

Poetry.

More Faith in Thee.

BY REV. D. WISE, D. D.

When like a bark at sea By rude winds tossed, Fierce troubles threaten me And hope seems lost. O, then, my cry shall be,— More faith, O Christ, in Thee. More faith in Thee!

When Satan buffets me With cruel hate, Or like a lion fierce Roars at my gate: O, then, my cry shall be,— More faith, O Christ, in Thee. More faith in Thee!

Though, from earth's golden fields, I reap much gain; Though honors crown my brow, And I win fame; Yet this my cry shall be,— More faith, O Christ, in Thee. More faith in Thee.

Though like a beggar, I, Of friends bereft, To live by rich men's alms Am sadly left, Yet still my cry shall be,— More faith, O Christ, in Thee. More faith in Thee!

Though sin my heart assail And wound me sore, And though my deeds be thorns Piercing me o'er, E'en then my cry shall be,— More faith, O Christ, in Thee. More faith in Thee!

When sickness casts me down, When death draws near, And when his deadly sting Shall wake my fear; O, then, my cry shall be,— More faith, O Christ in Thee. More faith in Thee!

The Homesick German.

BY REV. HENRY M. KING, D.D.

There is a wonderful power in the recital of Christian experience. Paul believed it and the story of his conversion was a mighty weapon in his hand, which he wielded for the glory of God. The most successful Christian workers I have known, both men and women, have been those who knew how to tell modestly, tenderly and effectively, what the grace of God has done for them. Could the experiences which are told in our churches by those who apply for membership, be written and published, what an interesting library would they make, and what a convincing argument would they be in favor of the truth of our gospel! How alike and yet how unlike, agreeing so exactly in their vital points, and yet differing so beautifully and wonderfully in their details. Does God keep a record of the dealings of his grace, and will the remembrance and recital of Christian experience have anything to do with the happiness of heaven? Who can tell?

I am prompted to put on record a part of the story told by a humble German, who recently applied for baptism to the church of which I am pastor. It will be only a part of it, for for three quarters of an hour he poured out his heart in a way that alternately brought tears to the eyes and smiles to the faces of those who heard him, and made the older Christians confess that old fashioned conversions are not altogether things of the past. The story, as written will lack, too, I fear, much of the interest which the teller's broken English and peculiar forms of expression gave to it.

Mr. B.—, when quite a young man, determined to leave his native land and come to America, whither his brother and a number of relatives and friends had already gone. His father at first was strongly opposed to his leaving home, but finding his son was determined to go, he gave his consent and the young man embarked in a sailing vessel with a company of four hundred, bound for New York. He had of course been brought up in the faith of the Lutheran Church, which is satisfied with obedience to certain rites, and makes no demand for inward piety. He knew nothing of saving faith, and had never been brought into contact with any better form of Christianity than that of his family. He had a restless, roving spirit, had roamed about his own country, disliked restraint, was fond of his liberty, and above all the pleasures of the world. He had thrown his whole heart into the gaieties and frivolities of life and had no higher or nobler purpose in living.

When the ship was a few days out she encountered a terrific storm, and which increased in intensity day after day. The oldest sailors had seen nothing like it before, and yet, instead of coming to an end it only grew worse. Fear was upon them all, and again and again the passengers

were told that there was no hope, for no ship could live in such a storm. As is usual in such circumstances, those who had forgotten God before were driven to pray to him in this extremity, and Valentine among the rest (for that was his name) promised the Almighty over and over again, that if he would spare his life to reach the port, he would consecrate his life to His holy service.

In the meantime so long time had elapsed since the sailing of the vessel that she had been given up as lost and her passengers were mourned as dead. At length, after a passage of fifty-eight days, her arrival was announced in New York and hundreds of people gathered at the wharf, with great rejoicing, to welcome their friends as from a watery grave.

Amid the festivities that followed, Valentine forgot the solemn vow which he had made unto God in trouble, and after some months he found himself at work among his own people in Western Pennsylvania. But God did not forget him. He followed him by his Spirit, ever reminding him by a voice which he could not silence, of the promise which he had made, and calling for its fulfilment. When at work or seeking worldly pleasure, alone or in company, by day and by night, the call kept coming to him, giving him no rest and no comfort.

Month after month passed away, but he told no one of the secret trouble that was gnawing at his heart. His appetite left him, the color faded from his cheek and the joy from his eye, and he seemed fast losing strength and vitality. At first his friends began bantering him and said that he was homesick and longed for his fatherland. But soon, when they saw how pale and feeble he was becoming, their banter changed to pity and they advised him to go home or he would die. But still he kept his heavy secret only replying that he had no means and could not go. At length a ticket was procured and put into his hands and he consented to return to Germany, fixing the time when he would go to New York to set sail, for he was ashamed to tell the cause of his inward trouble and his heart was unwilling to yield itself unto God.

