

For the Colonial Churchman.

ON PRAYER.

"Prayer to God is one of the most interesting, solemn, and exalting exercises which falls to the lot of mortal man. It should be well understood by the Christian. Prayer is naturally divided into secret and public, or into individual and social. The Saviour commanded both. He gave promises to both; to him that enters into his closet, and to him who agrees with others touching any thing for which they should unite in their prayers to God. Now with regard to secret prayers, there is less temptation to depart from the true and proper attributes of prayer, than in public prayer: for in secret we are freed from any restraints or inducements growing out of a regard for the opinions and estimation of others. Our wants and desires are merely to be expressed in simplicity, and just according to actual views and feelings, when we address no ear but that of Him who hears in secret.

It is in perfect accordance with that wisdom and goodness every where apparent in the Christian religion, that we are so repeatedly exhorted to enter our closets, and to address our Father in secret, to whom though he is unseen himself, nothing is secret.—There is no school under the heavens in which the art of prayer can be so easily acquired, in which the spirit of prayer can be so fully possessed, and in which the language of prayer can be so fully and perfectly attained, as in the closet, in the fields, or forests, when no human ear can hear, and when no human eye can see us. Besides, no prayers have so much influence upon ourselves as those which are offered up in secret to God. We are then, and feel ourselves then, in company with God alone. We can tell Him what we cannot tell any mortal, the nearest and dearest on earth. We can disclose all our secrets, unburthen all our griefs, confess all our faults, and pour out all our souls before Him. If we are distressed, the declaration of our distresses to Him relieves them. If we are prosperous and joyous, our thankgivings and acknowledgments to Him, temper our joys and moderate our rejoicings. Equanimity is not only produced but always retained; by this heaven-devised appointment. We are prepared for every event, when we have come out from the presence of God. But there is every thing in reason in religion, and in our condition and circumstances, to entice us to the closet, and to shew us into the secret recesses, to converse with our Father who is in Heaven."

How natural it is for the prayerless man to envy another in possession of the riches of this world; but I think that there is no man, so much to be envied as the true Christian, who can and who does from day to day hold converse with his God in earnest secret prayer, and who considers the things of this world as they really are, a passing shadow in comparison to the treasures of the kingdom of his heavenly Father. But how very few such men as the latter are now to be seen in proportion to those who know not God, who pass along the stream of life without prayer and with but little knowledge of Him in whom we all 'live and move and have our being.' The true Christian, no matter what his situation in life may be, is happy even in the midst of poverty, sickness, or adversity of any kind. He knows that all things here below are ordered by an all-wise Providence, and in constant earnest prayer makes known all his wants to his heavenly Father, and patiently submits to whatever his lot may be.

It is the bounden duty of every parent to teach the infant lips of the children to repeat words of prayer to God, and as they grow in years, to do all in their power to impress upon their hearts the necessity of earnest prayer to Him who is the common Father of us all; and great indeed will be the account that that parent will have to render at the day of Judgment, who neglects so important, so holy a duty,—a duty upon which the salvation of the souls of their children so much depend. In vain may the ministers of God preach and point out to children the necessity of earnest prayer, unless it is followed up by the example and advice of their parents at home. But there are some children in every place for whom there is perhaps some little excuse for not praying as they ought, inasmuch as the parents are prayerless, who never pray at all, and therefore neglect of course to teach their children how to pray. Reader,

are you a parent? Do you go on from day to day in the bosom of your family without earnest prayer to your God—to that God to whom you will perhaps sooner than you anticipate, be called to give an account of all your thoughts and words and actions? Oh! if such be your case, be prayerless no longer, but turn to the Lord your God. And do not allow the darkness of another night, which perhaps may be your last, to surround you without calling together your children, and offering up with them earnest prayer to Him whose ears are at all times open to listen to the prayer that flows from the heart of him who perhaps never prayed before. And be reminded that if you live without prayer to Him in this world, you will be sure to live without God in the next—in that case Reader, where will you spend Eternity?

June 20th.

D.

From the Christian Observer for April.

ARCHDEACON WIX.

The difficulty of travelling in some parts of the island is thus illustrated:—

"I have met with places in Fortune Bay, two or three miles only from each other, to visit which by land, in winter, it might be necessary to make a circuit of fifteen miles, to get round the deep precipitous chasms or 'gules' and ravines, which cross from the coast into the interior. 'Why, it is but seven miles, my friend, as the crow flies,' observed a judge to a remonstrant petty jurymen, who pleaded the difficulty and the distance. 'That may be,' replied he; 'but as I cannot go as the crow goes, I make the distance fifteen or sixteen.'"

"It may give some idea of the difficulty of communication in the winter, even in the neighbourhood of St. John's, if I state here, that a gentleman at Port de Grave had not seen a St. John's newspaper for a month, when I arrived amongst them; and that in Trinity Bay I found that the sum of forty shillings had been, on a late occasion, demanded, and twenty-five actually paid, for the casual conveyance of a single letter, overland, by one of the cross-country guides."

