

# RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER,

And Bible Society, Missionary, and Sabbath School Advocate.

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That God in all

things may be glorified through Jesus Christ—PETER.

NEW SERIES.

SAINT JOHN, NEW

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## Religious.

### THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

In Greenland, when a stranger knocks at the door, he asks, "Is God in this house?" And if they answer, "Yes," he enters. Reader, this little messenger knocks at your door with the Greenland salutation. Is God in this house? Were you, like Abraham, entertaining an angel unaware, what would be the report he would take back to heaven? Would he find you commanding your children and your household, and teaching them the way of the Lord? Would he find an altar in your dwelling? Do you worship God with your children? Is there a Church in your house? If not, then God is not in your house. A prayerless family is a Godless family. It is a family on which Jehovah frowns. He will pour out his fury upon it some day. "O Lord, pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not thy name." A prayerless family and a heathen family are here accounted the same.

I cannot mention all the reasons in favor of family worship; but if you ponder them, the four following should suffice—

1.—The Godly householders mentioned in Scripture practised it. Would you desire to be like Abraham, the friend of God? Wherever he pitched his tent, he builded an altar, and called on the name of the Lord; and Jehovah declared concerning him, "I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they will keep the way of the Lord." Would you like to resemble Job, "the perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil"? He used to bring his children together, and rose early in the morning, and offered a sacrifice of as many victims as he had sons and daughters, teaching us how express and special our intercession for our families should be, and this he did "continually." Would you resemble David, the man after God's own heart? At the close of a busy day, we find him going "home to bless his household." Do you envy Cornelius, whose prayers were heard, and to whom the Lord sent a special messenger to teach him the way of salvation? He was "a devout man, one who feared God with all his house, and prayed to God always;" and who was so anxious for the salvation of his family, that he got together his kinsmen and near friends, that they might be ready to hear the apostle when he arrived, and share with himself the benefit. Do you admire Aquila and Priscilla, Paul's "helpers in Christ Jesus," and who were so skillful in the Scriptures, that they were able to teach a young minister the way of God more perfectly? You will find that one reason for their familiarity with Scripture was, that they had "a Church in their house." In the Bible you find instances of family devotion in all ranks of life, from the king to the artisan, from David's palace to the tent of Aquila; to teach you that whatever be your situation in life, you should still have a Church in your house. I have sometimes seen family worship in great houses; but I have felt that God was quite as near when I knelt with a praying family on the earthen floor of their cottage. I have known of family worship among the shepherds in a barn. It used to be common in the fishing-boats upon the fringes and lakes of Scotland. I have heard of its being observed in the depths of a coal-pit. I scarcely know the situation in life in which a willing family might not contrive to pray together. If you live in a scoffing, ungodly neighborhood, so much the better. Abraham built his altar whilst heathen Canaanites looked on. He lifted up a testimony for God, and God honored him—so that Abimelech, his neighbor, was constrained to say, "God is with thee in all that thou doest."

2.—Wherever religion revives, family worship abounds. When the Spirit is poured out upon the house of David, "the land shall mourn,—every family apart." I can remember no instance of a great revival, of which this was not an attendant sign. Listen to the account which Mr. Baxter gives of Kidderminster during his ministry. "On the Lord's-day there was no disorder to be seen in the streets, but you might hear a hundred families singing psalms and repeating sermons, as you passed through the streets. When I came thither first, there was about one family in a street that worshipped God and called on his name, and when I came away, there were some streets, where there was not above one family in the side of a street that did not so; and that did not by professing serious godliness give us some hopes of their sincerity; and those families which were the worst, being idle and ale-houses, usually some persons in each did seem to be religious." Some of the poor men did competently understand the body of divinity, and were able to judge in difficult controversies. Some of them were so able in prayer, that very few ministers did match them in order and fulness, and apt expressions, and holy order with fervency. Abundance of them were able to pray very laudably with their families or with others. The temper of their minds and the innocency of their lives was much more laudable than their parts." When the Spirit is poured upon us, our cities will all present a similar aspect.

