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# A CHRISTIAN FAMILY

- Several hints -

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A compilation of leaflets from  
the beginning of the last century

- Booklet I -

*They were both righteous before God, walking in all the  
commandments and ordinances of the LORD, blameless.*

Luke 1.6

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# **Godly Concern for the Home.**

**G**OD has not formed men as units and in isolation. He created Adam and Eve, and then at once appointed families. Nor has His plan changed. Thus we see the deep and primary importance of the home. None are born into the world full grown, but in weakness and dependence, needing everything through others: thus we behold God's emphasis on the home from the standpoint of time, and its continued godly training. The whole of Scripture brings this before us. And if God's first arrangements for Adam include the home, Satan's first attack is on the home. The ruin in Cain's line is marked as in the home, and the blessing in Enoch's experience is associated with his family (Gen. 5. 22). Where is the failure in Noah's life, and in Lot's—the two brought before us as personally righteous in 2 Peter 2?—Is it not in the home?:

and the loving interest of God in Abraham's family shines forth in Genesis 18. 19. As we read the histories of Isaac and Jacob we see where the need lay. Nor can we be unmindful of Leviticus 10 with regard to the first priest, and Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas are a parallel at once before us.

The sin of the TWO sons in each case would emphasize that herein is God's solemn WITNESS to us. Eli was **blamed** particularly in this connexion (1 Sam. 2. 29, 3. 13) for lack of faithfulness (2. 35), and Samuel's TWO sons, after all this, indicate the grave danger, (even when we have seen the beacons of warning), and the deep, deep importance of the home (1 Sam. 8. 3). "Mine own vineyard have I not kept" (Song 1. 6). If we think of David, we must call to mind Amnon, Absalom, Adonijah. Faithfully God portrays all, that we may see the great peril, and how subtly and continuously the enemy fights for this citadel.

God appointed, at the outset, care for the home. "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children" (Deut. 6. 6, 7, cf. 4. 9, 10). If the homes go wrong, everything goes wrong, but if the home is blest everything is blest. The blessing of Elijah's ministry in Malachi is connected with the home, and John the Baptist, who went before the Lord Jesus in the spirit and power of Elijah, was enabled as to the homes (Luke 1. 17),—himself the child of godly parents (Luke 1. 6); the fruit of this we see in that in two cases, at least, the disciples who were with John brought **their brothers** to Christ (John 1. 40, 41), and He accepted both as His disciples. This was appointed as the characteristic of the present dispensation, for "the church in the **house**," meeting in connexion with a home, is consistently emphasized (Acts 2. 46, Rom. 16. 5, 1 Cor. 16. 19, Col. 4. 15, Phm. 2). No special public buildings were

erected, nay, the home was, and should be, the constant background. Brethren, have we realized this, as we should?

Do we expect God's work in our own homes? Do we spend sufficient time in prayer for this? Do we feel the hindrance if this is not laid upon our hearts, a hindrance in our own experience, and a hindrance in the testimony? The record of failures by others is not to excuse or encourage our parallel failure, but to be a beacon that we may pray more and live more to God's glory. The record may make us tender in thought as to **another**, who has home-difficulties, and we shall remember how Satan fights against godly homes, and help him in love and prayer, but we would hold fast the principle, and feel **OUR OWN NEED** for godly concern all the more. Is it not remarkable that though we have noticed the failure of a prophet, a priest and a king among Israel, who were peculiarly favoured, yet in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit's stress in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 puts a higher standard as to this in an assembly? "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity," "Having faithful (and believing) children, not accused of riot or unruly." So great is the privilege of the present dispensation. 1 Timothy 5. 13, Titus 1. 11, show the opposite of godliness, and that Satan's tactics have not changed.

It is well to recollect that God is our Father and we are His children. Hence the "home" ought to be a bright illustration of spiritual relationship: and so it is with regard to "Christ and the church." Hence we realize how important it is that the home should not become a contrast or misrepresentation, but that in love, unity and discipline, it should go forward in spiritual parallels, and thus be part of the witness in the power of the Holy Spirit. I know there are many who desire this. Can we not help one another to its fuller attainment?

PERCY W. HEWARD



# A MARRIAGE ADDRESS

Extracts Revised.

Scriptures read :—Gen. 2 4-24, Rev. 19. 5-9

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**H**AVE you ever seen an artist at work out in the open country, sitting with easel and canvas, while a group of small children look on? First they see sketched a general outline of the landscape, and then gradually the details are filled in, which complete the picture. Such a scene has been before me as I have read these verses, and I thought of this gathering as being the children.

