

## WHY DO PROFESSING CHRISTIANS NEGLECT TO PRAY?

It is natural for the deceitful heart to frame excuses for the neglect of duty. A cold brewer of an imaginary attack of what we may call the "Sundry sickness" is deemed a sufficient excuse by many, whose names are enrolled among those of the true children of God, for their non-attendance on the preached word, or the administration of any holy ordinance!

The "old man of sin" within us, is ever ready to frame out of the most trivial circumstance imaginable a specious pretext for the grossest neglect of Christian duty. And yet, strange to say, it seldom, if ever, occurs to the mind of the deluded professors, that those excuses are as groundless as imposing: since their origin is the carnal mind, that is "enmity against God," not subject to His law, nor His ordinance, nor indeed can be, for it has rendered the "heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Now, as the issues of life come from this heart, it generally can be known how a man feels towards God by his acts, no difference how high his profession.

But why do professing Christians neglect to pray in their families.

Here comes Mr. A, and says, "Indeed I have not moral courage to pray in my family or in public!" He, in his opinion, is mistaken. It is not courage he lacks, but disposition. If he has lectured congruous enough to stand in the congregation and profess Jesus, surely he has moral bravery sufficient to bow in his family and bless him. If he be so spiritually timid as this, he is the very one that should ask for boldness to "come to the throne of grace" of his heavenly King. If he lack courage to commune with his Redeemer in his family, how will he tremble to meet him as an angry Judge, before an assembled universe.

Not courage indeed! How much courage does it require to meet the "Lamb of God!" Certainly not so much as to meet the "Lion of the tribe of Judah"—and to meet Jesus in either the one or the other of these capacities, is the appointment of Heaven for every son and daughter of mortality.

Think again, my dear friend A. Where has your courage gone? It is not a friend you have to meet at the family altar, but a friend. Are you too timid to converse with a friend before your companion, children and domestics? Certainly not. I am your friend, and were you to treat me so, I surely would have a valid reason for dobbing the dignity of your affection. Ah, sir, your excuse for neglecting family duty is a grand illusion, flitting in the visions of your un sanctified soul, and will never stand the test of the awful scrutiny of Heaven's tribunal.

If you continue prayerless on earth, you will be speechless in the presence of the King of Kings, when he comes in to view the guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Acquaint now thyself (and family) with him and be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto you all. Job xxii. 21.

But hear what Jesus himself has said, "Ask and ye shall receive."—John xvi. 23, 24. Ask what? Why anything in his name, and he will give it to you, or do it for you, if it be for his glory and your good. Does not your family need many things? Have you not then, moral courage enough to ask, in a family capacity, your professed Lord to supply all the spiritual wants of your household out of his unwavering fullness? If not, O, what a timid soldier of the cross you must be! Ashamed to let those that are bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, hear you asking the great Captain of your salvation, for wisdom and strength to meet and conquer the common enemy! "Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee," says Jesus, whom you profess to obey. Again, "Let us reason together" saith the Lord, "though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." 2 Samuel xvi. 20: v. 13. Are you not professedly one of God's people? Has the scarlet and crimson been removed? No, never, or you would not refuse to call upon the name of the Lord, morning and evening in the family circle. If we feel our need of Divine grace we will not fear to ask for it; it matters not who may hear us. God's favour is grace, and his Son is Jesus, who is more loving than any earthly benefactor. Go then to the latter and ask for the former, for yourself and family, for the church to which you belong, and the world in which you live, and you will not ask in vain, and your childish timidity will instantly vanish, like the morning mist before the rising sun. Have you ever tried to pray in your family? Perhaps not. How then do you know your courage will fail you? Your wicked heart tells you so. That heart is like its father the devil, it is. That heart, it is true, is cowardly, but if it is you should not be. Christ came to destroy it, but to save you. Let not, then, its cowardice keep you from duty. It reads the locks of heaven's Lamb, yet licks the paws of hell's lion! Mark v. 7, 8, compared with Ezek. xiv. 2-6.

Be not ashamed to confess your Divine Master before your household, for he has said, "Whoever (professor or non-professor) is ashamed of me and my words in this generation, and in the generation to come, shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." Mark viii. 38.

"Ashamed of Jesus, just as soon  
Let midnight be ashamed of noon."

