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REV. E. McLEOD,

"THAT GOD

IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."

Peter.

[Editor and Proprietor.

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THE WRONG TEXT.

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Chapter I.

"But really, my dear, I cannot go with you to-morrow," said the Rev. Mr. B. to his wife, when one Friday evening they were at supper.

"You must, Charles dear," replied she, casting a kind, supplicating look at him. "Now, don't make the people unhappy by staying away. You know they all expect you, and the whole meeting will be a failure if you don't go."

"But, you know, I told them before that I never go out on Saturday. People should have sense enough to perceive that this is the worst day to call a minister out of his study. And then, what a distance! It will take two hours driving at least, and we shall not be back before midnight. I'm sure."

"Ah, well, dear, but this is an exceptional case. It is the anniversary of their missionary society, you see, and it just happens to fall on a Saturday this year. Now you know as well as I that there is nobody among them who is able to lead such a meeting in a satisfactory way. They are all of them good enough for their work, but poor speakers. It will be a dull meeting if you don't go, dear. And perhaps the Lord will give you a good word to speak to the weary there. Come now, don't be stubborn."

"But what about my sermon for next Lord's day?" asked the minister. "I shall not have time for preparation. I shall be unfit for my work if I go to-morrow and return so late at night."

"Tell you what," quoth Mrs. B., "you must preach that sermon about Melchisedech which you preached a fortnight ago at L—. None of our people here have heard it yet, nor have I; but from the portions you read to me the other evening, I am persuaded that we shall all be delighted with it. It must be fresh in your memory still, and if not, you may read it to the people. You do sometimes when you had no time to commit your sermon to memory."

Mr. B. felt so felled in by his wife's arguments that he could not resist longer. The next day they drove to the meeting, and it was quite midnight when they found themselves in their home again. No wonder that they did not rise with the birds the next morning. They had just time enough to take a hurried breakfast and to prepare for church.

"Just go into my study, dear," said Mr. B., trying to hurry his feet into his boots as quickly as he could—the clock had struck a quarter to ten, and service commenced precisely at ten o'clock, and they had to walk a good bit—just go into my study and fetch that sermon. You will find it on the second shelf—Heb. vi. 20, is written on it outside."

Mrs. B., umbrella in one hand and Bible in the other, hastened into the study, and soon found a sermon upon which she noticed the figures vi. 20. In a trice she was with her husband again, who put the manuscript into his pocket, and soon found himself on his way to the sanctuary.

One can hardly picture to one's self the minister's amazement when, sitting down in his pulpit during the singing, and taking his sermon out of his pocket, he found that its text was I Cor. vi. 20. It was an old sermon, which he had written some four years. He could not recollect one word of it. He knew not whether it was one of his best or of his worst; for you must know the minister had poor sermons as well as good ones—at least such was his judgment, though his wife would say that even his poorest sermon was good enough, under God's blessing, to serve as a sign-post on the way to heaven for a weary, wandering pilgrim. What was he to do? He tried to recall to his memory the sermon on Hebrews vi., but he soon found that it stood in a dim cloud before his mind. He then peeped into the sermon he had in hand, but it was not the time now to peruse it. Already the last stanza of the hymn was being sung. Then at once a thought flashed through his mind:

"Perhaps it is the Lord's will that I shall preach from the Corinthians to-day. Perhaps there is some error on this here present which needs a draught from this cup." Sending up an ejaculation from his heart to Him who alone can give the increase, he rose in joyful strength. He resolved to preach extempore now, and to commit the whole of his thoughts to the leading influence of his invisible Friend. So, putting his old sermon in his pocket again, he gave out as his text I Cor. vi. 20—

