

for if we should be bowing to wood and stone, we should be worshipping idols—and we should be involved in all those miseries which heathenism entails: “they shall multiply their sorrows that hasten after other Gods.” Ah! it is an awful thing to extinguish this light, to put it out from our dwellings! This is done when we make no use of the word of God, although we have it: when we seldom or never read it: when we allow it to lie unopened, unread upon our shelves. Or it may not be possessed at all. In many dwellings even in christian lands the word of God is not found. What are those families or individuals doing, who are thus careless about God’s word, but extinguishing the light which God has revealed? They are, as far as they are concerned, bringing about the state that would be, if we did not possess the word of God. They are as if invoking heathen darkness again! Little do they allow themselves to think how much they are indebted to that light for all the blessings they enjoy—how much, tho’ unimproved on their part, they are deriving the benefits which it so signally confers upon the world. Ah! we will not surely thus exclude the light of God from our dwellings:—we will not surely desire that light to be extinguished: we would not seek to walk in heathen darkness!

But they exclude that light who give no attention to the ordinances of God. There are very many who in this sense are living without God in the world. They may have the word of God in their dwelling: they may occasionally peruse it; but they seldom go to the house of God; and it is not likely they will often peruse his word. Light may be all around them, but they do not avail themselves of it. They put no value on it. They choose rather to live without any regard to God’s ordinances. The Sabbath may come round: the house of God may invite them to enter: it is no Sabbath to them: they care not for the courts of God’s house: they seldom join in his worship. They have no God; for if they had, they would worship him. How lamentable that the number of those who are so regardless of God and his ordinances is so great! What a proof of the perversity of the human heart! The word of God possessed: the ordinances of God enjoyed: but neither of them improved!

But they exclude this light who do not walk in it, but walk in

darkness, and obey not the truth. They may have light in their dwellings: they may have the word of God in their possession: they may read it: and attend upon the ordinances of God; and yet they may still walk in darkness, not according to the light they possess. Light may be in their dwellings, but they do not walk by it. We can conceive this in the case of such as do not improve the advantages and instructions which are to be found in the house of pious parents. Let our young friends, who may have the advantage of a pious home, who may have light in their father’s, or mother’s dwelling: where the word of God is—where the worship of God is—where the light of a pious example shines: oh! let them walk in that light, improve their privileges, quench not the light of example, obey the impulses of a heart which must often have opened to the power of the truth: and so shall they promote their own best and eternal interests.

Can light be in that dwelling, where the Scriptures are not read—where there is no family altar, and the flame of family devotion is not kindled! Let such of our readers as have not this light in their dwellings be induced to enkindle it now. Do not think that there is light in your dwelling till the flame of family devotion ascends to God, till at all events once a-day the altar is lit, and the fire of gratitude and praise rises bright to heaven.

In contrast with all this, the people of God have light in their dwellings. They have first light in their hearts. God has shined into their hearts to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. They themselves were sometimes darkness, but now are they light in the Lord. Their hearts are the abode of light. They have had communicated to them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened. In God’s light they now see light. They are no longer “blinded by the God of this world, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” They, therefore, walk in the light. Their path is like the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day. They not only, according to the apostolic precept, do not the works of darkness, but they themselves are enabled to shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life. Their example is light. They ex-