

THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN

FAITH AND ITS CHALLENGE.

(By Rev. J. D. Cunningham, M.A.)

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews begins with a definition of faith. It is the evidence of things not seen. But the writer does not linger in the sphere of abstract definition. He prefers to pass swiftly into the sphere of history, and make faith luminous through deeds rather than words. What faith is, may best be shown by what it does. With a few graphic touches, therefore, he reviews the past history of Israel. He creates a great picture gallery, in which are arranged the heroes of God in past ages, and here we see that every royal and masterful moment in the lives of these men was due to faith. Does a soul go out not knowing whither it goeth, knowing only that God knows? It is through faith he does it. Does a soul stand steadfast against the lure of power and place unwedded to responsibility, the lure of siren, palaced ease that makes life to be "feeding among the roses and lying among the lilies"? It is through faith he does it.

Faith, therefore, is not remote, academic, mystical. It does things. It does hard things. It does impossible things. It is a thing all thews and sinews, that can and does overthrow the world. It is a thing all-persistent and all-enduring, that knows no rest until it "lays the spectres of the mind and beats out the music of life."

Wherein lies the secret of this aggressive, history making, omnipotent power of faith? It lies in the fact that faith's other name is God! When we say "through faith," we say "through God." The achievements of faith are all achievements of God. Faith is simply at attitude of the soul, an open-dooredness of the soul which makes neighbors of God and life. Faith makes possible the presence of victory in life because it makes actual the presence of God in the soul.

It becomes clear, therefore, that, as we cannot understand faith through definition, neither can we receive faith in that way. God's divine intrusion into life is not through mental, but through moral avenues. We may have faith before we can define it. We may conquer by it, before we understand it. The willingness to receive God, the willingness to follow God,—these are the gates through which the king enters.

Having established that faith is not passive but potent, the writer of the Hebrews goes on in the next chapter to show that faith must be contagious. In the twelfth chapter, the "picture gallery" of which we have spoken, becomes all at once an "arena." We have been looking at the heroes of God, now, like a great crowd of witnesses; they are looking at us. We have seen their achievements, now they are viewing ours. We must have the picture gallery and enter the arena, saying, "Therefore let us also."

It is not enough to admire greatness, we must imitate it. After we have seen the heavenly vision, we must gird ourselves to "run the straight race." Thereby is the divine succession maintained, and goodness becomes a gleam of hope in the present, as well as a golden dream of the past.

Welland, Ont.

Hold the mind prayerful in conference with God. We are certain of success; go, nothing doubting.

The Cross means simply that you are to go the road which you see to be the straight one; carrying whatever you find is given you to carry, as well and stoutly as you can; without making faces or calling people to come and look at you. Above all, you are neither to load nor unload yourself; not cut your cross to your own liking.—John Ruskin.

HE SEES.

"The gods will see it." This was the reply of the Greek sculptor charged with the adornment of a temple when his employers found fault with him for taking so great pains with the carving on the upper surface of the capitals surmounting the pillars. "Why waste your skill," they asked, "where no human eye can behold its results? Only the birds of the air can rest in such a place." But the artist cared more for the praise of heaven than for the plaudits of the crowd.

The Lord of heaven once came into his earthly temple and found there instead of worship, the buying and selling that belonged to the market place. It is no wonder that he burned with fiery indignation, and drove the profane traffickers from the sacred place which they had been defiling with their greedy grasping for gain.

Now, as truly as in days of old, the holy Christ is among those who throng the courts of God's house. If their hearts are filled with vain, selfish, worldly thoughts, He sees all these, and they kindle His righteous wrath. Outward forms and ceremonies count for little with Him. What really matters is in the pure and loving heart.—East and West.

CHILDREN OF THE SUN.

By E. A. Lenta.

Two played unwearied in the sun,
And, oh, its beams were fine and warm!
They roamed a garden of delight,
With butterflies and flowers bedight;
They feared not any chill, or night,
And felt no presage of a storm!

Two walked ecstatic in the sun;
And glad their swift young pulses beat:
They gloried in their youthful might,
The coming years looked fair and bright,
The earth lay lovely in their sight,
The sun shone on them clear and sweet!

