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ART. I.—*Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States; together with an appendix, containing forms of Church Registers, form of a constitution and plans of different denominations.* By Charles Colcock Jones, D.D. Philadelphia. Presbyterian Board of Publication. 1847.

MANY centuries ago, a holy seer said, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hand unto God." In view of the fulfilment of this prophecy, the royal bard called for a song of universal praise. The words next succeeding this prediction are, "Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth: O sing praises unto the Lord." The writings of Jeremiah inform us who the 'Ethiopians were, when he speaks of them as contra-distinguished from the rest of the race by their colour, as the leopard is from the rest of the feline tribe by his spots.

The first step in the providence of God towards an amelioration of the spiritual condition of the negro race, was their dispersion among other races of mankind. This work, both cruel and bloody, had not been completed, when Christian philanthropy, ever vigilant, sought them out in bondage, and bore to

ART. IV.—*Thoughts on Family Worship.* By James W. Alexander, Pastor of the Duane-street Presbyterian Church, New York. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication. 1847. pp. 260.

THE church has occasion for renewed gratitude to her Head when he reveals anew his care over her by reproving her faults. If she be, indeed, "his body, his flesh and his bones," then as he liveth she must live also; and as he holds the powers of perfect spiritual health, every impulse from him to her will be sanatory, and be applied with most decision and effect to those parts which have most need of healing. Such has been the intercourse between Christ and the church from age to age. It awakens both sorrow and joy to contemplate any state in which the church has ever yet been formed on earth; sorrow, to witness her infirmity; joy, that the gates of hell have not prevailed against her. We see, on the one hand, the weakness and the treachery of men; on the other, the power and faithfulness of Christ. These have wrought against each other through every age, and the history and present state of the church are the product of the two contending forces.

"Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these; for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this." Each age of the church has its virtues. As the church advances, her glory brightens in reality, and to eyes practised in discerning her scriptural characteristics, it brightens in appearance. The dense but slowly vanishing cloud which floats over the field of her outward activity, darkens one spot now, and now another; but as the shadow moves, it keeps its limits, and slowly very slowly fades; while the illuminated region behind the cloud is a little brighter than that before. Thus the visible features of her glory successively pass into the shade, and successively emerge. The same spot will be dark and light alternately, till the cloud departs, and the light of Zion is fully come.

Each age, too, has its vices; and to these it becomes the respective generations of the people of God to be tenderly alive. The distinguishing virtues of this age of the Church we may leave to be enumerated and commended by a coming generation. It behooves Christians to listen to those admonitions which remind them of their proneness, while cherishing one virtue to

let another go. The remark of Dr. Alexander, in his preface is too true, that the "world has invaded the household. Our Church cannot compare with that of the seventeenth century in this regard. Along with Sabbath observance and the catechising of children, family worship has lost ground. There are many heads of families, communicants in our churches, and (according to a scarcely credible report) some ruling elders and deacons who maintain no stated daily service of God in their dwellings."

We receive this book with thankfulness. It comes as the voice of the Lord from the heart of one of his servants in seasonable reproof of a great neglect of duty in the church. Such a book would be acceptable at any time. The subject, in such hands, appears like one on which Christians might write and read to edification, though no prevailing dereliction suggested the form of exhortation and reproof. To illustrate those adorable laws of the spiritual kingdom which underlie this crowded field of divine phenomena, might afford intellectual entertainment of the highest and purest kind, gratify the most philosophical taste, and furnish a creditable addition to what may be called the philosophical literature of the church.

The appearance of this little work is seasonable. There are times when bold outward movements captivate the church; when the predispositions of Christians would divert from such a production the respect it might confessedly merit, and consign it to a natural though inexcusable neglect. But seldom less than just now has the attention of the church, the outward and noisy attraction of theological warfare, or of some new and absorbing enterprise of Christian zeal. Seldom more than just now do Christians seem prepared to listen to the word of exhortation. The unblushing neglect of family devotion is provoking a natural reaction from the instincts of piety, awakening sensibility to the dictates of true religion, and even anticipating reproof; a cheering sign of the working of one Spirit in him who gives the admonition and in those who are to receive it. There is, moreover, a strong movement in another quarter, on a subject, kindred to that of this book, and indeed involving it; a movement from which great help must come towards the ends of our author in this treatise. And furthermore, at the risk of seeming visionary we add, that by the progress of events, the correction of this evil is fairly suggested as the next thing in order to be done. We

submit this last assertion to whatever of illustration it may receive from the tenor of our subsequent remarks.

