



The
CHRISTIAN TREASURY

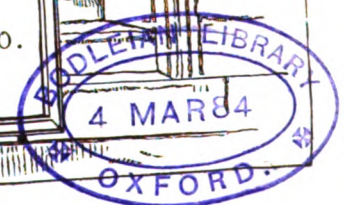
CONTAINING

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MINISTERS AND MEMBERS
OF
VARIOUS EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS



1883.

EDINBURGH:
JOHNSTONE, HUNTER, & CO.
LONDON: GROOMBRIDGE & SOXS.



THE
CHRISTIAN TREASURY,

CONTAINING

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MINISTERS AND MEMBERS

OF

VARIOUS EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS.



EDINBURGH:
JOHNSTONE, HUNTER, & CO., MELBOURNE PLACE.
LONDON: GROOMBRIDGE & SONS.

MDCCCLXXXIII.

G. & C.

CHRISTIAN TREASURY.

CONTAINING

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF VARIOUS
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.



MORE ABUNDANTLY.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D., BROOKLYN.



HOUSANDS of professed Christians have a very feeble spiritual life. They are rather gasping for breath than growing up unto the 'measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' How can such accomplish anything for their Master? How can the poor brother, who scarcely keeps

his farthing candle from going out, be able to let his light so *shine* before men as to glorify God, and guide souls to Him? What all such half-alive Christians need is to seek an immediate increase of heart-grace, and a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. Our loving Saviour has promised to give to those who truly desire it '*life more abundantly.*'

I. One mark of this more abundant life to be coveted is an INCREASE OF SPIRITUAL VIGOUR. At this season of the year fertilisers are being applied in innumerable fields and gardens. Yesterday I saw a gardener digging around a fruit-tree in my yard and applying the tonic of needed manures. Last year the tree produced only a few 'promissory notes' in the shape of blossoms; this year he means to have cherries. More abundant life in the tree will do it. The reason why any Christian does not produce the fruits of the Spirit is the lack of inward vigour. He needs a deep sub-soiling work of penitence, the tillage of prayer and Bible study, a fresh inflow of the power from on high. A very large percentage of the forces in Christ's army are either in the hospitals, or off on furlough. If any pastor doubts this, let him call the roll of his church members at any of the best-attended prayer-meetings of the year; and when he has made proper allowance for necessary absences, he will find how many are like the fig-tree which bore 'nothing but leaves.' The real revival which is needed is an inflow of new spiritual vigour, which will bring the invalids out of the hospital and the deserters back to their posts. As soon as a church seeks and obtains this quickening of the Holy Spirit, sinners will be awakened and brought to Christ. A re-con-

verted Church will be able to 'convert sinners from the error of their ways.' This kind of re-conversion Peter underwent after his shameful declension; and to this our Lord referred in Luke xxii. 32.

II. A second evidence of life more abundantly is an INCREASE OF FAITH. This is the grace which brings the soul into immediate connection with Christ. A feeble faith can remove mole-hills, but it requires a stalwart faith to remove mountains. He who would cast out the devils that infest his heart, and have the courage to undertake up-hill work, and the conversion of 'hard cases,' must take a prodigious hold on God. When Luther was in the thick of his fight with the Papacy, he says that he could not get on with less than three hours a-day in fervent prayer. The earthquake that shook Europe came through Luther's knees. His trust in God made one man an overmatch for the scarlet hierarchy on the seven hills of Rome. Sometimes a pastor who has been sowing pure gospel-seed diligently becomes so enlarged in faith and prays so intensely, 'Give me souls or I die,' that God takes him at His word, and sends him a full sheaf of blessings. This sort of stalwart faith sets great store by such a promise as Paul unfolds in this verse: 'If God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him *freely give us all things?*' An eminent Christian tells me that she considers this the most precious passage in the Bible.

III. With more abundant life will come a MORE PERFECT PEACE, AND A RICHER JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST. A sour, sullen, discontented, gloomy, grumbling Christian is a reproach to the name he bears. If such a pitiable professor, with his head bowed like a bulrush, should venture to ask an unconverted friend to embrace Christianity, that friend might well reply, 'I have troubles enough of my own without being troubled with such a doleful, ageish religion as you seem to have.' May it not be possible that many Christian parents rather disgust and repel

their own children by the melancholy exhibition which they make of their religion in their own houses?

