

Christian, Let Your Light Shine.

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill can not be hid. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under the bushel, but on the lamp stand; and it shines to all that are in the house. Thus let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Matt. v. 14-17.

Christian, do you let your light shine? If you do not I am a little afraid you have no light to shine. The Christian of old had a light and it shone, and it shines now, and its radiance will never die.

It has been said, and truly too, that "we are not needing the truth of the Bible proved by learned discourse so much as by the holy lives of professing Christians. If they would only live what they profess, the world would soon be converted."

O Christian, you go to the store and pay more in one day for things that (if your heart was right in the sight of God) you would be just as happy without, than you give to the Lord in one year. Where is your light?

When you are complaining of the acts of others when you do the same or worse yourself. When you are eager to repeat anything told against one who has hitherto borne a fair name, how does your light shine then? with a beautiful brightness or as if through a smoked glass?

When you are laughing and jesting with the thoughtless crowd "who know not God and obey not his Gospel" could a person, standing by, see your light shining? You argue that you must be friendly with them in order to join them. Yes, be friendly with them, but do it as Jesus would do it. Speak kindly and gently to them; but be no partaker in their evil works. Be careful that in trying to join them you do not lose yourself.

If sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Our Father would have us to be a "peculiar people zealous of good works." "Pameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as light in the world." Phil. ii. 15.

It is not my purpose to mention the things more generally recognized as sinful, such as dancing, intemperance, swearing, gambling and even playing baseball, which in itself is not so very harmful. The trouble is in the fact that it usually leads to gambling, and a person playing it has poor company to associate with; making it a good place to extinguish a young Christian's light. It is to young Christians that this is more particularly addressed.

Many persons seem to think there is no harm in playing the popular game of croquet. I, too, believe, as I said of baseball, that there is no particular harm in the game itself except in the waste of time. (We are told to "redeem the time," not to waste or "kill" it). I have played it myself, and I know that it is an interesting, fascinating game. It is a favorite with many people of the world, and is an excellent place to talk nonsense and learn slang phrases. I will give one more reason for not playing it, and that is the example it leaves for others. People have said to me, "Why, there is no more harm in playing croquet than in taking a walk; it is all in the company." But that is not quite all. Hear that child of the world say to the young child of God, who has not yet learned to look to the true source for example, "Come and play a game of croquet with me." Christian replies: "I think perhaps I had better not, I do not think it is quite right for Christians to play croquet." "O, there can be no harm in that, I saw Miss C— and Mr. M— playing it the other day, and they are model Christians, are they not?" "O yes, they surely would not play it if it were wrong," says Christian. Then he goes away, and his light ceases for a time to shine, there among the thoughtless children of the world. All on account of our example; although while you and I were playing it we might have been talking of

the glories of heaven or how to convert the sinner from the error of his way. Christian, let your light shine.

How many young Christians think it is clever and bright to be able to use the popular slang which is found in weekly papers and heard in daily talk, instead of the holy and godly conversation so much spoken of in the Bible. I am often pained to see professed Christians walking so closely with the world that

"None but He who knoweth all can tell the two apart."

I can not understand things as most people do. They seem to think it is all right for young Christians (young in years I mean not in Christ) to tell small society lies and jest, and spend all their spare time and money (by the way I would like to know who the time and money of a Christian belongs to) in having a "good time," and otherwise acting, as if they had never started to follow Jesus.

"Young folks will be young folks," they say. Then when they get married they expect them to settle down and be henceforward exemplary Christians. But the Apostle Paul did not seem so to think. 1 Cor. 7. 32-35.

I do not see why a person should not be just as earnest and true a Christian, and let their light shine just as brightly before marriage as after. We are told to "avoid the appearance of evil." It may sometimes be difficult to decide just what course to pursue. I will tell you what I think you will find to bring an almost unerring decision. Ask yourself,

"What would Jesus do if he was in my place." Ah, my brother, my sister, you cannot for an instant fancy Him doing any of the things I have mentioned nor scores of others that many who claim to follow him do to their shame and the shame of his glorious cause.

Just a line to preachers here. Do you think that Jesus would ever have had his pure lips defiled with the filthy tobacco that so many of you, his followers, use?

You may wonder if I would deprive you of all amusement. No assuredly not. I do not want to see a person put on a sad face just because he is a Christian; for I do not so understand the Bible to teach. No person on earth has a better right to be happy than the one who knows his sins are pardoned, who has a loving high priest, "who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin," to intercede for him with a merciful father, and who looks forward to an eternity of life and happiness, for he knows when the "earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved," that he has "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. v. 1. I believe that no one but the Christian is capable of enjoying true happiness either here or hereafter.

The road is rough and thorny through, and to some it may seem very long, but our Jesus has traveled it before us and made our trials less bitter, our sufferings more sweet because he has borne the same. The troubles of this world may fall with heavy weight on some of God's children while the children of the world seem to go free. But "Woe unto you that laugh now for you shall weep," said our Lord; and to the Christian he said, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

But there are many ways in which we whose hearts are filled with a love of God and his creatures, may find pure, elevating and edifying pleasure as much above the so called "innocent amusements" as heaven is above the earth. "Then let us lay aside every weight, and the easily besetting sin, and with patience run the race that is set before us, looking away to the author and finisher of our faith, Jesus; who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him who has endured such contradiction

by sinners against him, that ye become not weary, fainting in your souls." Heb. xii. 1-4; also read 2 Cor. vi. 14, to last, and first verse of 7th chapter; and Eph. v. to 9th verse.

Where one person looks to his Bible to see what a Christian should be, very many look to us and decide concerning the Bible by our works. Therefore "let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

LIZZIE ELY.

—What kind of Christians are those who when the monthly preacher is not present, spend three Sundays out of four bunning around over the country—some visiting their cousins and uncles and aunts, some salting their sheep and supervising their flocks; some partaking of big dinners among the ungodly; some taking boat-rides with their wives and children; some lounging about the streets, hearing and telling something new; some on soft sofas reading novels or in swinging hammocks in the cool shades of some purling brook? Anywhere but in the house of God; anywhere but among saints; anywhere except gathered around the sacred memorials of the Lord's sufferings and death; their eyes looking outward upon the perishable things of time, and not inward upon the all-absorbing things of eternity? Every Christian should ever be found in such a frame of mind as to say, "I would rather be a door keeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."—E.C.

—If any of our readers desire to be effectually cured of penitriousness—that ugly imp who skulks about in the recesses of so many human hearts—we advise them to take the following recipe:

A preacher was appealing to his congregation in behalf of some deserving charity. There was a man in the assembly who was noted for his penitriousness. The appeal that day wrenched his heart and called into activity some noble impulses, and he said to himself that he would give liberally at the proper time. The appeal was concluded, and the deacon started through the audience with his basket. The man whose heart had been touched put his hand in his pocket and grasped his pocket-book, saying, "When the deacon gets here I will put in twenty dollars." The deacon's work required him to be slow, and the ardor of the brother in question began to wane, and he said, "Well, I expect that ten dollars is as much as I can give." In the meantime the deacon came closer to him, and affected his heart somewhat as the approach of an iceberg affects the body, and he began to soliloquize; "To-morrow I want to buy fifty cattle and one hundred sheep, and I suppose that five dollars is as much as I can give." The deacon was now getting pretty close to him, and he concluded that one dollar was all that he could give. But just as the deacon reached him and extended his basket his better impulses asserted themselves, and he drew from his pocket his pocket-book and threw it, with its entire contents into the basket, settled back into his seat and said, "Now old nature, squirm." That was heroic and effectual. That one dose cured him, and he never had any trouble afterward.—E.C.

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