

**The Unfinished Prayer.**

"Now I lay"—say it darling;  
 "Lay me," lisped the tiny lips  
 Of my daughter, kneeling, bending,  
 O'er her folded finger-tips.  
 "Down to sleep"—"To sleep," she murmured,  
 And the curly head dropped low;  
 "I pray the Lord"—I gently added,  
 "You can say it all I know."  
 "Pray the Lord"—the words came faintly,  
 Fainter still—"My soul to keep;"  
 Then the tired head fairly nodded,  
 And the child was fast asleep.  
 But the dewy eyes half opened,  
 When I clasped her to my breast,  
 And the dear voice softly whispered,  
 "Mamma, God knows all the rest,"  
 Oh, the trusting, sweet confiding  
 Of the child heart! Would that I  
 Thus might trust my Heavenly Father,  
 He who hears my feeblest cry.

**Christian Politeness.**

Christian manners is a comprehensive term. The word "manners" in earlier days included all that pertained to the life of a people. Hence books of travel treat of "the manners and customs" of nations. In an important sense "manners make the men."

Let us study the Christianity of our manners, the manners of our Christianity.

1. There is a reciprocal action between our outward department and the radical condition of the heart. Too many reason that it is of no consequence what the department is, if the feeling is right; but this is a radical mistake. "To him who ordereth his conversation aright" God will show His salvation. Religion is real refinement. It is not surface work, but begins within, with the motives of the heart. It acts outward, and then reacts inward, as the root shoots upward into the branch, and then, by pruning the branches, the life of the root, in turn, is improved. As Demosthenes said of Oratory, so may we say of Religion—action is of first and last importance. You form a child's principles in this way, as the habit of stillness, by enforcing quietude of the body for a certain time, or control of speech, by stopping the hasty expression. "Evil communications (intercourse) corrupt good manners." Chesterfield was not a true model. Gilt and tinsel, veneer and varnish cannot supply the lack of sterling worth, nor can a dummy, clad in elegant garments, make a man.

2. A great deal of Christian kindness is pent up by gelid stiffness of life, and so inoperative! Therefore, manners should be studied. A spring of pure water may be obstructed by leaves and twigs, and so is the stream of inward affection clogged by outward hindrances in its manifestation.

3. Considerateness is an essential element of Christian politeness. Be pitiful, be courteous. It is because your neighbor is weaker and ready to halt that you make straight paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way. Your speech also is, for this reason, with grace, seasoned with salt.

Again, trivialities are not to be overlooked. How many who can be polite in a parlor are boorish in their treatment of strangers at church; who are supple in a dance, yet cannot bend head or knee in worship; who can sing in an opera, but are silent in an anthem of praise to God; who dread soiled feet in their hallway, but drag into the sanctuary their soiled and sordid thoughts, with no mat in the vestibule of their hearts! There are those who are all attention when listening to the voice of a fellow, but fear not to take a nap when God speaks; who are not a moment behind hand at the store, but stroll into a church service at their indolent leisure. Many a woman spends more time in attiring her person to meet the world, than in dressing the soul to meet her Redeemer. Keep, then, thy foot when going to God's house! Put off thy sandals, for the place is holy ground!

Yet, again, one's manners are a source of Christian influence, and so of success. It is said that Henry Clay's handling of his spectacles was a part of his eloquence,

and that another orator could move an audience by the simple utterance of "notwithstanding." Many a weighty sermon is baulked by a poor delivery, while one lighter in substance is admired on account of its elocution. Many study how to enter a room, but have no knowledge how to enter a human heart. There needs to be a training of nurses for sick souls, as well as for sick bodies. Paul knew how to be to the weak as one weak; to condescend to those of low estate; to be all things to all men, if he could thereby save some. Forget not that your life is your sermon, and see that it has a good delivery!

All these suggestions as to Christian courtesy apply to churches as well as individuals, and, if followed, would heal asperities and rivalries and schism. "Sirs, ye are brethren," not to sit in judgment one upon the other, but as companions and co-adjutors.

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