

The Private Manners of Early Christians.

The first point to which we shall advert in speaking of the manners of the early christians, is their dress.

It may to many appear a matter of indifference what colour or mode of dress is worn. Nothing, indeed, is more subject to caprice, and we may almost wonder how any one should attach the slightest importance to a thing so trivial. Viewed in the light of Christianity, however, nothing is destitute of some degree of interest, which either affects or is indicative of the spiritual condition of man. The primitive christians felt this, and accordingly we find that they were not altogether inattentive to the style of clothing in which they appeared. On this subject, Mr. Jamieson, after admitting that they gradually adopted a dress peculiar to themselves, thus vindicates them:—

Not that they affected any singularities in their personal appearance—for their habiliments were made and worn in the ordinary fashion of the time and place—and Christians, whether they were found in the high, the middle, or the lower ranks, were accustomed to equip themselves in a manner suitable to the decencies of the state or profession to which they belonged. But, looking to the moral influence of dress, desirous of avoiding every thing that might minister to vanity, or lead the wearer to forget, in attending to the outward man, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, they studiously rejected all finery, as unbefitting the humility of their character, and confined themselves to a suit of apparel, remarkable not so much for the plainness of the material, as for the absence of all superfluous ornament.—Everything gaudy or sumptuous, that partook of the costly stuffs, or the crimsoned dyes that suited the luxurious taste of the times, was discontinued by the spiritually minded followers of Christ; and though many of them were entitled by birth or otherwise to appear in the flowing folds of the graceful toga, yet even that favorite garb, while it was retained for the valuable privileges it conferred, was looked upon as too gay and splendid for ordinary use, and was by most, if not by all the Christians, laid aside for the common pallium or cloak, to which the preference was given on account of the air of great modesty and gravity that was supposed to belong to it. Moreover, among the Christians of the East, the custom early prevailed of wearing garments of no other colour than white.—In order that they might carry about them a perpetual memorial of the purity of character that became their profession; and there were others, in various parts of the world, who thought it their duty to carry the imitation of Christ to the extent of wearing the meanest and most common attire of one in the form of a servant. But neither of these extravagances met with very general countenance; and the greater part contented themselves with a dress free from all approach to gaudiness and pomp, betraying no symptoms of an anxious and elaborate decoration of the person, and conspicuous only for its neat and clearly appearance.

From these remarks, it must be apparent that, though in some cases there might be an excessive attention to their dress, the great mass of believers contented themselves with the observance of such a plainness and simplicity, in this particular, as became men whose minds were engrossed with far higher objects than mere outward decorations. And not merely in the article of dress were the early Christians thus simple and unostentatious; in the internal arrangements of their houses the same spirit was maintained. Thus Mr. Jamieson remarks, in speaking of their

FURNITURE.—

The same simplicity and plainness reigned throughout the domestic establishment of the Christians. Most of the primitive disciples, indeed, were in circumstances that offered no temptations to indulge in the splendour or variety of ornamental furniture. Their inventory of goods embraced only a few simple articles of use, which their personal and family wants required; and it may be supposed, therefore, that there was nothing remarkable in the absence from their houses of all traces of pomp and elegance, which they neither possessed the means nor entertained the hope of acquiring.

But even those of their number, who were persons of rank and opulence, amply provided with resources to gratify a taste for ornament, chose to content themselves with such things as were recommended by their utility rather than

their elegance, and calculated to answer the purposes of necessity and comfort, rather than to gratify the lust of the eye and the pride of life. Seats and cabinets, finished with the costly veneering of tortoise shell, and couches ornamented with the rich embroideries of Babylon—vessels of gold and silver, the numberless statues and forms, which adorned the chambers, the porticoes, and gardens of the rich, and indicated the epicurean taste that distinguished the age, disappeared from the houses of the Christians, as inconsistent with an humble and mortified life; and however refined and exquisite the taste which, through education and the habits of society, any of them had acquired, they learned to subject it to the higher principle of denying themselves to every thing that tended too much to captivate the senses, and increase their love to a world, the fashion whereof they though was soon to pass away.

Thus, discarding all worldly pomp and luxury, the early professors of the Christian faith strove to cultivate an entire superiority to those carnal pleasures which prevailed among the heathen. But, while in the furniture of their houses they used articles of the plainest kind, they came, in process of time, to adopt a more ornamental style of domestic arrangement—converting, however, the images of idolatry, so universally found in the houses of their pagan countrymen, into emblems of subjects connected with the Christian system.

From the Western Christian Advocate, A Remarkable Circumstance.

