

## Pastor and People.

### MOTHER'S HYMNS.

Hushed are those lips, their earthly song is ended;  
The singer sleeps at last;  
While I sit gazing at her arm-chair vacant,  
And think of days long past.

The room still echoes with the old-time music,  
As, singing soft and low,  
Those grand, sweet hymns, the Christian's consolation,  
She rocks her to and fro.

Some that can stir the heart like shouts of triumph  
Of loud-toned trumpet's call,  
Bidding the people prostrate fall before Him,  
And crown Him "Lord of all."

And tender notes, filled with melodious rapture,  
That leaned upon His word,  
Rose in those strains of solemn, deep affection,  
"I love Thy kingdom, Lord."

Safe hidden in the wondrous "Rock of Ages,"  
She bade farewell to fear;  
Sure that her Lord would always gently lead her,  
She "read her title clear."

Joyful she saw "From Greenland's icy mountains"  
The Gospel flag unfurled,  
And knew by faith "The morning light is breaking"  
Over a sinful world.

"There is a fountain"—how the notes triumphant  
Rose in victorious strains—  
"Filled with that precious blood for all the ransomed,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins."

Dear saint, in heavenly mansions long since folded  
Safe in God's fostering love,  
She joins with rapture in the blissful chorus  
Of those bright choirs above.

There, where no tears are known, no pain nor sorrow,  
Safe beyond Jordan's roll,  
She lives forever with her blessed Jesus,  
The Lover of her soul.

—Boston Journal.

### KNOWLEDGE AND CHARITY.

That passage in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, which was lately studied in the Sunday schools, enforces some lessons of great importance. The apostle appears to set knowledge and love in contrast. We must not, however, understand that Paul means to say that love is against knowledge or knowledge against love. On the contrary, it is evident that in every true Christian and in every really Christian community, love and knowledge work in beautiful harmony. Each helps the other, and each enlarges the other's sphere of operation.

But there is a danger that men—even Christian men—shall put too much dependence in mere knowledge and give too little place to love. They are too apt to think that it is knowledge alone that guides and edifies. The apostle would have the Christians of Corinth understand that the grand bond of union between the human and the Divine, the condition of spiritual development, the law of Divine fellowship in this world and in the world to come is love. It is love that unites, cements, edifies; it is love that, with faith and hope, abides forever. Knowledge is not to be despised. It is to be valued, cultivated and constantly employed within its proper sphere. But it is to be remembered that human knowledge is limited, imperfect, and transitory. Some men have more knowledge than others; but no man knows except in part and no man prophesies but in part. The largest and most accurate human knowledge discerns a few things clearly, beyond these there is a region in which knowledge is, more or less, shadowed and uncertain, and beyond this again there are infinite reaches of mystery. If one distinguishes between what he knows and what he merely guesses or imagines, and if also he perceives with

humility, that what his knowledge covers, is but a very diminutive arc of an infinite circle, his knowledge will be greatly helpful to himself and to others. But if he confounds knowledge with uncertain inference, puts mere opinion in the place of certitude, and confounds the little arc of truth which comes within the range of his dim vision with the infinite circle in which the gaze of Omniscience rests, he will know nothing as he ought to know it, and the effect of his knowledge will not be to edify, but to inflate with human vanity. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth.