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

The reader can imagine that there was one among Mr. B.'s hearers who was quite astonished. It was Mrs. B. She had already turned up to Hebrews and while hurrying the leaves of her Bible back to the Corinthians, she could not help looking up to her husband with an expression of alarm, as if she would say to him, "Dear, dear, are you not mistaken?" She soon found, however, that he was anything but in a fix. He spoke with a clearness, a fervour, and a fluency, such as she but seldom had witnessed in him. Every word from his lips fell like a heavenly dew-drop on her soul; and when she had listened for a couple of minutes, she was so entirely enraptured by the fresh, lively power of the preacher, that she forgot all about the mystery that had puzzled her. Among the passages that struck her most, there was one made a deep impression upon her. She thought it must go home to some heart craving the consolation of a compassionate Saviour, who is never weary to pardon and to save. It ran somewhat as follows:—

"And now, after having shown you who they are who are bought, what an incalculable precious price has been paid for such, and what the end is to which that unparalleled purchase is made, I have, in the first place, a word to those amongst you who once believed that they were the dearly-bought property of Christ, but disbelieve, or at least doubt it now, because their consciences tell them that they do not glorify God in their body and spirit. To put the case as clearly before us as possible, I will suppose that there is a sinner amongst us now, who once was arrested on his way towards destruction by the warning and inviting voice of the blood of Christ. He turned away from the path of sin; he knelt down at the feet of the merciful Saviour; he gave himself up to his service with his body and spirit, and a joy unspeakable and full of glory arose in his soul. Thus, perhaps, some years since passed in communion with God, and a life of holiness put its seal to this happy change of the heart. But circumstances have occurred which gradually have changed that flowery garden into a dismal wilderness. Some secret worm of sin, hid in the flesh, and not sufficiently taken heed against, began to gnaw at the root of the fruit-bearing tree. Some old bad habit, some wicked inclination of former days, though repressed for some years, yet awoke with fresh vigour under the influence of temptation. At some unguarded moment the first draught was again taken from the old poisonous cup, which had been left untasted ever since the goblet of the gospel was put to the lips. A second draught soon followed, and a third. And now we find that person entirely ensnared in the bondage of sin again. His body now glorifies himself; his spirit moves round carnal, worldly pleasures. That person, I will suppose, feels very miserable, notwithstanding the appearance of ease and comfort he tries to maintain before others. He cannot altogether forget what an awful change has taken place. He cannot forget that once he rejoiced to be the property of Christ, while now he serves the enemy of that blessed Master. He feels every day that that Master's service was peace, and joy, and unspeakable happiness; while his present condition is that of fear, discontent, and shame. He has got enough of the old poisonous cup, and he has found that, after all, its taste is very bitter, and its power a power unto death. He would fain return to his former Master now. He sometimes again takes to prayer; but before two or three sentences are uttered, a voice whispers to his soul, 'Don't take that trouble any more, you hypocrite; it is all lost.' He stops praying. He turns to his Bible, hoping to find some consoling word to keep him in countenance; but on every page he reads texts full of wrath and judgment over the wicked; and if he reads one of a consoling nature, that voice again whispers, 'This is not for you; it is all lost. You were bought with a price; but you have counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.' Thus he feels destitute of hope, and, seeing his way to Christ blocked up for ever, he wanders about in the dreary wilderness of sin, thinking that nothing is left to him but to curse God and die."

