

Pastor and People.

SONS OF GOD BY FAITH.

BY THE REV. F. FOTHERINGHAM, NORWOOD, ONT.

Gal. III. 26-27: "Ye are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, for as many of you as have been baptized unto Christ have put on Christ."

The apostle in these verses is drawing his favourite contrast between the law and the gospel, and comparing the glorious freedom of the latter with the servile bondage of the former, ascribing this blessed difference to the working of faith, which, in the sense here implied, had not then come, for, "before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed."

How is it that faith so unites us to Christ, that we may be said to have put on Christ and so become the children of God?

Is this a mere arbitrary arrangement depending on the will of God alone, or does it spring from the nature of the case itself? Is a man saved by faith simply because God has revealed that He will be satisfied with this, or has faith in its own nature that which makes it impossible for God to do otherwise than love the possessor of it? So that when we understand the nature of it and its results, we at once exclaim, "This is what the father-heart of God yearns for, here is a pearl that it was worth the shedding of the blood of God's own Son to purchase, and which nothing less could by any means have purchased or even in the most distant way revealed to fallen man."

WHAT IS THIS FAITH

which works such a stupendous miracle of grace?

Our shorter catechism, summarizing the truth of God's Word, tells us that "the Spirit applyeth to us the redemption purchased by Christ by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ;" and again, "faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation." Faith is, then, that by which we receive Christ, and become united to Him.

We all know what faith in a general sense is. Belief in a rumor, a theory, a man, but in all these cases there is merely an assent of the understanding. The intellect alone is engaged in the act. Its effects do not penetrate us, they only touch the shell of us. They affect our actions, but faith that is saving faith means more than this. It does not mean simply recognizing God's holiness, justice, and mercy, but recognizing them in such a way as to love that holiness, dread that justice, and desire that mercy. The heart must be exercised as well as the head. Not only must the head assent to the doctrines of Scripture regarding Christ as true, but the heart must so feel their power as to lead to the exhibition of their practical effects in the outward life. Is Christ presented to us as equal with the Father, God over all, blessed for ever more, then faith bids us bend the knee to Him in worship, and honour Him even as we honour the Father. Does the Bible reveal us to ourselves as sinful and polluted in the sight of a holy God, and Christ as the lamb slain a sacrifice for our sins, then faith bids us come to God in penitence, confessing our sins and asking forgiveness for Jesus sake—laying the foundation of our hopes upon Him, for it is a foundation ordered in all things and sure.

We separate too much faith and works, and speak of the latter as mere evidences of the former, the fruit which the tree produces. And this distinction is true enough if our object be to guard against the error of attributing a saving efficacy to the works themselves; if we are merely echoing our Saviour's denunciations of the Pharisees. It is a distinction perfectly legitimate, and indeed necessary when we would construct a theological system, and assign to each element its proper place. But in guarding against error we may give a one-sided view of truth—we may separate logically what never exist a part in fact. Faith is rather the root of the tree, and its manifest tokens are the trunk and branches—the one springs from the other, the one cannot exist without the other. When speaking we do not consciously control every movement of the lips and tongue; these movements follow spontaneously as the ideas arise in our minds, and so if there is faith in the heart, there will be piety in the life. Faith is not the tree, it is the root from which the tree springs. Faith is not the germ, it is the vital force which animates it and makes it verdant and blossoming in the life.

This divine faith, this quickening power, this saving grace from a reconciled Father, this is which works our salvation by

UNITING US TO CHRIST.

But how does it do this? To understand this we shall have to penetrate a little deeper into the mysteries of redemption and see what it was that our Saviour came on earth to do—we shall have to observe the kind of atonement that he made for us, and the revelation of God which he gave us. Man, by the fall, lost communion with God, and in that one sentence this misery and perdition is summed up. The cause of man's degradation is separation from God; the remedy for man is

RESTORATION TO COMMUNION

with God, and this restoration is effected by Christ Jesus. He came to raise fallen man, and teaching him up into union with Himself, and breathing His own spirit into him—by teaching him that God loved him with a father's everlasting love, and therefore it behooved him to live like a child of such a father.