It was the last evening before his departure, he had said good by to his friends and returned at ten o'clock to his room. He was to take the early train next morning, and he knew that instead of leaving behind him his heavy heart, he would take it with him. He took up a neglected Bible and turned its pages. They seemed to contain nothing but condemnation for him. In a moment of almost frenzy he threw it from him into a corner of the room, determined never to touch it again, for, as he said, he was not going to have a Bible that only condemned him. But in an instant he realized, what he had done, his will was broken, he burst into tears, he flew to the corner of the room, picked up the precious volume, carried it back to the light, and then as he opened it, how changed! it contained nothing but promises. He bowed on his knees in remembrance of his solemn vow, and there, penitently, gratefully and lovingly he gave himself, a new creature, to Christ Jesus.

He hardly knew what the new experience meant for he was utterly a stranger to such things, and living among people who were strangers to such things. But into his soul that had so long been dark and troubled, there came a light and peace such as he had never before known.

In the morning he was on hand for the appointed early breakfast, but the colour of health had begun to reappear, and his face was radiant with the joy that filled his heart. The family saw the change and rejoiced, ascribing it, however, to the flight of homesickness on the anticipation of his speedy return to his native land. Then he sat down and told to their bewildered ears the story of his long and persistent resistance of God's will and the wonderful grace that had been brought to him, and astonished them the more by saying, "I shall not take the train to New York this morning. I shall surrender my ticket to Germany, for I prefer to remain in a land where I have found Christ precious to me, and I shall not be troubled with homesickness any more, for my poor soul has found its home."

Amid much opposition and persecution from friends, he united with a Methodist church which was the only church that was near him which could sympathize with his spiritual change. After seventeen years of labor in that fellowship, during which there had been a deepening conviction in his mind that he had not rendered obedience to the positive command of Christ to be baptized, he with his wife, who had been led to the same

conviction, have now made together a profession of their faith in the buried and risen Lord, and confess to a sense of completeness which they had never felt before.

The Object of Preaching and the Conditions of Success.

BY J. H. F.

There is nothing sadder and more dreadful to me, than to look out in the world's misty light, and see the Man of Sorrows standing all alone, his hands stretched out waiting for his ministers to stop preaching philosophy, science, and lifeless abstractions, and to come out and bring him in. If our eyes could be opened to see him standing silently behind some of the ministers who profess to be his ambassadors, there waiting to be presented to the sinners he died to save, we should be moved to cry out for an end to this practical denial of Christ. Jesus saith, "I am the way, the truth and the life." The way into the truth, the truth itself, and the life of the Christian after he has received the truth. A Christian without Christ! A sermon without Christ! A gospel without Christ! Impossible! If Christ is not in the heart there is no Christianity. If he is not in every sermon that is preached, there is no way in it to nourish the spirit; life in it to animate either the speaker or the hearer. It is unspeakably sad when Jesus is thus wounded in the house of his friends. But so did he come to his own and his own and his own received him not.

I have listened to sermons, where, at the end, the Saviour was dragged in, with a kind of apology for bringing Him forward, as if it were insulting the "intelligence" of the audience to mention such old fashioned subjects as Christ crucified. Jesus pushed aside to make room for more modern taste. Art, Architecture, Science, Philosophy and Religion,—the latter being anything you choose, from Mahomedanism to Psycho-mancy.

It is a startling question but, one which needs to be asked: Have we a truly regenerated ministry? Have our pastors as a class given satisfactory evidence that they know the Lord; that they have been born again; that they have experienced the love of Jesus and been made new creatures in him? If so, why is it that so many of them have so little to say about the Lord. We can love a person but we can exercise no heart affection for theories and abstractions. Hence the person of Christ ever has power, while moral precepts, apart from Him, fall dead on the soul. Repentance can only be exercised towards a person; we cannot ask or receive any forgiveness from a virtue we have neglected, or a moral sentiment we have outraged. Faith can only be exercised toward a person; we cannot conceive of exercising faith in a law, as it has no soul, no life, no love, no person.

The Father sent the Son, he did not merely send a book of moral precepts. The Son came to deliver us from the bondage of the law, and to make us free men. When we once receive Christ into our hearts, we keep his laws because we are his saved ones, and not that we may be saved. The laws, apart from him, could awaken no love in us. The words from his very lips fell powerless on the ears of the faithless generation of his day, because the men of that time did not receive Him; but whenever they did receive him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God. It is a condition of success in preaching, that the person of Christ should be the prominent subject.

It is wrong to leave out Christ. On the other hand little good can be accomplished by merely calling people to "come." Exhortations to believe do not convince the sinner, the Scriptures must be explained, their meaning unfolded, and the result will be marvellous in our eyes, for it will be the Lord's doings, not ours. He honors his own word, and he won't honor anything else you may use as a substitute. The sooner and the deeper every theological student gets this into his head and heart, the better. The more thoroughly every pastor becomes convinced of this truth and the more completely he acts upon it, the happier will he be, for he will have comprehended the true object of the ministry and the conditions of success in accomplishing that object. A straight line is the shortest distance between two points. The shortest distance between the sinner and his Saviour is the line the faithful minister will draw. If one goes all around the universe the poor sinner won't get any where near his Saviour by following such a perambulator. Bring them together,—the Saviour and the sinner; the saint and the Master. Then will churches have no need of evangelists, for every pastor will be his own evangelist; sinners will be converted, and saints will grow.

