

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

AN ENEMY TURNED INTO A FRIEND.

During one of Luther's journeys, a noble knight, learning that he was to tarry at a certain place, and yearning for the honours and emoluments that would accrue could he be safely caught up and transported to Rome, resolved to hazard an attempt. He ordered his armed retinue to prepare hastily; for there was no time to be lost, the aspiring noble being urged and commanded to the task by his confessor, who assured him that he would be doing a good work, and would save many souls. He set out at early dawn, making his way along the picturesque *Berg-Strasse*, or mountain road, that skirts the forest of the Odenwald, between Darmstadt and Heidelberg. Arriving at the gate of Mühlentberg in the evening, he found the city illuminated and the town itself full of people, who had come thither to hear and see Luther.

More indignant than ever was the noble knight; indignation grew to rage when, arriving at his hotel, the host greeted him with—"Well, well, Sir Count, has Luther brought you here too? Pity you are too late. You should have heard him." In no mood for eulogy, the knight sought the privacy of his room. Awakened in the morning by the matin bell of the chapel, sleep had roused his ire, and his thoughts were at home, where he had left his infant daughter at the point of death. As he drew aside his curtain, he saw the flicker of a candle in the window opposite, and waiting a moment heard a deep, manly voice utter the words, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen." He heard the voice further continuing in a strong fervent petition for the whole Christian Church, and the victory of the holy Gospel over sin and the world.

Being a devout man, his interest was aroused, and donning his armour, he inquired of the landlord who that earnest man was that he heard across the street. "That earnest man," responded the landlord, "is the arch-heretic, Luther himself. Has your grace a message for him?" "Ay," said the knight, "but I will deliver it with my own lips," and with a dubious shake of the head he crossed the street, entered the house, and in a moment stood before the object of his search. Luther instinctively arose from his chair, surprised, and not a little disconcerted by the sudden appearance of a stalwart armed knight, perhaps having an unpleasant suspicion of his errand. "What is the object of this visit?" inquired Luther. Twice and thrice he repeated his question before receiving a reply. At length the knight, having recovered somewhat from the spell upon him, said, "Sir, you are far better than I. God forgive me for intending to harm you. I came here to make you a prisoner; you have made a prisoner of me instead. It is impossible for a man who can pray as you pray to be an enemy of the holy church, a heretic." "God be praised," said Luther, now relieved from his suspicions; "it is His word and Spirit that has subdued you, not mine, though I may be chosen to bring His word to honour in Christendom. Go now your way, therefore, in peace, my lord. He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it to Christ's coming. If it be God's will, you shall yet behold miracles; how the Lord will break many swords like yours, and cut the spear in sunder, as He has to-day."

Convinced and confirmed, the knight lost no time in making his way homeward, attended by his retinue, now still more curious to know the object of this hasty expedition. Arriving at the bedside of his daughter, he found her now convalescent and out of danger, and falling on his knees he thanked God for all that had happened. A few years later, when Luther confessed his faith before Charles V., among the assembled nobles who stood on Luther's side was this knight, who had once thought to overthrow and destroy him. —*Sword and Trowel.*

YOUR MINISTER.

Not in all things to your liking is he? And it would be so agreeable to you if he would leave off that habit of—what is it? Well, nothing of great importance, but he might be better than he is in some things. And when he went into the pulpit last Sunday, you wished he wouldn't look quite so solemn. And that way he has of gesturing with his right hand is a little awkward, don't you think? And then, for the life of you, you can't seem to take as much interest as you

ought in the sermon—it is a little commonplace and prosy. If he would only be a little more varied and lively now, just to stir you up and—

Don't go on any longer, dear hearer in the pew. You've said enough, and we know all about you. And now, if you will read just a little plain talk, we think it will do you good, and make your minister better too—in your opinion. Do you know what it costs to make a good sermon? One perhaps, but say eight in a month, as your pastor is expected to do? And then to make them for a year, two every week, and then for five or ten years! And he must have them all fresh. No old illustrations, no commonplace facts rehearsed, no plagiarizing. And when he goes up before you on Sunday he knows you are there, and he knows you are going to think him commonplace and dull. And he winces all over to think of you, because he knows that you care more about his gesturing and rhetoric than you do about the plain old Gospel that he tries to preach.

And when he reads in your face indifference or criticism, that helps to deaden his enthusiasm and takes the heart out of his work. He doesn't know it! O yes, he does. You show it in a thousand ways. You don't mean to be a faultfinder, but you are one. You don't mean to be cruel, but it is cruelty. Do you know that he sat up and worked on that sermon while you were asleep? Do you know that he went down on his knees in humiliation because he felt himself so inadequate to preach that great Gospel theme, remembering, perhaps, that you were to be there next day, and that he must look you in the face? He's a faithful man, and does his best. Brilliant? That isn't his commission. God sent him to preach the Gospel, and he has seen men converted under his preaching. But you, a Christian, a member of his church, whisper about gently that his sermons are not particularly brilliant. To be sure it's a small church. You can't pay much. You expect the minister to do a great deal outside of the pulpit. But he must be a brilliant preacher or he won't draw.