"Now, if such a person should be amongst us, I only have to say to you, poor fellow-sinner, that you are in a great and serious mistake. The voice which tells you that all is lost is not from Christ. All will be lost if you die unconverted; but you are living still, and the Sun of the year of grace is still shining upon you. Your sins are very great. Your case is indeed serious. But I may point you to a Saviour who commanded us to forgive seventy times seven times. If he required such a pardoning love from his disciples, he must that no love is to be found in him, the Master. If it was true some years ago, that you were bought with the precious price of his blood, it is true now, for he is not like a merchant who gives up the bargain he once paid for. You are his property, and he is your owner. So your first duty is to return to him. It is absurd to question whether you are permitted to return to him. You must, for he claims you as his property, which he has duly paid for. Or perhaps you are afraid that he will kill you? But can you imagine the possibility of his having bought you in order to destroy you? Does not the Lord compare himself to a man, who, having lost one out of his hundred sheep, went after it till he found it? And does he tell us that man, having found that lost sheep, killed it in his anger? No, surely not. That man laid it on his shoulder rejoicing; and when he came home, he called together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.' Mark, poor lost sheep of Christ, what a compassionate, tender-hearted shepherd yours is. It is the enemy's voice that whispers to your soul, 'All is lost.' Certainly you are lost to Christ, but Christ is not lost to you. He is going after you. The voice that often whispers in your heart, 'Return!' is from that faithful Shepherd. O, return! you, perhaps, doubt whether you were his sheep, or not. Do you believe that your conversion was merely imaginary, and destitute of reality? Well, then, if so do not wonder that it proved transient, and ended in backsliding. But if so, let the true and real thing be done now. Turn your back to the past, and your face to Christ now. Here he stands before you, with outstretched arms. He gave the precious price of his blood for sinners. Now, you are a sinner. You call yourself the chief of sinners, do you not? You say none has sinned so much, so recklessly, so obstinately against him as you. Well, then, you are exactly the article he wants to buy. Come, then, and let him rejoice to-day. Give him the happiness to-day of calling together his friends, and saying to them, 'I have got in my possession a soul that was deemed by itself and by others beyond my reach.' Be sure, he will make a feast over it. Be sure he will not bid you return to your riotous living and the swine and the hogs, but he will say—'Let us make merry and be glad, for this sinner was dead but is alive again, he was lost and is found.'"

This was nearly the purport of the passage which Mrs. B. thought was very good; and when, having got home, her husband, with a smile of gentle rebuke slightly patted her on the cheek, and said, "Dear, dear, you made me preach from the wrong text," she answered in a voice of deep emotion, "Ah, dear, but it was the right sermon, and I am sure the Lord will put much wrong right by it."

The next day, Mrs. B. doubted not for a moment but she would hear of the recall of some backslider under the impression of her husband's sermon. But no such intelligence came to her. Nor did she hear anything of the kind during the whole week.

"Ah," said Mr. B., "dear, it was a wrong text, and I am afraid a wrong thing altogether. I, who am a minister of the Gospel, have had his word, in the matter, but I am inclined to believe now that that thought was a trick of my deceitful, self-righteous heart, which always tries to prove that a wrong thing is not so very bad after all. Let us rather confess that we have deserved punishment. We were both of us lazy that morning, and we are to be rebuked because of our having dealt hurriedly with a matter which should have been an object of prayerful preparation."

Mrs. B. was silent. She feared there was truth in what her husband said. "Still," she replied, "the Lord may have turned it to good. We don't know." "Certainly not," answered Mr. B., "But, nevertheless, we are guilty of having put the thing

in such a way, that it wanted turning in order to become good."

Thus another week elapsed, and another. And a year passed away, and another. And neither Mrs. B. nor her husband thought any more of the wrong text.

(To be Continued.)

HOME EDUCATION.

There is much, in our days, spoken and written on the subject of education; and rightly so, for there can scarcely be conceived a subject of greater importance than that of training the minds of youth, and imbuing them with useful knowledge calculated to make them, in after life, good and useful citizens and men. Much, too, has been done to raise the masses of the people from degrading ignorance, and to furnish them with the means of knowing and searching out for themselves what is true, right, and holy. Night-schools and day-schools have been established, literature circulated, and a new stimulus given to the learning of every sort. But amongst these varied and useful schemes the vast importance and usefulness of home culture and training has been comparatively overlooked; or, at any rate, scarcely insisted on as earnestly as it should have been. And yet how incalculable are the results of this, the earliest education that the infant mind receives!

