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## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.  
The Flowing Fountain.

From His pierced hands and side  
Flows a precious crimson tide.  
Angels wonder at the sight;  
Earth affrighted hides in night.  
Shrouded dead the grave forsake;  
Rocks are riven, the mountains quake:  
But the fountain of His blood  
Floweth now a healing flood.  
Souls sin-slain arise to life;  
Death is conquered in the strife.  
Captives in sin's horrid power  
Find that this is freedom's hour.  
God's own glory lights the earth;  
Men rejoice with sacred mirth.  
As ye taste immortal joys,  
Sing, ye saints, with heaven-tuned voice.  
Sing aloud, ye ransomed band;  
Ye shall reach a heavenly land:  
"Hell is vanquished!" be your cry,  
"Jesus lives no more to die!"  
From the cross a fountain flows;  
Blossoms the desert like the rose.  
Now ye haste to home and God,  
Saved by Jesus' "precious blood."  
O. C. S. W.

## Religions.

For the Christian Messenger.  
Christ the Light of the World.

THE SERMON PREACHED AT THE  
WESTERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,  
HELD AT FREEPORT, JUNE 21st,  
1880.

BY REV. JOHN ROWE.

"I am the light of the world." John  
xiii. 12.

Light is possessed of remarkable properties, that may aid us in the illustration of this sublime subject. It reveals the hidden beauties of nature. The whole varied scenery of a beautiful landscape is written with marvellous precision on the retina of the eye; filling the mind of the scientist with the most profound admiration of the wonderful works of God. Light exhibits in a moment of time, the splendors, magnitude, forms and relations of all material bodies, which gives us some faint conception of the majesty and glory of their great Author. When the evening shadows fall upon the footstool of God, the twinkling rays of light that descend from the unmeasured depths of space, reveal the splendor of suns, worlds and systems, that overwhelm the mind of the humble student with the immensity and grandeur of God's works. These regions of unexplored grandeur would be an eternal blank to the human mind, if God had not revealed them by light, and had hid from our vision these upper glories that, no doubt, will administer food to the immortal spirit, in its deeper intellectual grasps. We certainly read the glory of God in the structure and mechanism of the heavens and earth, but we could not read these wonders without light, so that actually we are indebted to the wonderful properties of light, for a revelation of God's eternal power, through the material universe. Thus, light is one of the greatest gifts of God to men in this world.

The beautiful heavens and earth, with all their perfect harmony and adaptation to produce the noble end of their blessed Creator, in supporting the millions of inhabitants that swarm on the face of the earth, gives the lie to Atheism, by exhibiting continually to all intellectual beings, the living proof of an eternal God, so they are without excuse. Rom. i. 20.

We cannot tell the glow of happiness that is universally diffused through myriads of living creatures in our world, when the sun sheds his first beams of light, announcing to all the inhabitants of the earth, the beginning of another day, while the golden rays scatter the dark shadows that hung over the mountain tops, revealing the lovely landscape studded with ten thousand beauties that God has made for the enjoy-

ment of all His creatures. So Christ the great Light that illuminates all intelligent beings, reveals the Godhead as existing from all eternity in the glory of His incomprehensible nature, and as creating all the innumerable beings that inhabit His unlimited dominions. All created beings had a beginning, they were therefore, dependant on the will of God for their existence. In the eternal ages of the past, there existed no being or thing but the eternal God Himself. This idea is incomprehensible to mortal minds, yet we are compelled to embrace the truth, or believe in the old heathenish idea—the eternity of matter. God's eternal existing implies His independency of all created things. All material in its most permanent forms, is mutable, therefore cannot be eternal for change always implies imperfection and weakness. The whole universe of God may be hurled into annihilation by an act of the eternal God, and it would no more affect His glorious Being, than the fall of a drop of water from the fingers of a man would affect his life.

Thinking, intelligent beings came from a thinking, intelligent God. Thought can never be the product of dead thoughtless matter. This is self-evident, therefore God is a glorious and eternal Spirit, possessing incomprehensible attributes that will eternally court the investigation of intelligent beings in the bright world above.

Atheism is a lie, and all its reasonings are based upon false foundations. Christ the great central light of the universe, reveals the immutability of the Deity, and yet the immutability of God appears to be the necessary result of the perfection of all his other attributes. All his proceedings are founded on the perfection of wisdom and knowledge. All events and agencies, with all their innumerable operations, however diversified, complicated, or interwoven in the combined mysterious transactions of life, are perfectly known to God from eternity, and are completely controlled by Him. Therefore, no event, agency or power, will ever be permitted to disannul His promises or overthrow His loving designs toward His people. The glory and perfection of His government rest upon His immutability. If there was any possible change in God, the whole system of the universe might be overthrown. His blessed unchanging nature, secures an eternity of bliss to His children. It would be very unreasonable to suppose that the Divine Being would prosecute any plan in accomplishing his designs upon mere probability or uncertainty, when all the elements of certainty are within His power at all times. The fulfilment of prophecy depends upon the complete control of events being in the hands of God, millions of events may be interwoven in all their complicated combinations in bringing about some design of God in the world. If these were left uncontrolled by Jehovah, they might entirely overthrow the very design that God intended to bring into existence. God has been pleased to reveal, that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without his permission. It is true, that God has permitted both men and devils to do many wicked things in this world, yet astonishing to say, those wicked designs and actions have been so overruled by the allwise God as to bring about the most glorious event that ever reached the shores of a sin-cursed world. Wicked men were the instrument in crucifying the Son of God; an event that has opened the fountain of life to a perishing world; an event that has shed the light and glory of God upon a dark, blighted, ruined world. Keen and deep was the anguish of Jesus on the cross, but pure and heavenly are the joys that these sorrows have brought to our hearts. The Divine wisdom gives safe direction to all imaginable events. His ways are past finding out. The greatest angel ever God created, would blush at the idea of undertaking the government of the great empire of Jehovah. None but Jesus can accomplish such an omnipotent work. The Son of God can

