

## Christians Under a Cloud.

BY REV. THEODORE CUYLER, D. D.

It is not every Christian who walks in constant sunshine and carries within him a cheerful and a happy heart. There are quite too many who spend most of their time under a cloud. Here, for example, is one who leads a reputable life before the community; but in his own heart lies an overwhelming mass of doubts that rob him of his spiritual peace. He has become a chronic doubter; and what the Apostle Thomas was for a single evening, he is for nearly every day and night of his uncomfortable existence. It has become habitual with him to distrust God's promises, and sometimes to distrust his own conversion. He seldom knows what it is to grasp a divinely revealed truth firmly and cling to it, and rest on it, and grow by it, as his own body eats and thrives on his daily food. If the Apostle Paul should come to him and say, "I know whom I have believed," he would be very apt to reply, "How do you know it? I never have any clear assurance. I sometimes doubt if ever Jesus Christ redeemed me, or if the Holy Spirit ever converted me. I am enrolled on the church record as a 'believer' and yet I am very often a terrible doubter."

That is very true, my friend, and it is your own fault. The man that does that wretched doubting walks in your shoes. It is not another person's sin against you that robs you of peace, but your own sin against your own soul, and against your forbearing Master. It is your besetting sin. God commands you to believe his Word, and you disobey. Jesus Christ bids you look to him, and you look away; to lay hold of him and trust him, and you stand off and question his truthfulness, and love and power. He promises you that if you will honestly strive to obey his commandments, and will sincerely seek the grace that is sufficient for you, he will answer your prayers. You are no exceptional character. If Paul received from Christ pardon, and peace, and power, and assurance of hope, and spiritual joy under fierce trials, so can you. I fear that there is a subtle self-conceit in your heart which pretends that what sufficed for Paul and millions of other Christians, is not clear enough, or efficacious enough, for you.

In addition to a self-conceit of which you may not be fully conscious, you are guilty of no little obstinacy in cherishing your doubts. You hold fast to them, instead of holding fast to him who died to save you. When these harassing doubts come to the door of your heart, instead of bolting it in their face, you let them in, and parley with them and harbor them. Your duty is to treat them as summarily as Joseph treated the wanton proposal of Potiphar's impudent wife. To every skeptical whisper of your tempter, say, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" Pray for more faith. Grasp hold of a promise, as sinking Peter stretched out his arms to his omnipotent Master. Be done with your pitiful "ifs," and lay hold of Christ's immutable "wills" and "shalls." You listen to Satan more than you listen to your Saviour. The wretched habit you have contracted of disbelieving the Lord Jesus must be dealt with as a tippler must deal with his habit of indulging in intoxicants. You must break it up, or it will break you down. Fix your grasp on the loving Son of God, and say to yourself: "If I go on any longer in this way, I shall become an infidel and an outcast. I will be done with the devil, and cling to Christ if I perish. Lord, I believe; help thou my accursed unbelief!"

Depend upon it that you will never attain any sunshine of spiritual peace, or any power, until you—in divine help and strength—overcome this deplorable habit of doubting. What have you ever gained by it? How much has it cost you? And if you expect to rely on Christ in the dying hour, why not do it now? It is said that Dr. Merle D'Aubigne, the famous Swiss historian of the Reformation, was sorely troubled with doubts during his student days. He went to his old experienced teacher for help. The old man refused to discuss the doubts, saying, "Were I to rid you of these others would come. There is a shorter way of destroying them. Let Jesus Christ be really to you the Son of God, the Saviour; and his light will dispel the darkness, and his Spirit will lead you into all truth." That old man was right. He saw the fatal habit which the young man was acquiring; and he knew that the glorious Sun of Righteousness could alone scatter the clouds that make so many lives dark and dreary. I remember that once when a famous infidel book was under discussion in a certain ministerial circle, grand old Dr. Thomas H. Skinner said to us: "Brethren, difficulties have arisen in my own mind that were worse than any or all infidel writers could suggest; I have in the strength of Jesus Christ conquered all these; why should I care what the skeptics have to say?"