3.—It would make your home much happier if you had a Church in your house. It has been said with much truth, "Family prayer is the oil which removes friction, and causes all the complicated wheels of the family to move smoothly and noiselessly." It is one way, and the very best, for bringing all the members of a family together, and for promoting that harmony of feeling so essential to domestic enjoyment. Some families are held

together by hardly any bond, except that they lodge under the same roof, and assemble round the same board. But when they meet, it is not to fulfill one another's joy. They are selfish and sullen; cross words, peevish answers, and angry reprimands make up all their intercourse. The customary meal is despatched in a gloomy silence, or embittered by fretful words. I have known families so little at home with one another, that it was quite a relief when any casual visitor dropped in to break the irksomeness of their own society. I have seen brothers and sisters so ill-assorted in the families in which God had planted them together, that they had no subject of common interest, and no mutual love nor confidence. They could converse and be happy with strangers, but not with one another. And I have seen this in families where there was a form of family worship,—a pretence, a semblance of prayer—but never where there was the reality. If you be such a family, before peace and affection visit it, you must say, "Come and let us seek the Lord." If you would see the dawn of blander days on that clouded and lowering circle, you must cry, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, and so we shall be glad." If you could only persuade them to take into their hands the volume that speaks good will to man, and as they sit together to read by turns its messages of kindness; and then as they bowed before the mercy-seat, if in their common name, you said, *Our Father*, and confessed their common sins, returned thanks for any mercies which the day had brought, and asked such blessings as all need, this process could not be long persisted in, till you would see its softening and harmonizing influence. The dew of Heaven would begin to come down, and you would exclaim as you saw the difference, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

But perhaps your family dwells in unity—but it is not a holy unity. It is not sanctified by the Word of God and by prayer. You are happy in one another. You are never at a loss for the materials of a cheerful intercourse. But amidst all the sprightliness, cordiality, and kind feeling which encompass your fire-side, one ingredient of gladness is wanting. God is forgotten. In the morning, you meet and give one another a joyous greeting, and the morning meal despatches rush away to the day's engagements without a word of acknowledgment to that God whose sleepless eye guarded your midnight pillow—without one word of prayer to bespeak his upholding and guidance in this day's untrodden path. And when the evening hour of intercourse is over, and you have discussed the pleasant and prosperous incidents of the day, you lie away, cheerful but unsatisfied, to a prayerless slumber, perhaps to awake in death's dark valley, and find that the Lord is not with you. Your family is united—but it is a short-lived union. Your family-love—God is not in it, and therefore heaven does not follow after it. How it would give tone and intensity to the affection of your smiling circle, if you could be brought to love one another as the Lord! With what new eyes you would learn to look upon yourselves, if you came to regard one another as brethren from eternity! And how it would heighten bliss, and take the sharpness out of sorrow, if "For ever with the Lord," were the thought which joy and grief most readily suggested! Were it manifest of all the members of a family that God is their father, Christ their elder Brother, and the Holy Spirit their Comforter, such a family would possess a joy which the removal of no member could take away. That joy has often come into households through the channel of domestic devotion. For,

4.—Family worship is an ordinance which God has often blessed to the saving of souls. In houses where it is conducted with life and feeling, it has often proved a converting ordinance. A few years ago, an English gentleman visited America, and spent some days with a pious friend. He was a man of talent and accomplishments, but an infidel. Four years afterwards, he returned to the same house, a Christian. They wondered at the change, but little suspected when and where it had originated. He told them that when he was present at their family worship, on the first evening of his former visit, and when after the chapter was read, they all knelt down to pray—the recollection of such scenes in his father's house long years ago, rushed in on his memory, so that he did not hear a single word. But the occurrence made him think, and his thoughtfulness ended in his leaving the howling wilderness of infidelity, and finding a quiet rest in the salvation wrought out by Jesus Christ. In his *Fire-side*, Mr. Abbot tells us of a gay young lady who paid a visit of a week in the family of a minister, an eminently holy man. His fervent intercessions for his children and the other inmates of his dwelling, went to this thoughtless heart: they were the Spirit's arrow, and upon that family altar, his visitor was enabled to present herself a living sacrifice to God. It is with the Church in the house as with the Church in the village. The wayfarer may get a word in passing, which he never can forget. The stranger that turns aside to tarry for a night may hear at your family worship the word that will save his soul. Some years ago, an Irish wanderer, his wife, and his sister, asked a night's shelter in the cabin of a pious schoolmaster. With the characteristic hospitality of his nation, the schoolmaster made them welcome. It was his hour for evening worship; and when the strangers were seated, he began by reading slowly and solemnly, the second chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. The young man sat astonished. The expressions, "Dead in trespasses and sins," "Children of wrath," "Walking after the course of this world," were new to