In the first chapter of the work before us, which treats of "the Nature, Warrant and History of Family Worship," we note amidst the felicitous selection of hints on the origin of the practice, the "irresistible impulse to pray for those whom we love; and not only to pray for them, but with them," the "natural as well as gracious prompting to pray for those who are near to us;" and the involuntary impulse of any two human beings, "if they are of sanctified hearts, to pray with one another." It is afterwards stated as a natural reason why religion should specially pertain to the domestic relation, that "the family is the oldest of human societies; as old as the race. Men were not drawn together into families, by a voluntary determination, or social compact, according to the absurd figment of infidels; they were created in families. This has been recognised in every covenant; and the gospel, so far from destroying, has bound more closely and sanctified the family. By circumcision under the Old Testament and by baptism under the New, God has perpetually reminded his people of the honour set on this connexion."

We have here referred to the recognition of the family relation in the covenant of grace. Dr. Alexander seems not to have made it a part of his plan to illustrate the connexion between the doctrine of the family covenant and the practice of family worship. The paragraph quoted above, and a somewhat more extended passage in the thirteenth chapter, contain, if we mistake not, the only references in the book to this subject. We shall enlarge, a few moments, on this point, somewhat as we venture to presume our author would have done, if it had accorded with his plan. By inserting this covenant substratum under his several chapters, as far as our space in this article will allow, we would not be understood as suggesting any deficiency in the book; for the author had his wise design in the limitation of his subject; but as showing how his transparent views admit the thoughts of the reader throughout to the family covenant, as a prominent principle in the administration of grace.

Of all the condescending and gracious transactions of God with men in which there is signal recognition of the family tie, no other on record comes to our hearts with an impulse always so fresh and so powerful, as the simple covenant with Noah.

This covenant was peculiar in its matter and its application, but none can doubt that it was exemplary in its family principle and form. "With thee will I establish my covenant and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy son's wives with thee." This solemn and specific pledge of salvation from the flood embraced the entire family of Noah with himself. It must be remembered that this salvation of Noah was by faith, and that the covenant proceeded on gospel principles, although it did not confer the gospel salvation. It secured favour to Noah as a man of faith, Heb. xi. 7, and through the then unrevealed merits of that Redeemer by whom all the righteous have their salvation. We lay admiring stress on this feature of the covenant with Noah. While made with reference to *his* faith alone, and addressed only to him, its provisions contemplated others besides himself; and the grounds on which those others partook of its benefits was their family relation to a man of faith. Who can read the language of that covenant without perceiving that the extension of the promise was in kindness to Noah himself; to double the joy of his own salvation by the salvation of all who were joined to him in the family ties, and whose welfare might be taken as a part of the gracious reward of his own faith.

We must distinctly observe the relation through which the family of Noah reached a share in his covenant blessing. It was not the sole relation of blood kindred; though that was the chief and fundamental element. His sons were, indeed, of his family; but there were also his wife and his sons' wives, all of whom belonged to the family of which he was the head. His brothers and sisters were not included. Though kindred by blood, they were not of his household. His father was alive, and at the head of his patriarchate when the covenant was made; and remained alive a hundred and fifteen years after the ark is supposed to have been begun. Had the covenant been made with Lamech, it would have taken in the brothers and sisters of Noah. But it was made with Noah, and had no collateral application. The only persons embraced in these gracious provisions of salvation from the flood, were those who could properly be called the family of Noah.

There is an interesting sense in which Noah held, in this transaction, the relation of a representative of his household.

