

ONE HUNDRED BEST SERMONS FOR SPECIAL DAYS AND OCCASIONS

WITH ACCOMPANYING CYCLOPEDIA OF
CHOICE ILLUSTRATIONS

CHRISTMAS, OLD YEAR DAY, WATCH-NIGHT, NEW
YEAR, EPIPHANY, VOCATION DAY, YOUNG PEOPLE'S
SERVICE, LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY, WASHINGTON'S
BIRTHDAY, LENTEN SEASON, PALM SUNDAY, GOOD
FRIDAY, COMMUNION SUNDAY, EASTER, ARBOR
DAY, ASCENSION DAY, WHITSUNDAY, TRINITY
SUNDAY, MOTHER'S DAY, MEMORIAL DAY, CHILDREN'S DAY, COMMENCEMENT, INDEPENDENCE DAY, AGED PEOPLE'S SERVICE, THE SABBATH, LABOR DAY, RALLY DAY, ELECTION DAY, THANKSGIVING DAY, UNIVERSAL BIBLE SUNDAY, FOREFATHERS' DAY, CORNER-STONE LAYING, CHURCH DEDICATION SERVICE, DEDICATION OF CHURCH BELLS, SERVICES FOR LEADING FRATERNITIES, ETC.

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**ONE HUNDRED BEST SERMONS
FOR SPECIAL DAYS AND OCCASIONS, VII**

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Round me on every hand
Heaven is my mother-land
Heaven is my home."

If we but live in this world in such a manner that we shall be fitted for heaven, and we enter that beautiful land, the first to welcome us there will be that dear old mother who loved us here. How many sons have looked down into mother's face, as the candle of her life flickered out, and promised to meet her in heaven!

THE CHRISTIAN HOME: AMERICA'S FUNDAMENTAL NEED

By Rev. James I. Vance, D. D.

Text: "Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation," etc. Gen. 18: 18, 19.

The revival society most needs to-day is not the revival of trade. That will come in due time. It will not be the revival of good government. That is coming. But society needs more than civic reform. The revival society most needs to-day is not the revival of racial purity, of physical soundness, of eugenics. That, too, is important. The body is holy, but it still remains a fact that man merely has a body, while he is a soul. It is not the revival of philanthropy. Philanthropy is in a state of revival. The revival society most needs to-day is not a church revival. To be sure that kind of revival is desperately needed, and there can be no hope of any permanent improvement in society that does not take into account the potent influence which only the church can wield. The revival society most needs to-day is the revival of an institution which is older than all these, more important than any and all of them combined, and which, if permitted permanently to suffer eclipse and decline, will seal the doom of human progress. I refer to the home. The revival society most needs today is the revival of the Christian home.

The interests of the home are more important than the interests of trade. We have sold out, and sold to the lowest bidder, when we sacrifice home joys and sanctities for the money god. This is what many are doing. They are money-mad.

The discipline of the home is more important than good government, because the discipline of the home is essential to good

government. You cannot make good citizens out of people who have never been taught obedience.

The sanctity of the home is more important than all the questions which center in the latest scheme for racial integrity—eugencies; for if the homes had been Christian, the problems of eugencies need not have arisen. People talk about safeguarding the marriage relations with a physical examination. Why? Because the marriage relation itself has been so abused, ignored and defiled that society is paying the price. We must begin further back than a physical examination if race purity is to be achieved.

The devotion of the home is a finer thing than philanthropy, by as much as personality is finer than institutionalism. Our benevolent and philanthropic work is splendid and necessary. It has had an amazing growth; but this, to a large extent, has been made necessary by the failure of another and an older institution to do its work. If there had been better homes, there would have been less need of institutions. I care not how good an institution may be, it can never be as good as a home, and can never take the place of a home.

The interests of the home are higher than the interests of the school. In a measure they are, of course, identical, and should work in perfect sympathy and be controlled by the same ideals.

The revival of the home is more important than the revival of the church. The home is older in God's plan. It is basal. No revival in the church gets far enough, nor lasts long enough, which does not affect the home. The church is the most important institution of society save one. It is more important than the shop or the school or the state, but it is not as important as the home. The character of the church is fixed by the home. There is not much future for any church which does not have behind its altar a fireside.

I say that the revival of the home is of more concern than personal salvation, by as much as the cause is in advance of its results. It is important to convert people, to get them saved, but if this change is to come at the best time, if it is to last and produce the best results, if in many it is to come at all, it will be because of parental example and prayer, because of the holy influences wielded by a godly father and a pious mother in a Christian home. Therefore I say that the revival society most

needs to-day is the revival of the Christian home. It is a strong statement, but not stronger than the facts demand.

