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The Trial of Faith.

An unexpected trial of the faith of the Christian world has suddenly fallen on the Church. We had been rejoicing in an open and effectual door in every land. The burden of the songs of the greatest Conference on Foreign Missions that was ever held, was of the hope of the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom beyond all that has been seen, of old forms of superstition passing away, and of the world's readiness for the Gospel in a marvellous degree. "Forward" was the watchword to be passed along the whole line of the advancing host, pressing on to victory through the cross. But the echoes of those songs of triumph had not died away, till the mutterings of a distant and rising storm are heard threatening to undo and utterly destroy the work of generations. Mission property destroyed, missionaries fleeing for their lives, schools broken up and pupils scattered, converts put to death, and all the work of Christ in China suddenly brought to a stand, are the tidings brought to our ears day by day, until the heart is sick with anxious forebodings.

What is to be the outcome of this fearful uprising? Who can predict the future of Christianity in China? Now we have come to a time when we are called on to walk by faith and not by sight. It is like a time in some great battle, when the rank and file do not understand the movements of the army, and can only obey the orders of the commander. The commanding general understands the situation, and with implicit faith in him the corps and divisions advance or fall back, or turn to the right or to the left according to his will. They have no will of their own in this matter. So our divine leader, the Captain of our salvation, is directing in all the movements of his Church on earth. He is more interested in his cause than any of his people, and with infinite wisdom is leading on to ultimate victory. His plans of campaign are not revealed, and all his people can do is to watch his signals and follow as he leads.

Within the last half century there was a similar trial of faith. The Sepoy rebellion in India in 1857 came upon the Christian world with equal suddenness and surprise. The cry went forth that the British rule in India was at an end, and that the Christian work of fifty years would be utterly overthrown. The blood of martyrs soaked the soil of the land of the Hindoos. With fire and sword, the fanaticism of heathenism knew no bounds. The wisest man could give no forecast of the future. It was a time of humble turning to God in this country and Great Britain, when his people bowed before him in helplessness, not knowing what a day would bring forth. But he that sitteth in the heavens was guiding in that dread calamity. The rule of the East India Company was broken, wrongs were righted, Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India, the storm of rebellion and bloodshed subsided, light followed darkness, and to this day the conversion of India has become more and more hopeful with every passing year.

May it not be thus in the end of this conflict in China? There may be suffering and sorrow and mourning, to be followed by an enlargement of opportunities in that great stronghold of paganism. It is a time for the exercise of faith. In these providential movements, so far beyond our control, let us hear the voice of him who says: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

In the face of present conditions, which terrify and bewilder, the whole Church of Christ needs the faith of the sea captain's child. She was asleep in the cabin when a storm burst upon the vessel, and she was awakened by the commotion and cried out in her fright. When told of the storm and the danger, she asked, "Is my father on deck?" They told her he was and was in command. "Then it will be all right," she said, and lying down, sweetly fell to sleep again. If such sublime faith in the skill of an earthly father can triumph over danger, what should our confidence be in our all-wise and loving Saviour of his people who can cause the wrath of man to praise him and the remainder thereof he can restrain! This work of saving men is his and we are only helpers. Whatever reverses may ever come in publishing the Gospel, and money and lives be lost, it is his work, to be carried on to the day of final triumph. Let the faith of every one rally under the voice of him who said: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

No Dying Cause.

Liberal thinkers seek to represent evangelicalism as waning in power, if not in the last stages of decay. They are ready to sing requiems over its departure. Some of them are not content with sad tales of its decline, but go so far as to manufacture facts by the wholesale to its detriment, even misrepresenting the dead who have been conspicuous in its propagation and defence. For instance, one of them recently in Kansas City, Mo., announced that Mr. Moody, the noted evangelist, who had been the instrument of turning thousands to righteousness through a gracious Redeemer, died of a broken heart, because he realized that he was standing for a dying cause. How any one, who makes any pretention to veracity and self-respect, could give out so utterly unfounded a statement, passes our comprehension. There is not the least basis for it. Mr. Moody was at the height of his success and glory as a Gospel preacher and worker, when the Lord called him home. He never had higher hopes in regard to the evangelical faith than at the time of his removal. He wanted to live to carry on his Christian work. He took ill in the midst of a glorious religious awakening. His was no broken heart, but a broken down constitution through excessive zeal in a cause which he loved better than life. His expiring moments were those, not of the pessimist, but of the optimist. He felt that he had been leading, not a forlorn hope, but a winning cause. The Saviour, whom he held up for human uplifting and redemption, was the source of his joy and exultation.

tianity. The religious conferences—such as those at Keswick, in England, and even some of those at Northfield—deal mostly with the experiences and the duties of Christ's professed followers. When my dear Brother F. B. Meyer visited this country it was on a mission to the churches—and not to those outside of the churches. I make no criticism on the methods of my brethren, especially of those who are earnestly aiming to kindle and quicken the people of God. I merely state facts.

