

Devotional Papers.

THE SCARLET LINE IN THE WINDOW.

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C. H. SPURGEON, IN THE "SWORD AND TROWEL."
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"She bound the scarlet line in the window."
Joshua ii. 21.

Here was a DEDICATED HOUSE—a house with a scarlet line in its window. Coming here the other afternoon, walking down one of the back streets, I amused myself by observing how many houses were insured. I noticed the marks of the companies. There was the *Sun* on one, with his bright face looking down upon us, as much as to say, "There shall be no loss here." The *Globe*, the *Star*, the *Phoenix*, all were there as seals of safety. Now, there was only one house in Jericho that was insured, and that had for its symbol and mark of insurance a scarlet line tied in the window. What a mercy when houses are insured by the grace of God, and dedicated to the Lord—the very houses, and much more the inhabitants of those houses. How can you dedicate a house? I was reading the other day that in Cromwell's time you could go down Cheapside at a certain hour in the morning, and you would see the blinds down at every house, and hear the families singing, all the way along, "for," says an old divine, "in those days a drawn blind was the scarlet line in the window." People knew, as they passed along, that there was an altar to God in that house. I am afraid that there are a great many streets in our towns and cities which you might traverse at any hour of the day, and not discover a solitary sign

of family prayer going on. The practice has gone out of fashion even among many who profess to be the people of God; and farewell to any progress in godliness till we bring it back again. I believe that when the house and the church pull together, things are right; but when religion is made to be a thing of the church and not of the house; when the priest is looked to, instead of the father; when men cease to be priests in their own houses, then the very sinews of vital godliness have been cut. If I had to give up all week-day services, and shut up every place of worship in Christendom from Sunday to Sunday, I would prefer it rather than lose the morning and evening gatherings of devout households worshipping God. How much Scotland owes to her family devotions. You need not that I remind you of "The Cotter's Saturday Night." It is the very glory of that country that they do there worship God in their houses. "There is much formality about it," cries one. Well, was there ever anything good which did not degenerate here and there? But I can bear witness full many a time to the hearty devotion of morning and evening prayer in the North. I wonder how many houses represented by you come up to Matthew Henry's third standard. He says, "Those who pray do well." You get up to that, I hope. "Those that read the Scriptures and pray, do better. Those that read the Scriptures, and pray and sing, do best of all." I think so. This is the scarlet line with the three-fold cord to it; and I would that every house hung out that scarlet line as the sign—"This house belongs to King Jesus. The devil need not trouble