

Apollos water. But we ought not to conceal from you our disappointment also, so far,—our fear that, as of old, so now, much of the precious seed of the Word falls useless on the way side, Satan coming and taking away what has been sown in the heart, and, in many cases, the cares of the world and its deceitful lusts, like thorns entering in, choking the Word, so that it becometh unfruitful. We trust you share with us in our concern and anxious desire to see more fruit of our labours, more visible answers to your prayers and ours, more unmistakable tokens of the power of godliness prevailing among us, as well as of its forms being revered.

There is one special point to which we who are entrusted by the General Assembly with the issuing of this address have been charged to invite and urge your attention. That is, the duty of Family Worship, or the devout acknowledgment of God Almighty, the Father of all mercies, not by individuals only, but by families or households as such. Indeed, this duty rests on such obvious grounds, and the advantages connected with its performance are so generally admitted, that it seems as if it were a needless task for us to enter into any large argument on either of these heads. We have been slow to believe that the utter neglect of family religion, in some mode or degree of it, can be justly charged on any considerable number of the members of our congregations. On the other hand, we rejoice to know that in many localities the observance of Family Worship is all but universally attended to, and that they are not few among you who from experience can attest all we would set forth, whether as to its necessity, or its profitableness, for the conviction of those by whom the duty is practically ignored.

To you we can confidently appeal, who each morning and each evening bow at God's footstool with your children and servants, invoking the divine blessing, and committing yourselves and them to the divine protection, whether you do not find your way in life made more plain, your cares lightened, your griefs soothed, and your pleasure and enjoyment enhanced; whether, too, though at first you may have lacked confidence in your ability to do the part, as it were, of priests in your households, or doubted whether the claims on your time by necessary worldly business would admit of your being able to give stated attention to the calls of family religion, whether you have not found, as you seriously endeavored this, that difficulties disappeared, and any apparent sacrifice of time was more than counterbalanced by the pleasing consciousness of the divine approval, and by the greater energy in the discharge even of the work of your temporal callings, which the habit of acknowledging God in all our ways is sure to impart.

To those, if we must suppose there are such, who would ask us to show them an explicit warrant for the worship of God by families, or who satisfy themselves too easily with the maxim that religion is a thing between every man and his God, we would say, in all affection—Can you be in earnest in admitting the necessity of religion at all, and refusing to acknowledge your obligation to use every natural influence you possess to secure its benefits to those whose interests are so dear to you, and whose souls you are so specially bound to care for? If you yourselves know the peace in believing in Jesus, and have purified your hearts in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, can you be otherwise than solicitous that your children and domestics should in all their powers of action, and their capacities of enjoyment, share in these ameliorating and felicitating effects of faith and prayer? With the knowledge you have of the temptations to which all, especially the young, are exposed in daily in-