



SUNDAY READING

SAVED BY THE CROSS.

Difficulties in the Christian Life and How to Conquer Them.

In one of a recent series of sermons preached in St. Paul's Cathedral, Canon Knox-Little had these, among other things to say to his hearers:

Of conduct, especially spiritual conduct, surely this is true, that what we are inclined to do is to take for granted that we are entirely independent in this world. My brothers, we are not independent; we are not independent of our fellow-men; we are not independent of the society around us; we are not independent of God. But we take it for granted that we are. "Why should I pray?" we say. "Leave it to the sentimental, to the heart-broken, to the sorrowful, to be driven by anxiety into the cry of prayer. I have my strong arm, my determined will, my powerful brain; I can conduct my own affairs for myself." My brothers, I think it was said, I remember rightly, from this pulpit, by a great teacher, that the moment a man loses hold of any truth he loses hold of moral power. Now, humility is nothing else but the ready acceptance of a real fact—of our nothingness and God's greatness, and our dependence upon God. Lose your humility, think that you can do without Him, think that you can go without prayer, without sacraments, without the teaching of the church of Jesus, without a thought of another world, along you will go a certain way, but you are forgetting that there is only One Who is quite independent, and He has sent His Son to be His great revealer, and to know Him is to have eternal life; and to forget the truth of our moral feebleness, of my utter insignificance, of the fact that every pulse that beats in this wrist of mine, and every throb that vibrates in this breast, and every thought that darts across this brain, depends upon the will of Him from whom I come, and to whom I go—to forget that is to cease to be humble, to cease to be true. And the moment I have lost any truth, that moment I have lost moral power; my moral grip upon the conduct of my life is gone; my moral grip of the facts of Revelation is terribly relaxed; but when I look up, not only with the look of faith, but in true humility, then, dear friends, I am safe.

Great is the difficulty of conquering temper, great is the difficulty of conquering loneliness, great is the difficulty of conquering a cowardly surrender to pleasure when duty calls another way, great is the difficulty of overcoming lusts when wild desire is asserting itself in throbbing nerves, great is the difficulty of being loyal to the Church, loyal to prayer, loyal to the observance of holy-days, loyal to the Sacraments, loyal to your duty in the midst of a world that seems to forget God. My brothers who feel all this, to you I say, Look up to the Cross—there is hope there. If you are a man, with a man's heart beating in you, don't cave in. Hope is a moral power; it requires a strong will to conquer the seductions of despondency and despair. But the Cross is the great symbol of hope to the dejected, to the lost woman, to the weary-hearted, to the lonely life. Was there ever a man in all religion, was there ever a man in all philosophy, that spoke like the Crucified—stern, relentless, unbending, to the wilful and the sinful, and those who would have their own way, but tender, large-hearted, and forgiving to the dejected, to the broken-hearted, and to the discouraged.

Remember, for your encouragement, our religion is a religion of apparent failure, and it is a religion that can never say die. It was said by the eloquent lips of one that used to speak from this pulpit, that it you look at the history of mankind—I cannot quote the exact words, but simply give the substance of the thought—you will find it a long record of splendid failures. St. Francis making his great act of self-denial in the thirteenth century and then leaving his mediant friars soon to lose their first enthusiasm and to fall away from his ideal; St. Dominic filling the empty papists of Europe with his followers, who ultimately become the minions of the Inquisition. St. Paul himself doing a wonderful work in Asia Minor and Eastern Europe, and then alone in the prison under the Falatine, or in the cave at the Capitol, and the place of execution on the Ostian Way. And Christ on the Cross, forgotten, despised, crucified—a failure. And yet I look at this vast congregation and ask, Why should men and women care to hear a fellow sinner speak of a Man who died eighteen hundred years ago? Why His voice is heard in the whirlwind, the light of His life is seen across the surging sea, the thoughts of His hearts are in the poetry and literature of Europe, in the motives of His power have created the highest civilization. He lives He works, He helps; He is by lonely death beds, He is consolation in the hospital. He is the ideal of the young man struggling. He is the reinforcement of the preacher preaching, He is the strong support in moments of weakness, the great consolation in the hour of sorrow; and beyond all that, when we know ourselves in sin, He is the great absolver. And yet his life is a failure! Take courage, God did not call us to succeed; He calls us to work, and to leave the rest with Him. No; success is not to be compared with high failures. Take the higher line, live for eternity, live for the Faith, live for goodness, live for truth, live for duty. Your life may look a failure, but it will have the triumph of the Cross.