penetrate the depths of the Divine councils from all eternity, therefore, he is the light of heaven and earth, angels as well as men derive their light and glory from him. He alone is competent to open up the deep councils of Deity, and unfold them to the wondering minds of men and angels; He is worthy to receive the praises of all created powers in the universe of God.

Christ had no idea of leaving the fulfilment of His merciful designs, in the replenishing of His Kingdom with redeemed converts, to the fluctuations of free-will, or any uncertain principle in man. But the effective operations of His Spirit would render His people willing in the day of His power. Whatever may be the enchanting scenes of glory presented to the human mind, all its charming aspects, it will never remove the deep rooted enmity that rules the unconverted soul and effectually resists every proffer of mercy, until the mighty Spirit of God lifts the veil of darkness, and exhibits to the distressed sinner that he is rapidly sinking into irretrievable ruin. Much is said by some men, about free agency, and truly man is a free agent, but the free agency of the unconverted sinner is being invariably controlled by unchangeable enmity to God. He will never embrace the Gospel until that enmity is removed by the Spirit of God, so that all his boasted freedom is intolerable bondage to sin. And such a bondage, marvellous to say, the sinner loves. Now, it is evident, that the Son of God,—the light of the world—clearly saw that unless something effective was in the plan of His gospel, to remove this deep enmity, there would be none saved from ruin, or brought to heaven; consequently, the whole system of human redemption would have been a total failure, and the very demons of darkness would exult in the foolish expenditure of life and sorrow, privation and grief, of the Son of God, upon a mere probability of saving men. Thanks be to God, the Gospel is not a rope of sand to lift us up to heaven, but it is a mighty chain, every link being welded and examined by the hand of the mighty God Himself, sure and steadfast.

No man of common sense, would expend money, time and trouble to carry out a scheme, when he foreknew the whole would end in total failure. And would the allwise God convert a soul, free him from condemnation, plant his spirit in his heart, adopt him into his family, angels rejoicing over his spiritual birth, and in the end, let the poor fellow slip through some loophole in his experience, and fall from grace and be lost forever? The doctrine of falling from grace, presents God as acting more foolishly than men. Any intelligent school-boy, might therefore prove from Scripture that such a doctrine is totally false. The Saviour says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away until all be fulfilled." And he assures us of all that the Father hath given him, he will lose nothing, but will raise it up on the last day. Language cannot be used that would more plainly give us the idea of the certainty of man's redemption. The Arminian assumes the position, that the Christian may so neglect himself in the means of grace, as finally to be lost. Now, it will be admitted, that God knows all the dangers to which His people will be exposed. In order to save His people, it was equally as necessary to make their perseverance certain, as their conversion or repentance. It would be very irrational to suppose that God would make one part of the plan of redemption weak and the other strong, one part certain and the other uncertain. The perseverance of God's people is the result of their sanctification, which God carries on in the heart by His Spirit. This is an essential part of the great plan of human redemption, that will as certainly be completed as the regeneration of the Christian, both are equally essential in the completion of salvation. There can be nothing uncertain with God. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning." God in the salvation of His people, acted either

on the principle of certainty or uncertainty. If on uncertainty, then He acted irrationally, for he designed to save His people, and yet acted on a principle entirely to defeat His own glorious design. We never can conceive the rationality of an allwise Being allowing His glorious purpose of mercy in the salvation of an immortal soul to be overthrown either by loose planning or loose acting, the thing is absurd. In a practical point of view, Christ is the Light of men, by His direct influence upon their minds. Notwithstanding all the plainness of the Bible, all the good books published, all the powers of the pulpit, and all the operations of religious societies combined, they will utterly fail to convert a soul, without the light of Jesus, which removes the impenetrable darkness that encircles the impenitent mind of the sinner.

## "Must I Join the Church?"

BY REV. F. G. CLARK, D. D.