As a guide to conduct, knowledge though it be correct is not sufficient apart from love. Knowledge and self-interest may indicate a certain course, but love prompts us before entering therein to consult the interests of others and enquire what will be the result to our brethren if we take this course? The subject which the apostle particularly discusses is the eating of meat offered to idols. Should the Christian eat of it or should he refuse? Knowledge said. The idol is nothing in the world. It represents merely the ignorant and depraved fancy of the idolater. It has no power to harm or bless. The offering of the food then to the idol is to the Christian an unmeaning ceremony. The food was made to be eaten, and for this purpose it is not the worse for any ceremonies with which it may have been connected in the heathen temple. It is the good creature of God, adapted to nourish the bodies of men, and as a part of God's bounty, it may be received and eaten with thankfulness. Love, on the other hand said: True, but all men have not this knowledge. Some of the brethren have little knowledge and little power to reason. They have been accustomed in the past, to worship the idol, and they have not yet got free from the idea that it represents a reality. To partake of food which has been offered to an idol means to them fellowship with the idol, and is, in their view, an act of worship which their allegiance to Christ forbids. If then, one of these weaker brethren sees one who has knowledge—and because of his superior intelligence has respect and influence in the Church—eating things sacrificed to idols, he may be emboldened by the example to do likewise, although his act shall be accompanied with a conscience of wrong-doing, and thus his conscience is defiled, for Christian character is weakened or destroyed. The precept of Love to the man of knowledge is this: Do not use your knowledge selfishly and without consideration for others, nor let the exercise of your liberty become to weaker brethren an occasion of stumbling. It is better that you should never eat flesh at all, if thereby your brother is caused to offend. It is well not to eat flesh or to drink wine or to do anything whereby a brother is made to stumble.

The lesson here in its broadest form is this: Be careful of your example. It is not sufficient that you are persuaded that a course of action is in principle right and harmless, or even beneficial to yourself. As a Christian you are bound to consider not your own things only, but also the things of others, and to ask what will be the influence of my conduct upon my fellow men, and especially upon my brethren? Take for instance, the tobacco habit; some Christian man may say: I indulge this habit very moderately; I enjoy my pipe or cigar; I am in no respect the worse as a man or a Christian for it. Why should I be deprived of a comfort and an innocent enjoyment? But at all events the indulgence is not necessary to your spiritual well-being, and the money might be spent in other ways which surely would be as much for the glory of God and the good of men. And there is the question of influence which charity prompts: What will be the result to others? Is not your smoking an endorsement of a widespread evil which is resulting in the waste of immense wealth and working

great injury to many? Can any Christian man justify himself in a course of action which lends the power of his example to the influence constantly working to draw the youths of the land under the power of the tobacco habit? Whatever Knowledge may say to you in this matter, does not Charity say, "Abjure the weed."

Then there is the question of theatre-going. Some Christian man says: I go to witness certain unobjectionable plays. I find the influence of them to be elevating to my intellectual and moral nature. I use discrimination as to what I attend, and I am in no respect the worse as a man or a Christian for my attendance upon the theatre. Admitting this to be true, for the sake of argument, has not Charity a word to say here? Will you your example as a man of light and leading be quoted and followed by many who will go to all lengths and depths in their attendance upon the theatre? Can a Christian, under the guidance of Christian charity, lend his or her influence in that direction.

This principle has its appreciation in reference to the right of Christians to indulge in the use of intoxicating drink. Some Christian men claim such indulgence as their right because, as they say, they are able to control their appetite, a moderate use of wine is to them beneficial rather than injurious, and they do not understand the Bible to forbid its use. Such ground is by no means unquestioned; but supposing it to be tenable, there is still something to be said. Charity questions as to the influence which such an example involves. It is not the example of the drunkard but the moderate drinker that has the influence to entice men into the power of the liquor evil, and that influence is largely in proportion to the drinker's respectability and moderation. Is it possible then for any man who takes counsel of Paul and of Christian charity to satisfy his conscience while he is strengthening by his example and influence that which is leading countless multitudes to ruin? It is difficult to see how Christian people are able to reach any other conclusion than that, on the laws of Christian charity which Paul sets forth, tobacco using, theatre going, wine drinking and many other things which are spoken of as "questionable" are excluded.

