
Pointed Papers for the Christian Life

Cuyler Theodore Ledyard

Title: Pointed Papers for the Christian Life

Author: Cuyler Theodore Ledyard

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POINTED PAPERS

FOR

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY

THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF "HEART LIFE," ETC., ETC.



London :

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,
27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXXVIII.

141 . m . 727 .

*Published in England by special arrangement with
the Author.*

UNWIN BROTHERS, THE GRESHAM PRESS, CHILWORTH AND LONDON.

TO THE READER.



THE title of this Volume was suggested by an intimate friend who has long urged me to publish a series of practical papers on the Christian life,—from the soul's first step towards Jesus Christ clear onward to its final home-coming into heaven. If these chapters shall bring light to any bewildered soul, or strength to the feeble-hearted—any relief to the overloaded, or joy to the sorrowing—then my honest labour of love will not go unrewarded.

T. L. C.

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NOT FAR OFF.

OUR Lord told a certain discreet and courteous lawyer that he was "*not far* from the kingdom of God." Whether he ever entered into that kingdom and made his calling sure, we are not informed. But there are a great many like this lawyer in all our congregations. They are not inside the ark, but they are not far away from its open door.

Every Sabbath these people are at the house of God; their constant attendance shames some irregular "fair weather" church members. They listen attentively, putting themselves within close range of the arrows of truth. They listen approvingly, and sometimes say to their pastor, "That sermon hit *me* last Sunday." They put themselves voluntarily within a good atmosphere, where they are surrounded by the presence and the prayers of God's people. I always have strong hopes of the conversion of any man or woman who will steadily

place themselves right in front of a faithful sin-denouncing and Christ-preaching pulpit and keep their ears wide open to the truth.

Yet to all such we would like to say very kindly, you are in a very dangerous position. The cross of the crucified Jesus is in full view of your eyes, and His voice of love is constantly falling upon your conscience. Many have been converted close by you. The breeze of heavenly influence has seemed to fan you as it passed so very near to your yet unconverted heart. A single "Lord! I will follow thee," would have landed you within the kingdom long ago. Your danger is that you will trust to the very *nearness* to the doorway, and will delay the attempt to enter until it is too late. To miss the door of heaven by an ell will be your perdition. When God locked the door of Noah's ark, and shut the patriarch in, there may have been several of his neighbours within a bow-shot of the entrance. The bare thickness of that door made all the difference between being safe within or drowning in the devouring deluge. Barely to miss heaven will make hell more dreadful.

You tell me that your lives are moral. This is right and commendable. I honour you for it. It is better to be moral than immoral—better to be

chaste, and honest, and reverent, and benevolent, than to be unclean, profane, knavish, and revengeful. It is better to believe God's Word than to be a disbeliever. The fewer stains you have to be wiped away by God's pardoning grace, and the fewer bad habits you have to give up, the better for you. The minister who makes light of your honest moral life commits a rude blunder, and does shameful injustice to you and to his own office. If your Divine Lord were on earth, and were to meet you, He might very probably say to you, as He did to the polite Scribe, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." But He could not say, "Thou art *in* the kingdom." He could not say, "Thou art my disciple." Jesus never made an obedience to the last five Commandments of the Decalogue a ground of Christian discipleship or of salvation even to you, kind, amiable, and honest as you are. He would assuredly say, "Except ye repent, except ye be converted, ye cannot see the kingdom of God." Faith that trusts *on* Him alone for salvation, and not on your own respectable life, and the obedience that follows Him, are the indispensable steps to salvation. You admit that you have not taken these decisive steps. Then, however *near* you are, you are not "*in* Christ."