We may never, we can never, lose sight of the awful, blessed, fact that Jesus died in our room and stead. Not only the purple streams which dyed the temple curtains on Mount Moriah, and the unequivocal utterances of the inspired seer attest the truth of it, but heaven itself, from the degraded Hottentot to the cultivated Brahmin, with one voice proclaims

that atonement must be made for man by the sufferings of another. It is easy for scepticism in its pride, measuring all things by the rule of finiteness and imperfect human standards, to suggest difficulties—what divine thing is there that is not difficult to feeble man? But still the stupendous fact remains the sheet anchor of our faith.

But on the other hand he is indeed a bold man who professes to have fathomed the divine counsels, and to be able to formulate the whole of the doctrine of the atonement. No human words can ever confine within their narrow sentences the great "mystery of godliness." It is a mine in which devout theologians may sink all their learning to the end of time, and ever find fresh gems to be gathered. To another aspect of the atonement let me direct your attention. It is the complement of our Saviour's work would be perfect that did not present that view of it on which He Himself most delighted to dwell.

In this great problem which even angels pondered over, and whose solution they watched with profoundest interest.

TWO THINGS

had to be considered. Not only had the judgment of all the earth to be appealed, but the heart of the Father of men had to be reconciled. Not only were the bonds of law broken, but also the far tenderer ties of love. It was not enough that his righteous indignation should be turned aside. His love demanded more than this. What father would not demand more before the old relationship was completely restored? Would it satisfy any earthly parent that the penalty of disobedience was rigorously enforced? Would he not require that his love should be appeased as well as his law? And to win this the confession alone suffices. Only when the prodigal can say, "Father I have sinned against thee," does that father fall on his neck and kiss him. There must be a repentance and confession of sin corresponding in its depths to the majesty of the law violated before the objects of love can be reunited. Such a repentance man could never make, such a repentance he could never offer; for with his sin-darkened moral perceptions, and his sin-seared conscience the full enormity of his guilt could not be made apparent to him so as to awaken his remorse. What man could not do, Christ did for him. Christ as a man, as our elder brother,

MADE CONFESSOR FOR US,

and acknowledged the righteousness of God's wrath against sin. God alone saw the fearful depth of the fall, and so in Christ came to reconcile the world to Himself. He became man in order that, as man, He might stand and plead before God for man, and by His life and words confess man's sin. He came that He might pray, not merely with His dying breath, but by His whole life and for all men—"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." In this lowly birth and obedient childhood we see his confession of man's sinfulness and consequent misery and subjection. Throughout his manhood, the earnest prayers and pleading words he utters, the clouded brow, the furrowed cheek, the pitying eye, and pensive mien, all betray the load of man's sin lying heavily upon his heart before God. Nor can we separate His death from His life, but rather read the lesson of that death in the light of the life, and do we not see in it the culminating point and sum of the whole; for what is our Saviour's death on the cross but a deeper "amen" to the sentence, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die." From the manger to the tomb, and most of all on calvary, does the God-man appear as our advocate, pleading for the return of the Father's love to His wandering children. This was the aspect of our Saviour's life on its Godward side. This was the prayer it uttered before the eternal Father, "For my sake, who know their misery and sin, have compassion on the blinded children of earth. I will bear their penalty. I their brother, and thy Son, acknowledge and confess my brethren's guilt; restore to them thy Father's love, receive them again to thy loving embrace."

What message on the other hand did Christ bring to man, that he might be led to accept forgiveness and respond to the Father's love? He taught men that God was not only the Jehovah, the self-existent God of their father Abraham, but that He was also their "Father who is in heaven." Teaching no new revelation, but adding all the weight of His perfect life to the sublime teaching of the old, he came to reveal the Father

BY LIVING THE SON'S LIFE

of filial obedience. Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not. * * * then said I, Lo I come to do Thy will, O God * * *. He taketh away the first that He may establish the second. By the which will we are satisfied. (Heb. x. 5.) This is the key that unlocks the treasures of His kingdom; this is the undertone that runs through all the sublime music of His words. It is His brotherhood with men that draws them around Him; it is His Son life that points them upward to His Father and their Father. The name He delights in is "Son of Man," that men may feel that His life is their life, His service their service, and being tempted and suffering as they were, yet perfect, so they should be obedient likewise, that they might follow Him to the Father's house of many mansions, whither he was going to prepare a place for them. Yet, while knitting closely the bonds of brotherhood with men, He ever showed that he was only the mediator, the connecting link between them and God. "Lord show us the Father and it sufficeth us." "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou then, show us the Father?" God as a father was revealed in Christ the son, and in the kind of service the Son rendered towards the Father we see the Father's character glorified. The Father He declares to be glorified, not merely in the works, but "in the Son." He revealed the father by exhibiting the kind of service that Father

demanded from a Son. The Father's love is manifested in the Son's reciprocal love. His eyes glance upward in hurrying filial obedience, that men's eyes copying His may glance upwards likewise, and recognize their Father's countenance. And was the voice twice heard from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." His first recorded words are "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" and the last utterance that fell from His lips was "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." And as if to reassure His timid followers that their brotherhood with Him was not broken by His glorification, He bids Mary "go and tell My brethren, and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father."

