

God anew kindled in the family, lighted perhaps gathering brilliance from the very darkness around it—like the sun you see over every tent of Israel, the symbol of God's presence. Need we any otherwise recommend this duty to our readers? Will God not withdraw that sacred symbol, will he not withdraw himself, from that family, where his name is not called upon? What reason have you to think that God will be with you, in your tabernacle, if he is not worshipped there? Will he stay where he is not honoured? and as you would wish, then, the presence and protection of God—as you would desire his blessing, as you would enjoy his favour, ought you not to make his worship in your families an imperative duty?

There is often darkness in the believer's dwelling. There is sometimes sickness. Some member of the family is sick, it may be nigh unto death. Then there is darkness, the darkness of fear, of apprehension. There is a gloom over, and within, the dwelling; or death may be there, and then the darkness is thicker, more deep, more dense, more impenetrable. O! who can describe the darkness of that chamber where the light of life has been extinguished, where the lamp of some one has gone out in death, and where the body, but not the soul, now lies in cold obstruction! It was a denser darkness which succeeded that of which we have here the account, when the first born in every dwelling of the Egyptians was smitten in death. How dark is the heart of the bereaved parent, or child, or husband, or wife! The pinions of the angel of death obscure the light where he hovers. The funeral pall and the coffin are associated in the mind only with ideas of darkness, and the grave calls up only images of darkness: we speak of the darkness of the Grave! In Mahometan countries this darkness is dispelled by lamps which are kept constantly burning in the sepulchres.

Other afflictions may throw a gloom over a home—may introduce darkness into the dwelling. But, in the midst of the darkness there may be light. Let it be sickness, or death, or affliction of whatever sort: the believer has still light in his dwelling! There is a light amidst all which none of the afflictions of this world can put out. There is the lamp of God's word. There is the light of faith. And oh! how brightly does that light burn in the midst of the surrounding darkness—calm, steady, unquenched by any of the clouds which may envelope the believer and his home,

perhaps gathering brilliance from the very darkness around it—like the sun tinging the very clouds which threatened to obscure his beams:

“Within the soul a faculty abides,
That with interpositions that would hide
And darken so can deal, that they become
Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt
Her native brightness.”

Faith has a power which nothing can stifle or quench, and from it proceeds the light of hope;—and both unite and mingle their undying flame; and in the believer's breast, in the believer's soul, there is a light which nothing can extinguish, a light from heaven which is fed from no earthly source, and can draw its supply above the clouds, and above the sun! The believer is not exempted from sorrow: he has a heart to feel like others—and a heart, too, often more sensible than that of others, inured to the world, and hardened by its ways:—he weeps at the sight of affliction: he feels the losses which God may send him: he is distressed by the bereavements with which God may visit him: he suffers in the sufferings of those near and dear to him: but in all his afflictions he has a consolation which the world cannot give nor take away—there is light still in his bosom and in his dwelling, a joy with which none can intermeddle, a faith, a hope which survives amid the dissolution of nature itself, and which will emerge into the light of eternal glory. His own approaching death does not extinguish this light: it is with him when the darkness of temporal death is gathering around him, and when he has no hope but in the word of God. Has the time come for the believer to resign his soul into the hands of his God? Visit his dwelling. Go to his dying couch; and there when every earthly hope fails: when every earthly stay gives way: when the light of this earth is receding, and there is not even twilight in the sky: when eternity is before him with its solemn destinies: there is light there, light from heaven, the light of the eternal world, the light of faith, the light kindled by God's word, and fed by that word, the light of a hope which will only break into the fuller and brighter light of everlasting day.

How blessed to have this light! How cheerless to be destitute of it! How cheerless were the dwellings of the Egyptians when darkness was over all the land—a darkness that might be felt! But far more cheerless is that home where there is not the light of religion, where