It was not, indeed, by their choice, but by nature; by the tacit appointment of God. It was a peculiar sort of representation. The father represented not the opinions, the wishes, the righteousness, the claims, of his family, but their interests solely as blended with his own. There was, doubtless, on their part, an assent to his views and purposes, as there was obedience to his direction; and this assent and obedience were interwoven with the process of their salvation. But the ground of extending the covenant to them was the righteousness of their father; of which their assent and obedience to him were a natural fruit and proof. The father was righteous, not for himself alone but for his family with him. His wife, his sons and their wives are treated as one with himself. He stands in the covenant not as an individual, but as the head of a household; to the welfare of which, as well as to his own, his righteousness bears, through the grace of God, a vital relation.

This family dispensation, with various degrees of speciality appears in all the inspired history of grace to man. With Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the hereditary right of covenant privilege clave to the family, and pervaded the family, with only such exceptions as were expressly taken. Exceptions were made in the families of Abraham, and Isaac; but they were contrary to the rule on which those patriarchs had been expressly taught to form their general expectations of divine favour; and are noted in the sacred history as extraordinary sovereign deviations from an established law, to accomplish a special divine purpose. But from Jacob downward, the families were taken whole. The privileges and obligations of the covenant passed through the head to all the members. The very heathen were reached by the beneficent law. The accession of a gentile householder to the Hebrew church inserted the family, as a single branch, into the good olive; and the circumcision of the father and head was a warrant for placing the seal of the covenant on every male belonging to him. Thus the perpetuity and enlargement of the church was established upon the household tie; and an all-sufficient reason for a person's receiving covenant benefits was his belonging to the family of a church member. Such a person was no more an alien from the commonwealth of Israel and a stranger to the covenants of promise, unless for scandalous behaviour, he was cut off from his people.

Through all the intervening ages of the first form of the covenant where the forms of the administration, and even the benefits were so largely outward and carnal, we pass to the point of transition from the Old to the New. And first of all, we hear an evangelical Jew, familiar with the ancient way of calling people by families, and with the history of Noah which he afterwards quotes in an epistle, full himself of the Holy Ghost, declaring to a concourse of Jews, that the promise of the Holy Ghost is to them and their children. The promise is to you (Jews) and to your children; and to them that are afar off (Gentiles) and to their children, (for so the ellipsis is filled) even to as many as the Lord our God shall call. As Noah and Abraham had promises to them and their children, so ye who are now called, and who "believe and are baptized" have the promise of the Holy Ghost to you and to your children. This brilliant light was given out at the point where the heavenly principle of the family covenant passed from the Old dispensation into the New. That principle thus comes down the continued line of divine favour to sinners; and reveals itself through the official acts of the apostles, as at Philippi and Corinth in the actual baptism of households.

We now rejoin our author in tracing some of the energetic motions of this principle, through the laws of human nature, towards the establishment of family worship. "While all the church of God (p. 12) was in the ark, the worship was plainly Family Worship; and after the subsiding of the waters, when 'Noah builded an altar unto the Lord,' it was a family sacrifice that he offered." Family Worship in the ark! And there, it must have revealed the true family principle in which the practice originated. "There is an irresistible impulse," says Dr. Alexander, as quoted before, "to pray for those whom we love, and not only to pray for them, but with them. There is a natural as well as gracious prompting to pray with those who are near to us." And what a nearness is that between covenant-trusting Noah and his covenant-privileged household. The holy man "liveth not unto himself." All those around him have their life in his. With the blended airs of conscious security in God, of patriarchal dignity, and fatherly love, he walks, at the head of his natural group, into the ark; and when "the Lord has shut him in," and while the wall of his ark is the partition between

death without, and life within, he feels the "natural as well as gracious prompting to pray for those who are near to him." Nature had placed his family with him in common affairs, and the covenant takes him and them together, for its special purposes, as by the same incorporating law of divine beneficence. "Thee only have I found righteous, therefore, come thou and thy household into the ark." Here appears, in its full strength, the trustful and joyful recognition of the family covenant; a powerful principle, first to prompt all genuine family worship, and then to pervade it. When Noah calls his household to a devout and grateful celebration of the covenant mercies of the Lord, he doubtless finds them ready to join him with, at least, a sympathetic devotion.

