

~Other Speakers S-Z: Classic Christian Writings:

What makes a Christian home? The mere fact that Christians live there? No indeed. There must be Christian family life. Christian ideals and aims must be brought to bear upon the shared family life and interests, molding and motivating the conduct of its affairs.

The home is a specialized society where, in intimate contacts made possible by its protecting walls, the younger members may learn the lessons essential to life in the big world of humanity, and where every member may demonstrate, each in loving relationship to the other, the finer graces of Christian living. In fact, the home is God's gift, designed for child training and character developing. It is God's proving ground for whatsoever demands the future may make.

The indispensable ideals for meeting these requirements may be grouped under three words: Reverence, which we owe to our God; Obedience, the rightful due of children to parents; Patience, to be exercised one toward the other.

Reverence Godward

The Christian home had its origin in two persons being joined together "in the Lord," in a marriage ceremony sealed and sanctioned "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." This, by right, places Christ as the Head of the home. It recognizes God the Father as the over-all provider and protector of its people and its interests. It invokes the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit.

How shall such a relationship be given practical expression? How shall the Godhead be made a vital force in the family life? The logical answer is the Family Altar. Not only so; it is the most practical answer to the ever-rising problems of the home. Life in the home is sweetened; its harshness and roughness are reduced to the vanishing point. Confidence in one another is daily renewed as all hearts are freshly motivated by drinking together at the fountain of divine love, patience, courage and consecration to a common Lord and Saviour.

In families where God is honored, there can be few, if any, broken homes. What is still more, there can be little of the prevailing disrespect for parents. When children hear their parents discussing and near-quarreling over family affairs, respect for parents oozes out at every pore. When instead, children hear their parents taking the problems to a Heavenly Father, submitting heart and life to His wisdom and will, respect for them mounts to a high level.

Obedience Parentward

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise" (Eph. 6:1,2). Obedience is called for on the ground that it is "right." Every consideration of the child-to-parent relationship makes obedience right. Would that children could realize the wisdom of God in the gift to them of parents to nurture and admonish them in years when, undeveloped and inexperienced, they lack ability to care for themselves.

This is part of the ministry of a truly Christian home, bringing to the consciousness of its offspring their debt of gratitude to God for the gift of Christian parents and the priceless privilege of a godly inheritance received at their hands.

But the basis for obedience lies deeper than the tie uniting parent and child. The human family is meant to reflect upon earth the relationships in the heavenly family. We as earthly fathers are to require obedience of our children that they may, in turn, render a like obedience to their Heavenly Father. Obedience is not optional; it is obligatory, divinely so. God does not want spoiled children.

In exacting obedience we are laying the foundation for true Christian character. That obedience is best secured and easily so, when the child sees every one in the home eagerly rendering a heart obedience to God and His Word.

Patience Each Otherward

"Let your considerateness be known unto all men" (Phil. 4:5). How much more to those whom we hold as the dearest of earth. The home is the place where every Christian grace should find its fullest and finest

Christian Home Ideals By Norman B. Harrison

expression. One who is a Christian at home will prove himself a Christian anywhere.

But too often the home loved ones must suffer the outbursts of unkindness, impatience, ill-will and harsh judgment. Not every one is easy to live with. Someone has said that God can live with folks that you and I can't. But there is the supreme opportunity of Christian patience--the patience of Christ.

"Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness" (Col. 1:11). If there is any one place for exercising our Lord's unlimited forgiveness (Matt. 18:21,22), it is the home. There "let every one regard the rest as being of more account than himself; each fixing his attention, not simply on his own interests, but also on those of others" (Phil. 2:3,4 Weymouth).

The highest ideal of all is that every member of the family should know the saving grace of our Lord and through Him be found in loving Christian fellowship and sympathy with every other member. Where human life has been imparted, there we should be deeply concerned that eternal life also is imparted.

From Christian Victory.