First, there is the creation of the heavens and the earth. This is the broad outline, but the picture is not finished. **“There was not a man to till the ground.”** What would be the object of a world of beauty, full of richness, if there was no one to enjoy it? **“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.”** But the world is wide, a man could not occupy the whole, he has need of a centre, a home, and this was provided. **“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.”** Yet the picture is still incomplete. **“It is not good that the man should be alone.”** Give a man a palace with its gardens and grounds, its fruit and flowers, but if he is alone it will become a prison. **“I will make him an help, meet for**

him.” We go on to read of the beasts and birds being formed out of the ground, “ **but there was not found a help, meet for him.**” There is often an attachment between a man and his beast, and even the birds sometimes respond to kindness shown them, but a man craves for more than this. One that is **meet** for him, must be similar in character, in thought, and in feeling, able to share his joys and sorrows, and with whom there can be the closest intimacy and fellowship. “**And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept**” and there was removed a part of his body, and of that part, “**The Lord God made a woman, and brought her unto the man.**” God could have formed her out of the ground, but in His perfect wisdom she was taken out of man, and Adam said, “**This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,**” in other words, “**This is part of myself.**” “**She shall be called ‘woman’ because she was taken out of man.**” This then, beloved friends, is the completed picture of the first marriage. .

It may be thought that this cannot be likened to a marriage to-day, but let us listen to the words which follow: “**Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.**” And in one of the New Testament letters we read, “**So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. for no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth it, and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. . . . This is a great mystery.**” Hear also the words of the Lord Jesus concerning marriage. “**He Which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said,**

**For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh."** Is there not a connection between that first marriage and marriage to-day? Can we say how this union is formed? Not fully, but the following is sufficient for faith. **"What God hath joined, let no man put asunder."** Not, what the "Registrar" has joined; not, what a "minister" has joined; not, what man has joined, **but God.**

In the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament the description of the woman is that of a "helper," and it is also found in the New Testament; where we read **"The Lord is my Helper."** Here then, dear sister, is your privilege. I am glad you will have a garden attached to your home, and sometimes you will help with the work there, but I hope that not only will you be a helper in material things, but also in spiritual. An associated word is found in Acts 27. A ship appears to be about to break up because of a storm, so they use "helps," undergirding the ship to keep her together, and I thought that marriage is like a voyage; it starts fair, but sometimes there are storms, and then there is the need for that quiet, and yet strong binding influence of the wife and mother, to keep the home-ship together.

The word "cleave" is remarkable, having two distinct and opposite meanings. "To cleave" is to split, so making one into two. "To cleave" is to stick, so making two things one, and this is the Scripture meaning, literally "to glue." The man is to leave his parents and be **glued** to his wife, and may we not say that the reverse is

true? The woman must also leave and cleave. May I then give you a homely exhortation, "Stick to one another like glue," dear brother and sister. Then there are those words of God, **"Let not man put asunder."** These words are for us, dear friends. If God has joined these two, so that they are now one, let us do nothing to weaken that bond. The words have a bearing on divorce, but their message for us may be, 'If you speak about them, let your words be kindly.' It is not wrong to speak behind their back if the words are words of love, but remember the proverb, **"A whisperer separateth chief friends."**

The last recorded marriage was before us. One day these words will be heard in heaven, **"Let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come."** Who is the Lamb? It is the Lord Jesus Christ! Who is the bride? The Lamb's wife? She consists of those who are saved by His precious blood, who will be brought together in a wondrous unity and then joined in marriage to the One Who loved and loves her. **"It is not good for the man to be alone,"** was first spoken concerning Adam, but has an application to the sons of Adam, and beyond this may it not have reference to the last Adam? Did not the Divine Father have His Beloved Son in mind when He appointed marriage at the first? And it is written, **"Blessed (Happy) are they which are called into the marriage supper of the Lamb."**

S.A.B.

# **"BUT AND IF SHE DEPART."**

I Corinthians 7. 11.

**T**HESE words have been a problem to many dear children of God. They **SEEM** at first like permission to break the command of the Lord in verse 10. Our hearts realize that this **CANNOT** be, and rejoice that there is no suggestion of such an attitude. It is a matter of translation. The Holy Spirit uses every tense accurately. The R. V. misses the point even as the A. V. J. N. D. rightly renders, "But if also she shall have been separated." If we keep more nearly to the A. V. we shall say, "But and if she **HAS DEPARTED**."\* The Holy Spirit deals with the case of one who had acted before the epistle arrived, and in ignorance of the precept of the Lord Jesus,—possibly before salvation. What could be done? Two positions were possible: (1) To seek no marriage yoke, though remaining as if widowed: no lapse of time could ignore the existing marriage relation. Or (2) Reconciliation. Thus everything becomes clear, and the Divine plan for those who are found in a difficult position shows God's grace in dealing with all our circumstances, and with the results of past sins. So tender and loving is He.

A quite different tense is found in verse 15. It is **NOT**, "If the unbelieving one has departed." Why this difference? Because here we read of unsaved ones. Hence, "If the unbeliever depart": it is quite likely he will thus act. The Lord regulates (in 10) the lives of **HIS PEOPLE**. How we would praise Him for the accuracy of Scripture. and seek to live according to it. These old principles and precepts are still of living power for children of God in their relationship to unbelieving partners, though if any are saved **BEFORE** marriage their path is quite clear, viz inability to contract this partnership with an unbeliever. If any are in a remarkable emergency, because of long intention, God will solve the problem, without untruthfulness, if He is trusted, and if the expectation of faith is continued without wavering.

