

Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

We purpose, the Lord willing, in our next, to consider *The Commemorative Institutions of the New Testament.*

Original Contributions.

THE ROYAL ROAD OF LIFE.

Is. xxxv., 8-10.

This chapter is by common consent Messianic, so that when the Prophet says, "And an highway shall be there, etc.," we are led to look at once to the reign of the Messiah for a survey of the Way. It is almost startling when we turn to the history of the Apostles of Christ to find them announcing, in the very language of the prophecy, the Way. This is especially noticeable in the teaching and history of Paul. He went to Damascus with letters of authority, th. if he found any that were of "the way," he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem—Acts ix., 2. Paul and Silas proclaimed "the way" of salvation in Philippi—Acts xvi., 15. Apollos was instructed in "the way" of the Lord; and Aquilla and Pricilla expoundedun to him "the way" of God more carefully—Acts xviii., 25-26: Some of the disobedient ones at Ephesus spoke evil of "the way" before the multitude while Paul was preaching in the synagogue—Acts xix., 9. Shortly afterward, through the agitation of Demetrius, "there arose no small stir concerning the way"—Acts xix., 23. Paul declared to the Jews when making his defence, "I persecuted this 'way' unto the death"—Acts xxii., 4. And again, that he served the God of their fathers after "the way" which they called a sect—Acts xxiv., 14.

It is very evident from these declarations that in the days of Paul "the way" predicted by the Prophet was an existing fact, and that men were walking in it toward life and happiness.

The prophetic description is a glowing picture of what "the way" should be, and what it would ensure to men. It was first of all "the way of holiness." This means the way of separation. There will be many things not found there. "The unclean shall not pass over it." "No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon." Nothing corrupt nor corrupting, neither anything hurtful or dangerous shall be there. But it shall be a plain way. "The wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein." It shall be a way of freedom. "The Redeemer shall walk there." It shall be a way of ex herant joy. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads" It shall be a way of victory. "They shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Does the "way" preached by the Apostles correspond with this description? Let us see. Paul writes to those who are in this way: "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers; for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? and what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? For we are a temple of the living God, even as God said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you and be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"—II. Cor. vi., 14-18; vii., 1.

Here is separation. This way is "the way of holiness." There is no room here for the unclean. Men must be washed before entering here. While walking here they must keep themselves pure

Here also is safety. For "who is he that will harm you if ye be zealous of that which is good—I. Pet., iii., 13. The lions and ravenous beasts are all outside of this way. As long as a man keeps in the way he is safe. This does not mean that the Christian will never have to suffer. It simply means that he shall not be harmed. "Be not afraid of them which kill the body and after that have no more that they can do." That would be a small thing to happen to the man who was in the way of life. It would but hasten his arrival at the heavenly gate. This is a plain way. "For behold your calling, brethren, how that not many arise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God chose the foolish things of the world that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea, and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh should glory before God"—I. Cor., i., 26-29. A man don't have to be six feet high and weigh one hundred and eighty pounds, and be a graduate of a university and heir to a million before he can enter this way. It is enough that he has heard God call and humbly sought cleansing at the hand of Christ. And if he keeps fast hold of the hand of Christ he will not err in all the journey,

Here, too, is freedom. "If, therefore, the son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed"—Jno. viii., 26. "But thanks be to God that whereas ye were servants of sin ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching wherunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin ye became servants of righteousness"—Rom. vi., 17-18. God has "delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins"—Col. i., 13-14. The "redeemed" walk here. Here also is joy. "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit"—Rom. xiv., 17. "Rejoice in the Lord alway; again I say rejoice"—Phil. iv., 4. "Whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly, with joy unspeakable and full of glory"—I. Pet. i., 8.

This is also a way of victory. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us—Rom. viii. 37. We can come down to the end of the way with the victorious song on our lips: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, etc."—II. Tim. iv., 7.

The highway which Isaiah saw in vision, the Apostles preached in verity. Their proclamation of the gospel was the announcement and the summons: "This is the way, walk ye in it." It was the King's highway to which they summoned men. It was the royal road to life and salvation. We will survey it more closely in succeeding papers.

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FAITH.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."—Heb. xi. 1.

Philology has always been a much controverted science. The meaning of a single word has often given rise to heated discussions.

And this is natural. The changes constantly taking place in a living language; the great differ-

ence in the minds of men; the varied circumstances in which words are used; the motives prompting the using of them; the difficulty in accurately expressing our thoughts even in a language as rich as our own; the manner in which they are interpreted by others—all unite to make the study of words a difficult one.

The words of the Bible, the most perfectly expressed of any book, have not been free from controversy. If, however, the Bible is God's Word, there cannot be such looseness of expression as would appear from the construction placed on it by many.

In considering a word of the Bible, we should (1) study the definitions given of it, if any; (2) examine the illustrations supplied; and (3) carefully consider the connection in which they are used with all the surrounding circumstances. If we would follow out this plan in studying God's Word, I think we would not often misconstrue the meaning of a word. This plan should be adopted; more especially because certain words in our English Bible have a meaning which is contrary to the common popular use of them. With the exception of baptism, there is probably no scriptural word which has given rise to so much disquisition as that of faith. This largely arises out of the different meanings and shades of meaning attached to this word in our language.

The most common construction placed upon the word faith, is that of "belief" in the narrow sense in which that term is used, i. e. an intellectual assent to the truth of a certain statement of facts which although not positive knowledge, yet the direct evidence of which is equivalent to knowledge.

Indeed, matters of belief may sometimes be stronger than those generally included under knowledge. A person might say that he had knowledge of a certain fact that occurred under his observation, and yet he might through excitement or otherwise, have been mistaken about it. The same person may believe that there is such a country as England, and such a person as the Queen of England, although he has never been in that country, nor seen the Queen. Here the person could be mistaken about that which he claimed to have knowledge about, but he could not possibly be mistaken in his belief.

Now, true faith, to my mind, consists in a reliance in something which is not only beyond our knowledge, but beyond its equivalent, a belief in something we have not seen but which appeals to our reason also; and if this is so, the above illustration is not a good example of faith; the existence of England being not only established by direct evidence, but being such fact is as much within our comprehension as the existence of our own country also.

Scriptural faith, as I understand it, is the reliance we place in the truths revealed to us by God through His Word, which we cannot comprehend, weigh the result of, or see the necessity for, but which we accept solely because found there; and a trusting or acting upon such belief.

Without the acting upon such belief, faith is not made perfect (James ii. 22). But I do not wish to discuss that aspect of the word just now, but will confine myself to faith, theoretically speaking.

Let us examine briefly the verse that I have chosen as a text for this article, "Now faith is the substance (assurance, R. V.) of things hoped for." The assurance here referred to is not a conclusion drawn from certain events that is at least as the natural outcome of such events, but grows entirely out of the express promises of Christ and His Apostles. The assurance here is of something hoped for. The Apostle Paul asks why a man hopeth for that which he seeth. This undoubtedly refers as much to intellectual as to literal sight. We are expressly told with reference to the future, that we cannot understand what the Lord has prepared for us, but we trust him, and this is the future aspect of faith.