But, amidst every privation, the novelty and frequent splendour of the landscape often amply repaid the fatigues of the traveller. For instance:—

"The country at this time presented an appearance quite different from that presented by the vegetation when affected by a moistness of the atmosphere which is afterwards operated upon by sudden frosts, and is improperly denominated here, a silver thaw. The present appearance was much more beautiful, although that cannot but be much admired. The under current of air had been sufficiently cold to freeze rain upon its reaching the earth, or alighting upon any exposed vegetable object, although the upper media, through which it had passed, permitted it still to fall as rain. As soon as this transparent liquid had alighted upon a branch of evergreen, or on a blade of grass, which projected above the snow, it had congealed; giving, through its transparent covering, a brighter tint to every colour of the objects which it enveloped. As the rain had continued to fall very fast for several hours while the lower air was in this state, this bright incrustation was collected on every object, even on those which were most minute, and offered the least firm support to such a weighty girdle, to the depth of at least an inch. The splendour of the spectacle which was presented by woods, shrubs, and under-brush, thus brilliantly illuminated in a morning of unclouded sunshine, was greater than any effort of art could come near to imitate. It left all the spectacles of scenic illusion, or the imaginative creations of fairy descriptions, far, far behind the reality of the natural phenomenon, which, though it was calculated most surely to fix the gaze of admiring crowds, only called forth now the grateful admiration of one fond admirer of the gospel of nature. Yet this profusion of sparkling beauty was not lost:—'O ye frost and cold! O ye ice and snow! bless ye the Lord; praise him and magnify him for ever!'"

Archdeacon Wix does not affect to write a sentimental journey; but the circumstances of such a tour must often have led to feelings of deep emotion. Thus he says:—

"I persevered, made a second trial, and, threading our path through the thick woods, without the vestige

of a track, got at length to the ice on Bay de l'Eau, beyond Little Harbour; followed, upon the ice of the bay, nearly nine miles, and came to the winter-tilt of William Chick, of Odein, by half-past eight, P. M. I had discovered this cabin by the 'flankers,' or bright sparks, which flew up his chimney to some height in the clear star-lit sky, from his brisk birch fire. As I had fully expected to pass another night in the woods, in my wearied and wet condition, I was most thankful to discover these welcome signs of our proximity to some human abode. None but those who have traversed unknown woods, in the untracked snow, can conceive the joy with which the sight of the track of a human foot, or of a racket (snow shoes) is welcomed, even though such tracks, being only of persons who have been 'rummaging,' or searching for firesticks of timber in the woods, may again and again have raised deceptive hopes, respecting their leading immediately to some habitation or settlement. Even the sight of a 'whiting' in the woods, that is, of a tree stripped of its bark for the uses of the fishery, which tells of the place's having been visited, though in the preceding summer, or a year or two before, by the foot of man;—the marks even of the axe, where timber has in former years been cut and carried away, seem to remind the lone traveller of the link which binds him to the rest of his species."

The monotonous condition of the scattered inhabitants of these snowy solitudes is thus strikingly exemplified:—

"Friday, June 3.—Full service to the winter crew at half past seven, A. M., before they went into the woods for their winter work. Here, and at other winter houses, I saw a rude calendar; it was a piece of board, on which was carved an initial letter for each day of the week. Under these letters the date of the month was called afresh at the beginning of each week. The monotony of a Newfoundland planter's life is remarkable. I met on my journey with pious persons, who had occasionally, from want of such a calendar as I have described above, so miscalculated the lapse of time, that they had scrupulously abstained from work on Saturday or Monday, supposing it to be Sunday."

To be Continued.

AN IRRELIGIOUS HOME.

If there be one curse more bitter than another to man, it is to be the offspring of an irreligious home—of a home where the voice of praise and prayer ascends not to God, and where ties of human affection are not purified and elevated by the refining influence of religious feeling; of a home, (if the cares and sorrows of life shall bring religion to the heart in after days,) that heart cannot turn without bitterness of feeling—without anguish and vexation of spirit. If there be a curse to any country where the truths of religion are known, the deepest and bitterest curse which can be inflicted on it is a multitude of homes like that which I have supposed! Such homes send forth their sons unchecked in evil thoughts, unhalloed in their habits, and untaught in love to God—the name and cross of Jesus Christ stamped perhaps upon their forehead, but not written in their hearts; and they send them forth to prey upon the land and to become its curse and its destruction. But on the other hand, there is a blessing to the religious home, which no tongue can speak, no language can describe! The home, where, in early years, the heart trained to a love of God, and to take pleasure in his worship and service, interweaves with the existence of man's holy affections, which die not with the circumstances which gave them birth—which last long, even though they may for a season be forgotten and neglected—and which exercise at least some check on the evil of the human heart, and often, nay commonly, recall it to hear again the voice of God, and to return to the paths of holiness and peace! How great, how unspeakable is the happiness of a land where homes like this are common.—*Rose's Hulsean Lectures.*

Method in religious duties gains time. It is like packing in a box: a good packer will get in half as much again as a bad one.

Would you read through your Bible, at least once every year? Read three chapters every day, and five every Sunday.