



The
CHRISTIAN TREASURY

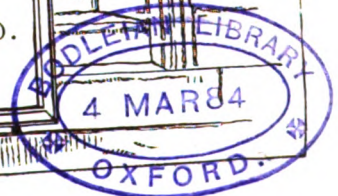
CONTAINING

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.



SAMUEL'S LITTLE COAT.

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



SMALL incidents in God's Word often teach great truths. One of these incidents was the manufacture by a good woman's hand of a tiny garment that went to dust and ashes thirty centuries ago. In the second chapter of the First Book of Samuel we are told 'his mother made him a little coat.' The good mother who made the little mantle was Hannah—thrice-honoured name in the annals of womanhood. The lad who wore it was Samuel, who grew up from a beautiful boyhood into the holy prophet, and the honest, fearless chief-magistrate of Israel. Hannah consecrated him to God from infancy (just as all godly parents do who make infant baptism a holy binding rite), and placed him in the tabernacle. Every year she made for him a little coat, and took it up to Shiloh when she went to offer her annual sacrifice.

We will answer for it that the garment which this sensible mother wove for her darling boy was a becoming one. She would not have made the child a doll to be overloaded with finery, after the fashion of thousands of fond and foolish parents. As if God had not made the little creature beautiful enough—they must needs overload it with the upholsterings of costly attire, and then torture its graceful freedoms under the tongs and screws of artificialities. On a certain Sabbath some such parents have brought these very children to God's house and formally consecrated them to Him in baptism. All the rest of the time they are devoting their offspring to that *other* Trinity—fashion, finery, and frivolity! This overdressing of the body *strikes through* into the heart. How can a stop ever be put to the crop of fops and extravagant fashion-mongers, if children are to be trained up into this slavery to externals from their cradles? How can our children be taught self-denial, frugality, humility, and the love of Jesus, while their forms are smothered under the trappings of pride and extravagance? We are quite certain that when the devout

Hebrew mother made a little coat for her lovely boy, she remembered that he was 'lent unto the Lord,' and not to the 'lust of the eye and the pride of life.'

Another meaning may be put upon this 'little coat' without any undue violence to Scripture. In the Bible dress is often made an emblem of character: 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ;' 'Be ye clothed with humility.' Faithful disciples are described as they who have 'not defiled their garments.' Nor is it a mere pun to remind you that the word *habit* signifies both dress and the disposition of the mind to good or evil. The *habit* of obeying God is the very essence of holiness.

Now we parents not only clothe our little ones; we also provide, in no small degree, the habits of their hearts and lives. We help to clothe them in garments of light and loveliness, or else in garments of sin and shame. Our children *put on* the example set before them by parents and by Sunday-school teachers. Not only what we say, but what we do, will be repeated in their words and conduct. Our character streams into our children. During the few hours that teachers spend with their classes, as well as during the many hours of parental contact every week, the young hearts are taking photographs constantly which come out in character and behaviour. Our irritations irritate them; our unseemly jests on sacred occasions breed irreverence in them. A trifling teacher of God's book on God's-day produces a class of frivolous contempters of sacred things. 'Teacher says so,' 'teacher did so,' has, unhappily, left an indelible ink-stain on many a child's memory.

If a boy is handled harshly and *jerked* into obedience he will likely turn out a sullen, obstinate creature; he will be just what rough impatience made him. If our talk is mainly of money, our children will grow up into covetousness; if it is chiefly about dress, parties, and self-indulgence, they will harden into slaves of sensuous pleasures. If we give our boys a *dollar* for the toy-shop or the place of

amusement, and a *dime* for the missionary-box we teach them that self-gratification is ten times more important than giving to the Lord. If we live *for* the world, they will probably die *of* the world, and the blood of their lost souls may be found in our skirts! The soul-garments we are weaving they will wear. Long after we parents or teachers are in our graves, our children will be clothed in the characters we helped to form.

Mr A— has always regarded it as quite the right thing to offer wine at his table. His sons have tasted it and learned to love it. They became bitten by the 'serpent' in the glass, and soon took to stronger and deadlier drinks. How does the father *like the coat* now which he made for his boys?

Brother B— tells his family at the table that the theatre is not so bad a place as the Puritanical folk make it out; so he goes occasionally when some 'star' is shining there. His young people go too, and soon become sensualised by the unclean sights and sounds. By-and-by a daughter begins to show streaks of coarseness, and the young men follow up the exciting scenes of the play-house over a bottle, or in the chambers that lie hard by the doors of hell! When the mischief has been wrought, how does that father fancy the *habits* he wove for his own children?

Madam C— is fully persuaded that a dancing-hall is the one only place to acquire elegant manners. So she equips her daughters for the ball-room—even though a 'round dance be the last gasp of expiring delicacy.' The poor girls become 'society girls'—one of the feeblest and most contemptible types of womanhood. If that infatuated mother shall look back from her dying pillow upon the moral (or immoral) apparel she made for her own children, she may well feel that in casting away the 'ornament of a meek' and godly spirit for the tawdry fineries of 'the flesh,' she has clad them in the garments of shame.

This little text about the little coat is full of the most vital suggestions. Teachers, as well as parents, must remember that they are *weaving character*, and the fabrics will last into eternity. We perform this weaving process stitch by stitch, and we do it by little actions and by unconscious influences. Mother Hannah's tunics went to rags and moths and dust; but the boy Samuel's character shines in the Bible-gallery as a raiment of light. The coats we make for the immortal souls committed to our teachings will outlast the firmament; and may God help us to construct such garments as shall grow brighter and brighter

among the white-robed around the throne. 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.' Be careful, fellow-teachers in school or in home, how you slight the little coats.—
Westminster Teacher.

Mother and Child.

The mother sat in the twilight
Teaching her boy to pray,
Her darling knelt in his night dress,
Closing the summer day.

She had given him some loving thoughts
Of the great Lord on high—
The Lord far off in the glory,
And yet for ever high.

And she folded his little hands,
And bid him hold them there,
While in infant adoration
He said his evening prayer.

And then she knelt down beside him,
Prayed in the waning light
That God would guard him every hour,
And keep him day and night.

And as she laid him down to sleep,
The twinkling stars looked in,
And her prayers went up beyond them,
The golden gates within.

Oh! sweetest hour of all the day
For mother's in their love!
What other time has less of earth,
Or more of heaven above?

But years sped on, and the mother
Is sitting all alone:
To a life at sea her darling,
Her loving boy was gone.

Yet she followed him oft in prayer,
Compassed him with her love,
And commended him in danger
To the dear Lord above.

But alas! on one winter's night
A cry of pain was heard,
And the gallant tars are shouting,
'A boy is overboard!'

Her boy! And yet she could slumber,
Yet she could calmly sleep;
She safe in her Scottish homestead—
He in the briny deep!

At first he struggled manfully
To keep himself afloat,
For there was nothing to be seen—
No craft, no little boat.