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\* Subjunctive, "If she have departed" is yet more literal.

PERCY W. HEWARD



*Parents!*

*Read this to your Children.*

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# A LADDER

## AN ADDRESS TO CHILDREN.

**I**F we had a ladder, boys and girls, a ladder that ran from the floor right up to the ceiling, I wonder how many of us could climb it. I think most of the boys would just be delighted to come and show us how quickly they could climb to the top. It may be also some of the girls would like to try as well, but perhaps they might be a little more afraid. It is one thing to start at the bottom—quite another thing to get right to the top; but the higher that we climb, the more we can see. I wonder if we can remember that. The higher we climb, the more we can see. Some of our big ships that go to sea have, above the deck, higher up than the deck, what is called the captain's bridge, and that is put high up so that the captain may see things, but even that is not enough. You know in front of the ship, right high up the mast, there is a man who is higher up than the captain, far higher than the bridge, and he is up there for the one purpose that he should be able to see things, and he is constantly looking out; and I think if he sees anything on one side of the ship, he has to ring a bell, and if he sees something on the other side of the ship (no matter what it is, if it is another ship, or some land, or whatever it might be), I think he has to ring the bell twice; or if it is right ahead, he rings it three times; and then the officers or captain get their glasses, and try to find out as soon as ever they can what it is that this man in front can see. They have to be high up to see things.

You all know the story, too, of a little man who tried to climb up high. Little people like to see things. Quite right they should. But that man, who was only a little man, we are told, was rich, but he was very little; the man Zacchaeus of the Bible. He climbed up a tree not only to see something, but to see Someone.

But I am not thinking so much this morning of climbing trees; I want to think of climbing a ladder. So I want you to think now of what we shall call God's ladder, that wonderful ladder of the Bible, which is only mentioned once, and that is in Genesis 28. Sometimes it is called "Jacob's ladder," but we will call it "God's ladder". We shall not have time to read it all, but perhaps I could just quickly go over the story. Most of you know that Jacob was on a journey, and as night was coming on, I think he was very tired, and he got some stones for a pillow, and just laid down to sleep, and he dreamed—he dreamed of a ladder. You know God's ladder reaches far higher than the ceiling of this building—far higher than the roof. God's ladder reaches right up to heaven; and there is another thing about God's wonderful ladder, it is so strong and so beautiful, and if we get our foot on the first step, we are certain to get to the top. CERTAIN to get to the top IF—but only *if* we really start at the bottom. And this ladder that Jacob saw, was a ladder that went from earth to heaven; and it was made increasingly beautiful, for there were glorious angels ascending and descending upon it. And I think that what Jacob saw was something more than a dream, I think he really saw God's ladder. God can speak to us, boys and girls, just as much when we are asleep as when we are awake; and Jacob saw God's ladder.



Well now, the higher we climb, the more we can see; and what do we see if we start to climb? What do we see if we get on the first step? Well, we see something that we have never seen before. From that first step we can see right inside ourselves—we can see our own hearts. Do you know, our hearts are not nearly so beautiful as we thought they were, because when we really see them from the first step of God's ladder, we see that they are very dirty, and very black with sin; in fact, it is only just as we get on the first step of the ladder that we have any idea of what we are inside ourselves. We did not really know that OUR heart was deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. We never saw it until we got on to God's ladder. Oh it is very dirty, and very black.

But I hope we do not stop on the first step; we will try to climb on to the second step. What can we see there? Oh we are getting higher up, and we can see a long, long way away. We can see right across the continent of Europe, right beyond the lands where our dear brethren are working, right beyond all those countries; we can see Jerusalem, and at Jerusalem there is a place called Calvary (or as the Hebrew puts it, Golgotha—it is the same place), and there we see an awful sight—we see the Lord Jesus, That One of Whom we have heard so much, we really see Him there, being nailed to a tree—not being allowed to climb a tree, but actually nailed to a tree. You know if we prick our finger with just a pin, it makes us almost scream; but the Lord Jesus had cruel nails pierced through His hands, and nails hammered through His feet; and He was nailed high up to a tree. That is what we see from the second step of

God's ladder. But I think some of you are ready to tell me, "Oh I have heard that lots of times, nearly everybody that speaks to us tells about the Lord Jesus dying for sinners"; but Oh, boys and girls, it is only as we get on the second step of God's ladder that we can see that the Lord Jesus was there for us, not for everybody else, but for ME. We cannot see that until we get on to God's ladder. One of our hymns says "But for His love we all had been in Hell", and our black and dirty hearts that we have just seen would put us there. That is where we ought to have been—on Calvary. But the Lord Jesus so loved boys and girls, that He took our place, and He died that we might live.

But we are going to climb a little higher. We will come up to the third step. The higher we climb, the more we can see. What do we see there. Oh we are getting near to the top, and we see the Lord Jesus no longer nailed to that tree, although Satan through wicked men tried to kill Him altogether. The Lord Jesus was stronger than Satan, and so even death could not hold Him. He rose from the dead. We see Him; yea, we can see right into heaven, and we see the Lord Jesus there. He is risen in wonderful glory, and He is praying for boys and girls, that they may reach the top of the ladder; that they may start even to-day to climb right up to where He is. That is His desire, that His boys and girls should share that wonderful glory that He has. We are assured of getting to the top of that wonderful ladder if we start at the bottom.

