



The
CHRISTIAN TREASURY

CONTAINING

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MINISTERS AND MEMBERS
OF
VARIOUS EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS



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CHRISTIAN TREASURY.

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FOOLISHNESS AND POWER.*

BY EUGENE BERSIER, PASTOR OF THE REFORMED CHURCH OF PARIS.

‘For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us
which are saved it is the power of God.’—1 Cor. i. 18.



FOOLISHNESS—power! These are the two names that Paul here gives to the preaching of the cross. I propose, my brethren, to study in succession these two ideas, in order afterwards to show you the tie that closely unites them together. This will be the plan

of our reflections.

The preaching of the cross is **FOOLISHNESS**. I pray you to remark, my brethren, that it is not an enemy of the gospel, but an Apostle, who says this to us. Christianity has not waited until the world cast this reproach at it; it has not left it this satisfaction. This insult it has itself seized, and been the first to claim as its lawful property. And let not men say to us that it is here a figure of speech, a bold apostrophe, that has escaped from the Apostle. The gospel is sparing in its use of these exaggerated epithets, of these figures of rhetoric; and, moreover, the same thought is found underlying the entire teaching of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ presented His doctrine as a thing that the world would charge with folly. He clearly speaks of the incompatibility that there is between man's view of things and that which He preached; He foretold

His disciples that they would meet with opposition, hatred, and contempt.

This is, indeed, a strange method of seeking to gain men; so strange that it would be foolishness if it did not show a divine inspiration. Usually, when a man wishes to succeed, he promises to himself and to his disciples success. Every general well knows that in order to succeed he must announce victory to his soldiers. It is the same in the order of intelligence; a philosopher, a chief of a school, is forced to prove that his doctrine answers to all the needs of the age, and will satisfy all its aspirations; he points out intelligences already prepared to embrace it, and proselytes who are about to range themselves under his standard. We ourselves, sometimes yielding to this attraction, have we not announced the near triumph of our beliefs! Jesus Christ alone said to His disciples, ‘You will be judged, calumniated, hated because of My name;’ and it is this thought that Paul takes up when he speaks with so much assurance of the foolishness of the cross.

The cross specially merited this distinction and this reproach, for it is it which epitomises our entire Christianity. It is its centre; it is in it, above all, that there appeared what was strange and opposed to human wisdom. The preaching of the cross was designed to be foolishness; it has been so, my brethren, and Paul has said not a word too much.

And, first of all, considering it only from an

* Translated from the French for the *Christian Treasury*, by permission of the author, from the seventh edition of the second volume of his sermons. Paris: M. Fischbacher.

those particular verses, until he looked for the pencil-marks, and became more and more interested. The experiences of that first year, the dangers and escapes he had passed, the new aspect of life revealed to Harry, all testified to this devoted service, and the comfort and assistance he derived from it.

One day, while sitting in his office busily poring over his books, a young man of very superior talents, and one whom Harry had often met among his associates, came in. His face was pale, his eyes blurred from the effects of recent dissipation, and his flesh hot and trembling as he took the hand of his friend. 'I have come to ask you a question, Harry. How can you stand so firmly, in the midst of temptation, when others fall?'

'Not in my own strength, I can assure you, Tom;' for Harry had long ago recognised his sister's God. 'There is One who is mighty to save. To Him I have confided my life, my all. A dear sister's love and teaching has been like an armour about me in the midst of all these evil associations. You have seen me push aside the wine amid the sneers and ridicule of those whom I thought my friends; and, if ever I was enticed for one moment to do wrong, a vision of that tender, pleading face would rise up before me, and the very thought of proving recreant to the trust she had imposed in me would make me start back with a shudder! Ah, my dear friend, if I could only do for you what she has done for me, how gladly would I do it! Christ is now my comforter, and He will be yours in your bitter need. Cast all your troubles upon Him, and be very sure that He will help you. Read your Bible, Tom; and may it be "a lamp unto your feet, and a light to your path," as

it has been to mine, giving you strength in every hour of temptation.'

'God bless you, Harry. No one has ever talked so to me before, or encouraged me. My feet are already on firmer ground,' and as Tom spoke his face beamed all over with this new-found hope.

Tom went from that office a rich young man. Within the last few moments he had gained three blessings which he had never known before—a Christian friend, an earnest purpose, and a sweet hope. Only those into whose dark life no one of these good gifts has ever come can begin to understand what they were to this wretched youth.

That night, a much-neglected Bible, that had long lain in his room, was opened; and there he learned, even in that one reading, that there is no trouble in life that we may not cast upon the Lord, and be sustained, no burden that we need bear alone, and that He is ever ready to forgive all sin and iniquity, if we are only repentant.

A month later, you would not have known Tom Brown, and in due time he, too, was gathered into the arms of the Good Shepherd, who more tenderly cares for just such as he than the ninety and nine that went not astray.

Harry Goodnow has long ago given up the law, and become a minister of the gospel, and many souls have been born into the new life through his instrumentality. 'A word in due season, how good it is!' Brothers and sisters who read this simple story, forget not that it is in your power to do what Kusha did then. 'Cast your bread upon the waters,' and God has promised, 'thou shalt find it after many days.'—*New York Observer.*

'BUSINESS IS BUSINESS.'

BY REV. T. L. CUYLER, D.D.

