

# THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL

VOLUME III, No 16

ST. JOHN, N. B., AUGUST 27, 1901

WHOLE No. 66

## The Way of Faith.

**R**IGHTLY considered, the narrative of Abraham's call records one of the most important events in the history of the race. If we except the fall of Adam, and the crucifixion of Jesus, probably it is the most important, for it marks the beginning of new spiritual order in the world. From the call of Abram and his response to it came the separation of the Chosen People from the rest of mankind—a nation to whom God revealed Himself; to whom He imparted those large and vital conceptions of spiritual religion upon which Christianity rests. It is impossible to understand Christianity without Judaism, or Judaism without Abraham. In reading of the call of Abram we stand at the fountain head of mankind's spiritual history. This sheik of the desert was the progenitor and forerunner of all those who live the life of faith.

Much has been written and preached about faith that obscures its real nature. In the career of Abram, and especially in his leaving Chaldea, we see this spiritual quality in its simplest form. It is something different from a servile obedience to a command. If Abram had simply been ordered to emigrate to Palestine, and obeyed the order, we should feel that his conduct was not necessarily an act of faith. Faith always presupposes some conception of the divine character that elicits other sentiments than the sense of fear or subservience to authority. It rests upon some perception of qualities in God that inspire love and trust. That is why the Scriptures so abound in promises, which are the richest disclosures of the divine character. There is seldom, or never a command that is not linked to a promise. Even the Ten Commandments that seem like a series of prohibitions, without any further outlook, are not understood until they are read in the light of the promises that are connected with them in the Book of Deuteronomy. Abram's faith was not obedience to a military order. The command was accompanied by promises that appealed to the best desires of a right-minded man.

And Abram's faith was shown in his whole-hearted, self-sacrificing surrender to the combined command and promise. His faith was something more than belief, it was a belief that led to the corresponding action. It was something more than obedience, it was obedience inspired by a great promise and trust and hope. The surrenderers of intellect and affection and will to the sufficiently attested revelation of God are the component parts of faith.

And in leading Abram to faith God did not scruple to address the whole man. He appeals to his desire for posterity and influence. "I will make of thee a great nation, and make thy name great"; to his desire to bless others, "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," and later to his most spiritual desire for fellowship with Himself. "I will be thy exceeding great reward." God's promise touches his whole life. Some of the motives addressed to Abram are higher than others, but all are good, and gradually these motives took their proper place in Abram's life, as they do in every obedient life. There are few more interesting studies than to watch the development in this man of increasing susceptibility to motives of higher quality. Until after his self-denial, following the rescue of Lot, he was ready for the supreme appeal and promise, and his whole life rested in it. Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and exceeding great reward." (Gen. 15:1).

## Spiritual Rest.

**I** WENT to an oculist the other day to beg for glasses that would keep my eyes from getting tired.

"My dear madam," the doctor said, earnestly, "the prescription for tired eyes is not a new pair of glasses, but rest."

"Of course," I answered impatiently, "but in

my case that is impossible. I am obliged to use my eyes steadily, twelve hours, at least, out of the twenty-four. Now, please don't say 'rest' to me again, but do the best you can to help me work."

The good man sighed. No doubt he was often persecuted with unreasonableness like mine, but I waited in silence while he considered my case. "You live in the country, I believe?" he said presently.

"Yes, in a small village; it is the same thing."  
"Have you a distant view from your window?"  
"Oh, doctor," I cried; "if I could only show it to you!" And, forgetting my business and his, I began to expatiate with an enthusiasm known only to the mountain-born and mountain-bred upon the glories of the Allegheny foothills from my back window, and the noble Blue Ridge peaks facing my front door.

"That will do," the busy man interrupted me, smiling; "that will be better than glasses. When your eyes are tired following your pen or the lines of a book, go and stand at your back window or your front door and gaze steadily at your mountains for five minutes. Ten will be better. You see what I mean? This will serve to change the focus and to rest your eyes, as walking up hill rests a man who has been footing it all day on a level."

I have profited daily by this simple prescription. Do not think, however, that I am giving you this as a medical advice. How do I know what your eyes need? But to me has been given a daily parable. "Soul of mine," I say to myself as I stand gazing at old Jump Mountain, "are you tired of the little treadmill of care and worry, tired of the smallness of self, tired of the conflict with evil, tired of the struggle after holiness, tired of the harrowing grief of the world, tired—tired to death of today? Then rest your spiritual eye by a far vision. Look up to the beauty of his holiness."

