

INTRODUCTION



It is for you who are called by the name of Christ that these pages are written: that you may be reminded of what God expects of you, and of what your new name commits you to.

It is a great thing to be a Christian. The very name is a noble one, beyond all the noble names of earth. The thing itself is inconceivably blessed and glorious. To say, 'I am a Christian,' is to say, 'I belong to God's nobility; I am of the peerage of heaven.'

Much, then, is expected of you.

Do not disgrace the old family name. Do nothing unworthy of Him who represents you in heaven, and whom you represent on earth. He is faithful to you; be you so to Him. Let men know what a Lord and Master you serve. Be His witnesses; be His mirrors; be His living epistles. Let Him speak through you to the world; and do you speak of Him. Let your life tell your fellowmen what

He is, and what He is to you. Speak well of Him to men, as He speaks well of you to God. He has honoured you by giving you His name. He has blessed you by conferring on you sonship, and royalty, and an eternal heritage. See that you do justice to His love, and magnify His greatness.

Let your light shine. Do not obstruct it, or hide it, or mingle darkness with it. 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee' (Isa. 60:1).

It is the light of love that you have received; let it shine. It is the light of truth; let it shine. It is the light of holiness; let it shine. And if you ask, 'How am I to get the light, and to maintain it in fulness?' I answer, 'Christ shall give you light' (Eph. 5:14). There is light enough in Him who is the light of the world. 'The Lamb is the light thereof' (Rev. 21:23). There is no light for man but from the Lamb. It is the cross, the cross alone, that lights up a dark soul and keeps it shining, so that we walk in light as He is in the light; for 'God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all' (1 John 1:5).

Be true to Him who loved you and washed you from your sins in His own blood. He deserves it at your hands. It is the least that you can do for Him.

Follow Him. His first words to you were, 'Come to me.' You came and found rest. But He adds these two other messages, 'Abide in me,' and 'Follow me.' You take up your cross as He took up His and you follow Him. You go forth without the camp, bearing His reproach (Luke 9:23; Heb. 13:13). Through good report and through bad report you follow Him. He draws you, leads you, keeps you—and

so you follow Him. Your whole life is to be one continuous following of the Lord. 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour' (John 12:26). 'My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me' (John 10:27). 'Followers of Him who is Good', is Peter's description of a believing man (1 Pet. 3:13; such is the proper rendering of the passage, and not 'of that which is good'). And the sure promise is, 'He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life' (John 8:12).

In following Him, you will look onward—for He set His face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem. And when Peter would have hindered His going to the cross, He answered, 'Get thee behind me, Satan' (Matt. 16:23). You will look upward too; for He 'lifted up His eyes to heaven;' and your posture must be 'looking upwards,' with your affection set on things above (Col. 3:1). You must bear the contradiction of sinners as He did (Heb. 12:3). You must count the reproach of Christ greater riches than all earthly treasures (Heb. 11:26). You must keep before your eyes Him who was 'despised and rejected of men,' yet who was 'meek and lowly in heart,' whose 'heart was not haughty nor His eyes lofty, who did not exercise Himself in great matters or in things too high for Him, who behaved and quieted Himself as a child that is weaned of his mother, whose soul was as a weaned child' (Ps. 131:1-2).

You began with turning your back upon the world, and 'looking to Jesus,' keep ever thus. Looking to Him brought rest to you at first, and healed your soul; so, looking to Him

daily will maintain your rest and perfect your spiritual health. 'Looking to Jesus' will give you light in hours of darkness, will strengthen you in weakness, will comfort you in trouble, will cheer you in the day of weariness.

Should your eye ever be withdrawn from the cross, you will be sure to go back, to grow cold, and to forget that you were purged from your old sins (2 Pet. 1:9).^{*} That cross is life, health, holiness, consolation, strength, joy—let nothing come between it and you. In the light of that cross go upon your way steadfastly, for to him on whose path that cross is shining there can be no abiding darkness. Clouds and eclipses there may be, but that light can never be quenched, that sun can never go down.

Remember what you are, and what God expects at your hand. Act out your own professions, your own faith, your own prayers.

God has had mercy on you, and in His great love He has laid His almighty hand on you that you might be saved. He has 'sent from above, and taken, and drawn you out of many waters' (Ps. 18:16), delivering you not only 'from the wrath to come' (1 Thess. 1:10), but from 'a present evil world' (Gal. 1:4). By His gracious power He

* Glory in the cross as Paul did (Gal. 6:14), but *do not wear such a thing on your person*. There is something awful in making an *ornament* of the cross to beautify our persons. Be sparing of ornament and finery in dress. Remember your espousals to the Lord 'as a chaste virgin' (2 Cor. 11:2). It is the 'white raiment' (Rev. 19:8), not 'the purple and scarlet, the gold and precious stones and pearls' (Rev. 17:4), that can alone befit the bride of Christ. Study the three following passages: Isaiah 3:16-23; 1 Timothy 2:8-10; 1 Peter 3:3-4.

has turned you from the error of your ways; and one of the many names by which you are henceforth to be known on earth is that of ‘converts’ or ‘turned ones.’

But your ‘turning’ or ‘conversion’ is only a beginning—no more. It is *not the whole*; it is but the first step. You are a ‘disciple,’ that is, one under teaching; but your teaching, your discipleship, has only *commenced*. Your life is a book, it may be a volume of larger or smaller size, and conversion is but the title page or the preface. The book itself remains to be written, and your years and weeks and days are its chapters and leaves and lines. It is a book written for eternity; see that it be written well. It is a book for the inspection of enemies as well as friends; be careful of every word. It is a book written under the eye of God; let it be done reverently, without levity, yet without constraint or terror.

Let me give you a few counsels. You will soon feel your need of them, unless, perhaps, you are of those who are too wise to learn, and are ‘vainly puffed up in their fleshly *mind*.’