In thus expanding the interesting hints of the author on this point, we reach the conclusion, that wherever the scriptural view of the family covenant is fairly taken, it is eminent amongst the natural sources of family devotion. It is certainly agreeable, if it be not incumbent, to associate all the Christian practices and privileges of the household with that same covenant foundation, on which family baptism, the beginning of what is properly household religion, is always upheld.

With this covenant clue it would be instructive to trace the philosophy of the history of family worship. The worship and the covenant have usually shown a natural affinity for each other. We will not stop here to verify our impressions by a fresh collection of particular facts; for we are not aiming at scholastic precision, but we have the prevailing impression that the recognition of the family covenant has usually accompanied true and long continued family devotion. Its tendency to promote domestic religion will be doubted by none. The days of Scottish household piety, so justly eulogized by the author, were eminently days when the family covenant was remembered and duly celebrated.

The beautiful illustrations of the influence of family worship on individual piety, given in the second chapter, will answer to the experience of all who have long been faithful in domestic devotion. And they will command the assent of thousands who have neglected it. Although piety in the heart "is best promoted in the secrecy of the closet, yet it must not, it cannot abide in the closet or the heart; but will be like 'the ointment of the right

hand which bewrayeth itself;’ like the alabaster box of ointment that filleth all the house. ‘The electric current will pervade all whose hands are joined in the domestic circle.’ Then by the aid of family worship, in bringing a daily or a semi-daily occasion of serious reflection, in placing the head of the household under a discipline peculiarly direct and effective; in furnishing a daily season of soothing relaxation for the laborious poor; in providing incitements intermediate between sacraments, sabbaths, and other periodical holy occasions, and making religion a matter of every day interest; in making the religious improvement of the head of the family avail the members; and in adding so much to all the other institutions of religion, it cannot fail, that where the exercise is conducted “in a due manner, as if we were going to the very feet of Christ,” a powerful influence will be exerted “to awaken, edify and comfort the individual soul.”

The third chapter treats of the influence of family worship on parents. ‘The first sentence indicates the superior importance of this part of the subject. “In order to educate the children of a land, we must first educate the parents; and if an institution were demanded for this special purpose, it would be impossible to find one comparable to family worship.” The reader feels no deficiency in the treatment of this part of the subject. “No man (p. 44) can approach the duty of leading his household in an act of devotion, without solemn reflection on the place which he occupies in regard to them. He is their head. He is such by a divine and unalterable constitution. . . . There is something more than mere precedence in age, knowledge or substance. He is the father and the master. No act of his, and nothing in his character, can fail to leave a mark on those around him. This he will be apt to feel when he calls them about him to pray to God; and the more devoutly he addresses himself to the work the more will he feel it.” Such is doubtless the natural tendency of the due performance of this duty. But to how many does it seem a drudgery; a submission to obligation; a subjection to responsibility from which the man would gladly be released. There is no attendant consciousness of dignity to render the responsibility agreeable. The thought of being the head of such a group of worshippers, would elevate the soul. The sense of responsibility for their spiritual privileges, is a powerful incitement. To regard oneself as the “divinely ap-

pointed head-spring of religious influence to his household" is most engaging to a reflecting parent. It suggests solemn thoughts to hold the office of an "intercessor for his house."

As subsidiary to all these tendencies, we will here add, there arises an awakening view from the doctrine of the covenant. The head of the household can derive the dignity, the solemnity, the official eminence of his station, from the fact that he alone of the family is party to the covenant between his house and God. There may be pious persons in his family who could read and expound scriptures, as well as himself, who could offer as fervent and acceptable prayer, and shed the light of as bright an example upon the household circle. But there is no other in the house to whom it is said with reference to the whole family: "With thee will I establish my covenant; come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I found righteous." "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as *he* is a son of Abraham." No other in the house can say, As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. What an element of dignity is this! To be thus the plenipotentiary of the house; to treat and be treated with concerning the spiritual and everlasting welfare of the whole household. If the natural minister of the household neglect their affairs, the members may act for themselves; and the Lord will condescend as graciously to the case of each directly, as if the parental mediation were duly fulfilled. And each one always *does* hold direct intercourse with God, according to his knowledge and other qualifications. But the parental ministry is a help to these personal offices, and always precedes them in the order of nature. And what an honour from God is conferred on the head of the family, so empowered that all the rest, under certain conditions, negotiate through him.