Christianity, some men say, is played out. They are wrong; indeed, they are wrong. Christianity has got a power about it still, a power that can never die. Some men think that loyalty, intellectual loyalty to Revelation is a matter of indifference, and that they can take their spiritual lives in their own hands without God as their

guide; and they are likewise wrong. Christianity is indeed a system of propositions, but Christianity is a rule of life, a rule of life and thought and conduct that lifts us up into higher things. But Christianity is more, it is the pointing to that great ideal that lies beyond. It is within the possibility of a finite creature that in the dear objects of human affection—in the girl you love as her lover, in the wife by your side all through life, in the little lad you have sent to sea, and whose letters are so eagerly received and treasured up, and whose hands are so lovingly clasped when at last he returns to his home, in the friend that stands by you in the hour of trial—there is only the image of One, the perfect Revealer, the tender Friend, the sweet Supporter, the entire Absolver. Christianity teaches us—Oh do not forget it—that by a right faith and a moral grip of duty, by constant prayer and a diligent life, by repentance for sin, and by trying again, and again, and again, we may learn a tender and an enthusiastic devotion to Him Who for our sakes became Man, and died, and lives again, and Who is now our support, our comfort, our absolver, and at last, may it be to you and to me, through the power of His grace, our exceeding great reward.

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION.

Probabilities That it Will Be Allowed to Remain as It Is.

It looks now as if, after all, the Westminster Confession would be left as it is by the Presbyterians. So far the scheme of revision submitted to the presbyteries has received the entire approval of only thirty of the 138 which have voted on it, and forty-two have rejected it entirely. The rest either approve of the revision in part only, or want a brand-new creed. These 138 presbyteries comprise about three-fifths of the whole, and they are enough to indicate that the general sentiment of the Church is opposed to the changes over which the committee of the General Assembly worked so long and painfully. Even a great majority of the presbyteries favoring some sort of revision are dissatisfied with the amendments actually submitted; but no committee could have pleased them any better. The Westminster Confession is so consistent a structure that no part of it can be removed or even transformed without damage to the whole. The movement on behalf of revision, too, started in opposition to the Confession's Calvinism, yet this committee was commanded by the General Assembly to leave its Calvinism unimpaired! The origin of the movement was the revolt of comfortably situated urban Presbyterians, more especially, against the doctrines of hell which the Confession lays down very squarely and explicitly, which really is the corner stone of the structure. This Calvinistic doctrine is that God of His own will decreed before all time the exact future state of every human being, whether he should be saved or damned. It is, in other words, that whatever happens was bound to happen; and its logic, therefore, is invincible. But it is not an agreeable doctrine, and prosperous Presbyterians do not like to have it put so sharply. They would dismiss the subject of hell entirely or treat it vaguely; but Calvin saw that his doctrine of eternal degrees is essential to his doctrine of a personal God, omniscient and omnipotent. It is essential to the consistency of the Westminster Confession; and hence there is no possibility of satisfying the objecting presbyterians short of a new creed. Really they are universalists. They want to be able to believe that nobody will go to hell.

Accordingly, the complete failure of the attempt to revise the Westminster Confession without impairing its Calvinism, seems to be a foregone conclusion. To be successful the proposed revision needs to get a two-thirds vote, and that, the returns so far indicate, is next to impossible. The forthcoming general assembly at Washington is likely to leave the presbyterians with their same old standards of faith. It will not undertake to abolish hell. [—New York Sun.

