

**"ENTER INTO THY CLOSET":
OR, SECRET PRAYER, AND
ITS ACCOMPANYING
EXERCISES**

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JAMES M'GILL

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“ENTER INTO THY CLOSET:”

OR

SECRET PRAYER,

AND

ITS ACCOMPANYING EXERCISES.

INTENDED

TO ASSIST YOUNG PERSONS AND OTHERS IN ACQUIR-
ING DEVOTIONAL HABITS, WITHOUT THE AID OF
WRITTEN FORMS.

BY

THE REV. JAMES M'GILL,
HIGHTAE, LOCHMABEN.

PHILADELPHIA :
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P R E F A C E .

SOME explanation is perhaps due by the present writer, in offering his thoughts to the public on a subject on which so much has already been written.

Of the many works in existence having reference to the subject of devotion, some are theological treatises, in which the exercise of prayer is examined in its abstract relations, and shown to be consistent with reason, as well as required by christianity ; others contain examples of devout meditations, intended to be directly employed in the worship of God ; whilst the object of a third class is to exhibit persuasives to the duty of prayer, with hints and directions as to its profitable performance.

The present humble production is most nearly allied to publications of this last description. Wholly practical in its design, it takes for granted the efficacy of prayer, as a

truth which cannot be doubted without denying the authority of scripture, and even the first principles of natural religion as embodied in the superstitions of all nations; but it aims not to investigate the philosophy of devotion, or to illustrate the question, more curious than useful, as to the manner in which prayer becomes efficacious. On the other hand, although intended as a companion for the closet, it is not what is usually called a Manual of devotion; but proceeds upon the principle, that the gift of prayer may easily be acquired by any one who, with the Bible in his hands, will think seriously of what he does when he ventures to address the Father of mercies.

The distinction between teaching and training, is now well understood. The one includes merely the communication of knowledge, the other embraces the regulation of the mind, and the development of character. This distinction supplies a hint as to the different ways in which divine truth may be presented, and religious duties inculcated: in the doing of which the course pursued must vary, according as we wish to communicate information, or to assist in the production of

habits. The title-page has already intimated that the latter, rather than the former, is the object which has been attempted to be kept in view in the following pages.

It is obviously of no moment what are a man's views or opinions on the subject of devotion, if the duty itself is neglected. It is the person who desires instruction, with the direct purpose of reducing it to practice, who is really on the way to improvement. He who seeks to know what he ought to do, with the design of doing it, will make most progress in the knowledge both of truth and duty. The words of our Lord, on a somewhat different subject, disclose a principle which runs through the whole of religion:—"If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrines." If a man would understand and appreciate the doctrines and precepts of christianity, let him surrender his heart and life to their guidance.

SKAIRFIELD, LOCHMABEN,
January, 1843.

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