

THE CHRISTIAN TREASURY

A FAMILY MISCELLANY

Contents.

	PAGE
THE BODY THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST. By Rev. DAVID SIMPSON, Laurencekirk,	217, 229
WYBRANDT AERTSEN. Chaps. IV., V.,	219, 246
A PORTION FOR THE AGED: "BROTHER SAUL"—PLEASANT GREETINGS—"IN GREAT DANGER"—WHICH ONE?	222, 223
LUTHER'S REFORMING ACTIVITY AND PERSONAL LIFE, 1525-1529. By JULIUS KOESTLIN, D.D., Professor in the University at Halle-Wittenberg,	224, 244
POETRY: HOUR OF PRAYER,	226
A DAILY PORTION,	227, 228, 239, 240, 252, 263, 264
RICHARD THE LION-HEARTED. By ERNEST GILMORE,	231
THE SNARES OF SOUTH WINDS AND SMOOTH SEAS. By THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.,	233
RELIGIOUS HOURS,	234
POETRY: ONLY IN THEE,	234
HER REWARD. By ERNEST GILMORE,	235
THE CHILD OF THE SEA; OR, FOR LOVE OF ME. By KATHLEEN MARY SMITH. Chap. VII.,	236
EXPERIMENTAL AND PRACTICAL,	239
CORRECTIVES OF THE POPULAR IDEA OF RETRIBUTION. By PROFESSOR AUSTIN PHELPS, D.D.,	241
TWO WAYS IN WHICH TO PREACH,	248
POETRY: COME,	249
HOW TWO LADIES FELL OUT. By Rev. IRENAEUS S. PRIME, D.D., Editor of <i>New York Observer</i> ,	250
POETRY: SERVING JESUS,	251
WALKING IN THE LIGHT. By THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.,	253
RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE,	254
HOW TO FIND CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS. By WOLCOTT CALKINS,	255
LIVING EPISTLES,	256
A SISTER'S INFLUENCE. By B. A. F.,	257
SOMETHING THAT WE CAN DO. By MRS ANNIE A. PRESTON,	258
ETERNAL GAIN OF SERVING GOD,	259
SOME NEW BOOKS,	260
INTELLIGENCE,	261

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WALKING IN THE LIGHT.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.



An intrepid man of science wishes to ascend the hitherto inaccessible Alpine peak of the Weiss-horn. He lies, over night, in one of the clefts of rock on the mountain side; the ascent is too dangerous to be attempted in the darkness. In the early dawn, as soon as the first rays

of the coming sun steal up behind the summit of the Alphodel, he is on the move. In that light he sees light. With a clear view of the hazardous pathway before him he creeps across sharp knife-edges of snow and cliff, and up dizzy walls of rock, until he swings his little flag in triumph from the lofty peak.

In like manner an ancient psalmist and prophet, desiring to know many things hard to be discovered, exclaims, 'O God! in *Thy* light shall we see light.' The first thing to be done was to put himself into that great element of light which flows down from the infinite fount-head of truth. He recognised God. He looked Godward. He waited on Him 'more than they that watch for the morning.' This life has too many mysteries, too many hard problems, too many precipices and pitfalls for any of us to venture through it by the sparks of our own kindling. Happy will it be for us if we determine to walk only and constantly in the light of the Lord.

The supreme value of the Bible consists in the fact that it is divine truth put into a portable shape. We can carry it with us and find there just what we need for every emergency. The author of the 119th Psalm, remembering how often he had threaded his way through the dark and narrow streets of the Holy City, exclaims, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.' This is the unanswerable argument for the Book which no scoffer can overthrow; this makes it inestimably precious to those who study it and go by it. It is the only guide-book given under heaven and known among men that is invariably safe to be followed and never misleads us; the only lamp that I dare to carry with me when I enter the valley of

the shadow of death. To Coleridge's famous eulogy of the Word of God, 'It is the book that always *finds me*,' may be added that it is the only one which always find *for me* the one safe, sure path through a life beset with perils. The people who commit the worst blunders and stumble oftenest in times of temptation are *not* the people who walk in the light of their Bibles.

