



The  
CHRISTIAN TREASURY

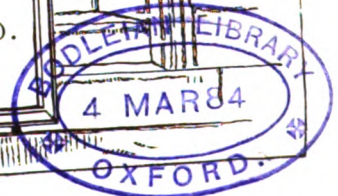
CONTAINING

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MINISTERS AND MEMBERS  
OF  
VARIOUS EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS



1883.

EDINBURGH:  
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LONDON: GROOMBRIDGE & SOXS.



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# CHRISTIAN TREASURY.

CONTAINING

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EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS.

## 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.



## FOR MY SAKE.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.



OR MY SAKE.' These three little words are the touchstone of love. The application of this touchstone begins with infancy and ends only with the end of life. If that baby in the mother's arms could speak intelligibly it would say: 'It is for my sake that a mother's eye watches unsleeping through the midnight hours, and her arms hold me until they are ready to drop off for weariness.' 'For my sake' many a successful man acknowledges gratefully that his parents toiled and economised in order to buy books and pay college bills. 'For my sake' provides the sheltering roof and the arm-chair for dear old grandma at the fireside. Take these three words out of our language, and you would rob home of its sweetness and human life of some of its noblest inspirations.

Our Divine Master made these words the text of several of his most impressive injunctions. 'Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it.' To newly converted Saul of Tarsus the first message is: 'I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake.' Again and again the early disciples were exhorted to bear crosses bravely for Jesus' sake. Christ came into this world to save us from our sins; and chiefly to save us from the abominable and damning sin of selfishness. The one motive that has the power to lift us out of self and to exalt life to its highest and holiest phase is heart-love for a crucified Saviour. 'Love Me more than houses or lands, or wife or children,' is the first condition of discipleship. No soul is truly converted until it cuts loose from selfishness and accepts Jesus Christ as the only ground of salvation. Conversion signifies that self has grounded its arms in its very citadel and has surrendered the keys of the heart to the conquering Saviour. Henceforth it inscribes 'for Christ's sake' on its banner. The shortest and most comprehensive con-

fession of faith that any Christian can phrase is about in these words: 'It is Christ's business to save me; it is my business to serve Christ.'

'Saviour, teach me day by day  
Love's sweet lesson to obey;  
Sweeter lesson cannot be,  
Loving Him who first loved me.'

The Master never allowed the supreme test of loyalty to Himself to be a mere emotion, however fervid. It was a practical test. 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments.' Write these decisive words upon the walls of every prayer-room to rebuke the rant and the rhapsodies in which too many windy professors indulge, while their honest debts remain unpaid and their own children sneer at the pious sham. It is not how many promises we make, but how many commandments we obey; it is not how many tears we shed, but how many sins we renounce; it is not how many sacraments we observe, but how many deeds we do for the Master's sake that decides the genuineness of our Christianity. Evermore is the eye of our loving Saviour upon us, and evermore is that voice saying unto us: 'Live for Me. Take up this cross for My sake.' When we are sore tempted to an act of retaliation or to some sharp scheme that selfishness has varnished over with falsehood, that rebuking voice accosts us: 'Wound me not in the house of my friends.' Sometimes a suffering servant of Jesus comes to us for a proof of sympathy that costs more than smooth words. Selfishness begins to mutter about 'impostors' and 'no end to these calls of charity.' But He who died for both of us whispers gently: 'Do it unto Me. He is one of My suffering children. Help him for My sake.' There is not a negro freedman who solicits aid for his struggling church, or a hungry stranger who knocks at our door for bread; there is not a poor widow that asks for a half-crown to pay her rent, or a neglected child running in rags and recklessness to ruin for want of a friend, but ever the same voice

is saying to us: 'Give to them for My sake. Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these, ye do it unto Me.'

One of the little orphan boys in John Falk's German Charity-School repeated at the supper-table their usual grace: 'Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and bless the food Thou hast provided.' A lad looked up and said: 'Tell us, teacher, why the Lord Jesus never comes.' 'Dear child, only believe, and you may be sure that He will come to us some of these times; for He always hears us.' 'Then,' replied the bright lad, 'I'll set a chair for Him'; and he put one by the table. By-and-by a knock was heard at the door. A poor travelling apprentice was admitted, and asked for food and lodging. The little fellow looked at the stranger a few moments, and then piped out: 'Ah, I see! Jesus could not come to-night, and so He sent this poor young man in His place. Is that the way, teacher?' 'Yes, my boy, that is just it. Every cup of water or bit of bread we give to the poor and hungry for Jesus' sake, we give to Him. Inasmuch as we do it to the least of our brethren, we do it unto our Saviour.'

There are a thousand applications of this principle of self-denial for Christ's sake. Grand old Paul had it in his mind when he wrote: 'It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine or anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is made weak.' It is not easy for a true Christian to keep this text in his Bible and to keep a bottle on his table. They do not harmonise. The bottle means temptation. The text means that things which are not always sinful, *per se*, should be cheerfully

given up for the sake of others; and the legal liberty of the man or woman whose heart is in the right place will never be exercised when a moral evil may flow from such exercise. We have no right to put a stumbling-block in the path of others. As a Christian, I am bound to surrender every self-indulgence which works directly against the best interests of my fellow-men, especially if it endangers precious souls for whom Jesus died. This principle gives to the doctrine of total abstinence from intoxicants a broad Bible basis as solid as the Hudson 'Palisades' on which I am now writing.

The two unanswerable arguments against the drinking usages are these: 'An alcoholic beverage endangers me if I tamper with it; it endangers my fellow-man if I offer it to him. My Bible teaches me to let it alone for the sake of the 'weak' and those who stumble. Ah, those stumblers! How many wrecks the world reveals! How many tombs it opens, whose charitable turf hides out of sight what surviving kindred would love to hide from memory! For Jesus' sake, and for the sake of the easily tempted, who will hide behind our example, let us who call ourselves Christians put away this bottled devil, which conceals damnation under its ruby glow. This subject of self-surrender for Jesus' sake is as wide as the domain of Christian duty. To live for Christ is the sweetest and holiest life we can live; to live for self is the most wretched. Every cross is turned into a crown, every burden becomes a blessing, every sacrifice becomes sacred and sublime, the moment that our Lord and Redeemer writes on it, '*For My sake.*'

## THE BULL OF EXCOMMUNICATION AND LUTHER'S OPPOSITION.\*

BY JULIUS KOESTLIN, D.D., PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HALLE-WITTENBERG.



IN Rome the Bull which now first came to Germany had already been issued on June 16. It had been very carefully considered in the Papal Consistory. The lawyers thought that Luther should once more be invited to recant, but not pressed. As to what had been arranged by Miltitz, the Papal ambassador, with respect to a hearing of Luther before the Archbishop of Treves, the Bull was silent.

The Bull begins, 'Arise, Lord, and judge

Thy cause.' It further calls upon Saint Peter, Paul, the congregation of the saints, and the whole Church. A boar has broken into the vineyard of the Lord, a wild beast seeks to devour it, &c. The Pope then bewails over the heresy about which it treats, and this so much the more as he asserts that the Germans, among whom it had broken out, were always dear to his heart.

Forty-one propositions out of Luther's writings, because heretical, or at least offensive and ensnaring, were rejected and condemned; and sentence is passed upon all Luther's writings, that they are to be burnt in public. As to Luther himself, he calls God to witness

\* Translated for the *Christian Treasury* from the German of Luther's Life, by Julius Koestlin. Leipzig: Fues' Verlag. 1882.