

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

HOME RULE—PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

Tacitus says of Agricola that "he governed his family, which many find to be a harder task than to govern a province." Government in justice and kindness, through affection and respect, rather than by the display of strength and exercise of authority, was what the sententious historian had in mind. It is easy enough to govern a family as some states are governed. In these the slaves of one generation are the tyrants of the next. To rule a family as Agricola ruled his, the first essential is to understand those with whom we deal. There is little hope that the husband and father will fulfil the duties arising from his domestic relations when he is ignorant of the feelings, however familiar he may be with the countenances, of those around him.

Arthur Helps in one of his essays remarks that the extent and power of domestic rule are very great, but this is often overlooked by the persons who possess it, and "they are rather apt to underrate the influence of their own authority." There is certainly little occasion for knowing much about the nature of those whom you intend only to restrain. Coercion, however, is but a small part of government. We should always, therefore, be most anxious to avoid provoking the rebel spirit of the will in those who are intrusted to our guidance. We should not attempt to tie them up to their duties like galley slaves to their labour. We should be very careful that, in our anxiety to get the outward part of our action performed to our mind, we do not destroy that germ of spontaneity which could alone give any significance to the action. "We may insist upon a routine of proprieties being performed with soldier-like precision, but there is no drilling of men's hearts." Still less is there any such drilling of the hearts of children.

True domestic rule, the rule of the home, not of the hulks or the reformatory, is founded upon truth and love. If it has not both of these, it is nothing better than a despotism. It requires the perpetual exercise of love in its most extended form. You must learn the dispositions of those under you, and teach them to understand yours. In order to do this you must sympathise with them; for upon your sympathy will often depend their truthfulness. Thus, you must persuade a child to place confidence in you, if you wish to form an open and upright character. You cannot terrify it into habits of truth. On the contrary, its earliest falsehoods are oftener caused by fear than by a wish to obtain its little ends by deceit. The child is conscious of wrong, without knowing in what the wrong consists. Show the child that you sympathise with it, and that it is not an outcast because it has erred, and the foundation will be laid of a confidence that will last through life, and will be more and more of a shield and buckler as the child grows in years and understanding.

Of course his own example must be the chief means in any man's power, by which he can illustrate and enforce those duties which he seeks to impress upon his household. Next to this, praise and blame are among the strongest means which he possesses; and they should not depend on his humour. A bit of praise will not make up for a previous display of anger not warranted by the occasion. Children are close observers. They notice inconsistency and contradiction as quickly as grown people do, brooding solemnly over the mysterious moral arithmetic which makes two and two a varying and most uncertain quantity. A child oftentimes forgets that it should not do a particular thing; but it rarely ever fails to observe the contradiction when what is sharply rebuked to-day goes unhidden on the morrow. Ridicule, in particular, is in general to be avoided. It is too strong a remedy. Especially is it important to avoid directing ridicule against that which is good in itself, or which may be the beginning of goodness. To any attempt at amendment we should be very kind. "An idle sneer, or a look of incredulity, has been the death of many a good resolve."

Mr. Helps suggests some general maxims which may be of service to any one in domestic authority. The first is to make as few crimes as he can, and not to lay down those rules of practice which, from a careful observation of their consequences, he has ascertained to be salutary, as if they were so many innate truths, which all persons alike must at once, and fully,

comprehend. Let him not attempt to regulate other people's pleasures by his own tastes. In commanding, it will not always be superfluous for him to reflect whether the thing commanded is possible. In punishing he should not consult his anger, nor in remitting punishment his ease. Let him consider whether any part of what he is inclined to call disobedience may have resulted from an insufficient expression of his own wishes. He should be inclined to trust largely. To these there is one maxim to add: Be heedful in promising, but keep the promise to the letter, whatever the inconvenience!

The cardinal error in dealing with children grows out of the unconsciously entertained idea that they have less insight and less reflectiveness than a brute beast. Their bodies are frail and their lips are sealed, but their souls have the maturity of immortality. Who has looked into the depths of the wondering eyes of a little child, and has not asked himself whether it is not possible that the clearness of vision which is said to come with approaching death is possessed by those who stand on the threshold of life? May it not be that, in these little ones, the immortal part is strong as the flesh is weak? They hear more than we think they hear. They see when we know it not. Watch them through the months and years, mark the readiness with which they take advantage of our weakness and play upon our affections. Who taught them these things? It is more important, therefore, to be amiable, courteous, and generous before children than before men and women. These will make excuses and allowances, where children make none. Above all else, save the children from the agony of feeling that they are misunderstood. Who does not remember the miseries of little David Copperfield, when, placarded as a boy who bites, he is made the jest and butt of the school? Children strive to do what is right more frequently than we think. When they take their first tottering steps, how eager are we to cheer and support them. What child was taught that it was a sin to fall in its earliest journeying from its tiny chair to mother's arms! Shall we be less considerate when it is treading, for the first time, the paths of submission and obedience! It is easy enough to rule our homes in gentleness and peace, if we but give to the government of our children a little of the thought we give to matters of less moment. Then will they advance in goodness as in knowledge, trusting those around them, honouring them and loving them, so to remain until they who are now children shall have children of their own, and repeat, as teachers, the sweet lessons they have learned. In this wise, the good that is done by those who rule worthily lives after them from generation to generation.

