

THE COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

"BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE. Eph. 2 c. 20 v.

VOLUME I.

LUNENBURG, N. S. THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 1836.

NUMBER 9.

For the Colonial Churchman.

FAMILY DEVOTION.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

When first created, Man had no idea of happiness without his MAKER. GOD was in all his thoughts, the object of all his affections, the end of all his desires and wishes. The holy law was written in his heart, and he delighted to run in the way of GOD's commandments. Such as he then was, such must he again be made by the power of the Holy Spirit, before he can be admitted into the garden of the Lord, and enjoy uninterrupted happiness in the immediate presence of angels and archangels around the throne of GOD. To man placed in this lower world of sin and sorrow, conscious of his daily progress to the same dark and silent grave, which from time to time has closed upon the objects of his affections,—and of the dread eternity which is to follow—how cheering is the sound of the precious Gospel, which from the hallowed lips of the Saviour, invites all who 'labour and are heavy laden, to come unto him and find rest,' and points out the way by which the 'inner man can be renewed,' and the image of GOD again stamped upon his soul. How delightful to such an one is also the privilege of Prayer, through which he can have access unto GOD, pour forth the sorrows of his soul and seek for 'grace and strength in every time of need.' Of prayer, it is well said, it is the *appointment of Heaven*. GOD has chosen it as the general means, or channel, through which He is pleased to communicate the needful blessings of His grace and salvation to the souls of mankind. Though he has promised His people deliverance from the guilt and dominion of sin, independently of any merit, or worthiness of their own, yet He has commanded it to be written 'Thus saith the Lord, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.' The following brief remark of an ancient Divine in one of your former numbers 'a family without prayer is like a house without a roof exposed to every storm,' led to the above remarks on prayer in general, and induced me to form the determination of forwarding the substance of my reflections on the important, but too much neglected duty of *family prayer*, for insertion in your useful paper,—a paper which I trust will prove a blessing, not only to the members of our own church, but to all those of every denomination who love our Lord JESUS CHRIST in sincerity. Instead, however, of my own remarks on that interesting and profitable duty, I shall now from time to time send those of another, said to be originally written for a friend, which I met with in a religious periodical published some fifteen or twenty years since. And thankful shall I be to the GOD who heareth prayer, if they meet the eye of any who, living in the habitual neglect of this duty, may be induced to bestow upon them a *practical* attention. The very heathen we read, had their *penates*, or household gods; yet many a family of professed christians will not blush to avow, in the words of the Roman Historian, *nobis lares, familiarem nullum!* no altar! no priest! no sacrifice! My earnest prayer shall be, that these remarks, under the divine blessing, may induce many such families, to institute this hallowed rite, then should 'the rains descend and the winds beat upon that house,' it will not be like one without a roof, but they will find that the favour of the GOD whom they worship, will be their protection in every storm.

Family prayer may be regarded as a kind of *supplementary* service. It occupies a place between public worship and private devotion. The latter is too special and particular; the former too general, to meet the exigencies of social and domestic life. In private, we unbosom our inmost souls to our Father which seeth in secret; and when no

eye is fixed upon us but His, and no ear but his is open to our accents, we disclose difficulties and temptations, hopes and fears, with which we desire none but our Maker and ourselves to be acquainted. In the house of GOD, an assembled district unite in acknowledging their common wants and imploring general blessings. And though we ought to rejoice in the provision made for our devotion by the wisdom and piety of our Reformers, in the use of a pure and simple, but sublime ritual, which applies to some of the most retiring feelings of the heart, while it grasps in its comprehensive range, the state and condition of the world, it is obvious that some intermediate link is needed, suited to the scenes and events which form the history of each family in this great assemblage. Some altar should be set up without the precincts both of the temple and the chamber, to be periodically approached by the members of each social circle, when their united spiritual concerns may be transacted with the Universal Parent in heaven, the GOD and Father of all the earth.

I propose to consider the obligations, the privilege, and the advantages of family devotion.

