

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

THE PASTORAL GIMLET.

The following, supposed to be from the pen of Dr. J. H. Vincent, will be read with a curious interest not without profit:

Once a city pastor was absent from home for a week. During his absence the son of a member who lived several miles out of town died. He did not hear of the young man's death until he returned. Then he was taken sick, and 'twas ten or twelve days before he could safely drive out and visit his afflicted parishioner. The first words which greeted his ears were:—

"Well, I thought you had forgotten us."

And then the good woman sat complacently down to be consoled.

That is what I mean by the pastoral gimlet; and it is astonishing how proficient certain church members become in its use. The delicacy in insinuating, the deftness and grace in twistings, can only have been acquired by assiduous practice. They know where it will go in most easily; just how many turns to give it before it gets down to the quick.

There are various scientific twists to the gimlet known to adepts and to victims.

There is the sarcastic twist. Hostess enters the parlour and greets the pastor thus:—

"Good morning, Dr. A—; really the sight of you is refreshing. Have you found out at last where we live?"

There is the business twist:

"Do you know that you haven't been inside our house for six months?"

Pastors, as well as mathematicians, are painfully aware that figures can't lie; so that this twist is a peculiarly effective one, usually transfixing the victim, and reducing him at once to a condition of helplessness.

Then there is the reproachful twist, also very effective; tremendously so, if the twister can manage to start a "silent tear."

"Really, we began to doubt whether we had any pastor."

And once in a while we were treated to the spiteful twist, in administering which the operator, or more commonly the operatrix, is at no pains to conceal her fell intent, but drives the uncoiled gimlet in with a steady hand, or, in other words, gives the parson quite a sharp "sitting down" on his shortcomings.

The men who wince under this instrument are the conscientious pastors who are forever haunted by the vague sense of work in arrears, and constantly tormented with self-reproach because they do not bring it up. The gimlet is a terrible thing to such an one. He knows the gimlet-houses, as well as the doctor knows where the small-pox is. He braces himself to visit them once or twice a year. He says jocosely to a friend at the gate:—

"I know there is a rod in pickle for me here."

He sits down to his work very much as if he were going to have a tooth filled, meets the twists of the gimlet without betraying his inward writhings, kneels down and prays with the gimlet-twisters, and rises to his feet to meet a parting thrust, as thus:—

"Now that you've found the way here, I hope that we shall see you often."

And as he goes down the steps he looks into his book, and seeing that the next place on his list is also a gimlet-house, he says to himself:—

"Not to-day; one a day is all I can stand."

You cheerful, sunny, sympathetic souls, God bless you, who perhaps excite the jealousy of your neighbours because the minister "drops in" at your house so much oftener than theirs, does it never occur to you that he comes almost as much for his own sake as for yours, because he knows you always have oil and wine in your casks for the wounds of the gimlet?

Now, ye gimlet-twisters, ye pastor perforators, lift up your voice and answer. What do you want a pastoral visit for? Do you want to talk with your pastor about your temptations and trials? Do you want instruction on some question of Christian experience? Do you want to discuss some scheme of Christian enterprise? Not you! No lawyer is more adroit in turning the conversation the moment it takes any such direction. Let the pastor take up the gimlet in his turn, and probe your heart, and lay bare your poor,

starved, stunted religious life; let him then tax you rigorously with your absence from prayer-meetings or Sabbath worship, and you will not complain of the scarcity of pastoral visits. The truth is, you do not desire council nor comfort nor Christian communion, but attention. Your pastor's absence wounds your pride. You care little about his doing the work he was especially called to do for you, but you are vexed because he does not concede more for your importance. You are not thirsting for living water, but for the tacit flattery of attention, thus seeking to convert the messenger whom Christ sends with living bread to your home and heart into a minister to your vanity. The people whose hands are idle, whose purses are shut, whose voices are against every enterprise which involves sacrifice and labour, are people who are masters of the gimlet.

THE ANGEL OF PATIENCE.

Beside the toilsome way
Lonely and dark, by fruits and flowers unblest,
Which my worn feet tread sadly, day by day,
Longing in vain for rest.

An angel softly walks,
With pale, sweet face, and eyes cast meekly down,
The while, from withered leaves and flowerless stalks,
She weaves my fitting crown.

A sweet and patient grace,
A look of firm endurance, true and tried,
Of suffering meekly borne, rests on her face,
So pure, so glorified.

And when my fainting heart
Desponds, and murmurs at its adverse fate,
Then quietly the angel's bright lips part,
Whispering softly, "Wait!"

"Patience!" she sweetly saith:
"The Father's mercies never come too late,
Glide thee with patient strength and trusting faith,
And firm endurance—wait!"

