

Religion.

Christ did not come to cramp any one's manhood. He came to broaden it. He did not come to destroy our manhood. He came to fulfill it. A thorough-going Christian is a man with a stronger reason, kinder kinder heart, firmer will and richer imagination than his fellows—one who has attained to his height in Christ. A bigot or a prig or a weakling is a half-developed Christian, one not yet arrived at full age.

What ought a Christian to read? Every book which feeds the intellect. Where ought he to go? Every place where the moral atmosphere is pure and bracing. What ought he to do? Everything that will make character. Religion is not negative, a giving up this or that, but positive, a getting and a possessing. If a man will be content with nothing but the best thought, best work, best friends, best environment, he need not trouble about avoiding the worst. The good drives out the bad. There are two ways of lighting a dark room: One is to attack the darkness with candles. The other is to open the shutters and let in the light. When light comes, darkness goes. There are two ways of forming character. One is to conquer our sins, the other is to cultivate the opposite virtues. The latter plan is best because it is surest—the virtue replaces the sin. Christianity is not a drill. It is life, full, free, radiant and rejoicing. What a young man should do is not to vex himself about his imperfections, but to fix his mind on the bright image of perfection; not to weary his soul with rules, but to live with Christ as one liveth with a friend. There is one way to complete manhood, and that is, fellowship with Jesus Christ.—John Watson.

Why We Believe the Bible.

Why, then do we believe this Bible? Because it has been handed down to us by our fathers? No, no. Because the church has authoritatively ordered us to believe it? Not at all. Because experts in scholarship have declared it sufficiently safe to believe some parts of it? Nay, verily. Because it purports to be a revelation from God? By no manner of means. Then upon what does this Bible rest for its ultimate authority over the hearts of men? Because the fruits of this word of God have been such as they are. That is the simple, final test. Sinful and sorrowing men have come to this word of God and have found the way of forgiveness and peace. They have been transformed from an old evil life to a new and beautiful life of righteousness. The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ which stands in the midst of it, illuminates it every where, and has again and again proved to be the power of God unto the salvation of men. The quality of its perennial fruits commends the Bible to us, and judged by its fruits, there is no other such book in the world. This book we believe because the fruits of it have been utterly beneficent. This book we believe because it has been dynamic in revolutionizing lives. This book we believe because in it we find the vision of God, of a redeemed and rejuvenated society. We believe it not because of its canonicity, not because the ages have accepted it, not because men hold it before us and say, You must believe it or perish, but we believe it because in our own hearts and in our own study of human history we have found that its fruits are of God. It is the supreme test which Jesus Christ applied. It is the test to which every society, every church, and every school must submit.—N. E. Wood, D.D.

Our Young People

Constant Companionship.

John 14 : 15-28 ; Matt. 28 : 20.

The Christian Endeavor Prayer Meeting for July 13.

Our Leader Speaks.

One day a wise man was engaged in watching an ant. The little insect was looking for food, and the wise man put in its path a piece of flesh. Knowing nothing, of course, of the wise man, not seeing him or perceiving him in any way, yet the ant seized upon the piece of flesh and tried to pull it off to the ant-hill.

But a score of difficulties beset it along the path. There were sticks, to get over, and grass thickets to force through, and stones to go around, and pits to avoid. The ant would have met with a dozen mishaps if the wise man had not removed the sticks, opened up a way through the tangled grass, lifted the flesh over the hollows, and brought the ant and its burden safely at last to its home. And all the while the ant knew absolutely nothing of its benefactor.

This is only a poor illustration of what Christ is doing all the days for us. He is ever by our side, only He is so great and we are so small that we cannot see Him. He is of the spirit world, and we are still in the ant world of dull matter.

But unlike the man and the ant, our Lord has come down into our world in token that He is always ready to aid us. He has talked with men, and they with Him, in token that He is always glad to talk with men.

And if we will only use the eyes of our souls, shutting these confusing eyes of sense, we can see our Lord smoothing the way before us, placing our food where we can find it, opening up the tangles, filling up the pits, bridging the morasses, warding off every danger, and sometimes taking us up bodily and carrying both us and our burden.

If this is true,—and nothing in all the world is more true or real,—why should we ever feel lonely or discouraged or at a loss?

Our Members Testify.

Some one has compared those that live close to Christ to men in a fortress which has within it an unfailing fountain. No matter how many enemies may surround the fort, they cannot cut off this supply of life-giving water.

The two from Emmaus that walked so far with Christ without knowing Him, knew Him as soon as they received Him into their house, and He blessed bread at their table. A poet has drawn the moral thus:—
"Wouldst know the Christ? Make Him thy guest;
His hearth-stone manner shows Him best."

Alexander McLaren bids us look at the cloud that catches the rays of the sun, though it is below the horizon, drinks them in until its heart is full of them, and then flashes them out in a thousand soft and lovely glories upon the world below. Thus ought the Christian to catch the beauty of Christ, and when He is seen by our hearts, He will shine forth in our lives.

When one we love very much has left our house, how empty it seems! We find ourselves looking for him when we go in, and expecting to see his face every time the door opens, and imagining we hear his voice

though he is hundreds of miles away. That is what the constant companionship of God ought to mean in our lives. It ought to be so real, so vivid, that a day or an hour without Him would make us lonesome.

During his last illness, Tennyson said that he would be afraid to live his life without God's presence, and that to feel that God was by his side, just like the friend with whom he was talking, was the very joy of his heart. If Tennyson, with all his store of beautiful thoughts, needed God's constant companionship, surely we do.

Probably everyone is glad sometimes to think of Christ as near at hand to save from peril, and to help over hard places. But the dearest joys of companionship are not in the storm, but in the calm; and no one has the best companionship with Christ who does not delight to take to Him his daily pleasures and successes and hopes.

Some Christians seem cut off from earthly companionship, and lead lonely lives. Perhaps they are repining at this; but if they would only think it over, they might conclude that God had shut them thus away from others in order that they might have more time and opportunity for close companionship with Himself. And that companionship is worth all friendships of earth many times over.

You are not keeping Christ's company unless other folks can see the results of the companionship in your face and life. The face of Moses told that he has been with God. After the twelve had spent three years with the Master, even their enemies declared that they had been with Jesus and showed the effects. What do men see when they look in our faces?

The Need for Encouragement.

A sympathetic hearer of sermons said recently that what he most misses in modern preaching is the note of encouragement. In reading the gospels he finds "the most scathing condemnation of sin, but the most wonderful stimulus and helpfulness for the sinner. Nowadays there is too much fault-finding, to little attempt to awaken enthusiasm for goodness, too little exposition of the beauty and fragrance of the higher life." There is much in this criticism that is just. Jesus was an embodiment in His ministry of the prophetic word, "A bruised reed shall he not break; and smoking flax shall he not quench." Preachers should cultivate what has been well called "the wooing note." Souls can never be driven into the kingdom of heaven; but that they may be drawn into it from the very brink of the pit, is clear from the miracles of conversion that are recorded on every page of the gospels.—The Christian (London.)

Daily Readings.

Mon.,	July 7.—The test of comradeship.	
Tues.,	" 8.—Knocking.	1 John 2 : 1-6
Wed.,	" 9.—The Word within.	Rev. 3 : 19-22
		Col. 3 : 14-17
Thurs.,	" 10.—Friends.	John 15 : 13-16
Fri.,	" 11.—The hope of glory.	
		Col. 1 : 21-29
Sat.,	" 12.—Our Helper.	Heb. 13 : 1-6
Sun.,	" 13.—Topic. Constant Companionship.	John 14 : 15-28 ; Matt. 28 : 20