

SECRET PRAYER

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Secret prayer by H. C. G. Moule

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H. C. G. MOULE

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"O! how the soul is refreshed with freedom of speech with its beloved Lord! . . . He that is much in prayer shall grow rich in grace. He shall thrive and increase most who is busiest in this, which is our very traffic with heaven, and fetches the most precious commodities thence. He who sends oftenest out these ships of desire, who makes the most voyages to that land of spices and pearls, shall be sure to improve his stock most, and have most of heaven upon earth."

Archbishop LEIGHTON, *on 1 Pet.* iv. 7.

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PREFACE

THE following pages are a reproduction, somewhat extended here and there but otherwise little altered, of a series of addresses delivered at the weekly Devotional Service of the Cambridge University Church Society, in the Lent Term of 1888.

The Subject needs no introduction, and truly no apology. If the writer reads some characteristics of our time at all aright it is a subject not only of permanent but of special and pressing importance, of the highest order, if the spiritual life of the Christian man and the Christian Church is to be maintained indeed under the conditions of the modern world.

As he has endeavoured to point out

in the first chapter, the practice of Secret Prayer suffers peculiar risks at present from even religious quarters, such as those of multiplied work, and highly developed public worship, and the abundant use of social devotion.

Under this last head indeed one exception must be made, and made with sorrow. Is it not true that in the hurry of modern religious life the practice of FAMILY WORSHIP is on the decline? But if it be so, it is time that every thoughtful Christian who can in the least use action or influence in the matter should withstand that decline in his own person. Nothing, as the writer has attempted to show, can take the place of Secret Prayer. But likewise nothing, where there is a family in any sense, can take the place of Family Prayer, in which the head of

the family takes his God-intended position as its pastor and teacher; instructing it from the Word, leading it in praise and prayer, and pledging himself and his circle by that solemn act to a family life in which the Lord shall be honoured. To the spiritual health of the Parish, of the Church, of the Land, Family Worship is of incalculable value.

These remarks are by the way, and offered only under the pressure of a deep conviction. But they have a true connexion with the subject of these chapters. Secret Prayer and Family Prayer are in many respects beset by like risks, and carry with them like blessings.

The present little book is a small contribution to a modern literature on Secret Prayer which is already considerable. Of that literature the writer

will here mention only one unpretending but precious specimen, a very small book by the late beloved and honoured Rev. Henry Wright, Prebendary of St Paul's and Honorary Secretary of the Church Missionary Society: "*Secret Prayer a great Reality*" (published by Messrs. Bemrose). Within thirty-two short pages that book contains great treasures. The writer has for many years owed much to it, and is glad of this opportunity of a grateful acknowledgment.

May whatever in the following pages is according to the Will and Word of God be used in His mercy for His glory as that glory is intended to be manifested in the life and spirit of His people, who exist that He may employ them for Himself,

GREAT MALVERN,

September 19, 1889.