

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

MANNERS AND THE BIBLE.

There is no "model letter-writer" comparable to the New Testament. Let a young man study the letters of St. Paul, and it will have an infinitely better effect on his style than the letters of Lord Chesterfield, and this quite apart from the effect of their moral and spiritual influence. The mere intellectual atmosphere of them will be elevating and refining to an astonishing degree.

And here we may remark on the influence of the Bible on mere manners. It invariably makes its readers more courteous and polite, and just, too, in proportion to the degree in which they are imbued with its spirit and teaching. Let a rough boor become converted, and let him begin to read and love his Bible, and he grows upward toward the gentleman from that hour. "The entrance of Thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." It cannot be otherwise, because the Bible brings his mind perpetually into "good society." He may be wholly cut off from this in the actual world—though a religious poor man has here an advantage over his irreligious compeer, for, at any rate on Sundays, he comes into contact with superior society in at least the pulpit of his church or chapel—but when he reads his Bible he is brought into the society of the highest and most refined minds that ever existed. And how can it but be that all this should, perhaps insensibly, but at the same time very certainly, elevate, polish, and refine? "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise;" or, as the Persian proverb beautifully expresses it, "Even the pebble will become fragrant if it lie beside the rose;" and he that thus enjoys the society of gentlemen can hardly fail to become one too.

Experience has shown this: other things being equal, as acquaintance of men with their Bible, so their mien and manners in regard to the standard of mere gentility. Does a parent wish to introduce his child into "good society?" Let him introduce him into a love of his Bible. Are young men and young women ambitious of self-culture even in regard to manners? And would they like to enter a good school of deportment? Let them enter into the society of the characters of the Bible.

But does some sharp reader say, "How is it, then, that instances of discourtesy occur among professing Christians?" My reply is, first, that it is one thing to be a professing Christian, and another thing to be a real and worthy one; secondly, that it is quite possible to be a truly converted one, and yet to be very far from being a model or a winsome one; thirdly, that even in the case of an uncorrupt Christian, depend upon it the man's native bearishness would have been vastly more bearish if he had not been a Christian. In such a case, it is not the Christianity of the man that is to blame, but rather his defect of it. He is a defective Christian because he has neglected the special duty "to put off concerning the former conversation the old man"—in his case, that very ugly old man—and to put on by self-discipline, culture, and prayer, gentleness and courtesy and all the other graces of the new man.

Christianity recognizes the fact that Christians have faults. But it does not allow them, and it urges us to correct them. "I speak this to your shame," said St. Paul to Christians. And there is much now that may be spoken to our shame; and we fear that want of courtesy and true graciousness is very conspicuous under this category. But when the Spirit of God says to us by St. Peter, "Adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things," sure we are that he would have us specially remember that exhortation which he gives by the same apostle—"Be courteous."—*Winsome Christianity.*

FORGIVENESS.

I see you are hanging on the edge of a precipice. Thank God you are not at the bottom. Thousands drop into perdition from the crag of implacability. Forgiveness is man's deepest need and highest achievement. All the "strong and beautiful things on forgiveness," which you so much admire in my books, were distilled in the alembic of my own experience. I have not had your trials, but my self-mastery was not the less heavy. I know what it is to have the purest motives, most fervent prayers, and most in-

cessant labours misapprehended and misrepresented. I know what the moral whipping-post means. But what I have done, or Christ in me, you can do likewise. Nothing does God require more explicitly than a clean forgiveness. Your provocations are multiplied and aggravated. The rasp that is drawn across your sensibilities without respite for successive years, is rough and sharp enough to require the concentration of all the Jobs in Christendom. Be not dismayed; only believe. Great trials make great saints. Deserts and stone pillars prepare for an open heaven and an angel-crowded ladder. But you are, indeed, sorely probed, and from the depths of my soul I pity you. If this is any comfort to you, let down your bucket to the end of your chain, with the assurance that what is deepest and most tender in me is open to your dip. But your victory rests with yourself. Kingdom over the vast territory of self must be, in order to a genuine forgiveness. To tear yourself from yourself, to double yourself up and thrust yourself under your heels, and make a general smash of yourself, and be all the more truly yourself for this mauling and self-annihilation—this is the work before you, and a mighty work it is. To accomplish this, we must be close enough to Jesus to feel the beating of His heart. By the time you are through your struggle you will be a god, fit to occupy a seat with Christ upon His throne. Kings alone can truly forgive, as kings alone can reign. You know the import of the cross. Set your heart like a flint against every suggestion that cheapens the blood of the dear, great Lamb, and you will as surely get the meaning of Christ crucified, as that He left His life in the world.—*Horace Bushnell.*

LIFTED SHADOWS.

Shadows o'er each pathway linger,
Rest a moment, then pass on;
But more brilliant seems the sunshine
When the transient gloom is gone.

So the shades of earth still hover,
O'er life's river, drear and dark,
And our wearied hearts discover
No safe haven for our barque.

