

**A CHRISTIAN GIFT;
OR,
PASTORAL LETTERS**

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A Christian gift; or, Pastoral letters by F. De W. Ward

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F. DE W. WARD

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PASTORAL LETTERS.

BY

Rev. F. De W. WARD,

LATE MISSIONARY AT MADRAS, AND AUTHOR
OF "INDIA AND THE HINDOOS."

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CORNER OF MAIN AND ST. PAUL STREETS.

1854.

VVW

D E D I C A T I O N .



TO THE
Youth of my Beloved Flock,

SOME OF WHOM,

I am mercifully permitted to hope,
HAVE COMMENCED A CHRISTIAN LIFE ;
AND FOR WHOSE INSTRUCTION AND COUNSEL
they were originally designed and prepared,

These Letters

ARE

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR ;

With an earnest Prayer to Almighty God
that they may, in their present form,
BE ACCEPTABLE AND PROFITABLE TO THEM,
as well as to others
into whose hands they may fall.

CANTON, N. Y.,
1852.

LETTER I.

Elements of a Complete Christian Character.

DEAR *Friend*,

I am much pleased to hear you ask, what it is to be a *complete Christian*? The question augurs well for your future career and prospects. Your results will very much correspond with your aims. In proportion to the elevation of your mark will be the probable height of your attainments. Let *perfection* be the object you desire and endeavor to secure, and though you reach not that faultless eminence, you will rise higher than would be possible

with a lower standard. Among the elements of a complete Christian character I would name as first,

INTELLIGENCE.

By this feature is meant an acquaintance with the proofs upon which you rest your belief that there is a God, and that He is possessed of all adorable perfections; that the Bible is heaven-descended, containing "*truth, without mixture of error*;" a knowledge of the leading facts and doctrines contained in that blessed volume; with the reasons of the hope you entertain that you are a disciple of Christ and an heir of heaven. The *first two* will require that you read with care one or more of the excellent volumes of Paley—Watson—Erskine—Alexander—McIlvaine

—Nelson—Spring, and others of like excellence, with which our age abounds. In order to the *third* you must diligently study the Sacred Scriptures, and in connection therewith, a systematic treatise on Christian Theology; while the *last* demands that you observe and reflect upon your prevailing thoughts and deportment, bringing them into close and faithful contact with the revealed tests of a truly converted heart.

Do not shrink from the undertaking as requiring more time and patience than you have at command. It is not expected that all this will be done *at once*, neither is it recommended that you aim at becoming a profound theologian and acute Biblical critic, versed in the abstruse speculations and techni-

cal distinctions of the schools. These pursuits must, of necessity, be confined to the *few* who have the time and opportunity for such far reaching engagements. But it is urged, most earnestly, that you acquire such a knowledge of the plentiful arguments in defense of the being of a God and the Divine authorship of the Bible as may enable you to tell the Atheist and the Infidel why you *cannot* agree with them, that all that we behold is the fortuitous accumulation of atoms existing from eternity, and that the Scriptures are a "cunningly devised fable;" as may enable you to state and defend the articles of faith peculiar to the church of which you are a member, being careful that these are based upon the Bible; and that you be ready at all

times to "give an answer to every one that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." Many Christians of our times are sadly deficient in this feature of *intelligence*, seeming to think that it is a matter of small moment what is the condition of the *mind*, if the *heart* is only right.

It cannot be denied that if the two must be brought into contrast a truly pious heart is more desirable than a highly cultivated mind. But between them there is no necessary collision. This is so far from being the case that it is *truth* in the *mind* that is best calculated to awaken right *emotions* in the soul, the judgment being the direct avenue to the affections. Every duty implies an intelligent view of corresponding truth. *Repentance* supposes a correct view of