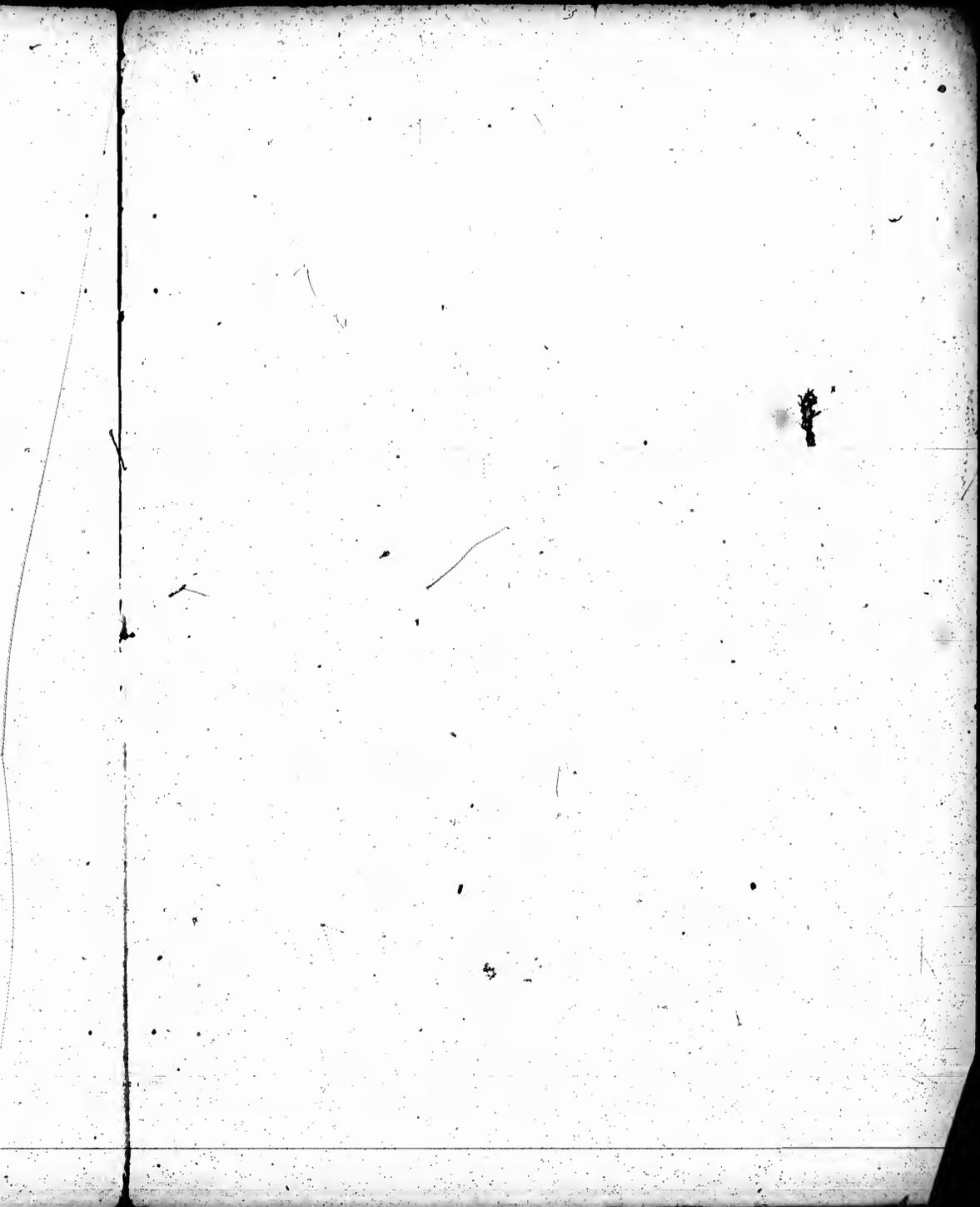
In all things civil and sacred the tendencies of the age is towards Individualism—towards the recognition of individual rights for old and young, man and woman, master and servant, without regarding their mutual relations, or enquiring how the family may be thereby effected. The spread of education, the enfranchisement of the working classes, the establishment of popular and responsible government, have produced the opinion that in order to accomplish any reform or achieve any good work the vote of individuals must be secured. "We must educate our masters" said an English statesman. The majority must rule, "*Vox Populi ! Vox Dei !*" says the nineteenth century politician. Everything must be determined by a plebesite—by popular acclaim—and, what we have to do with more especially, this individualism has wormed itself into the Church of God; so that not a few regard the Church as a mere voluntary association of individual men and women, which adopts its particular constitution or by-laws, and changes or annuls them, as a majority of the members may, from time to time, see fit. On this theory there is no room for the family in the church. Children who cannot voluntarily and intelligently join the society, cannot be of the church. A man cannot be known as husband or father, nor a woman as wife or mother, a boy or girl are not known as son or daughter; they are only and all equally members of the same society. Infants have no church rights, nor minors any church privileges. The bare mention of this theory with what it implies will suffice to show how it subverts the family and rules it out as the unit of church association; and how thoroughly it is contrary to the spirit of our text "thou shalt be saved and thy house." At the same time the consideration of this individualism and its mischievous tendency may serve to put us on our guard against plausible aphorisms and popular usages, which, unnoticed, are silently undermining the divine institution of the family. We must assert and maintain for our children their place in the Church of God, we must inculcate on them their obligation in view of that birthright privilege. The Sabbath School is not the church for the children. Our little ones and wives must appear with us when we publicly worship our covenant God as well as at the family altar. We must have the family pew where parents and children shall wait on the regular ministrations of the sanctuary. Pastors must see to it that their sermons feed the lambs as well as the sheep, and that our rising youths are dealt with in love and faithfulness as members of the Church of God. "Thou and thy house."