I. The home in decline. That the Christian home is in a state of decline is evident to anybody who knows what a Christian home is, and who pauses to investigate present-day conditions. The home as an institution is fighting for its life. The servant question, the high cost of living, the rush of modern life, the innumerable fads which claim our time, promising much and cashing out nothing, the speed mania, the dance mania, the recreation mania, are all a menace to the quiet and simplicity without which true home life has not the ghost of a chance. The unity of the home is difficult to maintain. The table used to be the social center, where all the family met at meal time, but nowadays they straggle in as the exigencies of social or other engagements may permit. Thus the bond of the common life in the home is broken.

II. Regard for the sanctity of the marriage vow is declining. Christianity stands for the sanctity of marriage. Marriage is not a sacrament, but it is sacred. Marriage has been fearfully cheapened. It is not only entered into lightly, but is lightly set aside. Divorce may be had for any whim, and is so frequent that the dockets of the courts are congested. Public sentiment on the subject has fallen so low that some are brazen enough to advocate trial marriages. This, of course, shocks us. But the proposal of so indecent and revolutionary a thing shows that public opinion has reached the dregs. And yet often divorce in reality is just this under the thin guise of a legal permit. Marriage is a moral act, made so by God, and human law can never make moral what divine law has made immoral. The prevalent low views on marriage are a feature of the decline of the Christian home.

III. There is also a decline of parental authority. Christianity stands not for parental servility, but authority. To every child the command is, "Honor thy father and thy mother." Parents are not to be arbitrary. They are not to warp or repress the child's individuality. But the first lesson any of us needs to learn is that of submission to authority. Man must have a master. The secret of self-control is lodged in the thought of being controlled. What is the situation in the average home? Parental authority is a joke. It has been reduced to a shadow. Your children have gotten beyond you. You have been weak

enough to permit it. It is bad for you, but worse for them. No colt ever broke itself to harness, and there is trouble in the world for any boy or girl until he learns to respect life's harness, until he has a sense of the value of authority and restraint.

IV. There is a decline in religious instruction. The most important element of the Christian home is the atmosphere of reverence. It is to the soul what sunlight is to the flower. Religion puts the home on a basis of sincerity and earnestness. It rules our shams; it slays artificiality; it is not possible to overestimate the value of all this. No child's soul has a fair chance who is not taught prayer and the great truths about God and the future Life. What is the religious life of your home? You probably provide well for the physical wants. Do you make any provision for the spiritual? If not, you are sending your children on a journey across a desert stretch of sterile sand with nothing for the journey. Is a blessing asked at your table? It is more important than what goes on the table. Have you a family altar? If you care anything for your home, for the character of your children, for their present or eternal welfare, beware of a prayerless home.

V. Need of the Christian Home. The Christian home is needed for the sake of the nation. We are fighting some great battles for human rights here in America. We must have leaders who possess courage and strength to stand against privilege, and citizens whose ideals are high and clean, and who place the moral welfare of society above party schemes or private gain; for the making of such leaders and citizens we must have Christian homes. No nation is better than the home life of its people.

The Christian home is needed for the sake of the church. The church is dependent on the home for its reinforcement. Do you think it strange that young men are not seeking the ministry as they once did? Why should they, when you think of the homes? What is there in these homes to direct a lad's mind to a holy calling?

The Christian home is needed for the sake of your children. You love them, and would do anything for them. Are you doing the best? Are you setting them a Christian example? Are you sending them out to life's duties strong with Christian principles, so that when temptations come they may stand? You feel that if you leave your children money enough to be independent that

will be about the best you can do. It may be the worst. Money is the least thing you can leave them. How often it becomes a curse? Have you ever known religion to be a curse? It is not money you need to leave your children, but character, faith, will-power, habits of reverence, of industry and devotion to duty.

God help us to save our homes! If I had but one message, the chance of but one word to the nation and the age, if I were preaching my last sermon, it would be a plea for religion in the home!

MOTHER'S DAY ILLUSTRATIONS

Why Mother?

There is a proverb which says, "God could not be everywhere; so he made mothers." It is not good theology, but it conveys a noble interpretation of the function of motherhood. The divine care for human lives has no better symbol than the unremitting attention which a true mother gives to her children. There is profound pathos in the lives of those little ones whose parents delegate their most sacred duties to hirelings. Nurses and governesses can never be satisfactory substitutes for mothers. A woman who is a mother only in the sense that she has given birth to children is a libel on the holiest office conferred upon her sex. The shrinking from motherhood which characterizes so many women in our time is not only a mark of selfishness; it is also an evidence of an inferior judgment about the way to be happy. Felicity belongs only to those women who frankly accept the natural terms of wifehood, and by bearing and nourishing children enter into fellowship with God's plan of setting the solitary in families.

