

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

THE WONDERFUL ONE.

The world dearly loves a hero. So said, and truly, one of England's sages. The soul thrills at the recital of prowess and pays instinctive homage to greatness. Little children hang on the lips of the traveller telling of adventure, and giants and wonders engage their earnest thought. We are all little children in this love for the strange, the grand, the new and glorious.

Deeds of noble daring, lives crowded with illustrious enterprises and successes, the victories and achievements of warriors and conquerors, compel our ardent attention and our hearty admiration.

"Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness,"

or, rather, thanks to the ennobling and sublimating influence of Christianity upon the soul, there is nothing that so commands our love, our unstinted, spontaneous admiration as magnanimity—true greatness of soul—unselfish purpose, or noble sacrifice. The sailor who leaps into an angry sea to rescue a drowning woman—the fireman who braves the hissing danger of the flames to save a helpless infant—these are the heroes that enthroned themselves in the heart and receive the tribute of tears.

The chronicles that tell of Him of Nazareth relate a story, simple, majestic and sublime. No one can read at a sitting one of these brief sketches of that strange life, without being struck (eliminating the theological teaching) with the qualities of character and the heroism of service therein portrayed. There is the display of rare self-command, utter self-abnegation, untiring beneficence, constant kindness, wonderful power and wisdom, a gentleness, a tenderness, a glory and majesty like the sun.

If it were possible to conceive the effect on the age of such a Personage, we could better understand the wonder, the criticism, the enthusiasm and the astonishment His deeds excited throughout the land. Think of His obscure origin, His humble home, His high claims, His marvellous works,—think of His spotless character, His cruel trials, His tender ministries, His strange death, is it a matter of wonder that scribe and publican, Roman and Jew, rich and poor, children and rulers, all and alike, were astonished at His mysterious Presence, His words and His deeds?

This is He of whom it had been said. "His name shall be called WONDERFUL." He was indeed the great wonder-worker. No magician ever wrought such unexpected, such strange transformations. From the moment "the conscious water saw its Lord and blushed," till the mysterious ascension on Mount Olivet, His life was a succession of wonders. At His will, the howling tempest hushed its wild shriek, and peace settled on the bosom of stormy Galilee. At His voice, the fierce maniac is subdued, and no longer the victim of another's will, ferocious, naked and intractable, is transmuted into a docile and willing follower of His deliverer. At His command Lazarus, the dead man, steps forth from his tomb. Constant marvels of speech or action elicit new admiration and continued wonder.

But His deeds were not wrought at the will of emperors and sages. His mightiest works were often done to relieve beggars, the poorest and least worthy. Not in palaces whose marble floors might resound with royal applause,—not in kingly state or wealthy luxury did He live and do His wonders. By the way-side, by the sea-side, in crowded street and temple, in quiet woods and walks, for the blind, for the needy, the outcast and the despised, for children and the most helpless, whatever their worldly state, He exerted His strange and beneficent power.

The wonder of His life is not so much in what He did, as in what He was. Surrounded by these who ridiculed and dreaded His power, who sought His ruin, He was yet without stain or imputation. History portrays but one perfect character. There is but one on its impartial record, whom neither malice can defame nor envy depreciate. That one is Jesus of Nazareth.

If, as many teach, and teach falsely, His influence and power on the race are only through His spotless character, His perfect example, the wonder of His life is still more pronounced. For never can be estimated that influence and power. He is unique, and yet the combined forces of the good and great in all ages have

never attained the vast, far-reaching, and tremendous result this one short life has effected.

While it is true, it is not merely the power of His example that makes Him the great Leader and Reformers, still it remains, that His power is projected upon the world, and to-day is felt wherever His name is known.

Surely this Wonderful One, so spotlessly perfect in character, so gloriously magnanimous in deed, is no mere man. His humanity proves His divinity.

The hero perils limb and life. *He gave His* It was His to give—and most freely He gave it. He gave it to secure blessing, even life and more than life, *peace*, for His own. And His own, who were they? Not titled minions of power—not the choice of rank or learning—not those whom the world calls worthy; but sinners of every name and grade, even Jerusalem sinners. This is the greatest wonder of all in the mysterious life of this Wonderful Being; *He died for sinners*. The cross is not only the pivot of the world's history, but it is the focus of universal scrutiny, amazement and adoration. Angels wonder: earth shows mysterious signs 'the heavens are veiled' and all the ages to come will echo with the song of praise for this act, "unto Him that loved."

Well may the Christian heart sing, in the devout adoration of our own Dr. Spence, in one of the best of our hymns.

"Blest Jesus, when Thy cross I view,
That mystery to the angelic host, —
I gaze with grief and rapture too,
And all my soul's in wonder lost"

Central Pr. A. M. S.

THE BLESSINGS OF THE BIBLE.

