

themselves, our innermost experience, if known by those around us, might be referred to when we should least like it to be the case? or is it that there is any latent fear lest the profession of one day should be denied by the practice of another, amongst those who see every part of life, and have the best means of judging our true character? If this be the case, you have the greatest cause for uneasiness about professing any spiritual life, for all experience is known to God, all professions come before him; and in making any profession you should ever have more fear of God, who so thoroughly knows you, than of any fellow-creature, whatever may be his relation to you. Every part of our religious life should be above all suspicion, and we should have so much confidence in our own integrity, that if we make any profession of godliness, those at home should see that that profession is most genuine.

There is sometimes a fear that the piety of some Christians is like an overcoat, only put on when they go out of doors. Amongst strangers they are on their guard, circumspect, humble, zealous; but at home, in the midst of closest friends, they are unwatchful. It is not that they do not earnestly desire the good of all by whom they are surrounded, but that as they are so often in their presence, they do not have constantly a consuming regard for their highest interests, but rather leave it for special seasons, when the matter of personal religion is uppermost. It must be confessed that there is nothing which so much interferes with the frankest and most outspoken piety at home as the consciousness of little failures, ill-temper, selfishness, or the manifestation of those dispositions which are not the embodiment of love to God and man.

My friend, if you have Christian friends at home, and if they who know you best do not esteem you most, it is because they who esteem you most esteem you more highly than you deserve? Do not on any account deceive yourself, or think more highly of yourself than you ought to think. The severest scrutiny, so long as it is not morbid, should be applied to your Christian character under the most powerful light which the Word of God can cast upon the subject.

The most thorough Christian candour should reign amongst those who are members of the same Christian household. Let the most pure unselfishness be manifest. If a mistake be made it should be frankly acknowledged; if an offence be committed, pardon should be sought; if in any way we can minister to the comfort, or ease, or happiness, or improvement of any in the household, at any personal sacrifice it should be done. Your position in a household should be subordinate to your Christian character: in this, as everywhere else, follow the Saviour's advice, and "seek *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness." A beautiful example of Christian simplicity comes to our mind. One who is now amongst the glorified throng, who was a very large employer, was on one occasion in great haste to get off to London. He required some assistance, but the assistant was not so quick in his movements as he should have been. With a tone and manner that betrayed undue haste, he rebuked the young man. At once he felt that he had lost that beautiful evenness of mind which had been enjoyed by him before; and without more