him. He sought an explanation. He was told that this is God's account of the state of man by nature. He felt that it was exactly his own state. "In this way I have walked from my childhood. In the service of the God of this world we have come to your house." He was on the way to a fair, where he intended to pass a quantity of counterfeit money. But God's Word had found him out. He produced his store of coin, and begged his host to cast it into the fire; and asked anxiously if he could not obtain the Word of God for himself. His request was complied with, and next morning, with the new treasure, the party, who had now no errand to the fair, returned to their own home. Perhaps, by this time, the pious schoolmaster has met his guest within the gates of the city, outside of which are thieves, and whatsoever maketh a lie. But I cannot enumerate all the conversions which have occurred at the Church in the House. Many servants have been awakened there. Children have often heard these truths, which, when the Spirit brought them to remembrance in after days—perhaps, in days of prodigality, and when far from their father's house—have sent home the prodigal. It is not only of Zion's solemn assemblies, but of Jacob's humble dwellings—the little fire-side sanctuaries—"that the Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people. This man was born there." In your house, there have been, perhaps, several immortal spirits born into the world. Have there been any born again?

Prayerless parents! Your irreligion may prove your children's damnation. They might have been within the fold of the Saviour by this time, had not you hindered them when entering in. That time when God visited your family with a heavy stroke, they were thoughtful for a season, but there was no Church in your house to give a heavenly direction to that thoughtfulness, and it soon died away. That evening when they came home from the Sabbath School so serious, if you had been a pious father or mother, you would have taken your boy aside, and spoken tenderly to him, and asked what his teacher had been telling him; and you would have prayed with him, and tried to deepen the impression. But your children came in from the church or school, and found no Church in their father's house. Their hearts were softened, but your worldliness soon hardened them. The seed of the kingdom was just springing in their souls, and by this time might have been a rich harvest of salvation; but in the atmosphere of your ungodly house, the tender blade withered instantly. Your idle talk, your frivolity, your Sunday visitors, your prayerless evening, ruined all. Your children were coming to Christ, and you suffered them not. And you will not need to hinder them long. The carnal mind is enmity against God; but no enmity so deep as theirs who were almost reconciled and then drew back. You drove your children back. You hardened them. They may never more be moved. They may grow up as prayerless and ungodly as yourself. If God should change yourself, they may soon be too hard for your own tears and entreaties. If you die as you are, they will die as you are. In the camp he heard God only evil works will follow you to the world of woe, and in blasphemy. In civil life he saw nothing but a poor new ingredients into your own cup of wrath. O! think of these things. A prayerless house is not only a cheerless one, but is a guilty one; for where God is not, there Satan is.

### A SINGULAR ROBBERY.

Robbery is one of the greatest and most detestable crimes men ever commit. The robbery of a stranger is so; and much more that of a father, or other benefactor.

But God said to the Jews—"Ye have robbed me even this whole nation. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." But they had not gone to his house and taken away the tithes and offerings; how, then, did they rob God of them? Evidently by not bringing them as they ought. Their neglect to devote to his service such a part of their property as he required them to, was robbing him.

God is always the same, and the principles of his government never change. Does not, then, the principle declared in this passage of his word still hold good? Does not he who now neglects to devote to the service of God a part of his property as he requires, rob God, as truly as did the Jews? I frequently hear it confessed that, as a Christian community, we do not do half as much as we might and ought for the evangelization of the world; and as people do not often confess more wrong than they are guilty of, I conclude they do not in this case. But God requires us to evangelize the world; and if we have not done more than half as much as we ought for that object, have we not robbed him of an amount at least equal to all we have contributed for it? If I have applied to my own use, what God required me to devote to his service, have I not robbed him?

Alas! we have robbed God, even this whole nation. We have neglected to devote to his service the "tithes and offerings," the contributions of property and personal service, which he requires.

