

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

HOLINESS ON A HARNESS

It is possible to consecrate even our pleasures unto God. And certainly our daily occupations may be followed in a spirit thoroughly dignified and devout. The solemn superstition of a heathen's fear is cast out by Christian love. It is likely, however, that a plain application of the ancient prophecy would make any ordinary housekeeper wonder, and compel any modern groom to laugh.

"In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts, and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them and seethe therein."

What! "Holiness to the Lord" engraved upon the harness of carriages, on the pots and kettles in the kitchen, this awful scrawl of words which the high-priest used to wear on his frontlet!

But where is the surprise? Is not human life the grandest and best thing there is on this planet? Why, do we not see at once that the full-rounded perfection of Christian character covers the little things as well as the large with the same sort of force? How expensive must a ring be before it will be worth nothing as a reminder of a friend, or a souvenir of some sweet hour of peace? Rather, we think, it is the small, fine, delicate symbols which are considered the most suggestive. These daily duties are what most show character and best manifest our attachment to Christ.

Pious old George Herbert told us long ago that the maid who swept a room for love of God "made that and the action fine." So, in our familiar hymn, it is

The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask;
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God."

It lifts all the drudgery of daily existence out of the reach of commonplace, just to keep saying—there is "holiness" on the harness, there is "holiness" on the shining surface of the kettle faithfully scoured. It ennobles man or woman in any station to keep saying: "This I do for Jesus' sake! I do my daily duties, just as I go up to communion, in remembrance of Him."

True piety can accomplish this, and never lose anything. For it has a Titanic force to deal with great, grave affairs; and it certainly possesses a gentle grace to touch on what are called trifles. I have somewhere read the comment of admiring surprise with which one of the strangers present in an exhibition looked upon a steam trip-hammer. He saw the giant crush into powder a mass of steel; one sudden blow stuck it into shattered splinters, and the hissing fragments flew as if an icicle had been hit by a child's mallet. And then he saw the workman lay a diamond brooch upon the anvil, and the ponderous weight came down as before; but it only touched the jewel at its topmost angle without bruising it and withdrew.

Why can not the Christian life do that? Why can not it combine delicacy with strength, and modify its force to its needs? Why can not a pure-hearted believer sing and shout, pray and play, with such constantly, filial affection, that all his life shall show his loyalty? Why can not a good man do everything he does do, just as he takes the bread at communion, "in remembrance" of the Lord Jesus Christ?—*Illustrated Christian Weekly*.

POPULAR PREACHING.

The term "popular preacher" has been so abused and degraded that what ought to be, and once was a title of high honour has become a severe reproach. It was to the populace especially that the preacher used to address himself with the most fruitful result, and he was best qualified to deliver the divine message who knew how to make it comprehensible and attractive to the common people. It was the popular preacher who converted nations, established churches, and kindled in corrupt ages the fire of reform. From the days of St. Paul to our own time the popular preacher has been the chief propagator of Christianity: Protestantism and Catholicism alike have recognized his special calling, and assigned him a peculiar place in the work of the Church.

But pulpit popularity has come to have a false meaning. The popular preacher now is not the one who stirs men's hearts, but the one who draws money. He is judged like an actor, by the receipts at the box-office. If the pews are taken at high prices, if the church can maintain itself in style and pay expenses, the minister is a good card; he can command a liberal salary, perhaps he can figure as a star, and make lucrative lecture engagements. Whether or not his congregation show any advance in spirituality under his exhortations, or his people learn to adorn their daily lives with simplicity and earnestness and truth, or the poor and unhappy find succour and comfort at his door, are questions which trouble the applauding public very little. They measure the popular clergyman's success by secular standards, and he is but too apt to accept their measure as a just one.

The type of preacher to which we refer is such a familiar one that it would be superfluous to mention any names. The degradation of the pulpit may be traced, we believe, to a degradation in the popular theory of a religious service. In the churches where sensational declamation prevails the idea of public worship has been almost abandoned. That used to be the primary object of the weekly assemblage, and the sermon was only an incident of the service. But gradually the devotional exercise has become subordinate to a sort of more or less pious entertainment, dependent for its effect entirely upon the talent and ingenuity of the minister. The result is unfortunate in more than one way. Men of ambition and a certain superficial smartness are attracted to the ministry without any real call or fitness for it. Conscientious pastors are sometimes driven to questionable devices to hold the vagrant attention of a curious and uneasy flock. The popular conception of the Christian life is slowly but surely lowered, and among outsiders respect for the Church is terribly impaired.—*N. Y. Tribune*.

THE HOUR OF PRAYER.

Lord, my heart is rested, strengthened,
By this quiet hour with Thee;
In the sunshine of Thy presence
All earth's shadows seem to flee.

And Thy peace, like music stealing,
Still all discord, tumult, strife,
Fills the heart with strange deep longings
For a nobler, sweeter life;

For more perfect self-surrender;
For a closer walk with Thee;
For a meek and quiet spirit
From all meaner aims set free.

