

carried on by children. In our daily watching over them, in constant care for their necessities, in our solicitude for their welfare, in our prayer and instruction for their spiritual interests. As parents, with awakened responsibility for what we are and what we do—and what will be the fruit—we are passing through a discipline that awakens the power of the heart, and strengthens the activities of the conscience, develops the mind, and matures the will. These things enable us to carry out the purpose expressed in the text: love for God and His truth, manifested by an eager search for its possession. Loathing every thing that would mar our influence, or blight its hopeful fruit in our children, our hearts' desire and our life's aim is to be to hand down a blessed heritage to our seed, and our seed's seed forever. "Bring up this child for Me, and I will give thee thy wages." "Lo, children are God's heritage, and the fruit of the womb is His reward."

Whatever partakes of subterfuge, evasion or mere ceremonial will inevitably end in tottering moral weakness or corrupting wickedness. You cannot lock up your real character in your home and say: "It will not be got at;" you cannot drape it in the folds of an assumed cheerfulness, or a forced amiability, and say: "It will not be felt;" you cannot fence off in a miasma; you cannot imprison contagion. Invisibly they move about; unconsciously they are breathed by one, and inhaled by others. The taking of moral leprosy is easy and silent. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Let us aim at being consistently upright, righteous, pure, then we shall be influential through what we are as well as in what we do. "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

3.—The last element in this Home life is ACTING UNDER CHRIST.

Few facts in the Gospel system have exerted more power in the Modern life of Presbyterianism, from Knox downward, than what we understand by the expression—THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST.

The conflict on this doctrine has been waged between the Church and the civil power as the ordinance of government in the earth under Christ, and the inherent spiritual liberty and authority Christ has lodged in His Church for her guidance in worship and work under Him. "He is head over all things to the Church."

So far as the Presbyterian Church is concerned, the battle is fought, and fruit is gathered unto eternal life, but we need to carry this fruitful fact into family life as well as into church principles.

The fulness of the Church's power, and responsibility under Christ, will never be fully realized, until the members of the Church carry that authority into the government, the worship, and the work, of family training.

Christ is supreme in every department of life, in every institution of Divine appointment.

See Him as He overturns the tables of the money-changers, proclaiming Himself "Lord of the Temple." Behold Him shewing the power and value of the spirit over the letter, the greatness of mercy over judgment, in that miracle of the impotent man that lay at the pool, Christ declaring Himself to be Lord of the Sabbath. By His unasked presence, His divine bountifulness, and gracious spirit, at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, He proclaimed Himself Lord of the family; so also in the healing of the demoniac at Gadara, and the commission Jesus gave him as he desired to follow Him. "Go home to thy family and shew what great things God hath done for thee." He set forth in many ways parental responsibility. In His tender and hallowed utterance as the children were brought to Him by hopeful parents, He proclaims Himself as head of the little children, "Suffer them to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He declares the same fact in His actions, "He took them up in His arms and blessed them." We are not absolute rulers in our families, we are under Christ. We are not at liberty to introduce our own experiments, and prescribe our own nostrums, as the cure for ills and the remedy for diseases, or to rule according to our caprice. Jesus has not, indeed, prescribed a routine to be followed, but He gives the parent, animated with the resolve of Joshua, a spirit of love and fidelity, an instinct that shrinks from everything that would chill the love, or blight the buds of hope in the home. "My kingdom is not of this world," is as authoritative in family life as in church life.

Christ is supreme; He is principal and teacher; the

government is on His shoulder, He bears the burdens; He has promised the strength; we are His servants, and not our own.

Personal piety fed from such a source, personal responsibility realized under such a Head, work done to promote Christ's glory in furnishing, and training, and inspiring another generation, must lead us to exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things," and discovering our great need of help and wisdom, we soon find that our sufficiency is of God. This will elevate family life and plant us on a higher plane than Joshua, but make us one with him in spirit, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

THE MIRACLE.

Two men were talking once in England: "Well, you may say what you please," said one; "I for my part, cannot believe that God would first impose laws on nature and then go on to violate His own laws. What would be the use of making them if they are so easily set aside?"

"I dinna ken, sir, what God may do, or what He winna do," said the Scot, very reverently. "But I don't regard a miracle to be a violation o' the laws o' nature; there's nae violation o' the laws o' nature, or rather the laws o' God, that I ken, save the wicked actions o' wicked men."

"And what, then," asked he, "do you make a miracle to be?"

"I regard it to be merely such an interference wi' the established course o' things as infallibly shows us the presence and the action o' a supernatural power. What o'clock is it wi' you sir, if you please?"

"It is half-past twelve, exactly, Greenwich time," replied he.