1. With regard to the obligation, it has been commanded by GOD himself, if not expressly, yet at least, by implication so strong that it is next to impossible to entertain a doubt of his will respecting it.—What means, otherwise, the commendation bestowed upon that patriarch who might well be regarded as a model to every parent in respect to family religion—'I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep justice and judgment?' What mean else those injunctions to the children of Israel to speak of the statutes of GOD, and to explain his ordinances to their offspring as they walked by the way, or sat in their houses, as they lay down, and as they rose up, to the intent that they might not forget the works of GOD, but teach their children the same? Do we not read also of fury to be poured out on the families that call not on GOD's name? * And is there not, likewise, a most encouraging promise made to social prayer? 'Whenever two or three,' the smallest possible number to compose a family, 'are met in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'

The duty is, in fact so reasonable and so coincident with the general injunctions of Scripture, that it seems to need no express appointment.

Not willing to occupy at one time too much space in your valuable paper, I shall leave for some future numbers what is said on the *privilege* of family prayer. The following lines from the *Protestant Episcopal Pulpit* for December 1835, are so very applicable, that I have to beg the favour of their insertion. SAMECH.

To be continued.

THE PRAYING CIRCLE.

'Come, let us pray,' the father said,
In accents clear and loud,
And ev'ry knee, with sweet consent,
Before its Maker bow'd.

* This and the preceding texts must not, perhaps, be pressed as literally inculcating that stated service which we are accustomed to denominate Family Prayer. But their general import bears fairly and strongly on the point. The religious instructions and exhortations of Abraham and of every pious Israelite in his family, would doubtless take something of a regular form; and though the expression 'families that call not upon thy name' is primarily only a periphrasis to describe the idolatrous nations, yet the specific fact mentioned serves to indicate that the families of true believers are such as do call upon the name of GOD generally, and doubtless, among other ways, in stated family devotion, consisting reading and instruction, of prayer and praise.

'We thank Thee, Lord,' the father hsp'd,
'For thy unceasing care;
Altho' we've sinn'd, yet wilt thou deign
To listen to our prayer?

Forgive our sins, and give us light,
That we may know thy way,
And give us strength, that we may all
Thy just commands obey.

We would not wander from Thee, Lord,
Thy paths seem righteous still;
O, save us from all pride, and strife,
And ev'ry lurking ill.

O, keep these young and tender lambs
From sin of ev'ry kind;
And save them from the world's foul snares,
And give them peace of mind.

They need thy smiles—they need thy care—
Save them, or they will die;
Encircle them in *Thine own arms*,
And fit them for the sky.

O, may we always humbly bow,
Whene'er the day doth end;
And raise our notes in grateful praise,
To Thee, our GOD, and friend.

And, when our breath on earth is spent,
Conduct us safe on high;
To praise Thy great and holy name,
To all Eternity.

For the Colonial Churchman.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

The following very excellent remarks on the superiority of a Liturgy over extemporaneous prayer, by Thomas S. Brittan, I copy from the 'Protestant Episcopalian' for March, 1833, published at Philadelphia, in the hope that they may be inserted in your useful paper. Mr. Brittan, it appears, was a Dissenting preacher in England, strongly and deeply prejudiced, as he himself acknowledges, against the Episcopal Church and her Clergy. These prejudices, were, after a time, removed by the increasing strength of his convictions. He visited New York, and there became a candidate for Episcopal ordination. Mr. Brittan, though a congregationalist, had for some years, in England, used the Liturgy of the Established Church, and states that a very considerable number of churches in England, which are in their discipline and name, Congregational, have been so deeply convinced of the importance of a Liturgy, that they constantly use that of the Anglican Church in the public offices of their devotion. 'His letters on Episcopacy, addressed to Bishop Onderdonk, of New York, are worthy the attention of every churchman, and might be read with profit by every denomination of professing christians. Amongst other remarks on the advantages of a Liturgy over extemporary worship, Mr. B— has the following.—Many and great are the advantages peculiar to a public formula—ry of devotion—it admits of that due *Meditation* and *Preparation* by which the mind may be fitted for the solemn engagements of prayer; so that, beforehand, we may have those affections awakened, which are to be expressed either in adoration, confession, petition, thanksgiving, or the other acts of devotion; are advantages which cannot belong to an extemporaneous prayer, inasmuch as we must previously be ignorant what the prayer will be, whether it will suit our case or not—whether it will meet our religious views or not;