Mother

Many will recall the words of Kate Douglas Wiggin: "Most of all the other beautiful things in life

come by twos and threes, by dozens and hundreds. Plenty of roses, stars, sunsets, rainbows, brothers and sisters, aunts and cousins, but only one mother in all the wide world."

Mother's Day Lesson

The lesson of purity is a Mother's Day lesson. Purity is strength. Impurity is weakness. Let the day remind us of the duty of purity. As has been said, impurity is weakness. A slight storm laid low a tall, well-built oak. Then it was discovered that the tree consisted of a shell, its heart eaten away by the canker of rot. An insignificant stroke of disease carried to his grave a man, tall, well-proportioned; apparently his vitality had been wasted away by use of alcohol. A man professedly standing for his honesty in business, occupying a prominent position in a Christian church, fell before a gust of financial temptation. An analysis of his character showed that he was like the tree, mostly external shell. His character resembled the physical frame of the man who died. The tree thought it was strong because it had not been tested. The first man boasted of his health because he had never been sick. The second man did not expect to fall

because he had not discovered how weak he was.

The Christian is peculiar because he is committed to holiness. He has been set apart, sanctified, is "called to be a saint." He may be far from real sainthood now, but the obligation to attain it is upon him. This he knows and feels. He also knows that he must seek to become a saint or he will soon cease to be a Christian. By every motive he is moved to press toward the mark of a high calling in Christ. That means, pledges him to watchfulness against evil from every quarter.—H.

The Baby's Sky

The nurture of the child soul begins when the nurture of its body begins. A mother is conscious of the responsibilities, at the birth of her child, that are not merely physical nurture and carefulness. Her love transcends the animal, and Hope hangs a star over every cradle. She looks through the animal at his soul. She is in a sense his soul, his will, his mind, his all. "It is given to mothers," says Bushnell, "to plant the angel in men."

"The holy baby has no skies
But mother's eyes;

Nor any God above

But mother's love;

His angel sees the Father's face,
But he the mother's full of grace."

And so, mothers, we have led you to the mother's task. She is the first and greatest interpreter of God to her babe. Kneeling beside his crib each day, she becomes to him an object lesson in prayer. She exemplifies the faith she means to teach. The faith-filled home needs no special conversation on religion, but is filled with religious conversa-

tion from which the child gets his vocabulary. Faith becomes a matter of the home environment and parental conduct.—Rev. Robinson P. Bennett.

Love for Mother

A pleasant-faced woman boarded a trolley car with her two small sons during the busy noon hour of the holiday season. The smaller boy sat with his mother upon one side of the car, while the other, who was about four years old, took a seat opposite. It interested him to look out of the window, but frequently he glanced across at his mother. At length he called softly, "Mother!" No answer. Again he spoke: "Mother!" This time it was said a bit louder, and the mother looked over and smiled. The boy's eyes lighted, and he whispered: "Mother! I love you." The mother turned a glorified face upon her small son, and men and women in the car looked tenderly from one to the other. The trolley car had suddenly become a place of blessing because a little boy had voiced this ever-beautiful sentiment: "Mother, I love you."—Zion's Herald.

"The God of My Mother"

In the middle of the last century Sir David Brewster went to Paris to visit his friend Arago, the astronomer, who was completing the circuit of his life. Of their interview he said: "We conversed on the marvels of creation; and the name of God was introduced. This led Arago to complain of the difficulties which his reason experienced in understanding God.

"But," said I, "it is still more difficult not to understand him;" and he did not deny it.

"Only in this case," said he, "it is quite impossible for me to understand the God of the philosophers."

I replied, "We are not dealing with him, although I believe that true philosophy conducts us to faith in God; but I wish to speak of the God of the Christian." Whereupon he exclaimed, "You mean the God of my mother! How much comfort she had in kneeling before him!" He said no more; but his heart had spoken.

Thus a man when left to his better instincts, true to his conscience and the light of the Oracles, finds his way to God.—Rev. D. J. Burrell, D. D.

The Emoluments of Motherhood

The emoluments of motherhood were never greater than to-day. Poets have sung of the debt which the race owes to its mothers, and every true man has spoken with unstinted praise of his own mother. The obligations of society to motherhood have had clear recognition. We shall soon discern that the women who bear children are the most determining factor in shaping modern civilization.—The Christian Observer.

Loved Me Over It

At Maule, near Paris, France, trees are grown for umbrella handles, canes, etc. Five hundred acres are planted with ash, oak, maple, chestnut. At one year they are cut back, so that there will be several branches. The next year different designs are traced on the bark. When the bark is stripped off the following year, the designs are found upon the wood, ready for use. This the mother does with her boys and girls, determines their worth. Mother is

the heart of the home, while Father is the head.

The mother-love tides us over many difficulties. A little child fell and was hurt; but she said of her father, "He just loved me over it." The boy was crippled; but the Mother encouraged him to try and try again to walk, with hand and kiss and song.

