

**AIDS TO THE DIVINE LIFE,
IN A SERIES
OF PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN
CONTEMPLATIONS**

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Aids to the Divine Life, in a Series of Practical Christian Contemplations by Thomas Sherman & William Maude

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THOMAS SHERMAN & WILLIAM MAUDE

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AIDS
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The Divine Life
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A SERIES OF PRACTICAL
CHRISTIAN CONTEMPLATIONS.

(Originally Published by "T. S." 1860.)

NEW EDITION.

EDITED, WITH A PREFACE,
BY WILLIAM MAUDE.

"Grateful—
To palates that can taste immortal truth;
Insipid else, and sure to be despised."
Cowper.

Liverpool
EDWARD HOWELL
1865.

141. k. 60.

PREFACE.

THE little work which is here presented to the reader *in a new dress*, was originally published in the year 1680, under the following title:—“*Divine Breathings: or, a Manual of Practical Contemplations, in One Century; tending to promote Gospel Principles, and a Good Conversation in Christ.*” T. S. London: published for Nathaniel Ponder.” By the middle of the last century, though its well-deserved reputation survived, the work itself had become exceedingly scarce, as appears from the following advertisement prefixed to an edition of Sibbe’s *Meditations*, published in 1775:

"There is another little piece, in duodecimo, of an unknown though not an ancient author, (the running title 'Practical Contemplations,') consisting of one hundred meditations on very interesting subjects, the title-page lost, . . . which has been very frequently inquired for, and particularly both in the *Gentleman's* and the *Gospel Magazine*, and many judicious persons wish it could be found and likewise republished."

These wishes, I rejoice to say, were gratified by its recovery and republication, in 1815, by G. Lambert of Hull, who commences his address to the reader in these words: "Christian Reader! Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which was lost; nor could I sufficiently enjoy the pleasure unless you became a participant with me . . . The

edition from which this is published was printed for Nathaniel Ponder, Poultry, London, 1680. The author's signature is 'T. S.:' who he was I have not been able to learn; but from his work I venture to pronounce him a wise scribe, well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven." *

As regards the book itself, if, as a clever writer has somewhere said, "great books, like large skulls, have often the least brains," it possesses the double recommendation of being small, and having brains beyond its size. Certainly the old proverb, which declares "a great book to be a great evil," true at all times, is especially true at the present time.

* Who "T. S." was is still a mystery; recent inquiries made by the writer, through the medium of "Notes and Queries," and other channels, having failed completely in identifying the author.

Our age is too busy for the folios of our fathers. Like the railway train, rushing on with accelerated speed as it approaches the terminus, the world seems hurrying on as if it felt that it had but a short time in which to despatch its remaining business. The ceaseless whirl of events, the bewildering phantasmagoria which each succeeding day presents to our notice, and the anxious necessities of business, sacred and secular, leave most of us scant time for reading or study. Here then is a book, in size *small* enough for the pocket; in arrangement divided into portions, *short* enough to be read at any leisure moment; and yet in matter *weighty* enough to supply much food for profitable meditation. Good old THOMAS FULLER wrote *Good Thoughts in Bad Times*; the

reader may find in the following pages *brief thoughts for busy times.*

The lines of the sweet Christian poet Cowper, which appear as the motto on the title-page, indicate very accurately the character of the work. To those who lack a spiritual palate it will doubtless prove altogether uninteresting; but to such as, "by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil," it will, I think, be rejoiced over as the finding of great spoil.

I have only to add that in the present edition the spelling has been modernized, obsolete words and forms of expression changed, and the one hundred contemplations, of which the work originally consisted, digested under twenty-one general heads. It is hoped that, at all events, these alterations will not

detract from the value of the work, no liberties having been taken with the sentiments of the author. And on the sure ground of the excellence of those sentiments, praying that the Divine blessing may once again accompany its publication, I commend this volume, small in size but not in value, to the prayerful perusal of the Christian reader.