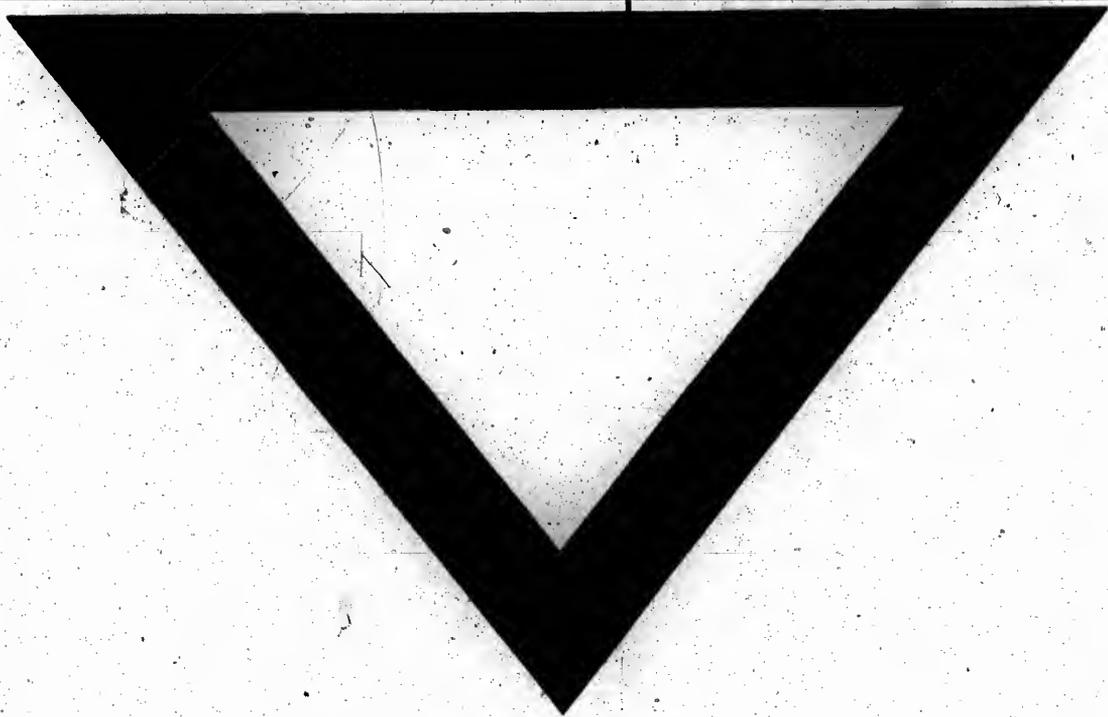
Amid the shaking of earth and heaven which these last days are witnessing, well may we ask: Is the family institution among the things which cannot be shaken and will remain? I believe it is. It is God's institution devised in wisdom and love for the proper training and formation of manhood; for the upraising and maintenance of a godly seed. The country and church in which the family is maintained and has its proper influence, will prosper and wax mighty. These nations shall inherit the earth. New countries are opening up to Christian civilization; and blessed be God, the only nations that to any great extent can send forth colonies are just those in which the family is respected and is flourishing in vigor. These are the peoples which are fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. A glorious future awaits our world when Christianity has spread its blessed influence over many lands. The state of society then will be something beyond our highest aspirations. But whatever changes may take place, when the peace-loving, peace-blessed inhabitants shall dwell in unwalled villages, at rest, dwelling without walls and having neither bars nor gates—when Jerusalem shall

be safely inhabited ; then shall the family reach the height of prosperity also, and around the old man and old woman still hale and happy, the air shall ring with the merry voices of boys and girls playing in the streets of God's holy city.

What then, let us ask in conclusion, is the hope of the world? By what instrumentality will God subdue the world? What human agency shall bear the seeds of blessings to the furthest ends of the earth? And whence shall come the goodly company whose feet shall be beautiful upon the mountains as they publish good tidings of good among all nations and disciple them? Surely the answer is : the Christian family, which God instituted because he sough a godly seed. Maintain this in its purity as God instituted it, and it will prove like the snow fields of Lebanon, an inexhaustible source of grace from which there shall flow forth unfailling streams of blessing, as the cool, clear rivers Abana and Pharpar, making the desert a garden and turning the wilderness into a fruitful field, laden with a harvest of righteousness to the glory of our covenant God and Redeemer.









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