The influence of family worship on children is traced by the author in its effects on the habits, the fraternal and filial affections, and the obedience of the children, in the good order of the household, in the devotional practices of the children, in their increased attachment to home and in the spiritual benefit they receive. "In many instances, (p. 61) we may suppose the first believing prayers of the Christian youth ascend from the fire-side. Slight impressions otherwise transient are thus fixed, and infant aspirations are carried up with the volume of domestic

incense. It is not too much to say that in this way family worship becomes the means of everlasting salvation to multitudes."

The family covenant here offers itself again so attractively that with the suggestions of our author before us, we cannot divorce it from our thoughts. "Nowhere (p. 63) is the Christian father so venerable as when he leads his house in prayer. The tenderness of love is hallowed by the sanctity of reverence. A chastened awe is thrown about the familiar form, and parental dignity assumes a new and sacred aspect. There is surely nothing unnatural in the supposition, that a froward child shall find it less easy to rebel against the rule of one whom he daily contemplates in an act of devotion."

Nothing, surely. And especially if in connection with these acts of devotion, there is felt, by the intelligent minds of the family, the natural power of the doctrine of the household covenant. Though the conception of this as a doctrine of theology be not indispensable to a participation in many of the promised benefits; yet the zest it must diffuse through the family devotion, the sacredness it must add to the spiritual relation of the members to the head, and the solemn aspect it must give the household state, will vastly invigorate the domestic bonds and exercises, as means of religious improvement. "Honour thy father and thy mother." And what children must not honour a father, in whose hands they see, for the time, the title and deed of their everlasting inheritance; or a mother, whose more retiring, but not less valid claim, draws with his upon the covenant deposit in behalf of the common offspring. "Children obey your parents in the Lord." And what children will not yield pious obedience to the parents, from whose lips they daily hear the special pleadings of the gracious covenant in their behalf; by whom they are daily led in the thankful celebration of benefits already received; and by whose faith and prayer, they have the incitements of faith and the nurture of hope in exceeding great and precious promises? What children can slight the Christian commands of parents by whose hands they have been led into the ark, for whose sake they are kept in it, and by whose hold on the covenant of promise they are saved from sinking in the flood?

Here, as it seems to us, is the corner-stone in the foundation

of parental control. Not only does it sustain the parental authority in its prerogative of moulding the entire character of the child, but partakes most efficiently in the process. The family of Noah is an example. It matters little as to practice whether we take the mutual fidelity of parents and children as a condition or as a consequence of the covenant promise; and it may be difficult to show of which character it most partakes. But it undeniably belongs in some way with the fulfilment of the promise. And in Noah and his family we have both the control on the one hand and the submission on the other. By means of his authority and instruction, his children agreed in their views of truth and duty with him, and not with the rest of the world. They assented to their father's faith in relation to the flood; and as God warned him, and he believed God, so he warned them, and they believed him. He was not so fearful lest his children should not be free and rational in adopting their opinions, that he dare not teach them his own; but, sure that opinions which were safe for himself would be safe for them, he did not hesitate to instil his doctrines into their minds.

Shall children be taught truth no faster than they can comprehend the evidences of it? Shall children have no fixed impressions of God, till they can form a conclusive argument for his being and attributes? And is there no religious truth sufficiently fixed and certain for a child to receive and act upon under a parent's direction? The Bible presumes that there is. The laws of nature, which dictate the parental relations and duties presume that there is; and these all bind the parent to find out truth for his children, and teach it diligently to them. The parent can teach with authority; and he is the only human teacher who can; and if by skill in government and in guiding early thought, he can succeed in forming the opinions of his children according to his own pleasure, he not only exercises his own right, but fulfils an unquestionable duty. He must command in the proper way, the religious opinions of his children. He is the first judge of their duty. To facilitate this parental prerogative, the children are cast, at birth, upon his care. They have, at first, no more of opinion or of knowledge, except what they receive from him, than they have of property or liberty. At this age of impressions, the children are under a parental power almost absolute. No power of one finite mind over