MR. EDITOR.—Not long since, at one of my protracted meetings where the work of God was graciously prospering, I witnessed a circumstance such as has seldom marked the progress of the Christian Church in her onward march. There was a gentleman residing in the neighborhood of the meeting, who has spent his days in sin and rebellion, and although he had not attended the meeting yet he poured his curses on it, but especially on the preacher. On one sabbath morning his aged lady besought him to conduct her, as she was blind, to their son's where the meeting was held; but she besought in vain.—For instead of granting the desired assistance, he shouldered his rifle and moved his aged frame to a thicket where he might spend the day in improving opportunities for shooting the passing deer.

The next day on hearing of this I visited him, and proposed to him to have a meeting the day following at his house, to which he very coolly assented, by saying, "As it may be gratifying to the old lady, I will not object." When this meeting had passed I requested that the day following there might be another; and this request was also granted. The day came, the hour appointed for meeting arrived, finding him in the congregation, though the preceding day during the hour of worship he was careful not to be seen. This, however, proved to be with him "a day of days." For while others were experiencing the manifestations of Divine grace, his heart was touched, tendered, melted, and powerfully converted to God. But what makes the circumstance so wonderful is this: not only was this aged sinner converted, but a daughter reclaimed, a grandson and a great-grandson were likewise converted, and all of them in the same hour. Though once this little house echoed with the dancing song of the tawny aborigines, it now, for well it might, rang with the high praises of a heart-converting God. Here was a lovely sight! An aged sire just ready to step into the grave, children, grandchildren, and a great grandchild, all exulting in Christ together. Four generations, born into spiritual life in the same hour is what I have not seen mark before the page of history.

The reason why the old gentleman would not attend the meeting while it was at his son's, was because there existed between him and his son's wife unreconciled difficulties, and until he could yield they were irreconcilable. So determined was he, that he had not been in his son's house, (though it was near by,) or spoke a word to his daughter-in-law for the space of thirteen months. No sooner, however, was the love of God shed abroad in the heart of this old man, than he puts on his hat and off he starts, and is seen to make his way to a house in which he had not entered rising of a year, that wrongs might be righted and differences cancelled. They met, and as the tears flowed down his furrowed cheeks, he says, "Mary, I heartily forgive you the past; come let us live together in friendship."

This was Christianity on which there is needed no comment. May God hasten the time when the nations shall be brought to experience its power, and share in its benefits.

Yours in Christ,
G. A. REEDER,
Head of Platt, March 28, 1848.

Poverty not always an Excuse for having Ignorant Children.

There are many valuable helps, of which parents may and ought to avail themselves in obtaining for their children the blessings of education. They cannot, perhaps, afford to send them to an expensive school; but, happily, there are now schools within the reach of most families, where children are taught the rudiments of useful learning freely, or for so small a weekly payment as almost the poorest families can, by good management, command, and will exert themselves to do; in proportion as they are sensible of the value of learning. When a mother takes pains to inspire into the minds of her children an earnest desire for instruction, they may generally be induced to devise means of earning something by their own industry and ingenuity, and devote it to the purpose of acquiring knowledge and purchasing books. But, even supposing the income of the family so scanty, as that every cent must go to purchase the necessaries of life, and that the whole time of every child capable of labour must be employed for the support of the family, or in nursing younger children, that the mother may be at liberty to earn something for their support; still there is the Sunday-school, where knowledge of the most valuable kind may be obtained, without money and without price, and without sacrifice of working time. See that your children constantly avail themselves of that inestimable privilege; and endeavour to second the efforts of devoted teachers, and to promote the improvement of your children—perhaps of yourself also—by encouraging the children to converse at home about what they learn at school, and to read in the family the books with which they are furnished. If the privilege is extended to them, of an hour or two's instruction on a week day evening in writing, or other useful knowledge not coming within the compass of Sunday-school instruction, you will, no doubt, kindly arrange matters so as that they may be spared to receive it; and you will employ it as a motive to diligence and contrivance on their own part, that they may be at liberty to attend without infringing on their ordinary business. By your thus judiciously leading them to prize instruction, they will rarely be inclined to bring into competition with it their childish plays; and however heartily they may engage in innocent sports in their leisure time in general, the appointed evening for visiting their teacher will be sacredly and cheerfully devoted to higher pursuits. If your children thus constantly enjoy and improve these advantages, they will not have to complain of want of education. They will possess such information as will qualify them to pass through life respectably in their present sphere, or as will form a solid ground work for more extensive knowledge, which changing circumstances may give them an opportunity of acquiring. Depend upon it, in the present day, young people do not grow up in ignorance simply because their parents are poor and uneducated, if they are not also indifferent to the value of learning.

