

**THOUGHTS ON PERSONAL
RELIGION, BEING A TREATISE ON
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN ITS TWO
CHIEF ELEMENTS, DEVOTION
AND PRACTICE. PP.1-145**

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Thoughts on Personal Religion, Being a Treatise on the Christian Life in Its Two Chief Elements, Devotion and Practice. pp.1-145 by Edward Meyrick Goulburn

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EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN

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THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
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TWO CHIEF ELEMENTS, DEVOTION AND PRACTICE.

BY
EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.D.
PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S,
CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF OXFORD,
AND ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS IN ORDINARY.

Third Edition, Enlarged.

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RIVINGTONS, WATERLOO PLACE.
1863.

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TO
WILLIAM GIBBS, ESQ.
OF TYNTESFIELD,
THE KIND FRIEND OF THE POOR,
THE MUNIFICENT PATRON OF ALL GOOD WORKS,
AND
A LOYAL SON OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH,
THESE PAGES ARE INSCRIBED,
WITH REVERENCE, GRATITUDE, AND AFFECTION.

21, Sussex Gardens, Hyde Park,
October 17, 1861.

MY DEAR MR. GIBBS,

You have kindly permitted me to inscribe to you this little treatise on the Christian Life. Most heartily do I wish that I had some worthier tribute of respect and affection for one, who has shown me such unceasing kindness, and has been the instrument of such incalculable blessings to my flock. But I know you will believe that my acknowledgment of all that I owe to you is, if not of any great value, at any rate sincere.

We have laboured much and happily together in the cause of the New Church, which your munificence has enabled us to complete and to endow. Perhaps this little book may serve as a memorial of the happy hours so spent in one another's company,—hours which, I can assure you, have been some of the pleasantest of my life.

The leading thoughts of my treatise are so well expressed by a passage from a work which you gave me, that I should like to adopt it as my motto :

“The oftener I read Jeremy Taylor, the more I am satisfied of the excellence of his method of recommending holiness to the heart and imagination, as well as to the understanding of frail man by dwelling on the infinite love and condescension of our gracious Father in taking so much pains to make it attainable, if not easy; and by mixing it up with every act and duty of ordinary life, so as to make every hour spent in the world, as well as in the closet, when sanctified by its motive, an act of religion and obedience. I have often wished to hear Christianity inculcated from the pulpit on this principle.”—Sir John Richardson, as quoted in the Life of Mr. Joshua Watson. Vol. ii. p. 10.

You will, I think, see that these three thoughts,—the power of attaining, under God's Grace, a real, though gradual, growth in sanctity; the possibility of making the homeliest acts of common life contribute to this growth; and the expediency of giving to such topics as these much more room than they generally occupy in Christian Teaching,—have been more

or less present to my mind throughout my argument. I have to thank you for giving me the opportunity of here stating the fundamental principles of my little book so tersely and clearly.

There is one point connected with this treatise on which an explanation seems necessary. By those who know what an all-important position the Holy Scriptures hold in the Economy of Grace, it will be remarked as a grievous omission, that in that part of the work, which professedly treats of Devotional Exercises, there should not be a chapter devoted to the study of Scripture. My answer is, that a single chapter could not do justice to a subject so wide and important, and that I have already published a small volume upon it, which has met with a fair circulation and a kind reception. I do not wish to repeat myself in print.

It only remains to add, by way of explaining some peculiarities of the style, that these pages, before they were thrown into the shape of a treatise, have been orally delivered, some of them in your own hearing, in the form of Sermons; but that the subject of them has been upon my mind for seven or eight years, and in the course of that period most of the chapters have been reconsidered and written afresh. Faults, no doubt, many will be found in them; but I trust that on topics of such transcendent importance I have not allowed myself to put forth any crude or precipitate views.

You will join with me, my dear Mr. Gibbs, in the prayer that, so far as it exhibits His Truth, God's Blessing may rest upon this little work, and that what is erroneous in it may be forgiven to me, and neutralized to the reader, through the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I remain, my dear Mr. Gibbs,

Your affectionate friend,

EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN.

William Gibbs, Esq.,
&c. &c. &c.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

I HAVE taken the opportunity offered by the call for a third edition of this little work to add two Chapters to it. The substance of the first of these (Chap. III. of Part I.) is indeed contained already in Chap. I. of Part III. ; but it seemed to me to require further expansion and development than I there had space to give it. The treatise in general is an enlarged commentary on the words, "Work out your own Salvation;" and I thought it therefore desirable to give great prominence to the other (and equally important) side of Truth, that "it is God who worketh in us both to will and do of His good pleasure."

The line of thought taken in the other new Chapter (Chap. IV. of Part III.) has been helpful and consolatory to myself in a busy life, and I have thought therefore that it might be so to others similarly circumstanced. The leading idea of it is very beautifully and delicately traced in "*Les Adieux d'Adolphe Monod (XVI. Le secret d'une vie sainte, active, et paisible)*," of which address my Chapter is little more than an expansion.

E. M. G.

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