another can be more complete. Such command of the parent over the opinions and conduct of his children makes it altogether reasonable to hold him as accountable for their early faith and practice as for his own. And if in their early faith and practice they are properly established and trained, when they are old they will not depart from them. The family of Noah, in the maturity of their life, honoured their father's faith, and followed his direction. During those long hundred and twenty years, while their father was spending his time and substance, on that immense ark, while all the changes of nature went quietly on, and all things remained as they had been from the foundation of the world, his family clave to his interest and shared in his reproach; and amidst the scoffs of an ungodly generation, they all followed him into the ark under as bright a sun as ever shone. Alas, for those children whose parents have no word of God for them; no covenant favour to plead for them; no pious faith to commend to them; and no hold upon their religious nature by which to establish them in practices of domestic religion, and offer them daily unto God, with their own consent, as a reasonable service.

The fifth chapter of our author is the outflowing of a lively and intelligent Christian philanthropy towards those members of the household, who according to "a different and more old fashioned school," pass under the name of servants. We do not take the remarks on p. 71 as an oblique lamentation over the progress of public sentiment against slavery; although (pp. 74, 75) the author from "having been born and having lived and laboured among slaves, feels impelled to utter thoughts which will meet a response in the hearts of brethren at the south;" and although, for the same reasons, he may be supposed, as well to regard slavery in the concrete as to reason about it in the abstract, with more lenity, and even apparent complacency, than those can do who never felt the peculiar, and possibly the noble and holy attachment between a kind master and a faithful slave. The truth is the "thoughts" of Dr. Alexander on this subject will "meet a response in the hearts of brethren" as well in the north as in the south. We are sorry if anywhere in the land, there are thinking and honest people who cannot see that such "thoughts" indicate the true way both to hasten the abolition of slavery, and to make it a blessing when it comes.

But to take the hints of our author in their permanent bearings. The religious instruction of domestics, even in those families where the children are conscientiously trained is greatly neglected. The failure, in religious and well ordered families, chiefly originates in the transient connexion of the domestics with the family; and how and when this hindrance to their improvement is to be removed, does not now appear from any providential indications. The condition of the better families of the land in regard to "help," were it for the foreigners who seek such place, gives no very hopeful view of the tendency of these matters under our civil institutions, our social theories and habits, and the industrial system of our country. With an "area of freedom" indefinitely expansible to accommodate independence and foster the disposition to hold "service" in disrepute; with a system of productive industry captivating by its magnificence, lucrative beyond the domestic rates, and threatening for years to want all the "hands" it can get; with a levelling tendency inherent in our political life, and with maxims and measures of universal culture which will long be temptations to confound equality of natural worthiness with equality of external conditions, we seem about to meet the alternative of making equals of servants or serving ourselves.

But under whatever name or conditions any may fill the place of domestics, they constitute an interesting portion of the convocation for family worship; perhaps even none the less so, for being transient, and having an eye to other relations in life. In the spirit of Dr. Alexander's remarks we can testify, how large an addition to the interest of family worship we have witnessed in households where domestics in considerable numbers were in punctual and solemn attendance. Beyond any other domestic occurrence, it embraces them in the circle of family sympathy. It carries to them whatever of organic circulation or of covenant influence, their relation to the household may qualify them to receive. The rich and suggestive remarks of our author concerning the welfare of servants, the bond and the free, and the various methods of doing them good in family worship, are worthy of the Christian minister who has so honourably associated his name, both in the south and the north, with personal labours for the religious benefit of that class of people.

The chapters on family worship as a means of intellectual

improvement, and of promoting domestic harmony and love, the admirable chapter on the benefits of family worship to a household in affliction, the two on its influence upon guests and neighbours, and in perpetuating sound doctrine; full of graceful, luminous, and moving hints, we cannot dwell upon in detail.

