

"I AM TRYING TO BELIEVE."

AN INCIDENT OF THE MOODY MEETING IN LONDON.

It was during the last week of the meetings in the great Terminus Hall, St. Pancras, that I fell in with a very intelligent young lady on her way to the inquiry-room. She seemed to be quite anxious about her soul, and greatly troubled that she could not find peace. I asked her if she was a Christian? She replied, "I am trying to be one, sir."

"But," said I, "you are not to try; you are just to believe."

"I know that quite well, sir; that is what Mr. Moody has been telling us in his sermon this afternoon. And that is what I am trying to do. I am trying to believe."

"Well, my dear friend, what are you trying to believe?"

"Why, sir, I am trying to believe that I am saved."

"But you are not to turn your faith upon yourself at all. You are nowhere bidden in the Word to believe that you are saved. Do you not see that if you were to find something in or about yourself that you recognized as salvation on the ground of it, you would not be trusting in Christ at all, but only in yourself? This is a very common mistake. It is, indeed, the old one of trying 'to feel,' in order to be saved. We are constantly tempted to turn our thoughts inward toward ourselves, rather than outward to Christ, who alone can save. Now, dear friend, just give up all attempts to believe anything about yourself. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

With that kind of inconsistency that is characteristic of a newly-awakened mind she at once shifted her ground, and said: "Well, that is just what I am trying to do. I am trying to believe in Christ."

"Very well," said I, with the purpose of clarifying her thought to her own mind a little: "What are you trying to believe concerning him?"

To this she made no answer for a long while. The truth is she was full of confused thoughts; she really did not know what her trouble was, and stood more in need of some simple and clear instruction than anything else. So I determined upon a course of questions which I thought would lead her out of her darkness and confusion.

"Let us see," I proceeded, "if we can't get at your difficulty. You say that you are trying to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but cannot. What is it that you cannot believe? Perhaps if we can separate that which you do believe from that which you do not believe, we will be able to treat your difficulties more intelligently. Do you mind answering me candidly a few questions touching your lack of ability to believe?"

"I will be pleased to answer any question I can; for I am very anxious to be saved."

"Well, then, we will try and see what you do believe, first. Do you believe that Jesus Christ came in to the world some two thousand years ago?"

"Oh! yes; I believe that, of course!"

"You are not in the least doubt upon that point?"

"Not the least, sir."

"Then you are not 'trying to believe' on that point?"

"No, sir."

"And do you believe that he was the son of God?"

"Oh! yes, sir! I am not in doubt there in the least. I fully believe that he was God's Only Begotten Son, just as the Bible says."

"Very well. Now, do you believe that God sent him into the world to save sinners?"

"Of course! What else did he come for? If I did not believe that, I would not be here trying to get my own soul saved."

"Very good; that seems to be clear. Here are two or three points concerning Jesus that you do

believe without a doubt; and so we rule them out from among the difficulties in the way of your faith. Do we both agree, so far, that you are not trying to believe but that you really do believe?"

"Yes."

Then turning to Isaiah liii. I read the following: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisements of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath made the iniquity of us all to meet on him."

"Now my dear friend, do you believe that, when God sent his Son into the world, he did really lay or cause our sins and iniquities to be laid on him? Or, to look at another Scripture (Rom. iv, 25), do you believe that 'he was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification'?"

After looking at these and other like passages for awhile, she agreed that she was "bound to believe that Christ had borne the iniquity and sin of the world."

"Well, do you believe that he bore your sins as well as that of all other sinners? Or do you expect him yet to come down and do this for you at some future time? Or, when he died for sinners, do you believe that you were left out of account?"

Here were some new lines for her. She dropped her head, and gave herself over to thought for awhile; and then, with the dawn of new light in her face, she said in substance:

"I do not see how I am to separate one thing from another. If I believe that he came into the world and died for sinners, I must believe that he died for me as much as for any one else, and that if God raised him for anybody's justification, he must have raised him for mine as well." But there was anxiety in her face still. She was not abandoning herself to the glad truth without reserve. So I went on:

"Let us go over the ground of our inquiry a bit, and see where we stand. You began by saying that you were 'trying to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,' but that you could not. Then, when we began to take the difficulty apart, and look at it in bits, you came to the conclusion that you did believe: (1) That Jesus Christ came into the world some two thousand years ago; that the story of his advent and death is no myth, but a real and blessed fact. (2) That Jesus is indeed the Son of God and not mere man. (3) That though we had all gone astray like lost sheep, yet God had laid on him the iniquities of us all, and had caused him to be delivered up for our offences, and had raised him again for our justification. (4) And, finally, you agree that you believe that you are included in that blessed saving work. That your sins, too, were on him, and that he was raised for your justification."