And you joined that church with a solemn vow to help him? Are you doing it? When did you ever let him know that you heard the good things in his sermon? And when he came down burning with his theme and hoping to get a word somewhere to show that his people had heard him, was it you who began whispering about secular matters to your neighbour in his hearing? Was it you who walked out of the church as cold as ice, as if the Gospel were a cold bath to you? While you are thinking over his shortcomings, why not think of your own a little too? Probably he has a great deal more reason to find fault with you than you with him, if the truth were told. Is it his duty to draw and fill up the church? Well, then, it is yours too. Do you think he can warm men up as fast as you freeze them out? How many strangers have you ever taken into your pew? How many have you invited to stay and be welcome among you? And do you think they are very likely to come if you keep giving out the impression that your minister isn't worth hearing?

No, dear Christian, your little unworthy criticisms indicate something wrong in yourself. You need to look within and see what the trouble is. Our word for it, your minister is a worthy and good, quite as good as you deserve, and he will be worth a great deal more to your church if you and the others begin to love him more and more. It is your church, and if it doesn't prosper, ten to one you are to blame. Get on the enthusiasm of love and the sermons will interest you, and then your minister will be just the right man. Try it.

MANNERS IN THE PEW.

Reverence for the sanctuary, as the place where we go to meet and worship God, should induce quiet and decorous behaviour while there. Most people would be intolerant of levity in God's house if they thought of the place and the purpose, and regarded them in the proper light. Even choirs, which—as everybody knows—often invite criticism by their frivolity, would be ashamed to look over their music in prayer-time, write notes to each other, or exchange glances and whisper audibly, if they remembered, each young gentleman and lady individually, that they were in the court of the King. It is forgetfulness of the day, of the place, and of the object, which induces presumptuous and irreverent demeanor in church on the Sabbath.

There is a matter of minor morals, which incites the present word of reminder—a sort of venial transgression, which good people commit without a notion of its being improper. The whole affair of manners in the pew is really on the same basis as that of manners in the household, in the drawing-room, or anywhere in society. Leaving the higher considerations wholly out of sight, we may observe good manners or the reverse in the pew, and praise or condemn them, precisely as we would in the parlour.

The noisy way in which many people put their hymn-books in the rack, at the conclusion of the hymn, is an offence against good taste. The sweet echoes of the song or Psalm have hardly died away, when presto! there is, as it were, a rattle of musketry all over the building. The innocent books go, slam-bang, into their places, as if they were projectiles which their owners were bound to throw as far as possible.

Taking out watches, and scanning them during the sermon, is another gross piece of rudeness. No one would dream of consulting a watch during the pastor's personal call at his home. It is equally unpardonable to manifest impatience of the pulpit, and indifference to the message spoken therefrom—regarding the impatience and indifference simply as a breach of courtesy.

Donning cloaks, furs, and overcoats during the Doxology and benediction, as some people do, is another infringement of propriety. The whole service demands the attention of the congregation; and, during its continuance, the edifice should not be turned into a dressing-room.

Making a frantic rush for the door, the instant the minister has pronounced the final Amen, is a bit of indiscretion but too frequently witnessed. One would suppose the building to be on fire, noticing the haste with which the occupants leave it. How much better a decent pause, a moment of silence, and then a restrained and unhurried movement through the hallowed aisles and out of the pleasant portals into the world outside.

Love for our special place of worship is as natural and as proper as love for our own homes. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning." The more dearly we cherish the house of prayer, the more chary let us be of doing aught that shall diminish our sense of its worthiness, and our feeling of the dignity of the service there performed. —*Christian Intelligence.*

SELFISHNESS UNCHRISTIAN.

Christ's ideal, Paul's ideal, the universal Christian ideal, absolutely contradicts this definition. What Jesus gives as the chief commandment, has passed into the conscience of Christendom. It is supreme love and service to God, and love and service of fellow-men as hearty as we give to ourselves. That is not Spencerism. Paul says: "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself;" but Spencer says the contrary. For our part, give us the old Christian philosophy, which recognizes selfishness, no matter how refined, as the condition of our sinful nature, which needs to be renewed by conversion. And that conversion is the rejection by the will of this principle that we are our own chief end, that labour is for relaxation, that working is for living, and the hearty acceptance of the great and holy principle of consecration, that we are not our own, and therefore we will glorify God in work or patience, with our bodies and our spirits, which are His. Living is for work; not selfish work, but helpful work, in imitation of Him who "pleased not Himself," but "went about doing good," and who has taught the world the unwilling lesson, which philosophers may also well learn of the Peasant who walked among the lilies of Galilee, that the sweetest bliss comes not to him who seeks it for himself, but to him who forgets himself in seeking the good of others. He that would save his life shall lose it; he that is willing to lose it shall save it.

WHOEVER makes light of matters which are intrinsically serious does violence to his own judgment, lowers his own dignity, and panders to a depraved and already far too popular taste.

THE capacity for following is quite as rare as the capacity for leadership, and many a pastor is to-day wearing out heart and life in the vain attempt to rouse an indifferent and parsimonious church to their duty.