

For the Colonial Churchman.

ON THE PRIVILEGE AND DUTY OF PRAYER IN EVERY SITUATION OF LIFE.

Of all the duties and privileges of the christian, Prayer is unquestionably the most important. It is the very soul of all true religion, and the channel through which God ordinarily confers his grace, and every other blessing upon man. At the same time it is an act of mercy, and our highest honor that we, dust and ashes,—are permitted to speak to the Eternal God. If there be indeed any duty, which our Lord Jesus Christ seems to have considered as more indispensably necessary towards the formation of a true christian, it is that of prayer. He has taken every opportunity of impressing on our minds the absolute need in which we stand of the divine assistance, both to persist in the paths of righteousness, and to fly from the allurements of a fascinating, but dangerous life; and He has directed us to the only means of obtaining that assistance, in constant and habitual appeals to the throne of grace. Prayer is certainly the foundation-stone of the superstructure of a religious life, for a man can neither arrive at true piety, nor persevere in its ways when attained, unless with sincere and continued fervency, he implore Almighty God to grant him His perpetual grace, to guard and restrain him from all those derelictions of heart, and from all those errors of word and deed, to which all are by nature but too prone. And surely, if the private christian in his humble walk through life is bound to seek for guidance, and for a blessing from on high,—if christian families are bound in obedience to the commands of that sacred and inspired volume, now too lightly esteemed, and too seldom in sincerity consulted, to erect the family altar, and feel the benefit of uniting in prayer, and thus calling upon the name of the Lord, confessing together their family sins, acknowledging together their family mercies, and petitioning together for family blessing. If particular societies formed for special purposes within their own peculiar sphere, commence not their labors without first supplicating aid from Him, “from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed,” and the Divine blessing on their consultations;—how much greater reason have they who assemble to legislate upon subjects near and dear to all, our property our liberty our lives and our religion, unless they believe not in the value and efficacy of prayer, to invoke “the author of peace and lover of concord,” who maketh men to be all of one mind in an house, and who has the hearts of all mankind at His supreme disposal, to guide and bless their consultations; more especially when such has ever been, and still is, the universal practice of all christian Legislators throughout the christian world, with now in the nineteenth century one solitary exception.

To say any more on the necessity of Prayer would but insult the understanding of a christian, and before the infidel, or those who by their actions, if not by their words deny the superintending power of God, can be persuaded of its efficacy, they must first be convinced, not only that the Being to whom christians address themselves in prayer really exists, but that He condescends to hear, and to answer the humble supplications of his servants and people.

To those who reside in the country remote from the agitations of the metropolis, very little more is known of the doings of the assembly, than can be collected from the weekly newspapers, but enough and more than enough must be known by the most retired, to cause the soul of the sincere christian to mourn in secret, and to offer up many a prayer for the advancement of God's glory, the good of His church and the safety, honor, and welfare of our Sovereign and this Province. One of the very first acts of those who are to legislate upon matters affecting the civil and religious interests of the inhabitants of this Province, has been virtually to deny the efficacy of prayer,—the christian's greatest privilege,—and the controlling power of that God, from whom the word of inspiration tells us, “every man's judgment cometh, and against whom there is neither wisdom nor understanding nor counsel.” Thus have reason and religion been overpowered by the force of violent and party feeling, while the majority of those who compose the present assembly, have shown to the world, that they

put but little faith in that sacred and inspired word which says “Except the Lord build the house, their labor is but lost that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” And that all man's best exertions are but *lost labor*, without a blessing from on High: which blessing, God requires that it be asked of Him,—“for all these things,” He says, “I will be inquired of by them.” Thus while the ministers of God, and religious societies are using every effort to stand in the gap, and to stem the tide of irreligion and impiety, the Legislators of the land, have by that one act done more to encourage the demoralizing and infidel principle, which though lurking secretly in too many hearts, was yet ashamed to hold up its head, except in some of the more distant parts of the Province, than all their future acts can remedy. For what real good can possibly be expected from so unholy, so inauspicious a commencement, even that indeed which at first sight may appear advantageous, will by the pious christian be looked upon with doubt and misgiving, since many a seeming benefit and advantage (unaccompanied by a blessing from God) proves in the end to be a judgment in disguise. Some who view not the matter aright, may at first consider it as a blow aimed at a particular branch of the christian church,—but even if so, it could not hurt or shake it, for it is founded on a rock. The humble and sincere christian however of every denomination, will look a little further, and perceive in it a blow against Religion, a triumph for infidelity, for the despisers of the means of grace, the prayerless among the people, and tending to lessen that respect and reverence for religion, ever due from sinful man.