The object for which he requires our offerings, is the publication of the gospel to every creature, and the use of all available means to prepare every human heart to be a temple for his abode. He has shown how much he desires this to be done, by the gift of his Son to toil and die for it. He has given us means by which, with his blessing, it may be done; and required us to use them for that object. But who among us has done all he could for it? Who shown himself as anxious for it as God did? Who has labored for it as Christ did?

Whenever we have used any of our property in such a manner that it did no good, directly or indirectly, to our own souls, or the souls of others, or less good than it would have done if it had been

used give Bibles to the destitute, instruction to the ignorant, or the gospel to the heathen, then we have robbed God. O, how many times we have done it! How many robberies have we committed—robberies of God, our benefactor and Father!

Is it strange that God is displeased with us? Is it strange that he does not more fully answer our prayers? If you were to rob a man, and the next hour ask for a gift, would you be likely to obtain it? God is infinitely better than we are, and bestows many favors upon us, robbers though we be; but might we not expect far greater blessings, if we should cease to rob him? We ask him for the best gift of heaven, the Holy Spirit, and our petition is not wholly denied; but it is only granted in part, and when the gospel is preached among us, "the seed of an homer yields but an ephah," and our children and neighbors perish in their sins.

Is it not enough? Have we not sinned in this thing too long already? Yes, we have robbed God too often, and too long. Let us not do it more. Let us devote to his service, all that he would have us. Let us not withhold a son or daughter from it? nor expend a dollar in any way in which it will be, on the whole, less useful to the Lord's cause, than it would be if used to give the gospel to the perishing.

Let us do this; and then, and not till then, can we confidently expect prosperity in our Zion. Then may we ask God's blessing, and though it would still be with shame for our many sins, yet God will hear us, for Christ's sake. He will "open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings" upon us, till our souls, and our country, and our world, are full of them.

Till we do it, I tremble for my country. When we do it, we may lift up our heads with joy, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh, our redemption from papacy, worldliness, and every other danger.

### "I AM A LOST MAN."

The newspapers inform us that these were the last words of Bugeaud, Marshal of France, and Duke of Isly. When he uttered them, he was just closing a brilliant, many would say a useful life. He had led vast armies to battle. He had governed extensive States. He had been conspicuous in the councils of nations. The President of France made anxious visits to his death chamber. The stern Cavaignac wept as he looked upon the dissolving frame of his old comrade; and the Convention was profoundly affected when the news of his death was announced. With all this accumulation of honor, he was by his own confession, "a lost man." How mournful the contrast between the glory of his life and the deep gloom of its close!

From the same source we learn that Bugeaud had a pious mother. In the history of his eventful life, this seems to have been the only quarter in which good influence was exerted upon his heart. His mother's voice alone warned him of his danger, and spoke to him of eternity; all other influences led him astray. In the camp he heard God only evil works will follow you to the world of woe, and in blasphemy. In civil life he saw nothing but a poor new ingredients into your own cup of wrath. O! think of these things. A prayerless house is not only a cheerless one, but is a guilty one; for where God is not, there Satan is.

In the hour of death, however, these voices die away and are forgotten. The acclamations of a world could not have made the failing pulse of Bugeaud beat faster. Other tones were in his ears; for the accents we will not listen to when they admonish us, we are often forced to listen to when they accuse. The dying moments are often the time of resurrection for abused privileges and neglected gifts. They "stalk from the burial place of memory," to foreshadow our doom, and to convince us of its undeniable justice.

Thus we explain that fearful expression that fell from the dying warrior. He heeded a voice which he had long neglected and forgotten. Across the waste of years, through the storm of battle, it comes clear and distinct upon his failing ear. It asks for the fruit of early counsel; it asks for the result of pious care and zeal. One comprehensive glance over his life satisfies the man that he has wasted it. His own conscience condemns him. In this he knows that he anticipates the sentence of God, and he sinks into death, "a lost man."