I cannot close this article without saying that many professing Christians are under a cloud caused by indulgences in sinful practices. Their transgressions, like a thick cloud, separate between God and their own souls; the divine countenance is hidden as in an awful eclipse. Spiritual declension is always fatal to spiritual peace. No church member who neglects prayer and the house of God, who pursues crooked paths in business, who indulges in secret tipping or unclean lusts, or who is un-

faithful to his word with men and his vows with God, can ever expect to enjoy a blessed "assurance of hope." That is a fearful description which Bunyan drew of certain backsliders, who, having turned over a "stile" from the King's highway, were left to grope among the tombs under the shadow of a dark and lonely mountain. As Christian looked at them, his eyes gushed forth in tears. I have occasionally seen such backsliders awakened out of their guilty condition by some alarming providence, and crying out, "Where is now my hope!" If any who is under such a cloud should read this paragraph, I would say to him or to her,—you may find your lost "hope" where Peter found his when he went out and wept bitterly. You may find it in penitence and confession, at the cross of Christ Jesus. And when, after your return to obedience and right living, the forgiving love of Christ has lifted away the cloud, you will feel as Lazarus must have felt "when he was delivered from the tomb, and back again to his home.—Selected.

## "Hallowed be Thy Name."

BY REV. C. B. F. HALLOCK.

How naturally does this petition follow the discovery, the acknowledgment and the sense that God is our heavenly Father! Every instinct of sonship is quick to own a father's authority, vindicate a father's fame, revere a father's character, to follow a father's name. In breathing this petition, we ask that God would hallow his own name and cause it to be hallowed. In it the child of God prays as a worshipper. In giving it to us, it would seem as if Christ meant to teach us that it should be our earliest prayer, our first desire, to reverence as holy, to sanctify, to consecrate, to separate the name of Jehovah high above all others. The petition is really the Tuid Commandment turned into prayer—"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." This petition takes precedence because it is so all-inclusive, desiring that all things may resolve themselves into a manifestation of the divine glory.

There are duties to which this petition pledges. In it we pray that we and all men may have appropriate thoughts of God, suitable emotions towards God, and make reverential use of his names, titles, ordinances, word and works. We pray also for the promotion of the public and private worship of God, the diligent use of his sacraments and institutions, and for such a diffusion of his honor throughout the world as will remove all causes which prevent his name being hallowed. While we can neither add to nor detract from the essential sanctity and glory of God's name and character, yet we must labor and pray that both may become more clearly visible to the world, more fully demonstrated, displayed and admired by all his rational creatures.

Again there are sins which the petition plainly condemns. Does it grieve us when we hear God's name used in an irreverent and unhallowed way? Are we pained when we hear, as we often do, the veriest child using the most profane language, coupling our Father's name with the most vile oaths, seeming as if it were regarded clever to do so? Can it be considered consistent to employ this name one hour in prayer to God, and the next in cursing fellowmen made in the image of God? Yet there are many men who use it in both these ways. Of course, their praying is only a mere form. But he it known to us all that either we must leave off profanity, or may as well leave off praying this prayer. For how can two walk together except they be agreed? What concord has Christ with Belial? With a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Yet with the same tongue bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Prayer and profanity do not pull together, and never can.

It must be acknowledged at once that the outward forms of reverence to God may be most diligently observed where there is total absence of the reality. We recently came across a striking instance of this kind recounted in the letter of a Christian traveler in Europe. He says: "One beautiful Sunday morning I happened to be at Zermatt, under the shadow of the mighty Matterhorn. Passing a Roman Catholic chapel at the hour of service, I went into the vestibule and mingled with the worshippers. My attention was particularly arrested by an extremely handsome Tyrolean guide in the picturesque dress of his native district. At the elevation of the host, not satisfied with imitating the reverence of his fellow-worshippers, he positively prostrated himself on the stone floor. Throughout the whole of that service his attention and his apparent reverence were conspicuous, and greatly impressed me. When the service was over, I happened to walk out of the church immediately behind him. To my horror he had scarcely crossed the threshold of the sanctuary in which he had been apparently so reverent, before he began to swear in the most blasphemous manner, and to use grossly obscene language." There could be no more overwhelming evidence of the fact that all the forms of outward devotion and reverence may be

most scrupulously observed, and at the same time be absolutely meaningless, and worse than meaningless.