But we see something, as well as the Lord Jesus. What did we see on that first step, do you remember? How black our hearts were. We see our hearts again.

They are no longer black. They are washed white, and we are made pure, and soon we shall be at the top of the ladder, and walk those wondrous streets of glory. We are told those very streets are paved with gold—that does not mean gold like we see it here. It is the gold of purity. There will be nothing there to dirty our feet, let alone our hearts, for we shall walk on purity. We shall be clean and white for ever, like the Lord Jesus, for the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from *all* sin. (I John, 1.7).

If you try to get on to God's ladder to-day you will not find it very easy, because there is someone who wants to pull you down, and that is "that old serpent called the Devil and Satan". He will do his utmost to prevent you getting on the first step, and as you climb up the fight will get fiercer, but we are assured of victory; we are certain to get to the top, and the higher we climb, the more we can see.

A little while ago a dear brother told us how wrong it was even to steal a lump of sugar, and that brought to my mind how a little girl really fought against Satan and won. It is possible. This little girl and her mother had had some friends in to see them, and amongst other things they had had some peaches. The friends had gone home and they were preparing for bed. The mother and the little girl had gone down into another room to get ready for bed, and the little girl went upstairs, and unknown to the little girl the mother had gone back into this front room again to clear things up; and the little girl remembered that there were some peaches on the table, and she thought to herself, "How I should like one of them". She came downstairs again—she had no idea that her

mother was in the front room, and her mother wondered what the little one was going to do. The little girl pushed open the door, and the mother hid behind a thick curtain, and the little girl went up to the plate, and took one of the peaches and went away. The mother was so sorry to think that her little girl would do such a thing; she waited—she did not come out and scold, she just waited, and prayed for that little girl; and in a little while, the door opened again, and the little one came in with the peach and put it back on the plate, and her mother heard her say, “Not this time, Satan, not this time”; and Oh that mother was overjoyed to think that her little girl had really fought against Satan and won.

And oh, parents, shall we not refresh ourselves with the thought that, as we get discouraged sometimes—we are so weak, and unable to convey to our little ones the knowledge of the good things we have ourselves, may it not be a refreshment to us to remember again the mighty power of prayer we have always available on their behalf.

But I am speaking to you, boys and girls. I hope even those few words will be for your benefit. I want to tell you why we are sure to get to the top of the ladder if we start at the bottom—but only if we start at the bottom. You know when Noah got into the ark, to me some of the sweetest words of the story are when he got in, **THE LORD SHUT HIM IN**. Noah could not get out if he wanted to. He might have thought he had forgotten something, and would like to bring it in, but I do not think perhaps Noah *would* do that. He might have thought that he would like to get out and help some of those who were quickly perishing, but he could not even do that, because *God*

*had shut the door*, and it would have been no use Noah getting out to help others, because he would only have been lost himself, and of no use to others.

Now I want to tell you why we are sure to get to the top of God's ladder, which I hope we will all endeavour to climb, for it is a safe ladder even for girls as well as boys, and this is why we are *sure* to get to the top. In Genesis 28 and verses 16 and 17, we read "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the *gate* of heaven". God's ladder, boys and girls, stands within the gate of heaven, and God shuts that gate. Not even Satan who is stronger than we are can get us out, because Satan has done his worst, for what did we see on the second step? On Calvary he has done his worst there upon our Lord Jesus, and as our Lord Jesus has got the victory, so we must get the victory—as the Lord Jesus has got to heaven, so must His people be with Him. Oh, boys and girls, though everything might draw you back, even meetings which sometimes, it may be, you get a little tired of coming to; yet if we get on to the ladder that leads to heaven, then these meetings will lead you to the gate of heaven itself. The Gate of Heaven is open wide that ALL who will may enter in by Jesus Christ. We know not how soon it may be closed, so "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found".

T.Z.



# The Salvation of Children.

**A**H, dear fellow-believers, this is a subject about which we should be deeply exercised. For there seems a sad and increasing indifference among the children, even in the homes of those who profess the name of the Lord. This should bring us to our knees, in humility of heart, and cause searching of heart. It is saddening to see the little ones quite unmoved when told about the suffering of Christ for poor, ruined sinners. There is an absence of tenderness in listening to the words of the Living God, and most can quickly put serious things on one side. Why such carelessness among the young in these *perilous times*? Surely there are many encouragements in the Scripture to believe that God will work by His Spirit even in very little ones, if trained in the way they should go. How many parents, and others who have the training of the young, have been helped in their difficult task by the promise in Prov. 22. 6. Some however, have imagined that, after being brought up in the fear of the Lord, many will turn away and yet be restored when old. But surely the Scripture means that if they are trained throughout, we may prayerfully expect they will be saved and kept, and not depart. There is comfort in 1. Tim. 2. 15 for those who continue in faith and love with sobriety. So much depends on the home-life of the parents.