The lesson of this sad incident is easily read.—It is only another instance of the case with which carelessness can turn our best blessings into curses. A mother's love and a mother's pious care are inestimable gifts of God's mercy. Indifference and impotence can make them causes of our deeper damnation, and so change the soft voice that sung our young infancy to sleep, that it will haunt our pillow with accusations that we can neither deny nor resist.—*Rev. M. B. Grier*

"THRISTLES OF THE HEART."—"Bad habits," says the *Boys Own Guide*, "are the thistles of the heart, and each particular indulgence in them is a seed, from which will spring up a new crop of seeds. A few years ago a little boy told his first falsehood. It was a little, solitary thistle seed, and no eye but God's saw him, as he planted it in the mellow soil of his heart. But it sprang up, Oh, how quickly! and in little time another, and yet another seed dropped from it into the ground, each in its turn bearing more thistles and more seeds. And now his heart is all overgrown with this bad habit; he is a confirmed liar, and it would be as difficult for him to cease entirely from falsehood, as it would be for the gardener to clear his land of the noxious thistle, after it has gained a footing in the soil."

## Correspondence.

### NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE.

NEW YORK, March 28, 1854.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—There has recently been in this city a successful effort put forth to ameliorate the "News Boys." These boys carry and cry papers through the city. Having bought their papers at wholesale prices they go forth to the boats, depots, and streets to sell them one at a time for an advance price. When a steamer arrives with important news some presses get out an extra, and forth with it is carried to every part of the city by these boys. It may be the middle of the day, it may be in the evening after the evening papers are out that there is an important arrival. Just as I am now writing one of these lads is passing, crying an arrival from Europe. The steamer has been looked for with impatience because she is a little behind her time. This will be likely to be a "fat" day for the boys. They will all be able to go to the theatre to-night, and afterwards afford themselves a cup of coffee (three cents) and cake (two cents) and perhaps lodging (six cents.)

These boys are often enterprising and active though untutored and uncared for. Some of them are obliged to count the letters on the paper's head to distinguish one paper from another. They are often without homes and no more able to give account of their parentage than was Topsy. Often are they dressed in the thrown off clothes of men, though they are not half grown; generally one boot and one shoe or rather pieces of such constitute the clothing of their feet; water, soap and towel you may well judge from the appearance of their faces they have never seen; if out of money, as they often are, they find a lodging in summer on the steps of the printing offices, of the city hall or of some other building; in winter, they creep into an empty cask, box, into a hall, doorway, corner or cart; sometimes they curl up in heaps of three or four on the gratings in the sidewalks over pressrooms in the vaults beneath; so, or in fighting, they manage to get through the night.

The Children's Aid Society has recently fitted up a lodging place for these boys. In connection with it a school or lecture room with desks, library and other conveniences. There are also the necessities to the boys of soap, towels, and bath rooms. They are to have lectures and instruction. The only charge to the boys is the sixpence for lodging. Before this they had to pay more. Even now when it is a hard day for them in their business, they are without lodging. There are accommodations for fifty. This place was opened a week on Saturday, and from 23 to 30 boys have patronized it each night since. It is hoped that by furnishing each a place of resort many of them will cease to attend the theatre, and that, as there is to be a Savings' Bank in which they can deposit their surplus earnings, many of them will gradually acquire habits of economy.

When these news boys are all provided for there will remain many hundreds of vagrant children in this city in far worse condition than these boys even were. These vagrant children obtain their living, if the way they stay is worthy of such a name, by begging and stealing in both which callings they become expert. At night they seek a place for rest more after the manner of brute animals than human beings. Some in addition to refugees before alluded to crawl into stables to spend the night. Within a block or two of where I reside there was a fire a little more than a year ago that consumed a livery stable and with it perished not only several horses but at least three of the vagrant boys, for their crisped remains were found next day. Many families in the vicinity missed after that two or three familiar faces from among their daily visitors who come to beg "cold victuals."

From these facts and many more such that might be given, it might seem to you that there are no Christians in New York. Yet there are many and those very benevolent. Benevolent institutions of various kinds abound and every year adds to their list, but want and crime still increase, owing principally to intemperance and the great influx from foreign countries of a pauper population. If the Maine Law which has now passed both houses of our own State's Legislature is not vetoed by the governor, and if it is enforced with efficiency it will do more to relieve suffering than the increase a thousand fold of our Benevolent Institution. I said *relieve*; I ought to say rather "I will prevent so much that all other will have a ready source of relief. The law goes into effect next December. I hope soon to give your readers some account of our Benevolent Institutions.

To-day a clergyman called upon me from Indiana. Years ago I was acquainted with him and