BUSINESS is business.' Yes, and a sorry business too many people make of it when they consult covetousness rather than conscience. They go on the false principle that there are two separate departments in human life, and that in one of them true religion—Bible religion—has no place. They consider Sunday as the only day and the church the only place for that. On Sunday they go to the house of God, and listen to the Word of God, and admit that they have souls to save. They get interested in the services, make a score of good resolutions, and sometimes persuade themselves that they are trying to be very respectable Christians. Certainly they have no intention of being lost for ever. But when Monday comes, and the church is locked up, they lock up their hearts also, and say to themselves—

'Religion is religion: I had enough of that yesterday; but business is business, and that I am going into to-day. If any idea of religion should come into any week-day business or into my work, I shall drive it out as I would a stray dog that should come into my store, or counting-room, or shop.'

They may not say this in so many words, but they practise this principle. They divorce religion from business, put the multiplication table in the place of the Ten Commandments, and study their account-books in place of the Bible. On Sunday they say, 'Now, let us worship God;' during the week they say, 'Now, I'll make money; business is business.'

No more fatal blunder could be made than this one, into which so many thousands fall, and to their own terrible injury. What is 'business'? It is, or ought to be, the production and the exchange of useful commodities—the making, the buying, and the selling of what

mankind needs. It has its rules and its regulations. The foremost is to do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Honesty is the corner-stone of credit and commerce. Take honesty out of trade, and confidence disappears in an instant—the house of merchandise becomes a den of sharpers. But the basis of honesty is conscience, and that is the religious faculty in man; the cardinal rule of honesty is the ‘Golden Rule,’ and that comes from the Bible. The great purpose of all legitimate business (for liquor-selling, gambling, and some kinds of ‘speculation’ are *not* legitimate) is to add to the public wealth and to the public welfare as well as to make an honest living. This, too, is a moral idea, and a Christian conscience approves of it. So that there are religious elements in all true, upright, honourable business; and you cannot separate them any more than you can the light and the heat in a sunbeam.

I wish I could impress on the mind of every young man that a life of business, in these days, is full of dangers. One of these dangers is the rage to be rich. On the forehead of most young men it is written, ‘I mean to be rich, come what may.’ Only a minority will ever become so; the best that the majority will ever do is to make both ends meet. I shed no tears over this fact; for wealth is not Paradise: it is often a purgatory. This rage for wealth tempts our young men to despise slow, honest gains, and to attempt ‘sharp turns’ and short cuts and some brilliant ‘operation.’ Three boys of my acquaintance were lately discovered to have clubbed together their pocket-money and tried a ‘flyer’ in the mining-stock exchange. They fancied that they were going into business, whereas they were only *gambling*. They might as well have bought a lottery ticket or tried their hand over a game of cards with their pocket-money for stakes. As soon as your head gets turned by such words as ‘chance’ and ‘luck,’ and by such delusions as getting rich without honest labour of some kind, you are *ruined*. Conscience must hold you, or you will go over the precipice; and the most important

factor in all honourable business is a *good conscience*.

Another temptation which is increasingly prevalent arises from the custom of ‘treating customers,’ either to make them buy or because they have bought. Hundreds of people say, ‘I don’t care for liquor, but business is business. If a customer has bought a pretty large line of goods, it is only the handsome thing to go and take a glass of champagne over it.’ Several gentlemen of my acquaintance have been led into terrible drinking habits just by this abominable practice. As for the occupation of ‘drumming,’ it is so full of temptation to drinking and other sensualities that no young man can safely go into it unless he have the fear of God in his heart, and is ironsided with firm religious principle. ‘Business is business,’ but not tipping or taking a customer to the theatre or to a worse place.

Competition is tremendous in these days, and a great many excuse themselves for putting inferior and ill-made fabrics into the market by the idea that they ‘cannot compete with their neighbours if they must make or buy the *best* articles.’ They do not call themselves cheats; they only mean that ‘business is business:’ my business is to *sell all I can*, and the buyer must look out for himself. Bible-honesty brands all such practices as *fraud*; in the long run it is found out to be a blunder as well as a sin. How can any man profess to be ‘religious’ on Sunday, and then overreach his neighbour by lies and misrepresentations during the week, on the miserable plea that ‘business is business’? The worst of the cheat is that the man *cheats his own soul*, and God will find him out.

Young friends, start with this pure principle: My chief concern in life is to serve God and save my own soul. Any business or practice that is opposed to this is a snare and a curse. Whatever will not bear inspection on the day of judgment is *wrong*. Write in your memorandum-book this golden sentence, and stick to it: ‘No man was ever lost in a straight road.’ To take that road and keep it is both ‘business’ and religion.—*Forward*.

SEEKING TO SAVE.

BY MRS ANNIE A. PRESTON.

‘Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God,’

said Harry Eustace, a rather flashily dressed, showy young man, as he walked hurriedly toward the railway station in a large New England town.

‘How did that ever get into my head, and what is the rest of it? There must be a rhyme to it,’ and he repeated the words again. ‘I certainly didn’t hear them at the theatre last evening, nor at Jerry Howe’s saloon this morning, and I haven’t read anything of the sort.

Confound it all! can’t I think of anything else!’ and he began to whistle softly a popular strain from the last opera.

The train was about starting, he hurried to get a seat, and when they were fairly on the way he found the objectionable words had set themselves to the whir of the car wheels.

All the way along the Shore Line, past New Haven, New London, across the Thames on the great steam ferry boat, on, on, almost to Providence. He had said the words a thousand times, he was sure. At last, in sheer