In Luke 1. 6. we are refreshed when we read that John the Baptist's parents were both righteous before God, walking in ALL His commandments and ordinances, and were blameless. It is recorded that his father, and his mother, and also he himself, were filled with the Holy Spirit. His case was special, yet surely these things are written to encourage parents to have and to seek fervently for godly homes, where the little ones are tender toward

the Truth of God. Timothy was blest even when a babe, in knowing the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3. 15). He, too, was caused to possess unfeigned faith, even as his mother and grandmother. Surely this record has been a help to many a dear mother when concerned about the salvation of the little ones. How thankful some of us who are now saved, and who were saved in early childhood, have been for the precious words of the Lord Jesus, when He spoke about the little ones believing in Him (Mark 9. 42). What watchfulness there should be not to hinder *one* such little believer.

Are not the words of Hannah, likewise, a spiritual help to dear mothers? “FOR THIS CHILD I PRAYED : and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him.” How definitely we should thank Him for answers to prayer. And she adds, “ I have lent him to the Lord ; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord ” (1 Sam. 1. 27, 28). Oh, for more mothers like to Hannah in these perilous times of lawlessness and disobedience to parents. Children who are simply and definitely trained for the Lord will be blest even in childhood. How many times Samuel is mentioned as “a child,” in chapter 2. As a child he ministered BEFORE THE LORD, and UNTO THE LORD, and GREW UP before the Lord. Will not the children that grow up before the Lord be saved? They cannot grow up “indifferent.” It was with reference to the home that God said, “Them that honour Me I will honour.” Yes, God will save the little ones, as He is exalted and revered. He is able. He is faithful. He delights to stimulate faith. Surely the little maid in 2 Kings 5. 2, 3 shews the influence of early training, for, though away from her land, she remembered God and His prophet. It has been said that children do not finally forget their early training, though they may turn away from it for



a time. Why should there be the turning away? What hinders the gracious working of the Holy Spirit in the little ones? If there is training in His fear, will He not honour this? Why is it that so few children are saved as LITTLE ONES? "Salvation is of the Lord"—parents cannot save their little ones, but we can all be stumblingblocks, although God is sovereign and He can work beyond us, where and as He wills. Worldliness is more a hindrance than many imagine. Are not many hindered by this, or by lack of enthusiasm for the Lord? Unguarded words are stumblingblocks. If any, when lovingly reprov'd, or encouraged to more devotion, become irritated, and defend self, can we be surprised there is failure? If there is a real heart-longing for the salvation of the children, worldly pleasures and fashions and old habits, will be GLADLY put aside. Let the children be unlike the world, in surroundings and manner and talk; let the homes be cheerfully pilgrim-like and bowed before Him, and He will grant the desire of our heart; even the salvation of the children, which is nothing less than a new creation, whether in young or old (2. Cor. 5. 17). Children are often taught to give their heart to God, but He cannot accept a sinful heart. He gives life first, THEN all should be given to Him. Salvation is more than coming out for Christ and confessing Him. Believing in the heart first is shown, then confession unto salvation (Rom. 10. 10). Multitudes have been encouraged to believe they were saved in childhood, who have shown later in life that there was no real or deep work of grace. Oh, that God may cause heart-searching in us all and the putting away of all that hinders, that He may, in answer to the prayerful longing of His own, grant speedily godly homes and saved families, for a witness to His own glory.

PERCY W. HEWARD

# CONCERNING CLOTHING,

## What are we to wear ?

**S**CRIP**T**URAL principles are so simple, in the light, for example, of 1 Corinthians 7. 31. That is to say, I should unostentatiously use the ordinary clothing of a country, **UNLESS** it contradicted **SCRIPTURAL APPOINTMENTS** in

- (a) Costliness,
- (b) Immodesty, (a deeply important matter)
- (c) Some special meaning being attached to any clothing (e.g. a clerical collar).

Moreover, (d) one should avoid frequency of change, even of neat attire. It is ill-becoming a pilgrim. We must not love variety.

Clothing is a reminder of **SIN**, and of **OUR NEED**. Let us be humble, and not desire to attract attention to ourselves.

(e) And if, in any way, other certain clothing causes to stumble, let us respect consciences, and give up gladly for Christ. We can afford, too, to be thought "outside," if we can save money for the spread of God's truth. Cleanliness and tidiness are glorifying to God, but worldly attractiveness is quite different. "The reproach of Christ" may extend to separation from the world's customs more than we think.

PERCY W. HEWARD

## “HE WENT DOWN . . . AND WAS SUBJECT UNTO THEM.”

Luke 2. 51.