One of the great blessings which the Bible takes with it everywhere is—a day once a week when the hard worker can rest and forget that he is a beast of burden, and remember that he is a man. Addison wrote of the Sabbath, that it was "a good institution, because it made poor people wash and dress themselves respectably once a week." The Sabbath was made for man: for man, not as shopkeeper, ploughman, statesman, but as a rational, moral, religious creature. A great authoress in one of our London dailies not long since pointed out the contrast between the Christian and the Moslem in this respect. He attends the mosque on his Sabbath Friday, devout, perhaps, as the Christian, but always in his work-a-day dress—there is no change of attire, no general rest from labour. No; the poor Arab, toiling in his one sordid garment, is never able to say to himself: "I am a man, and not a beast of burden;" but wherever this Book goes, it seems to hush the machineries of every-day life into silence. Man everywhere throws aside the tools and the soiled garments, by means of which he earns his daily bread; he goes forth after his weekly ablution and change, refreshed in soul and body; and often in this hushed silence—like John in the Spirit—on the Lord's Day, he thinks of the white robes of the eternal Sabbath. He remembers that he is more than a mere animal, to be fed and sheltered—more than a mere creature of intellect capable of education. that his highest interests are spiritual, and that the noblest relations which he sustains are to God and eternity.

This Book takes with it, again, a heart ready to sympathize, and a hand ready to help the suffering of every class and in every clime throughout the earth. Look through the "History of Great Sufferings!" Who were the most ready to help them? Were they not the people called Christians? To help people they had never seen—to help with no selfish motive? Was not that over half-a-million sent over to India a grand fact in favour of the religion of this land? And now the reply comes back. I am told that 16,000 have come to Bishop Caldwell in India, ready to lay aside their heathenism—whole villages. Why, all other religious systems are religions of "self-help." But this one exceptional system leavens people everywhere with a religion of "helping others." It introduces them into a new joy. It reveals to us the grand secret that by helping others we enter into the joy of our Lord. The rose is not sweeter for the fragrance with which it perfumes the morning; the well is no brighter for its cup of cold water to the passer-by; but you cannot give a shilling to that poor widow in her desolate home without feeling that your own home is brighter for the Christian act. You cannot send a bunch of flowers from your garden to that poor invalid in the garret without adding a new bloom to every

flower. The very garden smiles upon you with a new beauty, and exhilarates you with a sweeter fragrance. Canon Mozley has, with a master hand, shown that this principle of compassion that converts into a pleasure that which was of incalculable advantage to society—the alleviation of pain and misery—was a discovery of Christianity—a discovery like that of a new scientific principle. The Spartans did not believe in this compassion when they cut off at birth their sickly and maimed children, but they did believe in "the survival of the fittest." Hindooism, when it places the old and the infirm on the banks of the Ganges, to be carried away by the next rising of the waters, does not believe in this joy of Christian compassion, but in "the survival of the fittest." The religion of this Book, however, brings God down to the side of men, not as an everlasting condemner, but as a present help in time of trouble—brings down a divine Consoler, who was crowned to be the King of suffering humanity, not when He was crowned above with the royal diadem of heaven, but when He was crowned with thorns here below. It was that lifting up under a crown of thorns to the cross, that marked him forever as the Man of Sorrow—that draws all men to Him. It is He of whom we learnt when children the shortest and sweetest verse in the whole Bible—"Jesus wept." That attracts us to Him under our burdens, trials, and sorrows. You say that it is unmanly to weep. I answer: "Jesus wept." You say that our God is a hard, unsympathetic Being. I answer: "Jesus wept." And it is this Jesus, with a loving heart in His bosom, and tears in His eyes, that draws human hearts to Him for sympathy, and sends them forth full of help and compassion to heal the woes of humanity.—E. Herber Evans, in "Boston Christian."

CREDULITY.

The most credulous people we know of are infidels. They condemn a Bible which they have never examined, a religion which they have never tried, and principles which they have never put in practice, on the basis of assertions which they have never verified, and sciences which they have never investigated. They talk of geology which they have never studied, of history which they have never explored, and of heathen books which they cannot read, and they are slightly inclined to regard others as ignorant and idiotic, who are in no sense their inferiors, and in many respects may be more than their equals, who speak that they do know, and testify that which they have proved to be true.

The spirit of conceit and reason is not favourable to research, investigation, or candid judgment. Infidels are not fools, though some of them give people occasion to suppose that they are. Nor are Christians idiots, though some of their acts and words are far from wise. The apostle James says: "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." James iii. 13. If the Christian claims this wisdom, it is his duty to show it; if the infidel believes that he is the wise man, let him also prove it by his patience, candour, meekness, and honesty of speech and act.

Whatever infirmities and errors men may have, they are entitled to fair and considerate treatment at each other's hands; and as a rule, we believe true Christians are willing to thus treat men. Nothing is gained on either side by insult, scoffing or abuse. The matters in question are too grave to be thus disposed of; and honest, candid investigation will do much more towards leading men to the knowledge of the truth, than mere assertion, denunciation, and vituperation. He who speaks before he thinks, and thinks before he studies, may be confident, but he is not considerate; he may be intelligent, but he cannot deny that he is credulous. We have never yet met the skeptic who had a fair acquaintance with the Bible, or who could give a fair account of the reasons which an intelligent and well-instructed Christian has for receiving it as a divine revelation. We have met those who, when led to examine the evidences of the truth of Christianity, have renounced their infidelity and become followers of the Son of God.—Boston Christian.

Let your word be your bond. Good credit is a fortune to begin with.

Be temperate. Liquor has made more paupers than all other vices combined.