

bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Moreover so great was the esteem manifested by God for the family tie, that when at a subsequent period a proselyte was made to the faith of Abraham by the head of a heathen family, he brought in his children with him and placed the seal of the covenant on every male among them. Not, be it remembered, as the sign and seal of temporal benefits merely, but to designate church relation and church privilege. Under the Christian dispensation, when the ceremonial services of the former days were annulled, we find a distinct announcement that in the spiritual kingdom about to be set up by Christ, the family would find a place and little children be included. "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven," were the words of Christ.

The gracious influences of the Holy Spirit promised long, and largely realized on the day of Pentecost, were not to come on believing parents and exclude their little ones; no, the word ran—"The promise is to you and to your children." That promise is made good to the children, though but one of the parents belong to the Saviour. "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your children unclean, but now are they holy," that is, fit subjects for covenant blessings, to be brought up in the kingdom of Christ, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"—in the faith of the gospel, as heirs of that salvation which is by faith.

In keeping with this idea, when the Apostle addressed the *children* at Ephesus and at Colosse, special injunctions are laid on the children as being among them. "Children obey your parents."

We do not infer from this that children are necessarily saved with their parents, for some of them live and die in unbelief. "But what if some do not believe, shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" Our inference is that if children are included in the covenant, then their salvation should be looked for. They should be trained up, not as outsiders, to be brought in by and by, at some time when God in his sovereignty shall move on them, but as those already heirs by birth to spiritual influences, to be secured however in the use of the appointed means which every Christian parent should feel himself bound to employ. Every Christian family should be, as it were, a church in miniature. Every child should be baptized, then early instructed in the faith of the gospel, and trained up to the observance of every Christian duty, in full confidence that the promise of God will be realized—that the Spirit of God will seal home every precept, take of the things of Christ and reveal them to the young immortal, renewing his heart from day to day.

Family religion is the basis of family worship; the latter without the former must be formal, if not unprofitable. Let the head of every family bring his children with him daily to the footstool of mercy, as set apart to him, not as "unclean but holy," having the sign and seal of God's covenant upon them. Let him plead with them and for them, as expectants of mercy and grace, with their faces turned Zionwards, in covenant relations fulfilling the conditions of the covenant on their part, and realizing the fulfilment of the promise on God's part. We say realizing, for when the parent is faithful, wise and confiding, God does not keep back the blessing, but begins at once to cooperate with believing parent's efforts.

Family religion grows out of the family covenant, and family prayer is a graceful expression of domestic religion. We can scarcely expect family