Angel, behold I wait!
Wearing the thorny crown through all life's hours,
Wait till thy hand shall open the eternal gate
And change the thorns to flowers.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

We have been taught by certain modern philosophers that we do not know anything. I fancy our friends are not far off the mark if they speak for themselves, but I demur to their representing us. They tell us that we only know that our senses have been operated upon, and perhaps we may know that certain things do thus operate, but we can hardly be sure of that. One of these philosophers kindly says that religion is a matter of belief, not of knowledge. This is clean in opposition to all the teaching of Scripture. Take your pencil and read through all the Epistles of John, and mark the word "know"; it is repeated continually; in fact, it is the key-word of the apostle's letter. He writes perpetually, "We know; we know; we know; we know." Truly, brethren, we *know* the love of Christ. When Jesus dwells in us, we do not merely believe in His love as a report, but we enjoy as a fact; we have made its acquaintance; we have tasted, we have handled, we have experienced this heavenly boon. What a favour! To know the love of Christ! Do not forget that this only comes of Christ's dwelling in us, and of our being rooted and grounded in love to Him.

"We cannot be certain of anything," says some one. Well, perhaps you cannot. But the man who has Christ dwelling in him says: "There is one thing I am certain of, and that is the love of Christ to me. I am assured of the loveliness of His character and the affection of His heart; I perceive that He Himself is love, and I am equally clear, since He has come to live with me, that He loves me, for He would not have lived in my heart at all if He had not loved me. He would not cheer and encourage me; He would not rebuke and chasten me, as He does, if He did not love me. He gives me every proof of His love, and therefore I am sure of it. I will have no question raised, or, if you raise it, you will kindly understand that I do not raise it, for I have come to this, that I know the love of Christ."

What a blessed knowledge this is! Talk they of science? No science can rival the science of Christ crucified. Knowledge? No knowledge can compare with the knowledge of the love that passeth knowledge. How sweet it is to know love! Who wants a better subject to exercise his mind upon? And how

precious is the love of Christ! The sweetest of all the sweets that life can yield—the source of love, the mirror of love, the model of love, the love which surpasses all love, as the knowledge of it surpasses all knowledge. Who would not be a scholar when the book he reads in is the heart of Christ? Who would not be a student when the science is Christ crucified, the lesson-book Christ manifested, the tutor Christ glorified, and the prize Christ enthroned in the heart? Jesus is most dear from every point of view; but how charming is it to see Him in the light of love, so as "to know the love of Christ!" If the love of Christ is really known in the soul, it is like a precious box of rarest aromatics; it diffuses itself till it fills our entire being. I do not wonder to find my text saying: "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God;" for the love of the Lord Jesus is the most filling thing in existence. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in Him, for of His fulness have all ye received, and grace for grace; how can we be otherwise than filled?—*Spurgeon*.

GLADSTONE AND THE BIBLE.

Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrew's, speaking of the College days of the Premier of England, says: "I doubt whether any man of his standing in the University habitually read the Bible more or knew it better than Gladstone." Who can doubt that to this source is to be traced his spotless character, his firm grasp of truth, and his comprehensive statesmanship? Had Gambetta sat as an humble learner at the feet of the great Teacher, and learned that all are slaves except those whom the truth makes free, by the consecrated power of his eloquence he might have led his people from the desert of superstition and infidelity in which they are still wandering.

The movement to give systematic instruction from the Holy Scriptures as a text-book, in our colleges, already initiated, should be adopted in all our higher institutions. If we would not develop the intellect at the expense of the moral nature; if we would not leave the conscience dormant while the understanding and the imagination are stimulated, let us take warning from the Lord Byrons, the Aaron Burrs, and the Voltaires.

This frequent contact of God's truth with the hearts of those who are to be the thought-leaders of the Anglo-Saxon race, is not a trifle lightly to be set aside. In the crisis of their beliefs, when that which was like wax is rapidly becoming like adamant, let it be moulded under the influence that tends to the highest possible beauty and purity.

We are confirmed in these views by remembering what many of our statesmen and others have said in regard to the Bible. From the many who have spoken, hear Webster: "From the time that at my mother's feet, or on my father's knee, I first learned to lispen verses from the sacred writings, they have been my daily study and vigilant contemplation." John Quincy Adams said: "My custom is, to read four or five chapters every morning immediately after rising from my bed." Sir Isaac Newton: "We account the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy." John Milton: "There are no songs comparable to the songs of Zion, no orations equal to those of the prophets, and no politics like those which the Scriptures teach."—*Zion's Herald*.

WHAT A FEW CHRISTIAN WOMEN CAN DO.

The church in West Liberty, Iowa, numbers only seventy members. "Only a few years ago," says the pastor, "it was under the care of the Home Mission Board. But some way, as soon as the church began to take a deep interest in Foreign Missions it became self-sustaining. A lady's missionary society was organized by Miss Rankin three years since; the members have met once a month for prayer and instruction in the themes set forth for the Missionary Concert. Each lady that is able pays twenty-five cents per month, and in this way the little society raises upward of \$30 per year. However, a new plan was proposed during the summer. It was proposed that the regular work of the society go on as usual, but that in the month of November at their meeting the ladies should hold a thanksgiving service and make a thanksgiving offering. In order that the gifts should be purely personal, each lady set about to earn what she could for