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Knox, D. Broughton

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"THE PROTESTANT FAITH" is broadcast every second Sunday at 9.15 p.m. over 2 CH copies of these fortnightly broadcasts may be obtained (£1 per year posted) by writing to the "Protestant Faith, C/- 2CH, York Street SYDNEY.

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THE PRIZE FIGHT

by D. B. KNOX

THE PROTESTANT FAITH
I had prepared a talk to broadcast this evening on the subject I mentioned last time, The Christian View of Sex, but an event took place in Sydney two days ago that so disgusted me that I felt obliged to speak about it this evening as it is symptomatic of our community. So I have decided that I should postpone broadcasting on the Christian View of Sex till the New Year, perhaps the first broadcast in February, though I think you will find the subject this evening is not unrelated to sex. I refer to the incident on Thursday Night at the Show Ground when one man bashed another man into unconsciousness after they had been fighting one another for more than an hour, each doing his best to smash the other up. In the end one succeeded and it was doubtful for a while whether or not the other man had been permanently injured for life. But perhaps the most objectionable feature of the whole thing was that while this was going on the spectators shouted in excitement and the more blood that was splashed around the boxing ring the more frenzied the shouts became.

because it is plain that it will not be so. The day of judgment will come and that will mean that the present day of grace and salvation will have ended.

"Now is the day of Salvation" God loves Men and Women and invites them lovingly to return to him. Let us see to it that we renew our love for him and show our obedience to His will by using His gifts of the body, and all His other gifts in a way that honours the gift as well as the giver.
and which shows itself in so many different ways whether in blood lust as in gladiatorial shows or prize fighting or in other forms of sexual perversion, or in simple downright dishonesty, unkindness, criticism, selfishness, laziness and so on - when we contemplate our nature as it is when left to itself, we cannot help but marvel at the longsuffering of God Who, as the Bible says endures such contradiction of sinners against himself; and who continues to show love and kindness, making the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sending rain on the just and the unjust, as Jesus reminded us.

God's longsuffering is for the purpose of giving us an opportunity of being saved by repenting and believing, turning to Him and putting our trust in the Saviour. Had we got what we deserved, we would have all been judged and punished long ago, but God's longsuffering postpones the day of reckoning to give us an opportunity of being saved. We ought not to despise the longsuffering of God by continuing on in our self seeking ways, or treat his longsuffering as though it will go on for ever.

It is a disgrace to our community that this sort of entertainment should be allowed, and yet prize fighting is so popular that the event was splashed on the front pages of the most staid morning paper together with large pictures of the loser in his knocked out condition. Now, of course, we cannot expect the community that is involved in this sort of thing to be able to recognise the obnoxiousness of it. For example, we all in Australia recognise the disgraceful character of being entertained by Bull fighting, so popular in Spain where men risk their lives in order to entertain the community by fighting a bull and killing it. The Spaniards enjoy bull fighting and cannot see how debasing it is because they are involved in it. Similarly in the past our own community used to amuse itself by baiting, urging on dogs to tear a bear to death as best they could while the bear tried to tear the dogs to death, an exhilarating exhibition for those who have acquired a taste for that sort of thing, but very debasing. But those who enjoyed watching bear baiting could not see it in its true light. They had become addicts. There is a streak in all of us.
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closed and forbade his mind to roam abroad after such wickedness. Would that he had shut his ears also! For when one of the combatants fell in the fight, a mighty cry from the whole audience stirred him so strongly that, overcome by curiosity and still prepared (as he thought) to despise and rise superior to it no matter what it was, he opened his eyes and was struck with a deeper wound in his soul than the victim whom he desired to see had been in his body. Thus he fell more miserably than the one whose fell had raised that mighty clamour which had entered through his ears and unlocked his eyes to make way for the wounding and beating down of his soul, which was more audacious than truly valiant—also it was weaker because it presumed on its own strength when it ought to have depended on Thee (O Lord). For, as soon as he saw the blood, he drank in with it a savage temper, and he did not turn away, but fixed his eyes on the bloody pastime, unwittingly drinking in the madness delighted with the wicked contest and drunk with blood lust. He was now no longer the same man who came in, but was one of the mob he came whoredom, which was so common in pagan Corinth, he reminded them that their bodies were the temple of God’s Spirit. He wrote: “The body is not meant for immorality but for the Lord. Glorify God in your body.” (1Cor.6.) God himself indwells us and we are to treat our bodies, and the bodies of one another with honour and respect. We are not to use them for perversion, which is really what prize fighting is.

It is perversion of fellowship, to begin with, for two people to fight each other; but an even more evil perversion is the desire to entertain ourselves by watching it as spectators. It is in fact a form of the sexual perversion called sadism in which we get a kick from cruelty. The rising crescendo of frenzied shouts as the fighting becomes more severe and blood is copiously drawn so that in the end a limp body is pulped to the ground I say that crescendo of shouts shows that the spectators are obtaining a kick from blood lust. It is a disgraceful thing that our community should tolerate such shows, let alone headline them and write them up so fully in the newspapers.
No Christian ought ever to take pleasure in prize fighting or attend as a spectator, but should oppose the whole thing, as the early Christians opposed gladiatorial shows. He should make clear his aversion to it, as to every other form of sexual perversion and misuse of God’s gifts of the body. This is not wusservism, as some non-christians may jibe. Christians enjoy sport and the churches are foremost in organising sport for their members, whether cricket or football, tennis or skiing; but true sport is the enjoyment of God’s gifts according to their purposes, not the enjoyment of a perversion of those gifts. The same is true of course, in the use of sex, which is one of God’s excellent gifts to be used according to His purpose of leading a husband and wife into truer and deeper fellowship; not to be used by way of perversion. Our bodies are intended for use in personal fellowship. Fighting is the opposite to fellowship, and to take our entertainment by watching other people fight and draw blood is a disgraceful perversion, a blot on our community just as bullfighting or bear baiting or gladiatorial shows are blots on other communities.

If we indulge in this sort of blood lust it grows on us and destroys our character. I give an interesting illustration of this from Augustine’s Confessions, Book 6 Chapter 8, where he tells the story of a young friend Alypius who had made a resolve not to attend any more gladiatorial shows. However, and I quote from Augustine, “...One day he met by chance a company of his acquaintances and fellow students returning from dinner; and with a friendly violence, they drew him, resisting and rejecting vehemently, into the amphitheatre, on a day of those cruel and murderous shows. He protested to them; Though you drag my body to that place and set me down there, you cannot force me to give my mind or lend my eyes to these shows. Thus I will be absent while present, and so overcome both you and them. When they heard this they dragged him in, probably interested to see whether he could do as he said. When they got to the arena, and had taken what seats they could get, the whole place became a tumult of inhuman frenzy. But, says Augustine, Alypius kept his eyes...
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