

The Family Circle.

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CHRIST LEADING HIS FLOCK.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

"**H**E calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he hath put forth His own, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice." The pathway, too, is often one of His own appointing. Our divine Shepherd has never promised us an easy road or such an one as our selfishness might select. He never allows the flock to decide as to the lot in which they shall be pastured, or over what cliffs He may conduct them, or through what vales of the death shadow they shall walk, listening to His loving voice through the darkness. More than once weakness stumbles and falls, but He lifts us up and His grace sets us on our feet again. Sometimes we cry out in anguish over some lost treasure of our heart or home, but His calm reply is, Your treasure I will take care of; *follow Me!*

Strange as it seems to our ideas of things, chastening is a proof of Christ's love, and the sharpness of the discipline is often proportioned by the depth of the love. Pruning knives were made to cut. The trial that tests graces and purifies character must be something more than a pin scratch. It must *try* us; it must cut keenly, or it does not deserve the name of trial. It is hard to be poor while some others are pocketing a large income; it is hard to lie in a sick bed and suffer while godless mirth goes laughing past our door; it is hard to lose our one wee lamb while our neighbor's table is surrounded by a group of rosy-cheeked children; it is hard to drink the very cup that we prayed might pass from us; but the Good Shepherd comes very near us at such times and puts His arm about us and says: "I know My sheep and am known of Mine. I am with you always. Follow Me. If thy feet are sore, the green pastures will be all the softer by-and-by. If thy cross is heavy, I have borne a heavier one. Shall the disciple be above his Master, or the servant greater than his Lord?"

Observe, too, that the Shepherd does not go behind us driving a reluctant herd; He goeth before us, calling and drawing us onward. He offers to guide us if we will but hear His voice and follow Him. If he never promises smooth paths, He always conducts us into *safe* ones. When we obey Him, we may often be called to stern self-denials and difficult duties; to encounter bitter opposition and to perform services of love to some very unloveable and ungrateful people; but we are never called to sacrifice conscience or to do evil even that good may possibly come of it. Our holy Shepherd will never lead us toward any precipice of error, or land us in a quagmire of self-reproach and disgrace. He will never conduct us into the enchanted fields of sensual temptations, or up dizzy heights of vain glory. If we follow Him, we may find that the steepest climb sinews our graces, and the lowliest vale of humiliation is a highway to holiness. Jesus Christ does not guide us through such a world as this just to make us comfortable.

As Miss Fletcher, of Glasgow, (who spent her noble life in saving outcasts) well observed, "It is the devil that employs his gardeners to keep the religious pathway smooth. For Christians,

the rough path of sorrow is not an untrodden path."

Christ leads us through no darker rooms
Than He went through before.
No one into His Kingdom comes,
But through His open door.

Fellow Christians, we may have some hard pulls and tough climbing yet before we reach yonder streets of shining gold. Let us keep close to the Shepherd and take short views. Let us not be content to walk in a path only wide enough for one, but try to take some poor sinners to heaven with us. If we are only sure that our Shepherd is watching us and interceding for us and listening to every prayer that we heave upward to him, then the peace that passeth all understanding shall fill our souls like a river until it is lost in the ocean of Christ's eternal love!—*Evangelist.*

THE OPPOSITION TO THE BIBLE.

"**H**E persistent opposition of many priests of the Church of Rome to the circulation of the Bible among their people is one of the things to be expected in all countries where that church is paramount. It is shown sometimes in direct debate, sometimes in anathemas from the pulpit, sometimes in the seizure and destruction of books which have found their way into the hands of the people. Extracts from the letters of the Rev. James Dick, who died in Ceara, Brazil, in 1892, have lately been published in *The Missionary*, telling experiences which he had in common with many others, in the attempt to make known more widely, through the printed page, the story of the love of Jesus Christ.

In a letter dated June 8th, 1891, he says:

Toward the end of the last year, when I was out one day selling Bibles, I entered a house, and began to speak about the books I had to sell, and about the gospel. The woman in the house had never heard the story of Jesus before, knowing nothing but the Virgin Mary, the saints, etc. She became much interested, but had difficulty about understanding the gospel. She often said, "Well, if that is true, why don't the priests know it and teach it, and why has it not been told before now?"

On my second visit, she bought a New Testament, which she read almost through, and liked very much.

The other week I visited her again, taking with me our native elder. She said that one day the priest had come in while she was reading the New Testament, and she showed it to him, and asked him what he thought about it.

He looked at it, and told her that it did not speak of extreme unction, and was mixed with falsehoods, and that therefore she must on no account read it. He then and there tore the Testament to pieces before her eyes, and carried the fragments away, refusing to leave even the boards of the back. He knew as well as I that he was telling her a falsehood.

A few days later I went to this priest's house, taking with me a Testament just like that which he had torn to pieces. I told him that I had heard that he had done so and so, and asked him if it were true or not. He said "Yes." Taking the New Testament I had with me and handing it to him, I said, "Here is a New Testament; just like the one the woman had, will you kindly show me which parts are false?"

He took the book, saying that he had not examined it. He looked up certain passages and compared them with several of his translations, but, of course, found no difference. He then said, "I have not examined all this book, but it has