**T**HESE are days of *self*-assertion. Socialism has its echo, and a *loud* echo, even in the home. Satan, at the outset, sought to alter the right relationship of Eve to Adam. The language is strikingly changed from “a help, meet *for him*” (Gen. 2. 18) to “her husband *with her*” (Gen. 3. 6).<sup>\*</sup> And the same tendency is found when children behave themselves proudly (Isa. 3. 5). It seems evident that God permits this, in reproof (Isa. 3. 4). But many are not exercised regarding the state of affairs. A large number of parents seem willing to shirk responsibilities. This is not strange in the world, but believers need to be encouraged to faithfulness. Their duties are not easy, but they are a great privilege. “My son, hear the *instruction* of thy father, and forsake not the *law* of thy mother” (Prov. 1. 8). The authoritative, yet gracious, tone of the Book of Proverbs is helpful. *Children of God* must not be afraid that *their children* will be offended. “Fear” is often a peril. God’s fatherly love to us is to guide in dealing with others. There is no asser-

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\* The *stress* on Adam when God gave *commands* is noteworthy. To receive a command indirectly is no disgrace. The desire for special personal revelation errs.

tiveness in a parent's quiet dignity. It is quite the opposite of "I *will* be obeyed," "If you do that, I *will*"—with all manner of added threats, not intended, and never fulfilled. Untruthfulness in the exercise of authority is a fundamental failure—and a sin.

The Lord Jesus, Who took upon Himself the form of a Servant, is the Example of His blood-bought people in the home. "Subjection," which suggests "arrangement *under*"—the "Submission-word" of other Scriptures *as to the home*—is the word used of Him. He saw no disgrace in this. Love loves to be truthful in the *appointed* sphere, even though the sphere is voluntarily chosen. "He was *subject* unto them." Surely *Christian* children must feel the force of these words,—and Christian parents must see what they are to expect. "Expect" is a great word, but a precious one : expectation is a true help. The context enforces the lesson. Had He not just proved *His* wondrous knowledge ? Aye, and the words had sounded forth, "Wist ye not that I must be about *My Father's business* ?" Yet He did not hurry forward. The *greater* part of *His* brief earthly life was in *the background*. Was this a mistake ? There are no mistakes with Him. Luke 3. 23 is amazing, for He needed *no delay* as *we* need. And Mark 6. 3, seems to fill up the gaps. Could not others have made "merely earthly things" seemingly *just as well* ? Yet He spent more years thereon than in preaching. How instructive to the young believer who

would give up a situation, without a clear warrant from God, and devote his "time wholly to the Lord's work,"—oftentimes only to be held back from going forward by the *rules* of a society. The Lord can enable His people, in such a dilemma, to risk pennilessness, and to step forth, but it is better not to run into unappointed chains. How precious is the witness of godliness in the workshop, and *unpaid* witness for the Lord in the evening—and not only on a platform even then. Spirituality is in myriads of little things, and the blood of Christ has purchased the *whole* life.

But to return. "He was *subject* unto them." The principle is important. If they had understood all, we should find the passage simple. *But* they understood not (50), albeit Mary "kept all these sayings in her heart" (51). He was *subject*. We must not use one part of God's will against another. A believing child does not cease thereby to own his parents. Salvation does not make a debtor free to omit material payment. The imperfection of government does not give believers license for insubordination. The Lord Jesus would not have done evil, if unwisely commanded. Nor can a Christian obey if told to worship an idol. But there can be no resentment, nor rising up, nor lack of *submission*. The government remains the government which he honours, as such, even the day after it issues a wrong statute, and the moment after it condemns him for his conscientious disobedience.

There can be no godly *resistance*. A keen sense of God's providential arrangements is important. And HE appoints the home into which we are born.

The human heart often chafes against seeming *hindrance*. But the Lord Jesus knew nothing of this rejection of home authority. "He was subject unto them," and the plural implies the importance of *guardianship*, as well, for Joseph occupied this position. How often a believer has *fretted* because circumstances of responsibility have kept him, or her, back from a seemingly larger sphere. The Holy Spirit answers this fretfulness.

Another thought is linked. In how many homes there is an *unrest*. Children need to be told *repeatedly* what they are not to do, and so forth. The Lord Jesus was a Contrast. Is it not probable that if parents, from earliest childhood, emphasized this verse, there would be certain encouragements? The restful agreement which God reveals in a godly home is much needed.

So our hearts are led forward to see the unity which pleases Him. And there is a certain parallel in every form of Christian relationship. In business and assembly alike the believer is to honour God's arrangements, and to show a beautifully unassertive character. The Holy Spirit never leads to lack of humility. May our hearts be helped by this encouragement.

PERCY W. HEWARD



# Godly Husbands and Wives in Scripture.

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THE power of a godly home is implied throughout Scripture. Proverbs 31. 10-31 is an impressive acrostic, and the unhindered prayers of 1 Peter 3. 7 are ever delightful. Indeed the fact that the home relationship is made the background for the display of the love between "Christ and the church" shows us how precious to God's heart is the fellowship of husband and wife, in holy dependence on Him and His will.

Then we think sadly of Adam and his wife, and the lack of godly order. Eve was not a **help**, was not "meet" for her husband. But he chose the **wrong** path (how evil is **wrong** love), and was **not** "deceived" (1 Tim. 2. 14), and thus his responsibility is the more manifest. But though we have many sad homes in Scripture, and remember how Solomon turned aside and Ahab "whom Jezebel his wife stirred up" (1 Kings 21. 25), yet, thanks be unto God, there have been beautiful contrasts, and the Holy Spirit emphasizes them for our joy, our praise and our imitation.

