



The  
CHRISTIAN TREASURY

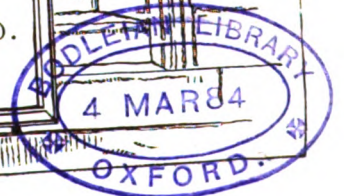
CONTAINING

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.



## SAVING FAITH.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.



**I**T is not every faith that saves the soul. There may be a faith in a falsehood, which leads only to delusion and ends in destruction. When the Eddystone Lighthouse was to be rebuilt, Winstanley, the noted engineer, contracted to rear a structure which should withstand the assaults of time and tempests. So confident was his faith in the showy structure of his own skill, that he offered to lodge in it, with the keeper, through the autumnal gales. He was true to his word. But the first tremendous tempest which caught the flimsy lighthouse in the hollow of its hand hurled both building and builder into the foaming sea. We fear that too many souls are rearing their hopes for eternity upon the sands of error; when the testing floods come and the winds beat upon their house, it will fall, and sad will be the fall thereof.

There is a faith that saves; it puts us into immediate and vital and permanent union with the Son of God. Because He lives, we shall live also. No man is able to pluck us out of the Almighty hand to which we have entrusted ourselves for safe keeping. 'Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace,' said Jesus to the penitent woman who washed His feet with her tears, and anointed them with her costly ointment. What was the nature of that faith? Was it merely an intellectual opinion, a clear conviction that this wonderful Man of Nazareth was a strong and sympathetic character whom she could trust? Yes, it was that, and a great deal more. It was a transaction by which she approached Christ, humbly embraced His very feet, acknowledged her sinfulness, and *relied on Him* to do for her some great spiritual good. Faith is simply an entire reliance upon somebody or something. The merit of the woman's deed was not in the act itself which she performed, but in the connection which she then formed between her guilty self and an all-powerful,

pardoning Saviour. Her faith was the channel through which the blessing came. Had He been an impostor, no benefit would have flowed through the channel. As He was divine, there flowed into her soul an abundant pardon and an abiding peace. The woman was really saved *through* her faith. Jesus Christ Himself did the saving work. When I turn the faucet in my house, it is not the faucet or the water-pipe that fills my empty pitcher. I simply put my pitcher in actual connection with the inexhaustible Ridgewood Reservoir, which is at the other end of the pipe. When I exercise faith on a crucified Saviour, I put my guilty self into connection with His Divine self, my ignorance and weakness with His wisdom and strength, my will with His will, my utter emptiness into connection with His infinite fulness. I trust myself to the Son of God; I rely entirely on Him to deliver me from condemnation as completely as Bartimeus relied on Him to deliver him from blindness; I confide in His blood to cleanse me, His grace to uphold me, and His life to flow into me, and keep me spiritually alive for evermore.

This is the faith which the Apostles preached, and which you and I must practise, if we would be saved from the death of sin. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,' was Paul's answer to the most important question that human lips can utter. Not on Christianity, observe, but *on Christ*. It is not enough to believe *in* the Christ described in the New Testament. Millions of unconverted people do this, just as they believe in Wilberforce as a noble philanthropist, or in Lincoln as an unselfish patriot. But these, whose judgments assent to Christ's wonderful beauty of character, do not entrust their souls to Him as an atoning Redeemer. They do not rely on what He has done for them, or promises to do. They do not put themselves into such spiritual connection with Him that they draw from His divine life their own inner life, as a grape cluster

draws its substance from the vine. When the miner looks at the rope which is to lower him into the deep mine, he may coolly say to himself, 'I have faith in that rope. It looks well made and strong.' That is his opinion; but, when he grasps it and swings down by it into the dark, yawning chasm, then he is believing *on* the rope. This is more than opinion; it is a voluntary transaction. The miner just lets go of his old foothold, and bears his entire weight on those well-braided strands of hemp. Faith is the cling to the rope, but it is the rope itself which supports him. When a human soul lets go of every other reliance in the wide universe, and hangs entirely upon what Jesus has done and can do for him, then that soul 'believes *on* Christ.' To Him the believer entrusts himself for guidance, for pardon, for strength, and for ultimate admission into the exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

(1.) Faith is a very SIMPLE process. Thanks be unto God that the most vital of all acts is as easily comprehended as a baby comprehends the idea of drawing nourishment from a mother's breast, and of falling asleep in a mother's arms. The theory of all redemption has its mysteries; the practical part of our religion, which is trusting and obeying a Redeemer, is no mystery. A mill operative, who was troubled about his soul, received a letter requesting him to come to the office of the mill at five o'clock. The Christian employer said to him, 'James, do you wish to see me?' The workman, holding up the note, said, 'I got this letter from you.' 'Oh!' said the master, 'I see that you believed that I wanted to see you, and you have come promptly. Now here is another letter sent to you by One who was in still more earnest to have you come to Him.' Saying this, he held open a Bible, in which James read slowly the words, 'Come—unto—Me—and—I—will—give—you—rest.' The tears came into the eyes of the poor fellow, as he inquired, 'Am I to believe that in the same way I did your letter?' 'Exactly in the same way, James; and if you receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.' That so cleared the path of salvation to the workman's eye that he perceived that his Lord simply asked to be treated in the same way that his earthly employer did. Jesus propounds no riddle when He invites you and me to come to Him just as the blind beggar and the penitent harlot came.

(2.) Faith is not only a simple, it is a SENSIBLE act. Do you consider it a sensible

thing to purchase a U.S. Government bond? Yes; because it gives you a lien on all the resources of the great Republic. So the highest exercise of the reason is to trust what the almighty God has said, and to rely on what He has promised. Infidelity plays the idiot when it rejects God, and pays the penalty. Faith is wise unto its own salvation.

(3.) Faith is a STOOPING grace. That heart-broken, self-despising woman weeping on the feet of her Lord is a beautiful picture of its lowliness and submission. Self must go down first, before we can be lifted up into Christ's favour and likeness. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Pride and self-righteousness were biting the dust when Saul of Tarsus stammered out, 'Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do?' It is an accursed self-conceit which prevents thousands from becoming Christians. On the low grounds falls the fertilising rain of heaven; the bleak mountain tops are barren. God resisteth the proud, and giveth His grace unto the lowly.

(4.) Faith is the STRENGTHENING grace. Through this channel flows in the power from on high. The impotent man had lain many a weary year by the pool of Bethesda. When Jesus inquired, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' and his faith assented, the command came instantly, 'Rise, take up thy bed and walk.' At once the man leaps up, and a helpless bundle of nerves and muscles receives strength sufficient to walk and to carry his couch. To as many of us as receive Him, He gives power to become and to live as the sons of God. Faith links us to Omnipotence.

(5.) Finally, it is the grace which completely SATISFIES. When a hungry soul has found this food, the aching void is filled. 'Lord, *evermore* give me this bread.' When the sting of guilt is taken away, and the load of condemnation is lifted off, then comes relief, rest, hope, joy, fellowship with the Divine. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace. Without this faith it is impossible to please God; when it is exercised and we come and ally ourselves with our blessed, pardoning, life-giving Saviour, He, too, beholds the happy result of His work, and is satisfied.

In view of all this, what a deadly and damning sin is unbelief! It cuts us off from God. Bartimeus stumbling, blind, into his grave, and the leper carrying his loathsome disease to his dying day, would be but faint pictures of what every sinner is who refuses to let the Lord Jesus save him. Faith is salvation; unbelief is eternal suicide.—*New York Independent*.