

This is certainly a cause of abundant thanksgiving to God. But what the Synod would solemnly call on every family within their bounds to do in regard to this important part of family religion is to *preserve it pure and entire*. Let it be observed in its integrity. Beware of curtailing it. There is a prevailing tendency to neglect the singing of God's praise in family worship. It is an evil tendency. By such neglect family worship is shorn of its brightest glory.

In dwellings of the righteous  
Is heard the melody  
Of joy and health.

"Family Prayers" is a most unpresbyterian phrase, and savours of too close contiguity to accommodating formalism, or it may be, of the fruitless attempt to serve God and Mammon.

Family discipline is of essential importance in the preservation and promotion of family religion. The Synod take for granted that all Christian parents dedicate their infant offspring to God;—that they do so in secret at the throne of Grace—that they do it constantly at the family altar—and especially that they do it publicly in the sacred ordinance of Baptism. If you have devoted your children to God, bring them up to God. The scriptures abound with warnings and directions in reference to this momentous subject. Historic beacons are set there for your warning, and ensamples for your imitation. The weak and facile Eli stands conspicuous among the former; the steadfast and faithful Abraham ranks foremost among the latter. Let these examples be studied, and copied or shunned, as duty requires; and let such portions of the Word of God as the book of Proverbs, the concluding sections of the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians dwell richly in the hearts of parents, and be their instruction and guide in the government of their families; and just as surely as the God of Israel has said it, your children will choose your God, and will walk in the steps of your faith and holiness.

### III.

The origin of true religion, whether it saves our souls, blesses our households, or adorns civil society, is an enlightened, regenerated and sanctified heart—a heart right with God, and sound in His statutes.

The Synod would therefore urge upon every member of the Church the great necessity of faithfully and frequently examining the state of his heart before God. The judgment of charity has already been passed in your favour, and on the supposition that the profession you made was sincere, you were admitted to the fellowship of the Church. But it is a small thing for you to be judged of us, or of any man's judgment. He that judgeth you is the Lord. It is well at any time—it is especially well at this present, to determine the question for yourselves, whether your hearts be right with God—whether you bring forth the fruit of the spirit. An error here is fatal. A mistake here will set every thing connected with religion wrong, and will keep it wrong: while the longer the error remains uncorrected the spiritual danger will proportionally increase.

Hoping however that your religion is genuine—that the root of the matter is in you, it is our chief desire—next to the promotion of the glory of God, that your religion be thriving. Beloved, we wish above all things that you prosper and be in health, even as your souls prosper. Planted in the house of the Lord, we wish that you may flourish in the courts of our God, and that the language of the Psalmist may be applied to you:—