The next three chapters beginning with the eleventh, exhibit the influence of family worship on the Church, the Commonwealth, and Posterity. Here we approach the triune receptacle and reservoir of the benefits granted as individual and family mercies. In these is collected from countless fountains, an ocean fulness to be distributed again in shadowy and cooling vapours, in brightening dews, and in the early and the latter rains, in a ceaseless and life-giving circulation. It accommodated the purpose of the author to distribute his thoughts under the three heads of these chapters; it accommodates ours to blend them.

It is a consideration of signal value to Dr. Alexander in giving his "thoughts" on this subject, and to us in expatiating on them, that the church, the commonwealth and posterity have their being in the family. Not only was the domestic organization first in the order of time but also first in the order of nature. Rather the first family is itself both church and state; and so it remains until another family rises out of it. Thus the natural commonwealth grows not by accretion, but by development through organization; enlargement by the law of an inward life. The family properties come into church and state, not by absorption from without; not by external application in the way of impulse or example, but by diffidence through the channels of vital circulation.

We discover here the economic reason why the covenant should have its gracious application to the family. It is dispensing grace through providential channels; rearing on the roots of nature, by the superadded agency of grace, a spiritual seed. Where else should the promise, and the grace itself, be applied? "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt." And when thus inserted by a divine skill, why should not the heavenly principle pervade the system? Why should it not impart strength to the stem, expansion and verdure to the leaf, tints and fragrance to the flower, and richness to the fruit. If we fail to discern this feature of the wisdom of God, we are liable to hinder the

work of his grace. Is it not to preclude such hindrance, that he says so much in the scriptures about his covenant with parents and their children, brings people into the church by families, calls children holy from the faith of parents, and requires them, as his, to be brought up in his nurture and admonition. "God determines (p. 178) that his great favours shall descend from age to age. The promise is to you and to your children. From the beginning of the world he has dealt with mankind upon the family principle. Every covenant has comprised succeeding generations. The federal and representative element, variously modified, is in every system from Edèn to Pentecost. It is breathed in the first promise, it beams in the bow of Ararat, it fills the starry page of Abraham, it is uttered through the fires of Sinai, it is inscribed on the bloody lintel of Egypt, it flows in the household baptism of the New Testament. . . . The 'word of this life' is not a cistern, but a fountain; it flows from father to child."

The Christian, whose dogmatical predilections blind him to such views as these, seems to us to suffer a great privation. It appears to us a theological obliquity, which, by some unravelled filament of personal accountability, or believers' baptism leads any Christian minds to pass by the everlasting covenant on the other side. We reprove ourselves and our brethren for the inconsistency and dimness with which the bow of this covenant stands before our eyes. It spans the territory of the church; and not until its reflection of heavenly love shall meet the eyes of all our families, will the people of Christ know "what is the hope of his calling."

Our author presents the church and commonwealth under that part of the influence of family worship which consists of prayer; and then follows prayer in its effects only through "*its answer in heaven.*" We contemplate a moment some of the natural forms, so to call them, in which its answers are bestowed.

Take, then, the family accustomed to the daily worship of God, and formed, in their dispositions and habits, under its power. If that worship be conducted, in some good degree, according to the true spirit of the institution, it nourishes directly in the head of the family, the spirit which adorns and blesses the church and the state. The yearnings of a father and a mother for the welfare of the church in their house are the natural germ of

solicitude for all the church of God. Such a family is an ornament and a support of the sanctuary. A church of such families would be a glorious branch of the church. Let the reports to our General Assembly, for a single year, embrace such a fact as this, that every family of the church has become a family of prayer, and that the head of each is leading his household in morning and evening devotion, and those reports need not embrace anything else. All other things pertaining to the prosperity of religion would follow from that. The countenances of pastors would brighten with joy. Zion would seem to have arisen from the dust and put on her beautiful garments. She would know herself from the world. The world would know itself from her. The heads of such families are the men from whom to choose the rulers and guides of the church. They are the men to act in church and state; to judge of the business proper to be done, and of the proper way of doing it, in matters to which their intelligence extends. They are the men whose views of the true character of the church and commonwealth, and of the value of civil and religious privileges, have been not the fruit of speculation, or of verbal instruction, but the fruit of pious devotion in the circle of their domestic love and care.