Two sat pathetic in the sun,
And slow their wavering pulses beat;
Their journeying was nearly done,
The sands of time were almost run;
They listened for the sunset gun,
And craved the rest, so sweet—so sweet!

BURDENS.

As I was travelling by railway the subject of burden-bearing was clearly demonstrated. I had my satchel checked to my destination. I saw many passengers coming into the coach each carrying his own satchel. An elderly lady came aboard, with a large well-filled satchel. It seemed too heavy for her; I said: "Madam, why did you not have the baggageman check your satchel to your destination and free you of bearing such a heavy load?" "My," said she, "I would not let anyone carry my satchel. I can take care of it myself."

How many professors of religion are doing this same thing, carrying their own burdens, who are expressly told to cast their burdens on the Lord and he will sustain them. Ps. 55:22. Fellow travelers to the bar of God, why not get rid of your burdens when such an invitation is offered? Christ carries all burdens that are given to him or left in his care and says to all followers, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for your body what ye shall put on." "Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you." Why does any one carry his own burdens when Christ is waiting ready and able to bear them all? Read Isaiah 58:6. If we carry our own burdens they will get us into trouble. Cast all on Christ.—J. Q. Miller.

It is the want of Christ which makes men have long faces.—Dwight L. Moody.

MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM.*

Some Bible Hints.

God's kingdom is like a wedding feast because it is happy, desirable, satisfying, beautiful; the Christian looks forward to nothing but delight (v. 2).

Our work and our wealth—the very things that the Kingdom is to enrich and render significant—are the things that often lead us to make light of it (v. 5).

Let the church carry the gospel where men are, and where the need of the gospel is realized (v. 9).

Both bad and good are to enter the Kingdom; no one is good enough, and no one is too bad (v. 10).

Subjective Thoughts.

It is not enough to give, we must go to the antipodes of society, if not of the globe.

Young people cannot expect to convert their elders, but they make the best possible winners of their contemporaries.

The reason why so few elderly people find soul-winning easy is because they were not trained to it.

Missionary study is based on knowledge, on mission-study, and missionary meetings made to shine.

A Few Illustrations.

Children learn languages easier than men; so they learn more easily the language of heaven.

Look upon a modern army, and it seems made up of boys. Let the army of the Lord also wear a youthful air.

If Mormon's see one of their number losing faith, they make a missionary of him; and in this they are wise.

The work of the lookout committee may easily become evangelistic. The step from associate to active membership may lead into the church.

To Think About.

Am I a soul-seeker?
Is my society trying to train soul-winners?

Is my missionary zeal contagious?

A Cluster of Quotations.

We are to go and teach the ignorant, convert the unconverted, and build up those who are converted. We are to do this as part of our loyalty to Him who is the King.—Spurgeon.

The trouble is that we are afraid to speak to men about their souls. Let us ask God to give us grace to overcome this man-fearing spirit.—Moody.

Here is our commission: "Let him that heareth say, Come." Not, "Have you a special gift of speech or pen?"—Frances Ridley Havergal.

This lynx-eyed world never sees Jesus Christ except in the persons of His followers.—Cuyler.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

M., Nov. 2.—Moses' zeal for Hophai. Num. 10: 28-32.
T., Nov. 3.—Solomon's for the heathen. 1 Kings 8: 41-43.
W., Nov. 4.—David's zeal. Ps. 40: 9, 10.
Th., Nov. 5.—"The Preacher's." Eccl. 12: 9-11.
F., Nov. 6.—"Daily." Acts 5: 40-42.
S., Nov. 7.—The result. Isa. 2: 1-4.
Sun., Nov. 8. Topic—Commending our Society. V. By missionary and evangelistic zeal. Matt. 22: 1-10.

We must not spend all of our lives in cleaning our windows, but in sunning ourselves in God's blessed light. That light will soon show us what still needs to be cleansed, and will enable us to cleanse it with unerring accuracy.—F. B. Meyer.

*Y.P. Topic, Nov. 2.—Topic—Commending our Society. V. By missionary and evangelistic zeal. Matt. 22: 1-10.