

Unto Abel and his offering God had respect. Imagination has been busy with guessing at the manner in which God showed respect. Was it, as in Elijah's case, by fire from heaven? How beside the mark all such suppositions are may be seen by noting closely the records. The respect (Gen. iv. 4) was not to the offering merely, but to *Abel* and his offering; and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews expressly states that by that faith with which he offered the more excellent sacrifice, he had witness borne to him that he was righteous. Abel's sign was the inward witness of a meek and quiet conscience, the possession of which is more than life itself. Cain lived; but a powerful pen has, without doubt, traced that life in the weird curse it puts in Eve's lips, as, distracted, she views the slain :—

"Hence, fratricide! henceforth that word is Cain,  
Through all the myriads of mankind,  
Who shall abhor thee, though thou wert their sire!  
May the grass wither from thy feet! the woods  
Deny thee shelter! earth a home! the dust  
A grave! the sun its light! and heaven its God!"

And that hell must, sooner or later, reign in every breast that departeth from the living God; for though here conscience may and does slumber, we shall, sooner or later, see things as they are—the light of the throne reveals ourselves as well as our surroundings. And who can endure that revelation?

"Oh! the godless gloom  
Of a life without sun, without health, without hope, without any delight;  
Can anything upon earth lift? Ah, God that terrible night."

Abel's death was heaven; Cain's faithless life a hell. Faith, after all, is the only assurance which rests upon a rock. We talk of being sure of that which we see. *Sure* of what? Of fleeting clouds and changing earth; of fortunes tottering and life that a moment dashes into nothingness; of friends that are torn from our grasp; of an earth that is shaking to its centre, and for aught we know liable at any moment to be scattered as meteor dust along the abysmal path of heaven. *Sure* of nothing! unless faith lay hold upon a God unchangeable, and a word that comes from Him; and Abel had that faith even unto death. Ah! the assurance that faith brings, "Calm in the midst of storms." Stronger than woe or death is

that faith which, going out towards God, rests upon Him and finds continued confidence and peace therein.

Young men, is your life to be a life of faith or unbelief? Remember, faith ennobles every work—the sweeping of a warehouse, the sealing of a bargain, the lighting of a candle in a garret, the gas glare of a comfortable parlour. Not *where* but *what* you are; not *what* you do, but the spirit in which you do it, makes earth either heaven or hell—your life that of righteous Abel or that of vagabond Cain.

Remember, moreover, there are some controversies that can only be settled one way—that is those where truth is only on one side. Such is the controversy in your life between faith and unbelief. Life is only by faith in Jesus Christ, and you were not created for death; therefore we urge, end the controversy at once; live by faith in the Son of God; you may find Him *now*, and *here*, if but the clouds of prejudice and misapprehension are driven away. Thus life will in truth be worth living, and death be but the entrance to that "before the throne," where in perfect service God's servants shall serve Him, and He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them, and God shall wipe away all tears from every eye.

## A BRIEF RESUME OF THE LIFE OF JESUS.

### I. THE NATION AND THE TIMES.

Rome was mistress of the world; Augustus ruled Rome. Never before or since has the sun risen on such an empire—shone on such a crown. Rome's rule may not have followed the course of the sun as we fondly dream the rule of Britain does, but the then historic world all owned the sway of the crown-wreathed Emperor of the seven-hilled city. Between Britain and her possessions other lands, tongues, peoples lie—other nations that can and do treat with her as equals. From the Pillars of Hercules to the Babylonian plains; from the inhospitable forests of Northern Europe and the Scythian wilds of Asia to the Sahara wastes; from the Cassiterides to the Orient one compact empire prevailed. The Mediterranean was a great inland Roman lake. Sweep where they would, the Roman galleys