Close Communion.

The following extract is from a standard Methodist work on Baptism by Rev. F. G. Hibbard of the Genesee Methodist Conference. It may be found in Part II., on page 134, and is deserving of commendation for its fairness. We only wish that all those who talk of Baptist close communion understood the matter as thoroughly:

"Before entering upon the argument before us, it is but just to remark that in one principle the Baptists and Pedobaptist churches agree. They both agree in rejecting from communion at the table of the Lord, and in denying the rights of church fellowship to all who have not been baptized. Valid baptism they consider as essential to constitute visible church membership. This also we hold. The only question, then, that here divides us, is, what is essential to valid baptism? The Baptists, in passing the sweeping sentence of disfranchisement upon all other Christian churches, viz., that baptism is essential to church membership. They have denied our baptism, and, as unbaptized persons, we have been excluded from their table. That they err greatly in their views of christian baptism, we of course believe. But, according to their views of baptism, they are consistent in restricting thus their communion. We would not be understood as passing a judgment of approval upon their course; but we say their views of baptism force them upon the ground of strict communion, and herein they act upon the same principle as other churches, that is, they admit only those whom they deem baptized persons to the communion table. Of course they must be their own judges as to what baptism is. It is evident that, according to our views of baptism, we can admit them to our communion; but with their views of baptism, it is equally evident, they can never reciprocate the courtesy, and the charge of close communion is no more applicable to the Baptists than to us, inasmuch as the question of church fellowship with them is determined by as liberal principles as it is with any other Protestant churches, so far, I mean, as the present subject is concerned; that is, it is determined by valid baptism."

The above is a fair and candid statement of the case, and we wish all our friends would keep it in mind. If all would practice the method of baptism that all agree is right—the immersion of believers in water—we should hear no more of close communion. — Vermont Baptist.

Let it Dry.

Mr. Spurgeon once went to preach in a little church outside of London. The day was wet and muddy, and the pants of Mr. Spurgeon were plentifully covered with dirt. A good deacon in the vestry said: "Mr. Spurgeon, let me get a brush and take off some of that mud; you can't go into the pulpit in that state."

"Don't be foolish, deacon," said Mr. Spurgeon, in his usual good humored way; "don't you see the mud is wet; and if you try to rub it off now, you will rub the stain into the cloth. Let it dry and then it will come off easy enough, and leave no mark."

There is an admirable hint for every one. When evil spoken against, as we may be for the sake of truth, and men throw mud at us, don't be in a hurry about brushing it off. Too great eagerness in this respect is apt to rub the stain into the cloth. Let it dry; and then, by and by, if need be, it can be removed by a little effort. If there is a little trouble in the church, don't foster it by haste and hurry in doing something. Let it alone; let it dry; and it will be more easily settled than you think now. Time has a wonderful power in such matters, and it is surprising how many things in this world would be far better arranged, and how many difficulties easily got over, by judiciously letting them dry.

An Italian Lady's Dying Discovery.

The necessity of correct spiritual teaching is illustrated by a sad case related by a French minister. A lady lay on her death bed in a beautiful Italian city. She was a Roman Catholic, and received the last rites of the church. She made confession of her sins to the priest, and received absolution, or, at least, he professed to absolve her. She was not satisfied with a verbal assurance, and requested it to be made in writing. This was done; but even with the document in her hand she did not feel at ease. She wanted some-

thing more than a priest's forgiveness, so friends telegraphed to the Pope in Rome, who immediately responded to his verdict of absolution. Then taking the priest's paper in one hand, and the papal telegram in the other, she declared herself safe, and could defy all the evil spirits of hell on the one hand and even himself upon the other. The Papal absolution was the stronghold of her faith, alas! mortal man cannot speak the word of life to immortal souls, and just before she died she evidently realized the vanity and fallacy of her of her misplaced confidence. She tore the papers of absolution, the supposed passports to heaven, in pieces, and crying, "Sonno perduto" ("I am lost!") died in hopeless despair.

The Gospel in France.

The Secretary of the Evangelical Society reports a great opening for preaching of the Gospel. He says: "I enjoy now a perfect religious liberty under a government which is in a large measure Protestant. I obtained recently permission to lecture on Protestantism at the theatre of Gueret, capital of the department of the Creuse, in the centre of France, a bigoted Roman Catholic country. A similar permission was given in Angoulême, sub-prefecture of Normandy, where the Gospel had never been preached since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In each instance the theatre was crammed, hundreds were unable to obtain admission and the audience listened with serious and breathless attention, even testifying their approbation of the sacred doctrines, as a new discovery, by enthusiastic cheers. Similar opportunities for proclaiming the Gospel could be obtained everywhere in France. We might preach to large popular gatherings in each of our 36,000 townships."

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