The children of such families are the earthly hope of the church. They drink at the fountain of church life. They come to maturity with church principles inbred. They have been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The mantle of the fathers falls on them; and as those fathers pass away, the sons, with hardly a sense of the transition, receive the ark of the covenant upon their shoulders, and bear it down through another generation. How many and luminous facts we have to suggest this covenant law of grace, we hardly stop to consider. Where are the inductive philosophers of the church? If our hearts are too froward to take the covenant of God by faith, let us look for the proofs of its power in facts. How does history teach us that "the word of God (p. 180) has been carried abroad from land to land and brought down to us. . . . Take the darkest view; there is scarcely a Christian family in a thousand of those who daily worship God, in which one member does not maintain the succession; while there are thousands in which every member is a visible believer." Who besides the children of the church of the past generation, with few exceptions, actu-

ally constitute the church of the present? How many are the adult baptisms in our annual statistical tables, compared with the annual admissions to communion? And has the covenant no force? All this fruit, moreover, from such careless and thriftless husbandry; from seed sown by the wayside, on stony places, and among thorns; in an age when, as the preface of our author justly says, "the world has especially invaded the household;" when "the church cannot compare with that of the seventeenth century," for domestic religion; when "many heads of families and some ruling elders and deacons, maintain no stated worship of God in their dwellings." And has the covenant no force?

What may we not expect from the faithful word of promise, if we do but adapt our practice to this law of the dispensation of grace? If it were true that we sowed much in this field and brought in little, we should still not lack proof of the faithfulness of God. How much more when over a harvest of almost spontaneous growth, we have to repent that we sowed so little. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, till there shall not be room enough to receive it." The lack of covenant fruits in their abundance is through mere want of conformity on our part with the outward conditions of the economy of grace. Here is our lamentable defect. Hence many a merciful beginning which is made by the spirit in the souls of our children, is left unimproved, and consequently remains unknown to the church, to the parents, and to the children themselves; until, after a youth of carelessness and a manhood of estrangement from the visible church, the latent life is taken, with its dwarfed capacities, to its everlasting state.

We commend the closing chapters on the *manner* of family worship, to our Christian people, as full of excellent counsel. Especially would we invite attention to the remarks on psalmody as a part of family worship. The great interest which children of a very tender age are capable of sustaining in that most delightful and edifying exercise, above what they naturally feel in any other part of the service, should make the household diligent in preparing to maintain it. But the first effort should be to establish the practice of daily worship in any form in those families where it is now neglected. The circumstances and the capacities of the family and especially of the head, will usually

suggest the most edifying form. Even the reading of the scriptures alone morning and evening in the family, solemnly called together for that purpose, would not be unavailing; nor after such a beginning, would prayer, and where practicable, psalmody, be long neglected.

There are auspicious signs in the movement of the mind of the church on this subject. We trust the Holy Spirit is in the movement. He evidently calls for a nearer conformity of our thoughts to the methods of his own work. The hope of such improvement is encouraged by several facts. That simultaneous impulses in the same direction come from different quarters of the church; that high and strong ground is so firmly taken, and that a pious purpose is so fully declared of pressing the truth respecting family religion and salvation on the conscience of the church, are indications of what we will call the family revival. It is now a time of interesting suspense. We are looking for good to Zion. The sects of the church are turning their eyes expressively on one another. We are inquiring for the old paths. The foundations of the church are presented to be explored anew. The principles of unity, the nature of faith, the laws of church growth, and the distinguishing properties of the church itself, are coming up in spirited review. It is a healthful, a delightful process; and such works as the one now before us, so timely, instructive and attractive, will contribute to render it a permanent blessing.

JAN
ART. V.—*A Commentary on the Book of Leviticus, Expository and Practical, with Critical Notes.* By the Rev. Andrew A. Bonar, Collace; Author of *Memoirs of Rev. Robert McCheyne*, *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews, etc. etc.* London. 1846. 8vo. pp. 500.

THE central mass, both of the history and antiquities of the Old Testament, is the Mosaic Legislation. Its relative importance may be fairly stated thus. The only way in which the parts of the Old Testament can be brought into agreement, so as