First, our mind is led back to Abraham, believing Abraham. And was not his wife believing Sarah? "Through faith she received strength" (Hebrews 11. 11), just the same as her husband (Romans 4. 18-20). And the encouraging words are added, "She judged Him faithful Who had promised." Such a testimony is among God's many striking declarations concerning godly women. Some of the most impressive examples of holy service are found among them. And another apostle was moved by the Holy Spirit to lay stress on Sarah as one among "holy women . . . who trusted in God," that godly Christian women to-day may be viewed as walking in the same family (1 Peter 3. 5, 6). Thanks be to God, this family is not extinct.

In the later Scriptures we call to mind Zacharias and Elisabeth. What commendation could be stronger than "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1. 6). We think of God's commendation in Job 1 and 2, though there the wife is contrasted. It is a wonderful privilege to be a "help," meet and suitable, the reverse of the hindrance that



husband and wife may easily become to one another. It is refreshing to find after the birth of John the Baptist that father and mother were of one mind (verses 60, 63); neither was turned aside by relatives. Thanks be to God for fixity of character. There is a measure of parallel between Judges 13. 7 and Luke 1. 15, and in the earlier passage the faith of Manoaah's **wife** seems the stronger. Yet Samson was only moved at times, as the record goes, and amid great physical strength he failed (contrast 2 Cor. 12. 9). But John's fidelity shines out. The testimony to Zacharias and his wife is much beyond anything in Judges 13, and thus emphasizes how God approved a godly home. And He is the Same to-day.

Joseph and Mary moreover set forth a beautiful relationship to one another (Matt. 1. 20-25, 2. 20-23, Luke 2. 41-52). And the Lord Jesus in the perfection of His childhood honoured both. No words are more impressive for children than those of Luke 2. 51. He was the Mighty God, yet, when He came into this world, He filled every sphere perfectly. How sinful is the insubordination of the natural heart.

When we read the Acts and Epistles, we find Aquila and Priscilla. They are **always** mentioned together, and there is a remarkable placing of Prisca, or Priscilla, first on three occasions. The Holy Spirit witnesses **definitely** through Paul as to the distinct spheres of brethren and sisters, but by such precious hints as the above He prevents misuse of the Divine teaching. There is no rivalry or antipathy, or jealousy where God appoints or works.

And as we ponder these graciously recorded examples of godly homes, we reach the unnamed overseers of Christian assemblies, chosen according to 1 Timothy 3, 5, 6 and praise God for this witness, and that of verses 11 and 12. And still beyond this we come again to Ephesians 5, concerning Christ and the church, and realize anew the beauty of a Christian home and its contrast with that of Adam and Eve. God has set high honour upon the husband and wife who acknowledge their privilege. But the joy of this blessing is not reached by mere desire. There must be a humble walk with God, in the continued love of background devotedness, in the enabling of the Holy Spirit, and let us all, who own the Name of the Lord Jesus, married or unmarried, prayerfully seek after this.

PERCY W. HEWARD

# A Mother's Responsibilities :

## Specially in the Book of Proverbs.

SCRIPTURE lays great emphasis on the privileges of parents, and the memory, as well as the heart, may be helped, if we add, their prerogatives and power. The very first mention implies that the child remains with them till grown up (Gen. 2. 24): we observe a definite contrast in the animal world.

The united influence of father and mother is ever before us, and the *first* "Commandment with promise" mentions them together, as those whom children are not merely to obey but to *honour*, a peculiarly impressive word. The absence of "honour" to-day is one of the sad signs of the times. The Holy Spirit, in an epistle dealing especially with the heavenly calling, mentions this command (Eph. 6. 1-3, see also Col. 3. 20). Precepts are not out of place because believers are in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. *Lawlessness is not* the reverse of legality, but its kinsman: both exalt self. It is deeply important that parents should recognize this teaching, and God's instruction as to acting *together*. The present day tendency for such to disagree in front of their family is deplorable, and sinful. They little realize the bitter fruits of this departure from God's will. The children become one-sided, and seek to set one parent against the other, and to gain from one what the other would refuse. The scheming involved, together with deceit and its sad accompaniments, hiding from one that which another knows, must undermine the whole moral training. We think of Genesis 27. If only believers realized the *responsibilities* of marriage and a home earlier in their life, and recollected 1 Peter 3. 7, with the whole of Ephesians 5. 21-33, these Scriptures would be a source of rich blessing. Often we are awakened "too late," and yet, even then, God may mercifully grant the restoration of years which the cater-

pillar has eaten. The fruit of the Spirit is self-control, and if one parent regards the action of the other too imperious with respect to the young people, a *prayerful* conversation alone, if both are believers, may be full of spiritual exercise for both and of personal blessing to each. Often we see in children a family likeness, temperamentally as well as in physical features, and may well be searched as to our past unconscious influence, and its future use for the Lord.