The Heaven of Purity

A well known friend and counselor of girls says: "Not long ago I entered a large department-store. On one counter I saw some dainty waists marked at so low a price that I paused to examine them. 'Why are these sold so cheaply?' I asked of the clerk. 'O,' she replied, 'they are shop-worn; you would not notice it at a glance, but their freshness is gone; so we have to put down the price. After a while, if they get more soiled we will toss them over there,' and she pointed to a table whereon lay a pile of waists with a placard above, telling that they were to be sold below even the cost of material. Around this table stood a crowd of people pulling over the pile of waists, soiling them still more, then leaving them perhaps a tumbled heap on the floor. 'Those are of the same material as these on the counter,' said the clerk, 'and both are the same as these,' pointing to dainty waists in boxes marked at prices more than quadruple those upon the table.

"'You see,' she explained, 'people who are particular don't want to buy goods that are not fresh. They'd rather pay more for the same article that has not been handled by so many.'"

There is price, there is privilege, there is power in purity. There is

heaven in it: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Think of this on Mother's Day.—H.

Dedicated

When young Matthew Simpson tremblingly broke the news to his widowed mother that he felt called to preach, which would necessitate his leaving home, she exclaimed with tears of joy: "Oh, my son, I have prayed for this hour every day since you were born. At that time, we dedicated you to the Christian ministry."

The One Argument

When Richard Cecil was a youth, he tried his utmost to be an infidel; but there was one argument he could never answer; it was the beautiful, eloquent Christian life of his mother. That held him fast.

Another, Dr. Newman Hall, had a similar experience. Against all the solicitations and seductions of infidelity there stood the holy life of his mother. He could not get away from that.

Mother's Prayer

Another great teacher, Professor George Wilson of Edinburgh, Scotland, who succeeded in putting himself into the life of his students in a marvelous way, in spite of the pain that tortured him all through his professional life, liked to tell lovingly of his debt to his mother. One of his first memories was of the evening visits paid by her to the bed in which he slept with his twin brother. As she bent over the boys, she would whisper the prayer of Jacob: "The God who hath fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel who hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads!" George was fascinated by the words, which

he heard one night when the mother thought he was asleep. After that he used to lie awake, pretending to be asleep, that he might hear the earnest prayer. The thought of the petition so often repeated was a benediction to him throughout his life.—Rev. John T. Farris, D. D.

Maternal Feeling of the Soldier

Lieutenant Coningsby Dawson, writing on "The Motherhood of the Soldier" in the Red Cross Magazine, says: "It sounds absurd, I know, but it seems to me that up front we fighting men contrived to get a kind of motherly feeling for one another. We were all so weak when considered separately, so liable to wounds and deaths; we were only strong when we stood together. This maternal feeling which developed showed itself in a special direction when the danger was most intense. The moment before an attack the uppermost thought which most of us had and which some of us expressed was, 'I wish, if I go west to-day, I had a kid to leave behind me.' It wasn't the father in the man speaking there, for the paternal instinct rarely makes itself felt until the child is already in the world. It was the woman speaking who lies hidden in the heart of every man."

The Power of Purity

The story is told of two theological students who were walking along an "old clothes" street in the Whitechapel district of London. Suddenly one exclaimed, "What a splendid text for a sermon to young men!" pointing to a suit of clothes that hung swaying in the breeze at the side of a window. "Slightly Soiled. Greatly Reduced in Price."

"That's it exactly," he went on. "We young people get soiled so slightly, just seeing a vulgar show in a theater, just reading a coarse book, just allowing ourselves a little indulgence in dishonest or lustful thoughts, just slightly soiled, and lo! when the time comes for our manhood to be appraised we are 'greatly reduced in price.' Our charm, our strength is gone. The consecration of youth is gone. We are just part and parcel of the general shop-soiled stock."

There is great loss in being "slightly soiled," but there is power in purity. Sir Galahad, the old knight who stood as the type of chastity, said: "My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure." It is so still. The man whose heart is right has the power of ten average men from the very fact that his heart is right. If

Sir Galahad was correct, his language might be followed with the statement of the man his exact opposite in character. "My weakness is as the weakness of ten because my heart is impure." If a man's heart is wrong, he has hidden away in his life as much weakness as belongs to ten average men from the very fact that his heart is impure. But there is power in purity. Shakespeare said: "A heart unspotted is not easily daunted." The poet Thomson said: "Even from the body's purity, the mind receives a secret sympathetic aid." "Virtue is a thousand shields" was the motto of the Earl of Effingham. Christ said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The apostle Paul said, "Whatsoever things are pure, think on these things." And he wrote to his young friend Timothy, "Keep thyself pure."—H.