The nursery, the mother's knee, the home fireside, are the first schools to which children go, the first instances of learning they enter. It is from the every-day scenes of home life, the every-day words that fall from those familiar lips, that the child imbibes either good or evil; it is from the domestic flowers their infant lips must suck either poison or honey. How powerful an influence early associations exert upon the minds of men, is well known, and so often exemplified as to render all proof needless here. True, early lessons may be forgotten, may slumber in the breast, and become well-nigh strangers to the heart; but often after a lapse of years some circumstance recalls them to the erring soul, the floodgates of memory are opened, and the stream falls on the awakened mind. The whole being of the man, like a string of a long disused harp, vibrates once again to the familiar melody, and attunes itself to the old and sacred strain.

To make our purpose and meaning clear, we would assert that education, like charity, should begin at home; and that parents, as the first and really the most important instructors of children, and cannot be too careful how they discharge the duties of their great and holy office. Nor do we limit the word "instruction" to the mere communication of book knowledge, necessary as that may be, and is, but to the entire moulding of the heart, feeling, and affections of the child, that forming the yet plastic character by advice, admonition, correction, and above all, by example, which none are so well adapted to perform as parents.

The saying that "the child is father to the man" is in its broadest acceptance true; and instances of the children of pious parents bringing disgrace upon their families are comparatively uncommon; nor, were they more common than they are, should they deter us from doing our duty in this respect, for the effect of these early lessons, though delayed, has often been abundantly proved. And if we "cast our bread upon the waters" we may trust to the mercy of God that we "shall see it after many days."

Now, assuming that it is the duty of all parents thus to instruct and educate their children—and that it is so none will deny—let us see how it may be performed in the best and most judicious manner: how the foundations may be laid of a great and glorious building in the future; how the seed may best be sown to ripen under the genial sun of Christianity into a rich and abundant harvest. And first, then, by example. It is an old and excellent saying, that "Example is better than precept." It is a poor thing to bid a child to act thus, or thus, while our own daily lives are in direct contradiction to the lessons we seek to enforce. The mind of childhood, which is peculiarly inquisitive, naturally asks, "if virtue, if godliness, be the best and happiest course, as my parents tell me, why do they not themselves practice what they teach?" Nothing can be more prejudicial to the budding mind than evil example; for while the children see the facts before them, they will be but little disposed, even were they capable, to enter into subtle theories. The lives of such men as Walker or Oberlin were daily, hourly lessons that sank deep into their children's hearts though they had uttered never a word. It is impossible for the conduct of parents to be too correct, too guarded, on all occasions, and particularly before their children; but it is not to end here—far from it; it must be good and holy throughout, for young minds are quick to detect deceit, and young hands ever apt to rend the veil from off the face of hypocrisy.

Good example then is the greatest and the best means, united with fervent prayer to God, for the primary education of the infant mind. We have said united with fervent prayer—all means must in themselves be powerless without this—earnest prostration at the footstool of Divine grace, imploring Him who "suffered children to come unto him and forbade them not" to "carry the lambs in his bosom." The mother of the great and holy St. Augustine never ceased to weep before God for the conversion of her erring son. In her agony and grief, Monica applied to a good bishop, who consoled her, telling her to "pray to God for him, as it is not possible that the child of so many tears should perish." And she continued as before to pray; and God was pleased to shed abroad his love in Augustine's heart, and the son of prayerful Monica became a "bright and shining light," and one of the greatest teachers of the Christian church. Oh! how that mother's heart rejoiced; she saw her son an eminent Christian before she was gathered to her home in heaven.