From Egypt to Canaan.

An aged minister, a correspondent of the Tennessee Baptist, dating from "Mount Ebenezer, near Alexandria, T.," gives the following unique description of the "short method" of being "born again," under the new constitution as he calls it.

"Religion is religion now, as it always has been; but the way of coming into possession of it is—Ah me! The people don't leave Egypt now as Israel did, and march forward under the command of Moses, the great lawgiver, by the special directions of the Lord Jehovah—from Rameses to Succoth and Etham, through the wilderness, on to Pa-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon, and pitch before Migdol, by the Red Sea, shut in by the wilderness on either hand, and the rolling waves of the Red Sea in front, and the formidable army of Egypt marching down on them, in dread array, where, oh where, they are compelled to cry unto God; and "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" by a newly created way through the waters of the great deep. Then on by Mt. Sinai, through the Great Desert, on to the plains of Moab, on the east side of Jor-

dan; where the great lawgiver dies, in order for Joshua, the Captain General of God Almighty's host, to lead them through the midst of Jordan into the promised inheritance.

But now, brother Howell, the people have found out a much higher way from Egypt to Canaan. When they leave Rameses, they march on by the Isthmus of Suez, then over the river of Egypt, the Sihor, the brook Besor, directly into Canaan, leaving the Red Sea to the right hand, and Mount Sinai so far, that they see not even the flash of the lightning, nor hear the awful thunders roll.

And this way, my brother, they have bestowed so much labor on, that has become to be a beautiful Macadamized road, and travelers now meet little or no difficulty in passing from Egypt to Canaan.

A Holy Clergy.

Let it ever be remembered, that no church can effect the highest ends of its institution, unless the clergy who minister at its altar walk worthy of their profession, as well as teach her scriptural doctrines, and administer her sacramental rites. Even the Jewish Church, Divinely appointed in all its parts, lost its general spirituality and efficiency by the decay of piety in its pastors. The Seven Asiatic Churches, whose praise is in the Apocalypse, once stars in the Son of Man's right hand, are extinct from the same cause. No creeds, no articles, no ecclesiastical platform, can be a substitute for a holy, diligent, humble, consistent clergy. In fact, the mass of mankind have always judged of a church by the doctrine and lives of its actual ministers, more than by its antiquity and formularies. And, undoubtedly it is upon that the conversion, edification, and salvation of each passing generation almost entirely depend.—Dr. Wilson.

Progress of Luxuries.

There is hardly a single article, says McCulloch, among those now reckoned most indispensable to existence, or a single improvement of any sort, but which has not been denounced at its introduction as a useless superfluity, or as being in some way injurious. Few articles of clothing are at present considered more essential than shirts; but there are instances on record of individuals being put in the pillory for presuming to use so expensive and unnecessary a luxury! Chimneys were not commonly used in England until the middle of the sixteenth century; and in the introductory discourse to *Hollinshed's Chronicles*, published in 1757, there is a bitter complaint of the multitude lately erected, of the exchange of straw pallets for mattresses or flock-beds, and of wooden platters for earthenware and pewter. In another place he laments, that nothing but oak is used for building, instead of willow as heretofore; adding that "formerly our houses were indeed of willow, but our men were of oak; but now that our houses are of oak our men are not only of willow, but some altogether of straw, which is a sore alteration!"—*The Polit. Econ.*

A GLANCE AT THE LIFE OF A COLPORTEUR.—"My field is a very difficult one," writes a Tract Colporteur in Ohio. "It is a swampy country, and hard to get over, especially where poverty and ignorance so extensively prevail. I have travelled for days when my horse would go to his knee joints in mud, and I could only dismount on the door steps of the cabins. The people have no enterprise and they seem to have lost all disposition to do any thing. Wickedness seems to abound. Some of the log houses are wholly destitute of chairs, beds and tables; in one cabin, with the parents and seven children, there was not the first evidence of a bed, but they slept in the corners of the room upon the bare floor! The father could read; he said he was once a preacher, but could not maintain his family and gave up the work in despair.—They were totally destitute of books, but gratefully received the volumes and tracts I gave them."

A PREACHER'S EXPERIENCE.—I am arrived at a time of life when my views of early habits, particularly in relation to the ministry, are greatly changed. I see many things in a different light from what I once did; such is the beauty of order, of regularity, and the wisdom of seeking to win souls by kindness, rather than to convert them by hastiness, and what I once called fidelity. I admire more the idea which I have of our blessed Lord's spirit and ministry that I once did.—*Simcon.*