Let us go back to the fountain-head. What was the practice of the Divine Founder of Christianity? We are told that "Jesus began to preach, and to say repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What was the practice of the greatest of the apostles? He "ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears," and under his pungent warnings one sinner "trembled" on his throne! The three most conspicuous preachers of the eighteenth century were John Wesley, Whitfield and Jonathan Edwards; and how faithfully and constantly they dealt with the unconverted all my readers know full well. The most successful preacher of this nineteenth century was Charles H. Spurgeon. Look over all his hundreds of sermons and observe what a large portion of them are aimed at awakening the impenitent and bringing them to Jesus Christ. In one of my many talks with him, he inquired, "How far do you American ministers aim at the conversion of souls?" Spurgeon's unceasing efforts to convert the "outsiders" kept up an unceasing stream of new converts into his vast church. He never had any "revivals," because his church—like Baxter's—never needed to be aroused out of a torpor.

When we speak of preaching to the unconverted, we do not mean that sermons are to be only—or even mainly—vehement exhortations. Discourses that are only hortatory seldom produce much result. We mean that the eye of the preacher is not to be chiefly on Christians, but very largely on those whom he strives to make Christians. He should so instruct sinners as to the nature, guilt and doom of sin, and so instruct them as to the benefits and blessings of the Christian life as to win them to the Saviour. In his efforts to convert sinners he should not cap Sinai or conceal hell! "Warn them from Me!" is the divine injunction to all his ambassadors; and because there is less of this solemn, tender warning to sinners is one reason why the number of conversions is sadly decreasing. If ministers do not pray, preach and labor to win the unconverted to Christ, then not many will be won.

Dr. Alexander McLaren, of Manchester, is not a hortatory preacher; he is profoundly instructive, as well as eloquent; yet in nearly all his discourses he recognizes the awful fact of sin and presents Jesus Christ constantly to his hearers. The atoning blood streams through all his sermons. What I am driving at is to urge my brethren to direct efforts to move and win the unconverted to Christ. Essays, treatises and ethical discussions are not to be the staple of a soul-converting pulpit. Argument is grand, but let it be red-hot argument with the "baptism of fire," and intense love of perishing souls.

I have just been reading with deep interest the recent published life of my brilliant and beloved friend, Henry Drummond. The grandest part of that splendid career was the part occupied in evangelistic labors with D. L.

Moody, and his subsequent labors among the students of universities. When I met Drummond in Edinburgh (in 1885), I said to him, "I hope your scientific pursuits will not draw you away from your simple, earnest orthodox faith." He replied, "Don't be afraid; I am too busy in trying to save young men; and the only way to do that is to bring them to Christ." Nobly said; and I sincerely lament that he was ever diverted from that glorious work in order to write a scientific treatise on the "Ascent of Man." Drummond's tracts and talks to Christians are eminently beautiful, inspiring and helpful; but I suspect that in the next world he will discover that his highest mission in this world was to convert—by the Spirit's help—the unconverted.

Is not this the great mission of the Christian ministry? Jesus came "to seek and to save the lost." A ministry that brings no soul to Christ is—not a success whatever it may do. To preach at sinners is no minister's duty; to preach to sinners with fearless fidelity, and intense love for their souls, is the highest and most far-reaching effort to which he can aspire. As for bringing the churches up to their work, the best way is for them to go to work and fight sin, and help the distressed, and save sinners around them from perdition. The pulpit that leads in this will have power—even a "power from on high."—The American Friend.

The Job Mystery.

By Rev. Dr. R. M. Patterson.

Why does not God, with one sweep of his magnificent power, banish suffering from his creation? Why not at least relieve his believing people from the heavy sorrows of life? Why not save them from the terrible maladies of body and of mind, from poverty and from care? Why not keep the death gloom out of our houses, and spare to us our friends, and preserve the earth unbroken by the grave digger's spade? To answer these questions it would be necessary with the eye of Omniscience to pierce the connections of all human beings and of acts in their mutual influence; with the hand of Omnipotence to unravel the tangled threads of cause and effect as through the ages they have been spun together; to separate the good and the bad from each other, and to check the developments of sin and sorrow in their legitimate growth through the present order of things. It is the old mystery of sorrow which puzzled Job and his friends.

The book of Job is the mystery of the Bible. Job was pronounced by God himself to be "perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." In his dealing with God and man he was everything that was beautiful: perfectly religious and perfectly moral. So correct, indeed, was he that he had become self-righteous, in ignorance of the sin of the heart. And yet, he was put by God under the power of Satan to take from him everything but his life. He suddenly lost all his property, his children, his position among his fellows, was afflicted with a loathsome disease, and became the subject of unearthly suspicions on the part of his friends. A perfectly good man cast down from the highest position in the world to the lowest. No wonder that his friends were puzzled by it.

We have more light upon it than they had. But still there is much darkness that remains to be cleared up, much that will only be satisfactorily banished when life

is over, and, purified and sanctified by the very afflictions that could not be understood, saved souls know as they are known.