The advantages of instilling sound, virtuous precepts into the children's minds are too obvious to require any lengthened notice. The great truths of Christian morality should be gently but assiduously pressed upon them, that they may learn to know and value the code of laws on which their elders' conduct is so admirably framed. Encouragement for the observance of these laws should be judiciously bestowed, that the youthful heart may feel its duty to be its pleasure also. Nor, on the other hand, should punishment be altogether wanting. It is undeniably better to draw an obedience by the silken cord of love than roughly drag it in iron chains. Still, such is the perverse nature of man, that corrective justice has

ever been found to be necessary; and it is true, now and always, that he who spares a judicious, merciful use of the rod, runs no small risk of spoiling the child. And this question of rewards and punishments leads us to consider the more positive methods of instruction—those, in fact, which are generally understood by the term education. It is especially desirable that Scripture lessons, collects, hymns, and the like, should never be set as punishment tasks; children should be taught to look upon such books and lessons as their privilege and happiness, and the memory of their first acquaintance with them will afterwards be linked in their minds with the most joyous hours of their gladness youth.

First of all books, of which a knowledge should be implanted in the child, stands the Bible, the record of God's dealings with his faithful servants, from "the first man, Adam," to the end of all things. Nor is a previous acquaintance with learning—may apply by the word in its lowest sense—requisite in the child for an appreciation of the Sacred Scriptures. The great use of a Pictorial Bible for this purpose is unquestionable. The father or mother, in their hours of leisure, may take their yet lisping offspring on their knee, and, showing to the glistening eye of the child pictures of the sacred scenes of Holy Writ, acquaint him with the history attached to them. The Tower of Babel, the Ark of the Covenant, the stupendous mystery of the Crucifixion, and other such representations, may apply by the word in its lowest sense, which to weave poems and holy tales—takes which, coming from the lips they love, sink deep into the recesses of infant hearts. Nor is there need of human eloquence in the narrator. So great is the beauty of the sacred histories, so marvelously adapted to the sympathies of our human nature, that of themselves they possess a charm for every ear; and, like the gorgeous glory of the setting sun, need no earthly gilding to set off their unrivalled beauties.

And rare should be taken to make the children view these scenes as times of privilege—favours they have in some sort merited by their good behaviour. It was thus that the mother of the great French writer, Lamartine, as he tells us, used to take down a Bible full of splendid prints, and, while nursing her child upon her knee, tell him the soul-stirring narrative of his Redeemer's life, and the wondrous love of that Redeemer's death. These stories remained fixed in the boy's soul. He remembered them when that loving mother's heart had ceased to beat, and all the distractions of politics and revolutions; and so strong was their influence upon his mind, that he never rested until he set out for the East, and trod in person the scenes which Christ had consecrated by his bodily presence.

But this method of teaching need not be confined to the Scriptures: good, plain books, illustrated, form the best library for children, and give a real of reality, an outward expression, to the most recorded in the text.

Two great care cannot be exercised in the selection of a child's companions. Of course, this does not come into operation until the child is somewhat more advanced in years; but it should be most watchfully guarded. There was never a truer saying than that inspired declaration of Holy Writ, that "evil communications corrupt good manners." Our capacity to receive impressions, good or ill, from those with whom we associate, is exceedingly great at those periods of life, but more particularly at that tender age, when the mind is soft and malleable as melted wax, and apt to take, ay, and to retain too, any figure that may be stamped upon it. "No one can handle pitch without being defiled," and no one can consort much with wicked or thoughtless companions without contracting some stain of sin. Like the Israelites in the land of Canaan, if we would be holy, we must dissociate ourselves from the Perizzites and Jebusites of the world; and if ourselves, then more especially our children.

