

THE
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HOME RELIGION AND FAMILY WORSHIP.

In some religious bodies the place of public worship is daily or even perpetually open, and matins and vespers occur as regularly as the sun rises and sets. Be the worshippers few or many, prayers are read the service is performed. If in such churches family prayers are generally offered with the reading of the Scriptures, and the singing of praises, we should like to be informed of it.

Not a fourth of the congregation attend or in ordinary circumstances can attend such church services; and if they are a substitute for domestic worship, one of the main and most joyful expressions of family piety, they are likely to be the occasion of more harm than good. We are persuaded that there is a more excellent way, and that is for every family to be led by its own God-appointed priest, morning and evening to the throne of the Heavenly grace. Our readers do not need to be told that Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua and David are represented in the Sacred Oracles as worshipping the Lord with their respective households. They can scarcely peruse the Apostle Paul's directions to mutual duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, and suppose these fully obeyed without family worship. They may need to be reminded that Reformation and revival times have been noted for the outburst of fervent prayer and sacred song, with the reading of God's Holy Word in the family.

Home is pointed out by Jesus, as well as by nature, as a first place and chief scene

for religious effort. "Go home to thy friends, was His charge to the restored demoniac, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." From the fervent heart the glowing flame should extend over all the sacred circle at home. Our nearest relations, and purest, deepest affections constrain us to say to all those loved ones, "O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together."

Here we receive and enjoy many of our greatest mercies—here we spend the greater part of our time—here are flowing from us constant streams of influence, and it would be strange indeed, if God was not to be acknowledged and served here by united prayer and praises.

We do rejoice that in Presbyterian communities family worship is the rule, and the want of it, the exception; and we desire by these remarks to strengthen the hands of pastors, who are striving in mixed communities, and in districts where ordinances have been only partially enjoyed, to extend the benign and hallowed practice of family worship morning and evening. We know that they meet with reluctance in young married parties, to commit themselves to the practice, because they never enjoyed the privilege in their fathers' houses; and still greater is the unwillingness of older parents to commence this work, which they feel has been too long neglected. To begin in the presence of their families now growing to manhood and womanhood, is in many cases the lifting up of a heavy cross. Still we know that faithful and tender dealing has