His whole teaching if full of the fatherhood of God; all through life it is the self-surrender of the filial spirit that He displays. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work," not merely that the same God-head exists in both, but because His whole being as a son was wrapped up in His Father's being. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." In the solemn agony of His passion, shrinking love implored "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." 'Twas but for a moment, when the filial spirit rose above the trial in conscious strength of faith. "O My Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, Thy will be done." It was this entire surrender of His own will to the Father's will that gave Him calmness before the scoffing Roman and blaspheming Jew. It is this that sustains Him in the desert of the temptation, as in the garden and on the cross.

In this light, too, we must view the resurrection of our Lord, for it was the glorious seal of the Father's acceptance. Louder than by the Jordan and on the mount of transfiguration, for its words are heard by many more, and it is but the echo of prophetic song, comes the voice from the empty tomb, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." "This He said unto His disciples, in that He raised up Jesus again," (Acts xiii. 33), and declared Him to be "the Son of God, by the resurrection from the dead." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." How? By propounding so many doctrinal theses regarding Him? No; but by living as man, and amongst men, the Son's life, and infusing His spirit into men that they too might have strength to live that life. Now what is faith in us but just the

AWAKENING TO BONDSHIP.

The spirit within us crying, "I will arise and go to my Father." It is the Christ-life awakening in us. We are made partakers of Christ, for we begin to share in His filial spirit. It is faith that gives us, nay, it is faith that is "the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father"—then the spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." It is by faith that Christ, that is the Christ-spirit, dwells in our hearts. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." We dwell in Christ and Christ in us, and hence it is that our faith makes us partakers of Christ and renders us acceptable to the Father. Because He recognizes the tender plant springing up in our hearts as that which His own hand has planted. Because He sees our feeble faith to be of the same kind as our Saviour's perfect faith. We are accepted because God sees in us the beginning of that which will become more and more like Christ's life—the germ out of which perfect sonship is developed by His fostering spirit. Some are accepted for Christ's sake. His perfect obedience is imputed to us, and covers our imperfect obedience. His perfect submission covers our too often rebellious one. "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son" (notice the relationship under which the second person of the Trinity is revealed. A son alone could teach sonship) "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive (not forgiveness merely, not freedom from sin merely, but) the adoption of sons, and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." "Ye are all the children of God, how? "By faith in Jesus Christ." "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God."

If this then be the nature of faith, and the union it effects with Christ, is not

UNBELIEF THE CROWNING SIN

against the fatherhood of God? It is worse than rebellion which sets at defiance the wrath of the Almighty, for it spurns the love of Him who mourns over His deluded creatures. What wonder, then, that we read as the dreadful doom of the unfaithful servant, He "will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief," for the unbelieving * * * shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." The prayer of faith—and none other is heard—"Whatever ye ask believing ye shall receive," and could it be otherwise? If earthly parents cannot resist the earnest pleadings of filial dependence and love, think you that our heavenly Father can turn a deaf ear to His weak children on earth. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." "Without faith it is impossible to please Him," and naturally so. What earthly parent would not be wounded, grieved, and justly indignant were his child to couple his request with the words, "I ask, but believe that you are to selfish, or care so little for me that I do not expect my request to be granted." Is not this just the implied utterance of a faithless prayer. What a mockery and blasphemy and insult to the loving heart of our Father!

A word in conclusion to those who have not this precious faith, in whom the filial spirit has not awakened. You are shutting your eyes to the light which streams to your soul from Christ's life. You are stopping your ears so that you hear not the invitations, the pleading invitations of your Father's love. You are doubting the love

of Him who is Love. You are doubting the word of Him who cannot lie. "To whom swears He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them which believed not." It is to you that he says, "When ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you, yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear; for only the child's prayer avails—only in the Beloved will my prayer be accepted."

