

## FAMILY WORSHIP.

The danger of those who neglect family prayer is very great, Jer. x. 25; where such are classed among heathens; and, consequently, they cannot be Christians but in profession. Indeed, they are worse than heathens, for even they were convinced of the necessity of this duty by the light of nature; seeing we read that every family had their household gods, to which they prayed, together with their children. But as family prayer is a very important part of family religion, and as it seems to be much neglected in the present day by those who call themselves Christians, we shall extend this inference a little. We say, then, that they who neglect this duty do not believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God. They may, indeed, acknowledge them to be so; but they do not firmly believe that they are the Word of God. For instance, they do not believe the passage formerly alluded to, viz., that God will "pour out his fury upon those families that call not upon his name;" otherwise why do they neglect this duty? But to reject part of the Scriptures, or those parts of them which are not agreeable to their inclinations, is the same as to reject the whole. The true Christian believes the whole Scripture to be the Word of God, notwithstanding that there are many parts of it which oppose his natural inclinations; and he endeavours, through the strength of Divine grace, to perform every commanded duty; and this he knows to be one, viz., family worship. But again, they who neglect this duty, live in a continual breach of the Fifth and Sixth Commandments of the moral law,—of the Fifth Commandment, which requires parents to instruct their children in the doctrines and duties of religion, and to pray with and for them; and of the Sixth Commandment, which not only forbids us to take away the natural life of ourselves or others, but also, according to its spiritual import, commands us to do what we can to promote the life of our own souls and of the souls of others. Surely, then, he must be a hard-hearted parent who does not do what he can to save the souls of his children, or, in other words, who does what he can to damn them; for we may readily believe, that he who neglects family religion will not be very anxious to keep his family from conforming themselves to the world,—that is, from following its maxims, customs and amusements; the love of which and the love of God are utterly inconsistent "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."—1 John ii. 15. He, then, who neglects the duty of family worship, has sure and infallible evi-

dence that he has no real concern about the salvation either of his own soul or of the souls of his family. But further, they who call themselves Christians, while they neglect this duty, are guilty of very great hypocrisy. They pretend to worship God in public, when the eyes of their fellow-creatures are upon them; but when in private and secret, or in the presence of the heart-searching God alone, they neglect religion altogether—they bow not a knee to Him who made them. Such have name to live, but they are dead—spiritually dead; and if they do not consider their ways and turn to the Lord and to their duty, they will in a short time be eternally dead. Let those, then, who neglect family religion, begin the performance of this duty, humbly depending on the grace of God, and ever remembering that none can be true Christians who neglect it. Although there is no express command for it in Scripture, yet we find that it was practised by the saints, which is equal to a command; and surely they who would be Christians, must imitate Christ, who did not neglect this duty, but prayed with his disciples, who were his family; and, moreover, it is, as formerly mentioned, a duty of mere natural religion, or a duty, the obligation of which is evident from the light of nature alone.—[Paterson on the Shorter Catechism.]

## A HINT TO TEACHERS.

Another thing is, you must study circumstances. You have all heard of the preacher who once went to a place to preach, and just as he began it came on an awful thunder storm. Well, he was a ready man—one of God's wise servants, so he took his text: 'Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup.' The feeling was intense; the people did not know how to bear it. When he went again they said to him, "Will you give us that thunder and lightning sermon to-day?" "Oh, no," he said, "I should want the thunder and lightning to help me." Just so; and so it is in reference to all circumstances. Sometimes a mother dies; take advantage of it to speak to the child about death. Sometimes there is affliction in the families of your scholars; take advantage of the circumstance to drive home the word of truth. In this respect, without laying down any particular rule, I would say, study to show yourselves 'workmen who need not to be ashamed.'—From Sermon to Teachers, by Rev. R. Bushnell.