

Our Contributors.

THE FAITH THAT SAVES.

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

"When I was in college," said the Rev. Dr. B—, "one of the professors tried hard to explain faith to me. But it was a muddle until I came and trusted my soul to Jesus Christ. When I did it; I understood it." It is the simplicity of faith that often puzzles people. They are discussing a doctrine, when they ought to be doing an act. They worry their brains when they ought to be yielding their hearts.

Faith is sometimes defined as an assent to the truth of the gospel which God has given us. But this is an intellectual act that is not sufficient to save a soul. Intellectual belief in the gospel is entertained by millions without the slightest penitence for sin or the least step towards following Christ. There are plenty of intellectual believers in that world of woe where "the devils also believe—and tremble!" Faith has also been defined as "taking God at his word." A very important mental act is this, too; but does any "word" of our Heavenly Father save our souls? Did the apostles ever preach, "Believe the word and be saved?"

Paul and Silas were confronted by the mightiest question that ever agitates a human soul, when that poor jailer of Philippi lay trembling before them. They did not stop to expound a doctrine; they enforced a deed; they did not point to a system of truth, but to a personal Saviour. To an Almighty Person, a loving, compassionate Person, to a divine Person whose atoning blood cleanseth from sin. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Not in Christianity, but on Jesus Christ. That is what they told the jailer.

Mark that little and, yet supremely great word *on*. It is not enough to believe in Christ. Millions of unconverted people believe in Jesus, just as they believe in Howard as a noble philanthropist, and in Washington as a pure patriot, and in Newton as a profound philosopher. But they do not trust their souls to Jesus. They do not rest on him for salvation; they do not build their characters on him as the only foundation.

One of the survivors from the terrible burning of a great hotel tells us that when he was driven back by the flames in the hall, he seized the escape-rope in his bed-room, and from an upper story he lowered himself through the smoke down to the sidewalk. He had seen that rope before, but had felt no need of it. He had a good opinion of the strength of the rope, but it was only an opinion; he put it to the test when he swung out of the window and trusted his life to it. Now that was a saving faith; he let go of everything else and committed his whole weight to those well-braided strands of hemp. And when a human soul lets go of every other reliance in the wide universe and lays hold of the sin-atoning Redeemer for salvation, that soul "believes on Christ." He entrusts himself to Jesus for pardon, for acceptance with God,

for grace, for strength, for guidance, and for a full salvation.

Some anxious inquirer who reads this article may say that if Paul told the jailer to believe on Jesus Christ, the Apostle Peter had previously told a company of sinners who were "pricked in their hearts" that their first duty was to "repent." Very true; and my friend, it is your duty also, if you would have a new life here and an eternal life hereafter. But just what is genuine and scriptural and effectual repentance? Is it sorrow for sin? Yes; but it is a vast deal more than that. It is the act of a soul that with not only a sorrow for sin but hatred of sin, turns from it to God with an earnest endeavor to obey and follow Jesus Christ. Evangelical repentance and faith go together. They are inseparable. They are the two halves of one globe. Sorrow, shame, self-reproach will all end in nothing unless you lay hold of him who alone can give you the new life, the new character and the new conduct. Is the Holy Spirit working upon your heart? Yes; and you must move whither he points; he is pressing you right towards Christ.

Repentance is more than a mere feeling; it is an act. Saving faith is more than an opinion, or a good resolution, or a devout purpose. It is the act of yielding your heart up to the sin-atoning and loving Saviour, and joining your soul to him as your Redeemer and Lord. When Jesus Christ called Peter and James and John, he said to them, "Follow me!" They did not sit down and cry; they did not consult anybody; they did not promise the Christ that they would at some future day obey him. Straightway they left their nets and followed him. There, my friend, is the example for you. Begin to do the first thing that the Spirit, working on your conscience, bids you do. When you honestly take any step, either in abandoning a sin, or doing a duty, and do this simply to please Jesus Christ, then conversion has begun. You have changed masters. To be willing to trust on Christ, and to go with Christ even for a single important step, is the beginning of a genuine Christian life.

Have you a little faith? Use what you have and pray for more. Christ will help you when you begin to follow him, as a child that is learning how to walk. Don't be satisfied with half-way work; no number of half Christians can make a whole one. Make a clean break with your old sins and old self, and lay firm hold on the Almighty Saviour. There was a good deal of pith in the answer of an humble servant-maid, who, when applying for admission to the church, was asked by her pastor what evidence she had of her conversion? Her reply was: "Well—for one thing, I sweep now under the rugs and the door-mats." The fatal mischief with some professors of religion is that they have left a sad amount of sin and selfishness under the door-mats. "Faith without works is dead." The only proof you can give that you are trusting on Christ and following Christ is that you begin to keep Christ's commandments.

"The Most Corrupt City in the World."

Review characterizes the great city of Philadelphia as "The most corrupt city in the World," and he seems to offer strong reasons in vindication of the charge he thus makes. If Philadelphia is bad, the state of Pennsylvania is no better. In both state and city partyism is run to seed. The "machine" is operated with masterly skill to the advantage of a party. Corruption by trusts and companies is universal. Justice is bought and sold. Valuable franchises are disposed of by a party for partizan advantage. Offices of every grade in every department are sold with a view to strengthening the dominant party. The leaders are personally men of good standing and reputation. They have, however, through their hirelings resorted to shameful devices—ballot box stuffing, ballot-stealing, ballot-switching, fraud, forgery and perjury.

Pennsylvania is the state named after William Penn, the righteous and honest and peace-loving Englishman. Philadelphia is the city of "brotherly love." City and state were meant to be models of pure government and just administration of righteous laws. It is now third in population of American cities, —excelled only by New York and Chicago; and in corruption excelled by none. It has been loyal to the "Republican" party; and it is thoroughly under the sway of the Republican machine. Whoever is nominated by the "boss" or the "machine" is sure to win. The Republican party has the prestige of carrying to a successful issue the great war. It was the party of anti-slavery and union. Its prestige still carries it on to victory. A couple of years ago the Republican machine carried the elections in Philadelphia by stuffing 40,000 false votes into the ballot boxes! They had bought the Democrat inspectors. Even judges, district attorneys, and men whose duty it is to discover and prosecute criminals, devise ways of evading the law. Jurors also are not always to be relied upon. Philadelphia City Hall has been thirty years in building and it has cost \$20,000,000—at least ten times the amount it ought to have cost. In 1885 twenty per cent. of the vote cast in the city was fraudulent. The robbing of the city treasury was flagrant, but continued unchecked. The gasworks owned by the city were handed over to a company. An attempt was made to hand over the water-works also, but this attempt was foiled by an honest man, who exposed the bribe of \$5,000 offered to him. There was an investigation, but the bribers made so good a show and so popular a defence that they were not subjected to any form of punishment.—The City Council men in the hope of compelling the people to give up the water works to a private company, allowed the water to become poisoned with the germs of typhoid to such a degree that the death rate advanced to 70 per thousand—a regular cholera rate. This horrible outrage continued for years.—An electric company has a monopoly which enables it to charge any rate it sees fit. To secure this from the city authorities cost the company \$100,000.—Certain work on the streets is carried on at three times the legitimate price. Corruption is still triumphant and wins its way by bolder and still bolder forms of robbery and wrong. The general defence is that the leaders of the party are good men, some of them very good men,—all of them better than "those Democrats." The writer claims that the city of Philadelphia has lost over one hundred millions of dollars by the bold dishonesty of its "bosses."—Pres. Witness.

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