"Yes; I am agreed to that."

"Now, let me ask you two questions. First. If you believe these things, you are not trying to believe them: for you cannot at once be trying to believe and yet believing them. In that case, you may give over trying, and begin trusting. Is not this fair and true?"

"Why, yes, sir; that seems very plain; but I had never thought of it in that light."

"Well, Second. What is it about Christ that you cannot believe?"

She looked up into my face, thoughtfully and steadily, as though she were trying to think of something she did not believe; but as she mused and thought on who Christ was, and what he had done for her, her fears had to melt away. Another moment she threw them all to the winds, and with a radiant face she said:

"Oh! now I see it. I am not to believe that I am saved, but that Jesus Christ saves me by what he has done for me, and by God raising him from the dead."

"Yes," I said: "Salvation is not the object of our faith, but Christ and his finished work. Indeed, salvation is the fruit or end of our faith. Further, we are not to look within for salvation, but to Him who is our salvation. 'Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord JEHOVAH (Jesus) is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.' This is the grand secret. It is not what we are, what we do, what we feel, or what we believe, but it is JEHOVAH—JESUS who is our SALVATION."

May the Lord direct the eyes of all anxious souls who may be "trying to believe" away from themselves to him who came, who was the Son of God, who was made sin for us, who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification, AND WHO IS BECOME OUR SALVATION.—Rev. Geo. F. Pentecost.

Missionary.

U-GANDA.

We feel sure that our readers will be glad to hear that we have again received news from the missionaries in U-Ganda, Central Africa. Since our last extracts from Mr. Mackay's and Mr. O'Flaherty's journals, they have been strengthened by several new missionaries.

Letters are to hand from the Revs. P. O'Flaherty and R. P. Ashe in U-Ganda, dated August 31st. The news is very encouraging. Nine men, seven women, and four children were baptized in August, making, with the first five converts baptized in March, 1882, and H. W. Duta (baptized at Zanzibar), and one seemingly true convert, baptized when dying of the plague, a total of sixteen men, seven women, and four children, twenty-seven in all. Mr. O'Flaherty gives some interesting accounts of some of these first Wa-Ganda Christians. Eight of them—four couples—had been united in Christian marriage. Besides the one who died, another, who was regarded as a true believer, succumbed to the plague without being admitted into the visible Church. So, observes Mr. O'Flaherty, the Native Christian community of U-Ganda has already to report its births, marriages, and deaths. Mr. Ashe writes, "I have made some progress in the language, and am in a better position to express an opinion about the work. There is much to encourage us, and I think that some, at any rate, of those baptized have indeed laid hold upon the truth as it is in Christ. Many still come to be taught, and seem to show a deep interest in what they hear."

Truly we may praise God for His blessing, as well as treat its continuance. What would the early missionaries in New Zealand have said if they could have reported twenty-seven baptisms within six years of their arrival?

In July, Mr. Mackay, accompanied by Mr. Gordon and Mr. Wise, travelled across the Victoria Nyanza Lake, and we think that a few extracts from Mr. Mackay's journal will interest our readers:

On the third day the canoes put up at a village which must be almost at the south-west limit of U-Ganda, where one of Mtesa's generals named Mungobya has a "country-house":—

"Several of Mungobya's lads had been taught to read by us, and here one produced a Kiswaheli hymn-book which he read fairly out of, as he accompanied me a mile on the way back. It is encouraging to find that these lads, who generally have to leave us as soon as they make some progress, strive in some measure to keep up their reading in the country."

On the next day,—

"In the wide bay south of Dumo it became so hazy that we lost sight of land. Boatmen could not steer, as even the sun was invisible.

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