

THE HOME FOR CHRIST.

(By Gertrude Cockerell.)

How often is marriage spoken of in a light and frivolous manner, and the conversation before and after the marriage ceremony frivolous to a degree. But it is too solemn an occasion for curious eyes to gaze upon; unhallowed tongues make light of it. Marriage should be entered upon "reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God."

Yet how often the only recognition of God, if then, is when hand is joined in hand by some minister of the Gospel, or God is asked to bless a union in which He has had no voice.

It may be that one of the contracting parties is a Christian, yet allows affection or convenience to have the casting vote; or he or she may enter upon married life careless or indifferent about the other's condition before God.

How many such to-day are in bitter sorrow over the disobedience to the command, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor 6:14), or are suffering "leanness of soul" through following "their heart's desire" (Ps. 106:15).

But granting that the contracting parties are "married in the Lord," the new relation must be cherished and maintained in the Lord if they are to strengthen each other's hands in God, and be helpers, not hinderers, of each other's faith.

To maintain right relations with God, to whom they have been "reconciled through the blood of the Cross" (Col. 1:20), how important in face of the task and problems that family life present.

How can parents sustain right relations with their children save as they themselves are in right relation to God their Father? Do you, beloved parent, represent God in such fashion to your children that in early life their intelligent choice is to make father's and mother's God their own, and are found at "the place called Calvary?" Do we as parents and guardians of youth abide in Him our Risen Lord, and so in life and conduct ourselves "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God"? (Col. 1:10).

How can we expect obedience from our children if we ourselves fail in obedience to Him Whose will is made

known to us in His Word? And how expect our children to have larger vision than our own if only too apparent that the things of time and sense are given first place in our lives? And what resource is left to the parent whose sole argument to enforce his will is brute force? And how many children are punished for the result rather than for the act of disobedience? What an outrage on the child's sense of justice; how blunting to its moral perceptions is such conduct. Little wonder if such a child regards life as a lottery, and makes of it a game of chance!

"A house divided against itself cannot stand." How true where children are concerned. How sharp their eyes to see the lack of unity, of harmony, of principle in their elders, and, alas! in many cases they learn to exploit these for their own purposes of self-will or gain.

And how careful we need to be not to foster pride in our children by our own false valuation of such externals as dress, appearance, appointments, or their marked ability in any given direction. How the unconscious charm of childhood has its bloom rubbed off by oft-repeated repetition of its baby prattle and its doings. How painful the spectacle of the self-conscious child who speaks and acts with his eyes upon his elders.

Who amongst us but has not felt a sense of shame and pain as some hapless child has been arraigned in our presence for some childish fault, or, worse still, disposition? Oh, parent or guardian of youth, may no harsh words or blow in presence of elders cause the blush of shame to mantle some young cheek or cause quivering nerves, like so many live wires, to cry out in protest.

When the Master "set a child in the midst" it was not as a shame-faced culprit for wrong-doing. He has no dock for children. Neither was it to make a display of childish charms or gifts. But he was set there as an object-lesson to his elders of humility.

And you to whom these lines are addressed. The charge committed to you of young life entails far more upon you than attention to mere bodily needs. When these are met and all the claims of time are met, there still remain the claims of God upon you as His guardians of your children. To fulfil these will surely mean the expenditure of time and thought directed

to these claims, alas! so often expended on outside interests. But to gain and keep the confidence of our children with regard to their safe conduct through time into eternity, is a task worthy of our best.

How few and precious the years that we can call our children our very own: Are we making the most and the best of the initial advantage that is ours before the child leaves the shelter of the home for the schoolroom, and rivals in all directions claim our children? The answer to the proposition, "How shall a young man cleanse his way?" is given by the Psalmist in these words, "By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." Is that Word in us? "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Gen. 18:19). Can God thus count on you?

THE LONG LINE.

Hoe your row, it's the only row for you,
From first flush of morn till the evening's dew,
There's never another your work can do
On that one line.

Murmur not, sigh not long not for rest,
That is the way to be happy and blest;
He does well, brother, who does just his best,
On the long line.

What! would you till in the green gardens near,
Old rows, fenced snugly, so soft and so clear?
Nay! up and at it! thou faint pioneer,
On the long line.

Sing while you labour, though weary the day,
Life is a song, though the skies may be grey;
Listening sad hearts shall be cheered on the way
Of that long line.

Never a rest when the work is begun,
Never a prize till the goal has been won;
Then God shall whisper, "Thou servant, well done,"
Seeing that line.