As early as possible let children have an aim and object in life; let them have an ever-present sense that God is with them; let their homes be quiet and godly joyous; let them feel that they are thinking beings, and learn to commune with themselves; let them find companionship in books, and they will learn to find companionship in themselves, nor deem it necessary continually to seek it in external relations. Nor should natural teaching, if we may so term it, be neglected. One's daily walks through the meadow or the wood; by the river's bank, or on the shores of the mighty ocean; over barren mountain steeps, or through the leaf-clad wood, may and should become the vehicles of instruction. The child would thus be taught to feel and know that everything has a meaning; that things are not as they are by chance; and would learn to look through the works of Nature up to that great and good God who has written his power, his mercy, and his love upon the giant boulder and the grassy plain, the hardy pine and quivering aspen, the roaring surges of the sea and the mimic billows of the lake. This will induce a habit of thoughtfulness in the child, and such a habit is invaluable. Let parents reflect awhile on this. Children are a sacred trust; arrows are they, indeed, in the hand of the giant, but arrows which, unless properly wielded, will plant their barbed points deep in their parents' hearts. How much good might be effected if fathers and mothers would thus regard themselves as the first instructors of their rising families; and how careful should such a consideration make them to order their own steps aright, for the welfare of immortal souls may depend upon them. If the fountain-head be itself secured, or tainted, can we expect that the stream that flows therefrom will flow on brightly and purely in its course, and reflect the unclouded radiance of Heaven on its bosom? If the blood at the great central heart be itself impure, how shall the flood of life rush on unstained through the ducts and channels of the body? If the master-note itself be out of tune, how shall melodious harmony pervade the strain? If parents be themselves unholty, how—humanly speaking—shall the children be righteous?

Parents have a high mission to perform. As the first, so are they the most important, instructors of future men and women, and much every day depends on how they execute their functions. There is ample work for them to do within their own homes and by their own firesides; and if properly discharged, it would go far to make these homes rudimentary schools and seminaries in themselves; schools where the highest of all learning is taught—the learning of the great Christian and moral duties of life; and when from time to time the children are called to quit the

paternal roof, they would go forth armed with the panoply of Christian warfare; and the various rays of piety and godliness shooting from each domestic hearth would converge into one great national, central fire, burning with zeal for the kingdom of God and of his Christ.

FRUITS OF A PRAYER MEETING.

Some time since I established what might be called a fellowship meeting in my parish. I was moved to it partly by observing the isolation and want of brotherly sympathy between those who, as far as I could judge, were growing Christians. Each man seemed to pursue his journey alone, and to be in the position of the "Pilgrim," before he met with "Faithful" or "Hopeful." His griefs and joys he kept to himself; he was unconscious of the strength, and joy, and light which union brings with it. My people did not seem to have realised that portion of the Creed, "I believe in, the communion of saints." I was moved to it also, by a feeling that there was a remarkable influence for good abroad in the land, which had its effect even upon those who were not yet converted by it. I think all of us who are ministers must feel that there is a great readiness to hear, and a willingness to be spoken to in a very serious manner.

And surely this was to be expected. Now that the last sands of Time are running out, men seem to stop, and catch their breath and listen, as if they felt conscious that the Judge is at the door, and expected to hear the sound of his coming. We must not overlook this fact of men's readiness to hear; but since a market seems thus to open for our spiritual merchandise, we must bestir ourselves, as merchants do in a time of brisk trade, and seek ourselves what new openings (forsooth, into men's hearts) we can find—what opportunities for putting off our wares. So, casting about, and asking myself, the prayer meeting suggested itself to my mind, as it had done to the minds of so many others. At first I had both a fellowship meeting and a general prayer meeting, but after a time, the smaller meeting merged into the larger one. And though I cannot tell of men and women stricken to the heart, and crying out, "What must I do to be saved?" I can tell of greatly increased seriousness among the people; of a few true converts coming gradually out from the world; and of a wonderful drawing together of the people of God. A wonderful drawing together, on their part, indeed; a relaxation, as it were, for the first time, that there was something real in Christian brotherhood. If I could only see this last-mentioned blessing, as a result of the prayer meeting, I should count myself amply repaid. My parishioners are generally refreshed by this system. It were to primitive Christian love. It has dawned on my people as a new joy, and they find in it not only a new pleasure, but also a new power for good. I believe there never was such a spirit abroad among my people as there is now; never a time when the poor, unlettered men among them spoke so earnestly to their "mates" and partners in work about eternal things, proving themselves helpers together in the work of God with their minister.

