

mercies." Some seek to justify their neglect of family prayer by the most frivolous excuses, such as press of business, incapacity, shame, &c., and fancy they will be excused if they perform the duty of private devotion. Such Christians are unworthy of a home, or of having immortal souls committed to their care; and cannot expect the blessing of a faithful God, who will pour out His fury upon the families that call not on His name; and who will assuredly bless the tabernacles where prayer is wont to be made. No excuse need be framed for the neglect of family devotion. "Prayer hinders no man's journey." "No ponderous intellectual machinery is needful to its dignity; no loftiness of reasoning, no magnificence of imagery, no polish of diction, no learning, no art, no genius. In its very conception, prayer implies a *descent* of the Divine mind to the homes of men; and with no design to lift men up out of the sphere of their lowliness, intellectually. Bruised reeds, smoking flax, broken hearts, dumb sufferers, the slow of speech, timid believers, tempted spirits,—weakness in all its varieties,—find a refuge in that thought of God, which nothing else reveals so affectingly as the gift of prayer, that He is a very *present* help in every time of trouble. He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, has come down and placed Himself in the centre of the little circle of human ideas and affections, as if for the purpose of making our religion always the homestead of common feelings."

Hence, Christian parents should take encouragement, and see that their home is a house of prayer, where their little flock can join at the family altar in sweet communion with God. They should continually "*watch and pray*" lest they enter into temptation. They must guard their precious charge from the snares of the wicked one; and in discharging every duty which they owe to their household, they must aim to be circumspect, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Yet, with the most vigilant concern, they should constantly cherish distrust of their own powers, and should seek for themselves and their children the guidance of the wisdom that descends from above. Of themselves they are wholly insufficient for the proper performance of any of their important duties. Even in relation to the things of the present life, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps; and parental training will assuredly fail of realizing any good fruits, if those who conduct it lean upon their own understanding. There is all encouragement, however, in bringing children to Christ, and in depending on Him who can own and bless the feeblest instrumentality. Let parents learn daily to place their children under the guardianship of the Shepherd and Watchman of Israel. Let them look to Him for direction and strength in relation to their own duty, and for protection and blessing to their children. He is faithful who has promised, He will remember mercy to them that fear Him and keep His commandments through many generations. "The children of His servants shall continue and their seed shall be established before Him." Therefore with united voice of prayer and praise may the Christian household confidently encircle the family altar, and plead the blessing of Him who has promised to "be the God of all the families of Israel," and who alone is the hearer of prayer, unto whom all flesh should come.

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