But the supreme glory of the Bible is Christ Jesus. As the chief object of the Eddystone tower is to lift high that blazing Fresnel burner that flings its radiance over the stormy sea, so is it the chief purpose of the Word to show us God in Christ. In the face of Jesus Christ we get the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. We can only see and comprehend God in the person of His Son; the 'only begotten Son, He hath declared Him.' There was no presumption, therefore, in the persecuted Peasant of Galilee, when He said, 'I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' Reading about Jesus in my Bible is not enough. Admiring, reverencing His wonderful character is not enough. I need to have Him 'formed within me, the hope of glory.' I must open my inmost soul to Him—every door, every apartment—and let Him fill me with Himself if I want to be illuminated and purified. The whole man is full of light only when full of Christ. The faith that profits me is not an intellectual opinion or assent, it is the *act* of opening my whole nature to the Son of God so that He pours into me of His wisdom, His strength, His righteousness, His grace. There is a great temptation to us all to follow other people, to be carried by currents and fashions; a still worse temptation to be guided by the false principles of mere expediency instead of absolute *right*. These are all transient sparks, often delusive Jack-o'-lanterns. A genuine Christian may be, ought to be, so possessed by the Lord Jesus Christ, that Christ shall shine within him and shine out from him. How else can we ever become 'lights in the world' such as our Master has commanded

us to be? When we surrender ourselves so completely to our Lord that His will is our will, and His Word is our law, and His spirit rules, and purifies, and elevates, and sweetens ours, then we actually walk in the light of the Son of God.

Here is a good test of character. Our All-Wise Master said of certain persons that they would not come to the light lest their evil deeds be reprov'd. I suspect that this is one reason why many people draw away from Christ; even some who profess to be Christians dread too powerful and searching a discovery of their own secret sins. Their blemishes look too ugly; they feel about their own inward selves as the sluttish housemaid did about her cobwebbed and dusty parlour, when she said, 'The room looked decent enough 'till the nasty *light* came into it.' Never can we hope to mend faults till we discover them, however painful to pride and self-conceit. Never can we see faults and deceitful sins in their false disguises until we look honestly at ourselves in the light of Jesus Christ. A whitewashed character is not a clean character; a covered cancer is not a cured cancer; a soul that will not bear the scrutiny of Christ's sin-revealing truth in this world will certainly not bear the tremendous glare of the last great day. The real difference between an unsanctified heart and the genuine, humble, docile disciple of Christ is that the one dreads the light and the other desires the light. 'Ye were *once darkness*,' said the great Apostle to his brethren, 'but are now light in the Lord. Walk as the children of light; for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.'

The world has a right to expect a great many things from all of us who call ourselves Christians. It is the business of a Christian not to smoke, but to shine. The dark-lantern religion that never makes itself visible to others will never guide you or me to heaven. We ought to reflect our Saviour as light-givers. When Moses came down from the mount he brought God in his shining face. The impressive Christians—the Wesleys, Paysons, Albert Barneses of the pulpit, the William E. Dodges and Theodore Frelinghuysens in commercial and civil life—have been men who made Jesus Christ *visible* to others. Sandy Hook lantern does not sound a gong; it *shines*. They that walk in the light of the Lord fling the rays of their influence; their example is even a richer gift than their gifts of money or kind deeds of charity.

The world has a right to expect a cheerful,

contented spirit; yes, more than that—a courageous joy in the Lord from all of Christ's followers. We ought to live above the fog-belt. The higher up the holier, the higher up the happier. A churlish, croaking, gloomy professor of gospel-religion is a living libel; he *haunts* society like a ghost. But there is One who says to us, 'I am come that your joy may be full.' Let us open our souls to Him, and our faces will shine; He can make even tears to sparkle; we shall carry sunshine into the darkest hours; we shall catch instalments of heaven in advance. 'Come ye and and let us walk together in the light of the Lord.'

RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE.

THE one overwhelming sad truth that perpetually confronts us in this land of churches and religious opportunities is that the great bulk of the people are living in absolute neglect of religion; in apparent unconcern about their soul's well-being. The question is discussed in religious papers, at minister's meetings, and in conventions both in this country and in Europe, How shall we reach with the gospel the masses? They will not come to the churches. It was once hoped that through the efforts of the evangelists, holding meetings in public halls, pastors and Christian people co-operating, they might be reached, but where hundreds come, thousands stay away—thousands who live on from day to day without God and without hope, who care nothing for the Bible, who never bend the knee in prayer, who are hurrying on, except they repent, to a woeful eternity.

Now, with the accumulation of evidence that men have, in this Christian land, is this wisdom? Is this rational? Is this what intelligent men—and many of them are intelligent—would call prudence? No! There is nothing in this world more certain to befall every man than death; and there is nothing more certain in the world to come than the judgment throne, at which every man must give account of himself to God. To trifle here, to be insensible to the pity and mercy of God, to refuse the love and blood of Christ, to neglect the great salvation, when it is brought to the very doors of the people, and urged upon them, is the most consummate folly of which they can be guilty.

The Christian religion does not prohibit attention to their daily vocations; on the contrary, it enjoins 'diligence in business;' at the same time, however, and with mightier emphasis, it enforces the care of the soul, the importance of which is indicated by our Saviour in the question, 'What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world'—all its riches, all its honours, all its enjoyments—'and lose his own soul?'—*Christian Intelligencer*.