All my care, my Lord, Thou knowest;
I can cast it all on Thee;
And with Thee I leave my dear ones;
Thou wilt keep them safe for me.

Lord, while still on earth a pilgrim,
I would in Thy fear abide;
Safely through life's shade and shining
Keep me ever at Thy side.

—*Annie S. Swan, in Christian Leader.*

IMMORTALITY.

The sublimest thought, in all human annals, is that of immortality. Under the benign influence of a guaranty of life, after death, the mind is expanded and elevated, and the shadows of dissolution flee away. Death ceases to be robed with terror. To every mortal comes the white-winged messenger of hope from the Beyond.

Down through all the ages has come the wistful, eager inquiry: What lies beyond the grave? Oblivion or another life, darkness or light? Is there in man a spirit that does not perish? Is there in the human breast a latent spark, placed there by a divine hand, that will kindle and glow after death? Is death an endless sleep, or merely the dark pathway that leads to immortality? Such queries as these confronted Plato, whose clear eye could not pierce the mystery. The wise men of all times have pondered over this subject, but their knowledge has ever been at fault where futurity is concerned. It has been the enigma of the ages. No voice came back from the gloom of death, no message from the hereafter, no words either of cheer or sorrow. In ages past, ere divine light and hope had dawned on the world, death seemed to be truly the end of all.

It is natural that man should hunger after immortality. He seldom finishes his work here, and his life, no matter how pure and good it may have been, is in-

complete. Death comes to most of us before we rightly see how to live. If our life here has been an unhappy one, we naturally hope for happiness in the life to come. If we have lost loved ones, what greater joy could we know than to meet them in heaven? Were there no hereafter, many of our purest desires would remain unsatisfied.

Our guaranty of immortality is a sure one. It comes from One whose wise words have shed light over the world for almost two thousand years. A representative of humanity, he is yet a God: He has tasted of death yet lives! He holds out to every human being the assurance of immortality, the greatest boon ever vouchsafed to mortals. No promise so sublime gladdened the ancient world, no hand swept aside for it the mystery of death, that the human mind might understand it. Inestimably precious is Christ's promise of eternal life.—*The Workman*.

CHASTISEMENT.

There is one other result which chastisement aims at producing in us—greater nearness to God, and so greater sweetness for heaven. As it is impossible to overstate the desire of God's heart that we would receive His love and walk in fellowship with Him, and consult Him in our difficulties and worship Him with our entire souls; so is it needful to confess, humbling and saddening as the confession must be, that few of us do this willingly or heartily or entirely, though, so far as we go, it may be deliberately and sincerely; we too often give self and the world as much as we can, Him as little. For, though we can trust God for our salvation, we distrust Him for our happiness. We look to Him to bless us in the world to come, we look elsewhere to be blessed in the present world. Health, money, friends, advancement, society, knowledge, business—these are the gods that we worship, on these we rely; and we do not discover that they are but broken cisterns which hold no water until God shatters them at a blow, and so we fall back on Him as our only abiding portion, in whom alone are the fresh springs of our life. Let us humbly confess that God desires us and we do not desire Him; He is ever turning towards us to bless us, and we—we are ever turning away. His hands are filled with gifts for which we hardly care. His heart is overflowing with love, which does not content or gladden us unless it flows in the channels we ourselves choose for it. Idolatry is still the characteristic sin of men; love of this present evil world has far more power over the best of us than we think it has; and with many of us it is only when health is impaired, or money is lost, or friends die, or occupation is suspended, that our eyes are fully opened to discern good from evil, and we made willing to say: "I will arise, and will go to my Father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." (Luke 15: 18)

OBJECTORS.

The people who are "opposed" to things are a social curiosity. At every turn they encounter something that does not please them, and then "I am opposed to it" is their protest and conscious release from all obligation and responsibility. It is a duty to be opposed to certain things; nobody can be in favour of everything. At the same time the chronic opposer is usually one who is either a constitutional fault-finder, or an insincere person who wishes to shirk his duty and thus cover up his delinquencies. If money is asked, he is opposed to something and cannot give it. If work is wanted, he is again relieved by his convenient protest. If friendship be solicited, or brotherly kindness, charity, union in some line of Christian effort, help for work at home or far away—anything, indeed, that requires the least outlay of money or strength, he has something to which he can put himself in opposition and then settle down in satisfied contentment and repose. He is like the stick fastened in the bank of a stream that refuses to break off, but "opposes" and frets the water and keeps up a gurgle as it hurries by, but has only a little transient foam to show for its influence. Above and below it there is the glad music, and the margins are as green and flowery as if it had no existence.—*United Presbyterian*.

THE Woman's Board of Foreign Missions of the American Presbyterian Church has under its care missionaries in India, Persia, Syria, Siam, and nearer home, in Mexico and Guatemala. From all these mission stations comes the cry for more helpers.