Messages of Help for the Week.
Monday.—Psalm 5, 7: "I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy; and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple."
—Monday—Psalm 25, 14: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant."
Tuesday.—Proverbs 1, 7: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge;" execution on the Ostian Way. And Christ on the Cross, forgotten, despised, crucified—a failure. And yet I look at this vast congregation and ask, Why should men and women care to hear a fellow sinner speak of a Man who died eighteen hundred years ago? Why His voice is heard in the whirlwind, the light of His life is seen across the surging sea, the thoughts of His hearts are in the poetry and literature of Europe, in the motives of His power have created the highest civilization. He lives He works, He helps; He is by lonely death beds, He is consolation in the hospital. He is the ideal of the young man struggling. He is the reinforcement of the preacher preaching, He is the strong support in moments of weakness, the great consolation in the hour of sorrow; and beyond all that, when we know ourselves in sin, He is the great absolver. And yet his life is a failure! Take courage, God did not call us to succeed; He calls us to work, and to leave the rest with Him. No; success is not to be compared with high failures. Take the higher line, live for eternity, live for the Faith, live for goodness, live for truth, live for duty. Your life may look a failure, but it will have the triumph of the Cross.

When Abraham Lincoln was president he attended the New York Avenue church in Washington. Years after, the church was refitted and refurbished, and the seat which Mr. Lincoln occupied was removed to the rooms used by the Sunday-school in the basement of the church. But it was never lost sight of; and a few weeks ago the church members voted that it should be brought back and placed on the north side of the middle aisle where it was formerly. It was taken out and photographed, and then brought up to the auditorium. It is of black walnut, of the same length with the other seats, but lower and narrower. The other seats are of bright new oak, and the change makes this dark old inhabitant a noticeable thing. A plate is to be put upon it to show its history, and it will be occupied by the family of the Rev. Dr. Bartlett, the present pastor.

NEWS AND NOTABILIA.

Every hypocrite in the church makes some outside sinner feel safer.

The baptists of the United States gave \$13,907,418 into the treasuries of their churches last year.

The Marquis of Breadalbane is to be Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the church of Scotland.

It is rumored in Paris that the Pope is preparing another encyclical on social questions, which will be published in May.

Massachusetts is the stronghold of congregationalism. That state has 579 congregational churches and 105,943 members.

The Duke of Northumberland gives some £3,000 a year in donations and subscriptions to various church schools throughout the country.

Five ministers of Macon, Mo., are being tried upon the charge of libel for publishing a circular denouncing a school in which dancing is taught.

From the first settlement of Truro in 1760 during a period of 22 years, there was no other denomination within its neighborhood but Presbyterians.

Mr. Lyne Stephens is the only woman who has ever presented a cathedral to a religious community. It stands at Cambridge, Eng., is dedicated to Roman catholic worship, and cost \$400,000.

The death is announced of the Rev. Father Coleridge, brother of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge. He became a convert to the Roman Catholic faith many years ago, and afterwards joined the Jesuit order.

More than 100 new Christian Endeavor societies are being enrolled every week, and at the last quarterly meeting of the trustees of the united society, General Secretary Baer reported that there were 3,400 junior societies.

Afghanistan has 6,000,000 of population and no missionary; India, one missionary to 275,000; Persia, one to 300,000; Tibet, one to 2,000,000. If 40,000 missionaries were sent to India there would still be only one to every 50,000.

There are in Great Britain and Ireland nearly 500,000 Wesleyans, over 100,000 primitive Methodists, nearly 75,000 members of the United Methodist Free churches, and over 36,000 persons attached to the methodist new connection.

Eleven European Lutheran missionary societies are represented in India. They sustain 200 missionaries, and their congregations number 150,000 baptized members. The two American societies have 22 missionaries and 16,600 communicants.

The principal of the school in which the late Bishop Brooks once served as an usher predicted, when the latter entered the ministry, that he would be a failure as a clergyman. It would be worth knowing whether the pedagogue is still alive, and, if so, how he regards his prophetic powers.

"Many a clergyman," says Mr. Gladstone, a good and kindly critic, "will think that if he has embodied in his sermon a piece of good divinity, the deed is done, the end of preaching is attained. But the business of a sermon is to move men as well as teach; and if the preacher teaches only without moving, may it not almost be said that he sows by the wayside?"

Another member of the Wesleyan ministry in Wolverhampton, England, has decided to take holy orders in the Church of England. Perhaps the most notable contribution of the Wesleyan ministry to the ranks of the church clergy is Archdeacon Watkins, of Durham. There is some reason to believe that the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse would also have been on the church side but for the red-tapism of a prelate, who insisted that he should spend some time at a theological college.