Of those who have received benefit from these meetings, one has already been removed from this world. She was a woman of considerable intelligence, and removed as far as one can conceive it possible from anything like enthusiasm. She had for years counted herself a Christian, and of late years had been a communicant. But there was a coldness and want of life in her Christianity which was very discouraging. She attended regularly our prayer meetings, and, after a time, a great change in her was evident. Their was a responsiveness in her now; the eye would light up; the expressive countenance began to work; the interest she took in spiritual things was not to be mistaken. It might have been only that she had returned again, by God's grace, to the warmth of her "first love;" that her soul, which had been cleaving to the dust, had been greatly quickened; that she had girded up her loins, and mended her pace, for the last stage of her journey; for soon after this she failed, and sickened, and passed away. It may have been only this; but she herself always looked upon the time as that of her conversion.

"I had thought myself, sir," she said to me, "a Christian, for some time; but I believe that my mind was impressed at one of the prayer meetings held at the school."

"Can you remember," I said, "what it was which impressed you, and led you to think more seriously of your state? Was it while the Scripture was being read, or during the prayer?"

"It was during one of the hymns," she answered. "They sang that beautiful hymn—

"Come, let us join our cheerful songs,
"No feeling well, and was not able to stand up or join in the singing. And as they sang—

"Worthy the Lamb that died, they cry,
"For He was slain for us!"

I thought how blessed to join in that song, and wondered whether I should join in it. As I sat silent on my chair, I seemed excluded from the song then; should I be excluded from it for ever? Religion, from that time, seemed to me far more important, and also, a more blessed and joyful thing, than ever it had done before. Heaven appeared before me as my home; it seemed more real; and since then my thoughts have been much more on it. I love to think of it."

"I might well have answered, 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' I doubt not that she joins in that song, and will join in it, throughout eternity: 'Worthy the Lamb.' I will give, briefly, another encouraging instance of a benefit resulting from these meetings.

I had a meeting at my own house, in my dining-room. The room was full; we had, I suppose, sixty persons. A neighboring clergyman had come over to help me. He had chosen, as the portion of Scripture which he read, the parable of the barren fig-tree. Upon this he made a few plain and pointed remarks. It was not until some little time after that I learned that the arrow had gone home.

Among those who were assembled that night was Edward Hooker. His wife had long been a praying woman. They had no children, and her prayers had long been offered, with intense earnestness, for him. Before that night she had never, she said, seen him "bend the knee before God." That night he prayed. From that time forth no man was more regular at the means of grace than Edward Hooker. Whenever the church doors were open for divine service, he was there. Wherever I held a meeting for reading the Scriptures and prayer,

Hooker would be present. Noticing this, I spoke first to his wife, and then to him, and so learned the history of this happy change. Between two and three years have passed away, and he is a growing and ripening Christian. He cannot read, and was, three years ago, a very ignorant man; but he makes up for all by great diligence and real love. He comes to every means of grace to gather food; he feeds upon the word and hides it in his heart. We need not, therefore, be surprised that he profits exceedingly.

Soon after his change, he established family prayer in his house. His wife reads the Bible, and then this poor, unlearned man pours out his heart in prayer. "It makes the tears come to my eyes," said his wife, "to hear how earnest he is; he is just as much so when he and I are alone before God. And this," I say to myself, "is my husband, who, three years ago, never bent his knee before God!"

We may well say, What hath God wrought! I can bear testimony to his earnestness in the prayer meetings. Only a few nights ago, walking home from one of them, with several of my parishioners, one Christian woman said to another, "I am always glad when Hooker prays; his prayers seem to come from the bottom of his heart." Indeed they do: it is just that. He uses the broadest language, and speaks, perhaps, the worst English of any of the labourers; but you cannot, while he is praying, get over the impression that his words are heart-deep, and that you are joining in prayer with a man who is really speaking with God. He is, as you may suppose, a great advocate of these prayer meetings. He never likes to hear of their being discontinued, even for a time. He persuades his neighbors to attend, and when he is there, seems as if he were at home and happy.