Away then with your timidity! Go, erect a family altar. Let the fire of holy zeal burn constantly upon it, come boldly to a throne of heavenly grace—bring every member of your family with you, and the God of

peace, who "seeth the solitary in families, will lead you all into his beautiful city of glory, and his banners over us will be for God." (Gen. xii. 1) God is King in Zion, his thrones are three; one of grace, one of judgment, one of glory. The first is on earth, the last in Heaven, and the other will be on the clouds. At the first we all should kneel—before the second we all must stand, Rev. xx. 12, and on the third we all may sit, Rev. in. 21. At his throne of grace on earth, we may receive strength to stand before his throne of judgment, and we may be permitted to stand at his throne of glory in heaven. What precious privilege this, to be permitted to make arrangements in Time, for participating in the bliss of Eternity! Grace is the earnest of glory—grace is the first degree of glory, but glory is the last degree of grace; grace begins salvation,—glory consummates it. Oh, why then do deem it a glorious privilege to bow around a throne of glory, and sit out our lives in a vain and empty show, when we are from him without money and without price, every need good for time and eternity. With the fire upon the family altar we may light up the candle of the Lord in our souls, whereby we will be enabled to

"Read our titles clear,

"To mansions in the skies."

And would not this glimpse of celestial joys fill all our hearts with rapturous bliss, and dry the tears of woe from sorrow's cheeks! Ah, yes, such a foretaste of heaven, would give us true Christian courage, "to march with vigour on," and say with our own profession, "I will serve the Lord, you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—Joshua xxiv. 15.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.—What book is there in the compass of human learning which can confer the same sanctification and blessing? In the hemisphere of literature the Bible is the ran, and the brightest gem shines forth out of darkness only by the reflection of its rays. The writings of the ancient divines abound with most glowing eulogiums of the Sacred Scriptures. "The Holy Bihh," says one, "is a spiritual paradox: the book of Psalms is the tree of life in the midst of it." Others exclaim, "The Psalms are a jewel-cluster, made up of the gold of doctrine, the pearls of comfort, and the gems of prayer. In the Holy Scriptures the doctrines that edify, the prophecies that warn, the laws that restrain, and good; covenants betwixt God and man most gracious, promises most precious, privileges most ample, providences most wonderful, ordinances most comfortable, and soul-reviving; that, whatever is taught is truth, whatever is commanded is good, whatever is promised is happiness."—What shall we add in commendation of this holy book? It is the Tree of Life, bearing twelve and twelve leaves thereof are for the healing of the nations. It is a garden of the most lovely flowers, and the most delicious fruits. The Bible is the well of truth, and faith is the vessel that draws up its refreshing waters. It is a mirror in which we behold the Almighty God in his beloved Son, as the father of sin, and the reconciler of the world. In these scriptures will be found the most perfect truth, the surest promises, the most gracious and wise, and wisest counsels! "The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, and purified seven times." The instructions of truth, the consolations of religion, display a faithless bloom, because they possess an everlasting virtue; turn to them at whatever time, return to them with whatever frequency, they shall always be found budding with new and seasonable refreshment.

HORNBLOW.

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH.—"The church in the world" has been the frequent cry of our secular churches, a people dwelling within walls." The watch-word of the defenceless spiritual churches has been the *nil dependant*, "We have a strong city; God is our refuge and strength; therefore will not we fear." This has in part arisen from the fact, no doubt, that the latter have ever regarded less their own party-profession than the stability of the great christian republic. If they have trembled, it has been for the ark of God; and their trembling has therefore been transient, and transitory, as an affectionate inaction, passing away before their first earnest reflection; for the ark, they know, is sure as the truth, and safe as the throne, of God. But partly, also, we have little doubt, it has arisen from the fact, that they have been conscious of no mingling in the main of perishable elements with their spirit. It is the voice of history and of observation, that in secular churches, either the earthly elements have been helplessly confined and arranged those of a different and better nature, with which they have been associated, and have dragged them ultimately down into their own destined abyss,—or else, in the mercy of God, there has come to be a strife for the mastery between the two sets of elements. Then has come the heaving of the earthquake, the volcanic throes, and the mountain has been shattered, as in a session; or, as in a reformation or disruption, it has been divided into two parts, and spiritual churches, like disappointed genii, have come out of the enormous reef, to walk abroad unfeathered, and to do such deeds of power and prowess as faithless men, oblivious stupidly of the past, have been accustomed to put in the category of sheer impossibility. "Whose voice then shook the earth; but now hath he promised, saying, Yet once will I shake the earth, and it shall also heave." There is an age approaching—can we not see its dawn!—the age, not of pitiful and pitiable scepticism, but of manly and wholesome thought. It will be the consummate age of the world's economical disposition. Let us prepare for its advent; "for it shall be as the refiner's fire, and as fuller's soap." It will bear no "myrmemies," no shams, no deluding of the conscience, or brow-beating of the reason of a