The society for promoting Christian knowledge, which began in 1840 by giving \$10,000 to the council of the colonial bishoprics fund "for the endowment of sees in the colonies and dependencies of the British Empire," has up to the present time voted £88,000 towards the increase of the colonial episcopate. The society has helped the endowment funds of 17 dioceses in Canada, North America and the West Indies, of 12 dioceses in Africa, of seven dioceses in Asia, and of 16 dioceses in Australia and New Zealand.

Mme. Tel Sono enjoys the distinction of being the first and only woman lawyer in Japan. While engaged in her profession she had many opportunities of discovering the needs of her countrywomen, and with a view to founding a Christian training school for women in her native town, she spent some time in America studying the customs of the country, whose women, to her mind, were on an equality with men. The class she aims to help is the highest in Japan, and one which the missionaries cannot reach, but to which she has admission from her rank.

In the Buddhist country of Ladakh, or Western Tibet, the traveller is constantly encountering by the wayside some signs of the fantastic creed of the Lamas—altars, images, praying-wheels, praying-flags, praying-walls, and other strange objects; and, if one judged from the multitude of these, one would conclude this to be the most religious country in the world. Most of the devotion of this strange people is literally carried on by machinery. Wheels containing rolls of prayers are turned by water power, and every time the wheel revolves it is supposed to be working out the salvation of the man who put it up. On the tops of the houses wags flags inscribed with prayers, performing a similar function; while many other artifices are employed.

The presbyterian witness says that on the 16th Nov., 1798, the Rev. John Waddell was inducted over the Truro congregation as colleague and successor to Rev. Daniel Cook. The following incident related by him during the latter part of his ministry, illustrates his zeal and energy in the Master's service: In the summer of 1837 the widow of one of his elders was sinking under consumption and he was assisted into his wagon and driven to the door of her house. As he was not able either to get out or be helped out of the wagon she was drawn to the door in her chair, where he conversed and prayed with her for the last time in this world. Mr. Waddell's last public address was given at the funeral of five persons who were buried to death in a house at Truro, March 31st, 1841.

The Number Seven in Scripture.

To the theological student the frequent recurrence of the number seven is well ascertained, or easy ascertainable. The first total of which we read in Holy Writ is seven. A little farther on in Genesis sevenfold vengeance is denounced on the slayer of Cain, if such a one should be found. Pharaoh's dream of the kine and the ears of corn is familiar to the least biblical of readers. Balaam, again, demands seven altars, and, for victims, seven bullocks and seven rams. Seven years did Jacob serve for Rachel; and seven times, in his nervous apprehension, he bows himself before the outraged Esau. Nebuchadnezzar's furnace was heated "One seven times more than it was wont to be heated" for the faithful three. Seven priests with seven trumpets marched round the doomed Jericho. Seven times did Elijah's servant look, at his master's bidding, seaward. Seven was the chosen number of deacons. The very first chapter in the book of Revelations introduces us to the Seven Churches of Asia, the golden candlesticks and the seven stars; and throughout the book the same numerical identity is constantly meeting us. The Bible, in short, in both Old and New Testaments, and in Apocrypha to boot, is full of similar instances: from the seven "of every clean beast" taken into the ark to the sluggard who is wiser in his own conceit than "seven men that can render a reason," from Jethro's seven daughters to Sevea's seven sons.



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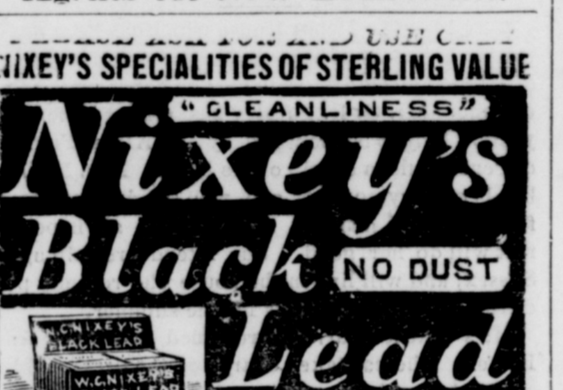
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