"Look upon that great multitude whom no man can number who stand in the presence of our Lord. Look at the dear ones who now share the many mansions with their Master and ours. Look away at the day, the promised day, when Jesus will come again in power and glory. Rest you, soul, by these far, fair visions."—*Union Gospel News.*

## Wasted Not Lost.

**M**ARY'S ointment was wasted when she broke the vase and poured it upon her Lord. Yes; but suppose she had left the ointment in the unbroken vase? What remembrance would it then have had? Would there have been any mention of it on the Gospel pages? Would her deed of careful keeping have been told over the world? She broke the vase and poured it out, lost it, sacrificed it, and now the perfume fills all the earth. We may keep our life if we will, carefully preserving it from waste; but we shall have no reward, no honor from it, at the last. But if we empty it out in loving service, we shall make it a lasting blessing to the world, and we shall be remembered for ever.—*J. R. Miller, D. D.*

## One-Tenth for God.

**T**HERE is a story about a native preacher in India who thought he was getting too small a salary, and so he would not give anything to the support of the mission church. The missionary urged him to try for three months giving one-tenth of his salary. He thought he and his family would starve if he did it, because his salary was so very small; but when the next quarter came around he went to the missionary, with shining face, and said, "Nine-tenths with God's blessing is better than ten-tenths without it." That is what the thirtieth verse of the tenth chapter of Mark means.

## A Warmer Worship.

**O**UR worship needs to be more humanly and divinely warm. Channing calls a church without devotion "the coldest place on earth." Rational instruction, or the thought-side of religion, may well claim a large place; but the sermon itself requires an atmosphere. Unless our "exercises" are merely formal, hymn and prayer, too, will kindle and blaze with heavenly light. We want also the cheer and comfort of human fellowship; we want to bring our families together, under the sheltering name of a common Father. Home life will be all the richer and sweeter if we carry from the church a feeling of 'broader brotherhood, a sense of kinship with other men, women and children, and some hint of our relationship to all who share our common nature.' And our custom of clasping each other's hands itself becomes more and more like a sacrament when we have meditated together on higher themes, and joined heart and voice in some uplifting service.—*Charles G. Ames.*

## A Judge on Liquor.

In opening the Superior Court in Charlotte the other day, the presiding judge said, in his charge to the jury:

"Gentlemen of the jury, if any of you are in the habit of drinking intoxicating liquors, I hope you will desist from the habit this week. A man is not fit for the discharge of any duty when he is under the influence of whiskey. It is not only a contempt of court, but it is a misdemeanor for a juror to become intoxicated. I wish, also, to impress the fact on the minds of the suitors the witnesses and the officers of the court, that you cannot properly discharge your duty when under the influence of liquor."

Undoubtedly this testimony is true. Whiskey does incapacitate men for business. No one wants to trade with an intoxicated merchant, or entrust his interests to an intoxicated lawyer, or have an intoxicated physician prescribe for him, or an intoxicated jury decide a case in court.—*New Jersey Methodist.*

## Avarice.

It sometimes takes heroic measures to effectually suppress avarice when we find it arising in our bosoms. Canon Farrar tells of a case that came under his observation: "A gentleman, at the beginning of his fortune, had made up his mind that he would always give a tenth of it to God. It happened to him, as it has happened to thousands who have made this rule, that God continually blessed and prospered him in his worldly concerns; but as his riches grew ever greater, the fatal temptations to hoard his acquisitions increased also, and as the tenth began more and more to represent a large sum, he felt inclined to shirk the sacrifice. Despising himself for his own traitorous meanness, he said to himself, 'Henceforth to the end of your life you shall give a seventh and not a tenth.' And so he punished his own transitory pusillanimity by forcing himself to make perpetually a larger sacrifice."

## A Beautiful Answer.

The story is told of a little girl in England who, when rain water was scarce, saved up as much of it as she could and then sold it for a cent a bucket. In this way she earned nearly five dollars, which she brought to the Missionary Society. She was a modest little girl, and when the secretary of the Missionary Society asked her for her name, she hesitated and failed to answer. "But I must put down where the money came from," said the secretary. "Call it rain from heaven," replied the little girl.