In thus deciding to commence their labors in their legislative capacity in a manner contrary to all preceding Parliaments, economy could not have been the object of the Representatives of the people, as more of their valuable time was expended, and consequently of the peoples' money, before they could come to the pious resolution, than would have remunerated the chaplain for his services during the session,—for while some, unable to shake off the early impressions made on their minds, of the necessity of prayer to “our Father who is in Heaven,” by some beloved and pious mother, proposed that at each minister of the different denominations should in turn act as chaplain; others saw that a greater pledge, would thus have first to be required from the officiating minister, than was of the candidates at the hustings, lest all might not be able to say “Amen” to the prayer offered up—reasoning well that as they could not allow an address involving their own or the peoples' rights, to be presented to the Representative of our Sovereign Lord the King, without first knowing and well considering its contents, so neither could they allow a petition to the *King of kings* without first ascertaining the subject petitioned for, bearing in mind the caution of Scripture, “*Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God.*” Unwilling to return to the good old way, new difficulties appear, for while some would propose each member in turn supplicating a blessing, others perceived, that, unless by a subversion of the whole plan of the Gospel, the ministerial office could not be taken up, and laid down at will; not because there is in those to whom the ministry is committed any elation above the qualities of their fellow-men, but because *no man should take this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron.*

As a substitute, and which of itself would prove how ill able those are, who though they may possess the *wisdom* of the world, which is foolishness with God, to reason on spiritual things; request was to be made to the ministers in the town, to offer every Lord's day a petition for a blessing on the consultations of the Assembly: as though the omniscient eye of that omnipresent God was not in the midst of His people EVERYWHERE, when assembled together to worship Him.

How happy, Messrs. Editors, would it have been for the christian community, had reference been made to but one admonition in the Sacred volume, “My son, fear thou the Lord and King, and meddle not with them that are given to change.” Prov. 24c. 21 v. When therefore we view the alarming signs of the times, it surely is more incumbent than ever upon christians of every denomination, to supplicate from the God of mercy, from whom alone rational prospe-

city can come, a blessing on the labors of our Legislators, and a continuance of the advantages the inhabitants of this Province have so long and so richly enjoyed. For the ministers and members of the Episcopal Church a most comprehensive and admirable prayer is appointed to be used during the session of the Assembly—and which is now, as well as always heretofore, used in the churches in Town and Country. I know of nothing which would more tend to allay party feeling, than joining with a “pure heart and humble voice” in that most solemn, most interesting, and most applicable supplication. The prayer is generally for the Province at large, and especially for His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, the Council and Assembly in their Legislative capacity. It seems to have been penned in a time of peace, and it breathes a calm and peaceful spirit; it beseeches the guidance of the Almighty in the consultations of our Legislature, it implores of Infinite wisdom the special direction of their proceedings, it proposes the most noble and praiseworthy ends “the advancement of the Divine Glory, the good of the Church, the safety, honor, and welfare of our Sovereign and this Province,” and it inculcates as the basis of all *peace and happiness*, the same foundation of *truth and justice, religion and piety*. Let me urge it upon professing christians to study this prayer, to imbibe its spirit; and to offer it at the footstool of that Throne where the fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much—and thus endeavour to avert the evil threatened by the Almighty, Isaiah 30 c. 1 v. against those *who seek not counsel from Him*. So may we humbly hope that the Allwise God will vouchsafe his guidance and blessing;—for in the page of infallible truth it is written, “In all thy ways acknowledge him and He shall direct thy paths.” SAMECH.

From the Knickerbocker for December.

A VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

By an Officer of the United States army.

The scene of the sufferings and death of our Saviour was a primary object of attraction. The spot is now enclosed by the church built by the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine, over the Holy Sepulchre, the walls of which are in a state of perfect preservation. It is built in the Gothic style of variegated marble, and has a very venerable appearance. The prominent object of interest that arrests the attention of the visiter upon first entering the church, is a long marble slab, upon which the body of Christ was washed, after being taken down from the cross. At either end are massive brass candlesticks, six feet in length, with waxen candles of proportionate size. A flight of marble steps leads to Mount Calvary—the scene of the divine interposition of mercy towards the human race. As I stood upon the spot, I could not avoid exclaiming, with a deep sense of awe almost overwhelming me, “How awful is this place!” A few hundred years ago, and the meek Redeemer stood where I now stand, reviled, scourged, spit upon, crucified! Here arose the roar of the maddening multitude; here flowed the crimson stream from his pierced side—here oozed the drops of tortured agony from his thorn-pressed brow; up this steep, toiled the Saviour, followed by a few weeping daughters of Jerusalem, bearing the cross upon which he was to yield up his sinless life! The limits of this sacred spot are now so circumscribed, that there is little more than room enough for one large cross to stand. The situation of the cross on which the Redeemer suffered, is indicated by a large parti-colored marble platform: no one is permitted to profane it with unhallowed feet. About fourteen feet to the left, is pointed out to the visiter the spot where the cross was taken down; and near by, you see the rent rock where an altar is raised, and the two holes occupied by the crosses of the two thieves who were crucified with Christ: From the above-mentioned slab, there is a piece cut out, and the cavity filled by three bars of silver. On removing these, you perceive, by the aid of a taper, the chasms in the rock, caused by the earthquake which rent “the veil of the temple in twain from the top to the bottom,” when the Messiah gave up the ghost. I passed two hours upon Calvary, without speaking a solitary word; and the thoughts which passed through my mind during this period, were of such deep intensity, that