Like the pillar of fire—which stood behind the host of Israel on the shore of the Red Sea—all God's promises are a dreadful brightness to His enemies, but a glorious lightness to His chosen people. You must look beyond the mountain-top and the thunder cloud, and see the Father's face in the law-giver, and then above the sound of the trumpet you will hear the gentle tones of love that will make your heart throb and your pulse bound with a new joy. Then, even although the ground may sometimes tremble beneath your feet, and the skies tremble above, you will find that "the Eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Come then to Him as the children to a father, and by His own spirit He will teach you, with His own power protect you, with His own joy refresh you, and into His own family receive you.

Now unto the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Ten Points of a Good Wife.

Robert Burns, the Scottish poet, speaking of the qualities of a good wife, divided them into ten parts. Four parts he gave to "good temper;" two to "good sense;" one "wit;" one to "beauty" (such as a sweet face, eloquent eyes, a fine person, a graceful carriage); and the remaining two parts he divided amongst other qualities belonging to or attending on a wife, such as fortune, connection, education, or accomplishments, family, and so on; but he said, "Divide those two parts as you please, remember that all these minor proportions must be expressed by fractions, for there is not any one of them that is entitled to the dignity of an integer." Mr. Smiles, in quoting this passage from Burns, in the chapter on marriage in his pleasant and chatty book on "Character," says: "No wise person will marry for beauty mainly. It will exercise a powerful attraction in the first place, but it is found to be of comparatively little consequence afterwards. Not that beauty of person is to be underestimated, for, other things being equal, handsomeness of form and beauty of features are the outward manifestations of health. But to marry a handsome figure without character, fine features unadorned by sentiment or good nature, is the most deplorable of mistakes." This is the only comment made by Mr. Smiles on the matrimonial scales of Burns, the proportions of which he may therefore be taken to approve. The matter is worth closer criticism, and it will be an amusing and not unpractical or unprofitable employment of some leisure minutes, to try, in some reader's judgment, whether any variation or improvement may not be made in the distribution of the ten points in a good wife. It will be observed at the outset that the moral and religious element is wholly ignored in the estimate of the poet. Physical, intellectual, and social qualities are alone taken into account; for good temper can scarcely be included among moral excellencies. But the problem need not be complicated by bringing into its consideration points of moral or religious worth. Designate these under the title of "a good principle," and this would demand a far larger proportion of the ten points than the four which Burns gives to good temper. For without virtue or good principle, we know that good temper, and good looks, and other gifts of person, are too often dangerous and ruinous to their possessor. Rather let us assume good principle and virtuous conduct, founded upon true religion, to be taken for granted in the problem, as it will be certainly deemed essential in the choice of a wife by every man who makes Christian profession. To marry "in the Lord" is a divine precept as well as a prudent resolution for all who "seek to live for both worlds." Two other conditions are to be presupposed—a certain amount of equality of station, as well as no undue disparity of age. There are exceptional cases in both respects, but in discussing general principles we have regard to the common rule, not the rare exception. As a rule, marriages of equal caste turn out unhappily for all concerned. In the rough bush life of a new colony this may be of less moment, but in the ordinary circumstances of civilized life, some equality of station and of education is expected. In examining the qualities to be sought in a wife, let us therefore regard moral worth, and also suitability of station, not as among the requisites, but as prerequisites; and then let us see how far we assent to the distribution of the ten points of Burns. The importance of good temper is great, but four out of ten seems rather a large proportion to allot to it. In describing the good qualities of a friend, or a brother or sister, or a master or servant, good temper would be a large ingredient, but in a wife, other points deserve equal if not greater note. Taking the larger view of beauty, as including all personal qualities of a physical or material kind, and form and figure as well as feature, and especially a healthy constitution, it certainly should be at least on a level with good temper. A poor invalid or cripple may have the sweetest of tempers. On the other hand, a pretty face may belong to a silly fool; which brings the point of good sense also to the front. The majority of sensible men will thoroughly agree with the poet as to the comparative unimportance of what he calls the "minor proportions" of fortune, family, accomplishments, and other accessories; and, in fact, one instead of two out of ten might be allotted for their fractional expression. Of course there are exceptional cases and circumstances, where some of these minor qualities assume greater importance. For instance, the heir of an estate, or the representative of a high family, might consider rank, and wealth, and education, of more consequence than to be represented by a decimal fraction. The wise Lord Burleigh,

in giving advice to his son on the choice of a wife, said: "Let her not be poor, how generous (well-born) soever, for a man can buy nothing in the market with gentility." The greatness of his house was in his mind more than the happiness of his son, in giving this advice. But taking the average of men who have to consider only their own personal taste, comfort, and advantage, good temper, good sense, and good health are the three primary and essential points.—The Leisure Hour.