### ABOUT PREACHING AND PREACHERS.

At the Congregational Union, the chairman, Mr. Albert Spicer, in his opening address as to the sermon, said frankly that he thought we have too much mere preaching and too little Bible teaching. Such a series as the International Series of Lessons in the Sunday schools needs to be supplemented by a regular course of teaching by ministers on Christian principles and doctrines for the pulpit on Sunday. He had been examining some pictures of old preachers, and he was led to ask the curious question whether ministers to-day are as full of earnestness and enthusiasm as the attitudes in the portraits show their predecessors to have been. He suggested that preachers should illustrate the eternal truths and principles contained in God's Word by references to the occurrences of our own day and generation; that those who read their sermons should remember that it is a sermon they have to preach, and not an essay to read; and that they should pay special attention to a concluding summing up of the teaching and the direct appeal. A paper on "Our Ministry: Who Shall Enter It?" was read by Rev. Wm. Pierce, Tollington Park. He laid it down that over and above the possession of those gifts and graces which are the common property of all true Christians, the minister of a Congregational Church should be a preacher, a pastor, a leader, and a zealot. He placed preaching first because it was the most indispensable. It was their greatest power. For influencing men profoundly there is no force equal to it:

notes if the preacher have not the pastoral heart. Just as they had in the ministry, by some strange chance, men who cannot preach, so they had men set over congregations who are lacking in the power of social ministry. Sometimes they are mere intellectual machines, devoted to the hammering out of moral problems or religious systems. Their people will tell you in charity, that they are very learned, great scholars, and so forth, but their flocks are starving all the same for the lack of pastoral sympathy. It is no scandal that men should be such by congenital idiosyncrasy. They are as God made them. The only scandal is that they should ever have entered the Christian ministry. As leaders, the ministers should be men of strong personality. They did not want weakly pious and anaemic men in the Congregational ministry. The ministers must be zealots, for they wanted men who believed in their calling, their message, their Church, and its free constitution, with all the ardour of enthusiasts.

### BE HAPPY.

It is as much a duty for the true Christian to be happy, joyful and contented as it is to be pure and holy.

The latter virtues are considered absolutely necessary to fit us for life beyond, and justly so; but are not the former attributes just as indispensable to the life we must live here, if we hope at last to be greeted with the welcome summons: "Enter thou into the joy of the Lord?"

If Heaven is to be a Heaven of eternal joy, will we be fully prepared to enter into the fulness of its blessing, if our lives here are spent in looking on the dark side of everything, and in making the lives of those around us as unhappy as our own by our constant repining and complaining? Think you a life in which gloom, joylessness, despondency and unhappiness has been the chief characteristics would feel at home in Heaven? Such a spirit would be as much out of place as the most hardened sinner, producing discord amid the angelic hosts, and making itself even more unhappy by being compelled to witness the supreme joy of others.

The unhappy Christian—if such a state be possible—has either failed to realize the fulness of God's promises, or is afflicted with an acute case of religious dyspepsia, and needs both the stimulating and invigorating effect of that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.

A joyous, happy, cheerful, sunlit life will do more towards making the world believe in the blessed nearness of God here, and the eternal peace and rest of His promised hereafter, than all the other attractions, influence and aids of life combined. Let every Christian show his happiness and joy in believing in his daily life; let the radiance and sunshine of God's loving presence stream out through his every act and word, and the effect upon the world at large would be simply marvellous.

### A NEW CREATION.

God never repairs. Christ never patches. The Gospel is not here to mend people. Regeneration is not a scheme of moral tinkering and ethical cobbling. What God does, He does new; new heavens, new earth, new body, new heart—"behold I make all things new." In the Gospel thus we move into a new world and under a new scheme. The creative days are back again. We step out of a regime of gaols and hospitals and reform shops. We get live effects direct from God. This is the Gospel. The Gospel is a permanent miracle. God at first hand—that is a miracle. The Gospel does not classify with other schemes of amelioration. They are good, but this is not simply better, but different, distinct, and better because distinct; it works in a new way, and works another work. Compare the wrought chains riveted on the demoniac, and the divine word working a new creation in the demoniac. It is all there. It is like the different between the impotent Persian lashing the turbulent sea with chains, and the gracious Lord saying to the troubled sea, "Peace, be still."—Rev. C. H. Parkhurst.