Rays of glory, gleaming brightly
From the Saviour's starry crown,
Circling round the brow of mercy
Whence the anguish'd drops flow'd down,

Scatter swiftly all the shadows,
Darkening o'er the waters wide,
Lighting up the peaceful harbour
Into which our barque may glide.

THE BIBLE.

The Bible alone, of all books in the world, instead of uttering the opinions of the successive ages that produced it, has been the antagonist of these opinions, and the victor over them all. It maintained the unity of God amid all the darkness of Western polytheism; the vivid personality of God against Eastern pantheism; the ineffable purity and holiness of God against the obscurities of Egyptian and Canaanitish idolatry; the omnipresence of God against the heathen theories of gods many and lords many; teaching salvation by grace without works just when and where the great schools of the world's philosophy were glorying in their schemes for human regeneration; teaching the resurrection of the body, and that this mortal must put on immortality, just when and where Socrates and Plato, on the one hand, had theorized for man an immortality that excluded the mortal body, and Epicurus and his swinish herd, on the other, were teaching their practical atheism of the destruction of both soul and body together. In all these things the Bible was in advance of the ages in which it was written and the antagonist of the false teachings of those ages, and in the end the victor over them all.—*Stuart Robinson.*

DIED FOR US.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us."—1 Thess. v. 9, 10.

Died for us? Who else ever did as much for you? Who else ever loved you as much? Only think, now, what it really means, because it is really true, and surely it is most horribly ungrateful when one for whom such a great thing has been done does not even think about it.

You would think it hard to be punished for some one else's fault; but this is exactly what our dear Saviour did—let Himself be punished for your fault, instead of you.

Suppose some cruel man were going to cut off your leg, what would you think if your brother came and said, "No; chop mine off instead?" But that would not be dying for you. And "our Lord Jesus Christ died" for you.

It was the very most He could do to show His exceeding great love to you. He was not obliged to go through with it; He might have come down from the cross at any moment. The nails could not have kept Him there an instant longer than He chose; His love and pity were the real nails that nailed Him fast to the cross till the very end; till He could say, "It is finished;" till He "died" for us.

It was not only because He loved His Father that He did it, but because He loved us; for the text goes on: "Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we might live together with Him." So He loved us so much that He wanted us to live together with Him; and as no sin can enter His holy and beautiful home, He knew our sins must be taken away before we could go there. And only blood could take away sin, only death could atone for it; and so He bled that we might be washed in His most precious blood; He died, "that whether we wake or sleep, we might live together with Him."

"There is a word I fain would speak,
Jesus died!
O eyes that weep and hearts that break,
Jesus died!
No music from the quivering string
Could such sweet sounds of rapture bring;
Oh, may I always love to sing,
'Jesus died! Jesus died!'"

—*Frances Ridley Havergal.*

RESULT OF KINDNESS.

A servant of the Rev. Rowland Hill suddenly died, and his master preached his funeral sermon to a numerous audience, in the course of which he mentioned the following anecdote:—Many persons present were acquainted with the deceased, and have had it in their power to observe his character and conduct. They can bear witness that I speak the truth when I assert that he has proved himself a perfectly sober, honest, industrious, and religious man, faithfully performing, as far as it lay in his power, the duties of his station in life, and serving God with constancy and zeal; yet this very man, this virtuous and pious man, was once a robber on the highway. More than thirty years ago he stopped me on the high-road and demanded my money. Not at all intimidated, I argued with him. I asked him what could induce him to pursue so iniquitous a course of life. "I have been a coachman, sir," said he, "but am out of place, and not being able to get a character, can get no employment, and am therefore obliged to resort to this means of gaining a subsistence." I desired him to call upon me; he promised he would, and kept his word. I talked further with him, and offered to take him into my service. He consented, and ever since that period he has served me faithfully, and not me only, but he has faithfully served God. And instead of having finished his life in a public ignominious manner, with a depraved and hardened mind, as he probably soon would have done, he has died in peace, rejoicing in hope, and prepared, we trust, for the society of just men made perfect.

A PLEA FOR THE LITTLE FOLKS.

Don't expect too much of them; it has taken you forty years, it may be, to make you what you are, with all your lessons of experience; and I will dare say you are a faulty being at best. Above all, don't expect judgment in a child or patience under trials. Sympathize in their mistakes and troubles, don't ridicule them. Remember not to measure a child's trials by your standard. "As one whom his mother comforteth," says the inspired writer; and beautifully does he convey to us the deep, faithful love that ought to be found in every woman's heart—the unfailing sympathy with all her children's griefs. Let the memories of their childhood be as bright as you can make them. Grant them every innocent pleasure in your power. We have often felt our temper rise to see how carelessly their little plans were thwarted by older persons, when a little part would have given the child pleasure, the memory of which would last a lifetime. Lastly, don't think a child hopeless, because it betrays some very bad habits. We have known children that seemed to have been born thieves and liars, so early did they display these undesirable traits; yet we have lived to see those same children become noble men.