In using the Lord's prayer, let us make sure that we use it as the sincere breathing of a filial spirit—"Father," a fraternal spirit—"Our Father," and a reverential spirit—"Hallowed be thy name."—Herald and Presbyter.

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## The Aim of a Christian School.

BY REV. NATHAN E. WOOD, D.D.

The idea of vicarious sacrifice runs all through human society. Its extreme culmination was in Jesus Christ, crucified. The doctrine of a vicarious atonement for the sins of men has been in all history the intensest incentive to evangelizing work. It has made the missionary and the martyr. It has been the unvarying impulse to the most self-denying labors in behalf of others. It has always begotten a spirit of self-sacrifice in those who have believed it. "By its fruits ye shall know it." Every other idea of atonement has resulted in a paralysis of earnest and persistent effort toward the evangelization of the world. Neither missionary nor martyr are its fruits. It has no victorious power. The great doctrine of atonement needs particularly to be studied in the light of its triumphant achievements and its true fruitage.

Humanitarianism under various theological names is actively appealing for public acceptance. It has promised much and accomplished much. It is most alluring as a sociology. All its efforts are put forth upon the plane of man. Its sources of help are no higher than this level. God has been, for the most part, ignored. The supernatural has been flung as unpractical and a superstition. Humanitarianism has sought primarily to better the physical and mental condition of men. Better housings, better sanitation, better foods, better air, and more recreation are to be our physical regenerators. Better schools, better books, better music, better art are to be our mental regenerators. Now all this is admirable and valuable so far as it goes. I have no word to utter against its usefulness.

But the aim of a school established for the education of a Christian is that it may accumulate and use power as a forerunner of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Its supreme purpose is not to promote scholarship, or to give intellectual training to its students. It is not to accumulate vast wealth of appliances for research. It is not to accumulate academic atmospheres and ideals—all these things are necessary and useful. But over and above all must be the ideal and controlling purpose to make all tributary to the moral redemption of the race, and the bringing of the whole world into loving obedience to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The fruits of a Christian school are to be the same in kind as the fruits of a Christian church. Knowledge and character are to be twin results. The teacher misses the highest ideals of his calling if he fails to be a pastor to his class. The pastor misses the highest ideals of his calling if he fails to be a teacher to his flock.—Watchman.

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## God's Open Doors.

Whatever God may deny us, he never denies us the opportunity to do the right thing. This thing may be our going forward or our holding back, our acquiescence or our refusal. He leaves it to us to decide and this is our opportunity. Sometimes it is to live, sometimes it is to die. But it rests with us to make the circumstances in which we are placed our opportunity to do the right thing, and to take it. God often shuts the door in our face that we may go through another one which he has opened. He knows that the closed door is the one that we want to go through. But sometimes he permits the opening of a door which he knows that we know we ought not to enter. He thus puts us to the test by allowing us the opportunity of keeping out of it. And there are times when he closes all doors in order that we may have the opportunity of patiently waiting and knocking until one is opened. No one can complain of the lack of opportunity, for he is pretty sure to be in one or another of these cases.—Patterson Du Bois.

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## The Professor.

Serene of face and pure of brow,  
Enthroned among his books a king,  
With little heed for Past or Now,  
Yet with kind thought for everything.

Both true and pure of heart is he,  
Of worldliness he bears no stain.  
Life is to him a theory,  
Small part of it gives any pain.

With forceful logic, wondrous power,  
He teaches Truth to all who hear,  
Inspired he seems from hour to hour;  
His listeners feel that God is near.

From him a gentle influence breathes  
On all his followers far and near:  
Unknown, unsought, the laurel wreaths  
Are woven him from year to year.

Far from the restless, selfish throng  
He sits at night and reads alone,  
Perchance he scans a simple song—  
A king grows lonely on his throne.

And when at last the midnight oil  
Fades out, and lights around grow dim,  
Peaceful, he rests from daily toil—  
He sleeps, and God still talks with him.

Wolfville, 1901. EVELYN FRANKWICK KRISTEAD.