This was, no doubt, an honest question in the inquirer, but it revealed an enormous weakness. It was a young person who asked the question as he was looking out from a world-life into the new life of a Christian. He had been loitering near the door a long time. He was often greatly moved towards entering. He had long ago learned what Christ taught as to the terms of discipleship. The cross, the yoke, the confession were familiar terms—even threadbare in pulpit teaching, and yet ever requiring petition. But this youth had marked out a by-way for Himself. It was aside from the thoroughfare of common Christians. It was smooth, well shaded from the sun of trial, and pretty free from the hills of difficulty. His religion he thought to put away secretly in his heart. His charities should be known only to God. His confessions of Christ were to be so direct and inferential that common people could hardly suspect the real secret of his life.

In some such state of mind as this our young friend saw his companions leaving him to join the church. They were coming to the front of Christian living, and were going to find out what cross, if any, might lie in the path of open and honest discipleship. The flaw in his experience was revealed in the question at the head of this article. He had been smothering a Christian life, feeble enough at best, under the non-committalism of a secret religion. Of course, there can be but one answer to the state of mind disclosed in this question. God may, indeed, make exceptions to the privileges of a Christian life. He may lay upon us what disabilities He will. But aside from such barriers nothing is more sure than that real love to Christ is an out-pushing, and not a secretive principle. He only can tell how sickly a Christian life may be, and yet be a Christian life. He only can tell us how little courage and heartiness one may use, and yet creep into heaven. But the whole Bible is witness to the fact that Christ's type of religion is one which holds sincerity and purpose and pluck. The feeblest flower-seed has to push hard against the overlying clay. And if the world is to enjoy the odor of its blossom, there must be quite a battle with scorching sun and sweeping storm.

The real religion of Jesus Christ goes beyond this question, ordinarily with a single bound. It is very sure that all the workings and successes are achieved by another and a higher principle. The remedy for such a questioner lies not in answering his query so much as in finding deep down in his soul a spring—a nervous, spiritual principle—which pushes itself up, and comes to the surface as unconsciously as the seed-germ. The religion of Jesus Christ does not wait for a "must," because it is busy in asking, *What may I do for him who died for me?*  
The Presbyterian.

Strong reasons make strong actions.  
—Shakespeare.

## The Loneliness of Jesus.

A part of that grief which weighed down the "Man of sorrows" consisted in His loneliness. The most loving man that ever lived, ever reaching out after human friendship, ever longing for human sympathy, was yet the loneliest man on earth, His love unshared for, His friendship slighted, His sympathy spurned: His mother did not believe in Him, His disciples deserted, denied, and betrayed Him. Lonely at all times and in all places; in Nazareth, in Capernaum, with the multitudes as well as on the sea, on the silent shore, on the mountain top, there were times and places when and where that loneliness became so intensified as to be especially painful.

But, however intense, it never sought relief from irreligious associations of festivities. Among the many villages and cities that bordered the sea of Galilee was the then new city of Tiberias. Built by a dissolute king in honour of a more dissolute emperor, it was the only heathen city in the province of Galilee. It alone prided itself in a forum, a stadium, a golden-roofed palace, a theatre; and in a temple and status dedicated to heathen deities and pagan emperors. And though the greater part of the life of Jesus was passed in the immediate vicinity of that city, yet we never hear that He entered it. Neither curiosity nor a desire for relaxation drew Him thither.

As that little fishing-smack which so often bore the Redeemer of men over the storm-rocked sea lay tossing upon the waves and driven by the winds through the darkness, the lights from those halls of revelry in Tiberias were often the only rays which illumined the gloom. Yet, the little tusk never, so far as we know, moored in the shelter of that haven. No sense of danger, or of weariness, or of desolation, was strong enough to draw Jesus to look upon or to mingle in the festivities of that pagan city. But when the overburdened disciples, and their more wearied Master must find repose, the invitation was heard—"Come ye into a desert place and rest awhile."

Following the little band in their retirement, we find that the rest to which they were invited was a change of employment, not cessation from labour, and that the "desert place" blossomed with miracles of mercy. Jesus was no anchorite. Occasionally and for brief periods He sought to be entirely alone. More often His loneliness was enforced rather than voluntary. How often, when compelled to escape from the multitude, did He seek to draw His chosen friends with Him to silence and solitude. How gladly would He have had all His disciples to lean, like John, upon His bosom, or like Mary of Bethany, to sit at His feet.

It was because even His chosen ones wilfully stood apart from Him, and would not enter into His thoughts and feelings that Christ was so constantly lonely.

The question put to the three in Gethsemane, "What! could ye not watch with me one hour?" might often have been repeated to all the disciples with equal significance. Jesus predicted that in the hour of His supreme agony the disciples should leave Him alone. The prediction was most sadly verified. We wonder how it could have been possible that He who spoke such words of love, and tenderness, and pity, such words of inspiration, and hope and promise, in the upper chamber to the twelve, found no one of them to be near Him in the hall of judgment, or before Pilate, no one to lighten the burden of the cross on its way to Calvary, or to soothe His anguish on the cruel wood.

But is not the conduct of the disciples to Jesus during His earthly life being daily repeated by many of His professed followers now? Is not Christ, in the person of His dearest, most devoted friends, still suffering from the same enforced loneliness. Of Himself, as represented by the truly consecrated band of His disciples now earnestly labouring for Him, the Master could say, addressing the great mass of nominal Christians, "Ye shall leave me