The Beauty of Creation.

The earth is full of blessing,
Ther's beauty everywhere;
And He who made the universe
Has made it good and fair:

The wild-flowers in the hedge-crow,
The blossoms on the trees,
The radiance of the summer sun,
The freshness of the breeze

The hoar-frost in the winter,
The crystals pure and bright,
Created in their loveliness:
In one brief lover's night:

The mountains and the valleys,
The deep unfathomed sea,
With all its rippling waves that play
And dance about with glee.

Ther's beauty in the lustre
Of every twinkling star;
The colors of the rainbow, too,
How beautiful they are!

We gaze in silent wonder,
And whisper reverently,
"If this world is so very fair,
Oh, what must Heaven be!"

The Training the Lord Requires.

BY JOHN HALL, D.D.

The Bible rule is, "Train up a child in the way it should go." That rule is addressed to parents, to the Church and to the State. It is never broken with impunity. Parents, if you fail to train up your children in the way they should go, your will be broken hearts and bitter memories some day: Brethren of the Churches, if you fail to train up the children in the way they should go, there will be dishonor done to the Head of the Church. And the State, so far as it is its function, and it has power over the matter, must heed the voices that speak to it. "Train up the children in the way they should go;" for in a land like this, where power is put into the hands of such great multitudes, it is of the last moment for the welfare of the community that there should be not merely smart men; men with clever brains, but men with sound hearts and right consciences, that the people of the country may fear the Lord, and the land be established in truth and in righteousness.

It is the part of the American Sunday-School Union to help forward in this great work. It assists parents in the training of their children by giving them a suitable Christian literature. It assists the Church in the doing of this work by furnishing its teachers with the helps they require, by aiding them in the great business of organization, and by keeping up that living enthusiasm by which men are strengthened and sustained in doing the work of the Lord. And finally, it supplements the work of the State. We are justly proud of our common schools; but let it be borne in mind that the Sunday-school is needed to supplement the teaching of the common school. I am afraid that the tendency of the times is to reduce the teaching of the daily schools to the minimum. All the more need have we, therefore, for concentrating our energies upon the work of Bible teaching on the Lord's day, that so we may send forth in the next generation men saturated with a knowledge and love of the truth as God has given it to us in His word.

I am afraid there are some who look upon the Sunday-school as a safe playground for their children. The young are kept quiet there, and out of "harm's way." It is true there is that element in it, and we should be glad that it is so, but parents out not to be indifferent, whether their children learn at school "humpty dumpty," or good Christian songs and hymns!

Beard in mind that keeping the children away from perils is but a small part of the element that enters into the value of a Sunday-school. The mustard is very good, but it is not the dinner. Those things are very good, but they do not constitute a Sunday-school. There are some, again, who imagine that the Sunday-school is a kind of a pillow, upon which the parental conscience may go to sleep; and when we ask them what they are doing for the religious training of their little ones, their reply is, "Oh, we send them to the Sunday-school, and they have capital teachers there, and so we feel easy about the matter." Dear friends, you must not feel easy about this matter. The Sabbath-school is to supplement not to supersede, your exertion. There are, again, some who look upon the Sunday-school as a kind of gentle, gradual opening into good, respectable society. There are nice people in the Sunday-school, and so they send their children there. This is good so far as it goes, but it is a very small part of the recommendation of the Sunday-school. And finally, I am afraid that there are parents in many places, and many persons in the general community, who look upon the Sabbath-school as a kind of reformatory institution for the young, who being neglected in their homes, and left to grow up in ignorance and vice, are sent to the school as to a house of correction. Now it is true that the Sunday-school does inform the ignorant and improve the morals of the young, but that is to take a very low and inadequate view of it. The Sunday-school is a part of the Church of Christ herself, organized for the work of training the generation that is coming in Christian truth—in the knowledge and fear of the Lord.—Address at Semi-Centennial of American Sunday-School Union.

Be not easily discouraged. Hope on. Hope ever. A very experienced laborer says that he has frequently seen the happiest results following labours performed under the greatest discouragements. Many have said as much. Look not much at discouragements.