"Weel, sir," said the Scot, pulling a huge old time-piece from his pocket. "It is ane o'clock wi' me. I generally keep my watch a little forward, but I may have a special reason, the noo, for setting my watch by the railways, and so ye see I'm turning the hands of it round. Noo, wad ye say I hae violated the laws o' the watch? True I hae done what watchdom wi' a' its laws could nothae done for itself, but I hae done violence to nane o' its law. My action is only the interference o' a superior intelligence for a suitable end. But I hae respected nae law, violated nae law. Weel, then, instead of the watch, say the universe; instead o' the moving o' the hands, say God acting worthily o' himself, and vohae a' that I contend for in a miracle; that is, the unquestionable presence o' a mighty hand working the Divine will. And if he sees fit to work miracles, who can hinder Him, what can hinder Him? He has done it oftener than once or twice already, and who dare say that he'll no get leave to do it again?"

Is there a better illustration of a miracle than this of the old Scotchman? Looked at rightly, there need be no difficulty about this matter of miracles which so many rationalizing people so coolly assert is so beyond belief as to be unworthy of a thought. *From the Sunday Magazine*

PULPIT PRAYER.

The pulpit should avoid irreverence in prayer. The common form of this sin is the addressing God in the third person. "Will God bless His people?" "May God be in the midst of us to-day?" Indeed, so common is this form (irreverent as it is, except when used in the form of a benediction), that some persons would hardly be suspected of being engaged in the act of prayer, but for their having said, "Let us pray."

Another irreverent habit is that of vain repetition, so pointedly condemned by the great Teacher. With one it is the vain repetition *Oh!* *Oh!* before the names of the Deity is highly proper, but *Oh!* as an interjection is never so. With another the vain repetition is with the sacred name itself in some forms—*Oh, Lord!* *Oh, God!* *Oh, Jesus!* and the like, occurring, in some instances, simply as an expletive, or for want of something else to say.

The pulpit should seek to avoid stereotyped prayers. It has been claimed that one special excellence and advantage of extempore prayer over written forms of prayer is variety of expression corresponding to the ever-varying phases of feeling and changing circumstances. This claim is doubtless well founded when prayer is made a theme of study and appropriate preparation. But how seldom is this done! The minister depends on the spur of the moment or occasion, but alas! the occasion too often brings no in-

spiration either of thought or feeling, and the old threadbare, stereotyped prayer is presented for the thousandth time. In order to maintain the charm and interest of variety in public prayer, the following suggestions may be of advantage:

1. Do not usually, if ever, pray more than eight or ten, or at most, twelve minutes.

2. Do not pray about everything every time you pray. Appropriate subjects for their appropriate occasion is a good motto.

3. Stop when you have finished, if you have not prayed ten minutes. All attempts to lengthen out a prayer are too transparent to deceive anybody, and are both ridiculous and profane.

4. Pray *for* men, but never pray *at* them. Let prayer be sincerely offered to God.

5. Avoid the habit of undue haste in commencing prayer before the singing is fairly ended, and the people have had time to assume the posture for the most important act of Divine Worship.

6. The careful study of the Scriptures, and the habitual use of their language, will add greatly to the beauty, the interest, the dignity, and the variety of public prayer.—*Philadelphia Presbyterian Journal*.

PAUL AS A MINISTER.

Think of the early Christians and the noble line of martyrs, and your sufferings will sink into insignificance. Look at the apostle to the Gentiles, see him arrested and imprisoned, see his back bared to the lash. Five times he received forty stripes save one. See him gathering his garments about his lacerated shoulders when he whispers, "None of these things move me." See him taken to the edge of yonder city, stoned and left for dead. As his friends raise him up they say, "Better abandon the Gospel, they will kill you if you preach" but he says, "None of these things move me." I see him yonder upon the shore; he has been drawn out of the water, he has been a day and a night struggling in the deep, he is overcome and lies fainting on the earth, the water dripping from his hair. His friends think, surely he will never preach again. But as the pulse beats and the strength returns, I hear him say, "None of these things move me." He is on his way to Jerusalem. The prophets tell him he is to be bound and imprisoned, and the people weep at the thought of seeing him no more. The elders at Ephesus go down to meet him. He tells them that he is going to Jerusalem, and he knows not what shall befall him, but the Spirit tells in every place that bonds and imprisonment awaits him, but he grandly declares, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

Bonds and imprisonment did await him. He stood before Nero. He was condemned to die, and out of the dungeon of his prison he sends through Timothy this heroic and joyous message, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," etc.

Such a grand hero was the apostle living and dying. One work he did unmoved and unmovable, and to us he speaks, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

THE United States sends 460 missionaries to foreign lands, Germany more than 500, and Great Britain 1,000.

THE Bishop of Gibraltar has been offered 1,000 Greek Testaments for circulation in Cyprus.

A GREAT conflagration broke out in Hong Kong, China, Christmas day. The destruction of property was very great.

SCIENTIFIC Boston now sings its hymns at praise meetings not out of hymn-books, but from *hymn screens*, whereon they are projected by means of a stereopticon.

THE Pope has sent a letter to the Archbishop of Cologne, indicating friendship for the German Government, but the financial situation is the subject of general discussion in Berlin.

THE distress in the industrial classes in Great Britain increases. The Mayor of Manchester writes that 11,500 pounds have been received for the relief funds. About 6,500 persons are receiving relief. Two thousand nail-makers in South Staffordshire have been discharged from their workshops, and great destitution has resulted.