On the other hand, a cheerful, healthy, sunny-faced piety has great attractiveness, and is a daily sermon to win souls to Jesus. Nearly all the most successful soul-winners, from Luther down to Spurgeon and Moody, have carried this light in their countenance. The joy of the Lord has been a part of their strength. Paul and Silas were so filled with it that they made the dismal dungeon of Philippi ring with their songs of praise at midnight. Such joy can only be fed by a constant keeping of the inner life hid with Christ. 'These things have I spoken unto you that *my* joy might remain in you, and that *your* joy might be full.'

We might specify other tokens of the more abundant life which Jesus gives. These three—healthy vigour, stalwart faith, and gracious joy of heart—are the ones most to be desired, and the most certain of attainment when we *do* honestly desire them. They are all within the reach of every one to whom Christ has imparted spiritual life. If you are content to be a feeble dwarf, you will always continue to be one. If you strive after the abundant life, you can have it. The promise which I read on this five-pound note, 'the National Bank will pay the bearer FIVE POUNDS' ought not to inspire such implicit trust as these higher words, 'Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened.' 'I am come that ye may have life, and that ye may have it *more abundantly*.'

LUTHER'S RELATIONS WITH THE HUMANISTS AND THE NOBILITY.

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

(Continued from page 375.)



JUSTUS JONAS, ten years younger than Luther, friend of Eoban Hess, and one of the most talented members of the circle of poets, now went over to theology from the law, which he had studied, and in which he had already begun to teach. Admiration of Erasmus united itself with enthusiasm for Luther, the bold champion for the Divine Word, who had come from Erfurt. Jonas, as with Lange, now came into close friendship with Luther. Erasmus had encouraged him in his passing over to theology. Luther, when the tidings came to him in 1520, congratulated him that he had fled out of the stormy sea of the lawyers into the asylum of Holy Scriptures.

But CROTUS was the most zealous of all the Erfurt students for fellowship with Luther. He had been a fellow-student with him in Erfurt; He had gone to Italy. Here he, from the autumn of 1518, had been roused into earnest sympathy with Luther through intelligence from Germany, and at the same time he had come to know, as he said, from his own contemplation in a still wider circle, the scandals and enormities contended against by the Reformer. He who once, in the 'Letters of Obscure Men,' had, according to Luther's judgment, lacked holy earnestness in his satire, now expressed his entire concurrence in Luther's fundamental religious and theological ideas, his high esteem of the Holy Scriptures, and of the evangelical teaching of the way of salvation. He repeatedly wrote to him, and whilst he reminded him of their being together in Erfurt, reported to him about 'the chair of pestilence' in Rome and Eck's intrigues, and encouraged him to advance still further. In his letters the peculiar phraseo-

logy usual among the poets is found alongside of religious matter. He styles Luther a father of his country, who is worthy of a golden statue, and a yearly festival. He would like to glorify his Martin, who first had dared to free the people of God, and to point them to true piety. While he was in Italy, and even after his return, his literary productiveness actively showed itself in anonymous pamphlets in behalf of Luther. It was from Crotus that there came towards the end of 1519, the Humanistically cultured theologian John Hess (at a later period reformer of the Church in Breslau) from Italy to Luther and Melancthon in Wittenberg. Crotus himself returned to Germany at the beginning of 1520.

ULRICH VON HUTTEN, the personal friend of Crotus, at this period joined the Humanistic friends of the Lutheran movement. Ulrich von Hutten not only wrote in an incisive and fiery manner, as scarcely any other of the Humanists could do, but he was always ready in behalf of the matters contended for by him to seize the sword, and to summon powerful associates of his own rank to contend along with him. He was descended from an old Franconian family, in which he inherited not much money or land, but only an old knightly independent spirit. Although he hated monachism and all connected with it, he was yet from his early youth compelled to enter a monastic order. He was put by his father into a convent when he was a boy, and in his sixteenth year he fled from it by the help of Crotus. While Hutten shared in the scientific aspirations of his friend Crotus, he learned to write with great skill the poetical and rhetorical Latin of the Humanists of that period. With all his aberrations, adventures,