VISITATION OF THE SICK.

Of the spiritual preparation needed in order to be a son or daughter of consolation I will not now speak. There are, however, a few practical points which a missionary, Bible reader, or pastor, often overlooks.

1. Quietness of movement and voice. You do not know how much the sick are annoyed by heavy steps, slamming of doors, and loud speech. Said an octogenarian to me, "I prefer your visits to those of my pastor, for he prays so loud." But if there is anything worse than noise, it is whispering. The nervous suffer more from this in the sick-room than from rudeness in other forms.

2. Cheerfulness. Incidents by the hour could be related of physicians of body and soul whose sunny natures were their best medicines. The writer unwittingly used to carry an anxious face into the pulpit. The remark of his deacon about the pleasant expression of countenance which a neighbouring pastor wore when he preached was a delicate hint and never forgotten. So at the bedside, even of the dying, sobriety and cheerfulness may be combined, not only in the glance of the eye and intonation of voice, but in the modes of conveying one's thoughts.

3. Truthfulness. Some affirm that it is right to deceive both the sick and their friends, because it is feared that neither can bear the truth. It is both cruel and wicked to encourage false hopes of any kind. It is right to say with a smile that we hope or pray that we shall see the sufferer better next time, or give some such evasive answer to them. It may not be wrong in delirium to play a little with the harmless fancies of the insane, but this is no real exception. A New York actor was recently pronounced "sound as a nut" by a physician. In a few minutes he was a corpse,

the result of deep ulceration of the lungs. A hoarse laugh at the table was the immediate occasion. A lady in this city made a similar remark in regard to the diagnosis of her family physician in reference to a daughter just before death, when he must have known the truth.

4. Remember little things which relate to your own safety and the comfort of the sick.

(a) Leave your outer garments, if possible, in another room. "A bushel of cold" comes sometimes with a sudden approach from outside air to the sensitive person of the invalid. In contagious diseases, fumigation of clothing is needed before returning to one's family. A friend has just buried his wife with diphtheria, having neglected care in this matter.

(b) Don't give an icy hand to the sick. If your hand is ungloved or cold, warm it before slaking—no, never "shake" anybody's hand, sick or well—before taking another's hand in your grasp.

(c) Don't kiss those sick with fevers or dangerous diseases, specially on the lips. The daughter of Her Majesty Queen Victoria paid her life for such a kiss. If a mother or wife will kiss their sick companion or child, press the brow or hand, and avoid inhaling the breath, or swallowing afterwards without expectoration. Still more objectionable is it to caress or kiss the corpse.

(d) Some medical men advise visitors to the sick to sit elsewhere than between the fire and the bedside, where the effluvia naturally would pass in the draft.

(e) Sit facing the sick when communicating with them. Thoughtless visitors sometimes take a chair at the head of the couch. The sufferer twists his neck to get a sight, when by reversing the chair the parties are *vis-a-vis*. These are little things, but not unimportant, as many years' observation in hospital and sick-room proves.

(f) Visiting when one is fasting is not wise. Disease is more readily caught when one's stomach is empty.

Other hints will follow. Meanwhile forget not what Fredrika Bremer says: "Sickness is not always an evil, but often a good—a healing balsam, under whose benign influence the soul rests after its hard struggles and its wild storms are still! When at last we arise with exhausted strength from the sick bed our souls often awake as out of a long night into a new morning. So many things conspire to soften the feelings—the still room, the mild twilight through the window curtains, the low voices, and more than all, the kind words of those who surround us, their attention, their solicitude, perhaps a tear in their eyes,—all this does us good—essential good."—E. P. T., in "The Christian."

THE RIVER OF LIFE.

We are taught in the Nicene Creed that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. If we turn to the sacred Scriptures we will find this article of the Christian faith abundantly verified. The very office of the Holy Ghost in the work of our salvation indicates this cardinal truth. He applies the saving work of Christ to men. Of Him we must be born again, in order to be made partakers of the divine nature, and be saved from the corruption of our fallen nature. He is therefore "the Lord, the Giver of life," as the creed also affirms; and He preserves those who in the new birth are united to Christ in that life which they have in common with their divine human Head. It is His office to unite the heavenly and earthly elements which constitute our renewed nature; hence, He makes effectual the visible means which Christ appointed for our advancement in the Christian virtues and graces, and prepares us for the heavenly state. He is the Life, Light and Power of the Word and Sacraments, and without His presence in them they would be lifeless and useless.

In Rev. v. 6 the Holy Ghost is represented by the seven eyes of the slain Lamb, called the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the world to bear the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ to the souls of men; and in chap. xxii. 1, the cleansing and sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost and His life-giving energy are set forth under the symbol of a pure river of water proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb.

The truth that is here so beautifully symbolized, stands in necessary relation to the doctrine of the divine Trinity. The pure river of life flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. Father and Son are here declared to be the joint occupants of one