Two single grapes out of a small cluster; two of the richest and choicest; two, which lay, so to speak, nearest to the sun. Others are slowly ripening; some are still very immature; but we may trust to the Sun of Righteousness to give to them the degree of ripeness of which they are capable.

Blessed fruits of a prayer meeting! Happy meetings we have had; meetings full of profit and blessing; meetings in the middle of the week, to help us on our way from Sunday to Sunday. May God multiply such "prophesying" (to use the old English word) throughout the land!

THE DUTY OF CHRISTIAN COURTESY.
"... Life's best joys consist in peace and ease,
And few can save, or serve, but all can please."
"Large bounties bestow with a cheerful will,
But all may share the boon of giving well."

The world has its books of etiquette, its code of laws and regulations, by which to fashion the manners of those who are wont to mix in its gay circles; and volumes have been written, even by noblemen, to initiate the higher classes into the finished arts of politeness which are considered essential in fashionable life. Nor are these instructions in vain; for no one who has mixed among those classes can have failed to observe that graceful politeness, which is the distinguishing charm of such society, and which renders the guest perfectly at ease, however inferior his rank or position may be.

It was the quaint saying of a good though eccentric man, when advocating an improvement in our church psalmody, that he saw, "no reason why Satan should have all the best music;" so we may, with equal truth, say we see no reason why the world should have all the best manners and most courteous behaviour.

We remember hearing it remarked by another good man that a Christian shoemaker ought to be the best shoemaker in the parish. So, surely we may say, that a Christian gentleman ought to be indeed a thorough gentleman; for excellent as may be the world's conventional laws of politeness, we fear not to assert, that they fall far short of those which the Christian possesses. He, too, has his "book of etiquette," and there are exquisite finishing strokes given to the general laws laid down in that book for the regulation of our conduct towards one another, which we shall look for in vain among either the precepts or the practices of the world.

A rude Christian is a perfect anomaly. Shame, then, to him, who by his disagreeable manners and want of courtesy, brings reproach upon his profession, and provokes the remark, even from the lips of his fellow-Christians, "I believe he is a good man, but he is so uncourteous and repulsive in his bearing, that I do not desire his company again. Surely, even this, we have often reason to say that 'the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.' Let such a one, and alas! too many are to be found—reflect for one moment on the dishonour which he does to his Lord and Master. Let him not imagine that no sin was involved in that cold and repulsive reception of one who was a brother and fellow-pilgrim, and who, as such, had a right to kindly sympathy. Or, if the unwelcome visitor was one whose heart was still given to the world, who can tell but that kindness and gentleness of manner might have gained such influence over him that ere long he might have been won over to the service of the same gentle and gracious Master? Alas! such Christians know not what mischief they may have done, nor what good they may have prevented. It is true they may have clear view of the doctrines of the Gospel; they may be bold and fearless in the confession of Christ before the world; they may be sincere and consistent in the exercise of various duties; and yet with regard to this Christian grace, may it not be said of them, 'One thing thou lackest? Truly they have forgotten the exhortation of the Apostle, 'Be pitiful, be courteous.'"

It is surprising how frequently the want of courtesy mars the loveliness and the usefulness of even sincere Christians. And yet that sweet and lovely temper and demeanour which our blessed Redeemer exhibited during his sojourn on earth, ought invariably to characterise all true disciples. How continually does the Apostle Paul urge his blessed Master's perfect example, as a constraining motive to all his followers? "Let every one please his neighbour to his good to edification, even Christ pleased not himself." And again, "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than himself. Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." And as if he could find no higher appeal on which to found his earnest exhortations to his beloved Corinthian church, he exclaims, "I beseech you, by the meekness and gentleness of