About twenty times in the Books of Kings we read "the mother's name was ——," as if to imply the great power a mother has. Alas, many women, even believers, seem to seek a sphere of authority to which God has not called, and, meanwhile, to lose the honour and privileges which He has appointed. If the home were more frequently in accord with Titus 2. 5, there would be "much fruit." It is easier to "preach" than to undertake background service to the Lord. We all wish to see "*great results*" more quickly. 'Tis a grave mistake. "Guide the house" in 1 Timothy 5. 14 is a remarkable word. It contains the same root as "master of the house," and implies a queenly sovereignty, in happy subjection to God's will (Col. 3. 18). The Holy Spirit's language in 1 Peter 3. 6 is not popular to-day. Those who speak lightly of "the words of Paul," and urge that he was unmarried, show a distressingly proud denial of inspiration. It is remarkable that the same Divine Author used a married man to give this parallel testimony, which only self-will rejects.

Influence for evil is marked in such words as "his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly," 2 Chronicles 22. 3, and it is deeply refreshing to turn to Proverbs 31. 1, and read "The words of king Lemuel, even the prophecy that his mother taught him." If death and life are in the power of the tongue, we may find the same tremendous possibilities in that which is entrusted to a mother.

It is true that a father is mentioned somewhat more frequently in Proverbs (23 verses), but the mother is fourteen

times before us. In accord with the harmony already urged, we note with joy that in twelve instances father *and* mother are together in this appointed *order*. Twice we are reminded of a mother's *law* (1. 8. 6. 20), her words are to be authoritative to her children, trained and caused to love her with the affection of chapter 31. 28. The deep feelings of a parent are brought out in 4. 3 (love), 10. 1 (heaviness), 23. 25 (gladness), and the bringing to shame of 29. 15 may be added. Too often parents of to-day rather expect the children to have their own way, and are not pained in the manner God has appointed.

The uniformity with which Scripture upholds the mother's authority is impressive. In 15. 20 and 23. 22 God condemns "despising," in 19. 26 "wasting," in 28. 24 "robbing," in 30. 11 the absence of "blessing," and in 30. 17 "despising to obey." Such language shows that He expects not only external obedience, but also esteem and respect. There are other ways of robbing beside that which is outward and material. These are days of "unfeeling," and we should be concerned that there may be holy contrasts among ourselves.

We have alluded to the priceless acrostic of chapter 31--all Scripture is priceless--the Holy Spirit shows a high standard, and we should not continually expect to be disappointed. It may seem easier to be "irregular" and to lose our authority in irritation, and worldliness, and other sins, but we shall lose heavily through these departures from the Lord. For the glory of His Name, may we not plead with Christian parents, and Christian mothers especially, to maintain their holy dignity, in devoted dependence on the Lord? The willingness to be thought old-fashioned and peculiar may well be viewed rather as a true adornment for those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

PERCY W. HEWARD



# The Importance of the Home.

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**S**ATAN'S attack on a home in Genesis is significant. The Holy Spirit's emphasis on the Fatherhood of God for His redeemed people, and that they are His children, must help us much. And those who had responsibility to oversee an assembly were to be ruling well their "own house." How godly the family should be. The stress on saved households in Acts encourages us, and we praise God for the answer of Moses to Pharaoh. "We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go" (Ex. 10. 9).

The arrangements for passover week provide a helpful sidelight as to the home. It is worthy of notice that 1 Corinthians 5. shows the sad failure at Corinth as to the home, and urges godliness there. Hence we notice gratefully the different expressions used by the Holy Spirit. (1) "Even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of **your houses**" (Ex. 12. 15). (2) "Seven days shall there be no leaven **found in your houses**" (Ex. 12. 19). (3) Ye shall eat nothing leavened in all **your habitations**" (Ex. 12. 20).<sup>\*</sup> In this verse the reference to "habitations" seems in the centre to go with **both** parts of the command.

(4) "There shall no leavened bread be **seen with thee** (or for thee, or belonging to thee); (5)

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<sup>\*</sup> Where they "Sat," cf. Deuteronomy 6. 7.

neither shall there be leaven **seen with thee** (or for thee, or belonging to thee) in all thy quarters ” (Ex. 13. 7); (6) “ Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it ” (Deut. 16. 3); (7) “ There shall be no leavened bread **seen with thee** (or for thee, or belonging to thee) in all thy coast ” (quarters, Deut. 16. 4).

Thus we learn our responsibility for what is ours, and for our houses, and dwelling places: whatever is in our “ boundary ” is entrusted to our care. What do we allow in our house? Do we permit our children to read unsatisfactory books? Have we “ put away ” that which God wishes us to put away? Again what do we eat—mentally and spiritually? What is “ found ” with us, what is “ seen ” with us? We are reminded of unseen sin, that we may be humbled, not that we may excuse it (Lev. 5. 17), but that we may not boast of our sinlessness when realized sin is judged (Ps. 19. 12). Leaven is floating in the air, but an Israelite was not on this account to tolerate what he saw. So it is with us. May there be the glory of God in our heartfelt application of His truth.

PERCY W. HEWARD