The righteous do not always prosper in this world; great numbers of the wicked do. If this life were all, either we should say, "There is no God," or, "He is unjust in permitting such a state of things." But the rectification comes at the judgment bar and in the future worlds. There, the suffering righteous receive the greater blessing, the prosperous wicked the greater woe. Let us be so faithful that our afflictions shall "work for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. 4: 17 R. V.)

How Mormons Do It.

By Rev. John Eaton, LL.D.

It is not a little puzzling to understand how such foolishness as Mormonism maintains itself against Christianity and gains adherents at the rate of 40,000 or more annually. A look around in Utah will see how it is done, how the tithings and enthusiasm are kept up and additions are made. The orders of the leaders are respected as of Divine Authority. They put their organization in all matters of religion in the place of the Christian Church; they hold Mormonism to be better than Christianity, and adopt from the Christian Church its forms, terms, even its Sabbaths, sacraments and various agencies. They displace the Bible with the Book of Mormon, and affirm that their priesthood is possessed of Divine Power and speaks with the authority of the Almighty. Life in all its activity is filled with the teachings of this priesthood; their conversation exalts it; there are books and newspapers for adults and children, and their magazines celebrate and repeat its precepts and illustrations. Mormon enthusiasm is the fashion in all things. When a large event, such as the birthday of Brigham Young comes, the utmost is done to celebrate it and emphasize it. Business is suspended. Time is given to processions, assemblies, speeches and all the incidental activities which enforce the supremacy of their hero. Public men are called in to laud him. The eloquence of an ex-member of Congress is laid under contribution to add to the interest of the occasion. Every speaker finds some merit in Mormonism. An ex-Senator declares the Mormon Church meddles less with politics than any other Church. A Governor of an adjoining State declares the Mormon Church the most efficient in its activities of any Church. No wonder that some of the most enthusiastic propose to erect the statue of Brigham Young in the old Hall of the House of Representatives of Washington, D. C. The Mutual Improvement Society has an oratorical contest, and the local press reports that the theme running through all of the orations was practically the same, dealing with the incipient rise, progress and future of the Mormon Church. In all of these demonstrations no discordant note is allowed.

The Bible in Japan.

The American Bible Society has received from its agent in Japan, the Rev. Henry Loomis, his annual report, in which he states that the first effects of the completion of treaty revision and the abolition of extra territorial jurisdiction have been helpful to Bible work.

It has evidently been very gratifying to the Japanese to be accorded a place among the leading and enlightened nations of the earth, and a more friendly and cordial feeling is apparent in our intercourse with the people of all classes, and especially the officials. This friendly attitude of mind is, as a matter of course, both desirable and beneficial in every way. It will probably secure us against troublesome annoyance in the conduct of the business, and also result in a more ready sale of Scriptures, because it is becoming more and more known and recognized that to a large extent the Bible is the foundation of our highest civilization. There is a special readiness to purchase and read the Bible, because it has such a prominent place in the literature of the enlightened nations, as well as being the basis of their moral and ethical teaching.

Christianity is becoming more and more one of the factors that is entering to the life of the people, and every suggestion of its presence and its doctrines stimulate inquiry and prepares the way for its reception. The time has been when it was everywhere regarded as a foreign and undesirable system of teaching that was to be resisted. Now it is recognized as having a place among other religions, and something that deserves careful attention. The restrictions placed by the Educational Department upon the teaching of religion in schools has aroused a general interest in the subject, and the discussion has been carried on to an extent and in a spirit that was probably hardly expected by the authors of the regulations. It is a matter of great significance that, among all the newspapers in the country of any importance, there are none to defend the action of the government. It is generally believed that a change in the Cabinet will occur before many months have passed, and the result is likely to be a difference in the attitude of the authorities toward religion. In every important city of Japan, where any Christian work is being carried on, Scriptures are on sale in the most prominent places.

The Men in Demand.

The men who find easy situations are those who have mastered difficult ones. Men who have left hard places with the work undone in order to find easier ones do not succeed. The workman who acknowledges himself beaten in a task he has chosen is not sought for to repeat the experiment.

In no calling are these things truer than in the ministry. Often the minister is discouraged in his present place. Unexpected obstacles have daunted him. Bad men in his church are made the excuse for others to keep out of it. The prevailing tone is unspiritual. The financial support is small, and many of the members shirk their share of the burden. The methods the pastor most values are unpopular. Customs he disapproves of are persisted in. He feels himself beaten. He wants to abandon his task to some other man and try to work somewhere else.

But the defeated man is not in demand. He will probably find other obstacles as great in the next church that may be persuaded to call him. Each confessed failure leaves him less valuable. He takes up each new task with lessened confidence in himself and less faith in God. The dead line with many a minister is not in his age nor in his lack of study. He has too often confessed himself unequal to what he has undertaken. He has been hunting too long for new work because he shrank from what demanded his attention. We especially counsel young ministers to face unflinchingly the tasks before them.—Exchange.