

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B. - - - DECEMBER, 1889

EDITORIAL.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Heb. xii. 2.

These chapters contain a brilliant lecture on faith.

The eleventh chapter defines faith and tells and illustrates what it did for the elders and ancients, by it they obtained a good report and labored and suffered and died in faith. This twelfth chapter treats on our faith.

These ancient worthies had such a strong confidence in God, that they joyfully endured every suffering and death itself rather than deny Him. Before these men and women passed from earth, others waited to fill their place so as to form a cloud of witnesses to the power and faithfulness of the God they trusted. They leave us whose advantages are so far superior to theirs, no ground to distrust Him who is true and good. They had confidence in the future fulfillment of a great promise, but we can look back to its actual fulfillment that they without us should not be made perfect (Heb. xi. 40) While we are surrounded with so great a cloud of witnesses, we are commanded to run with patience the race set before us.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

It is most natural for men in respect to the important future to look to those whom they think able and willing to guide them. Children look to their parents, confident of their integrity and skill. What their parents say and do they consider right. When they become old enough to understand that even their parents are not infallible they seek others, either living or dead, to be their guides. This is why so many are easily persuaded to look to departed saints to patronize and intercede for them. But this command is to look to Jesus.

Looking unto Jesus is the first step in a sinner's turning to God. It is looking to Him that shows us our lost condition. We see Him dying for our sins, which is the first fact in the gospel. Nothing else can give us such a discovery of our sins as the cross on which the beloved Son of God died for them. There we see a Father's love for His lost children and learn how He can be just and the justifier of every one who believes in Jesus. Looking to others keeps us away from Jesus. Looking for goodness or virtue in ourselves discourages us and prevents our coming to Him. But turning from all others and ourselves, and looking to Jesus and His death, to His commands, and His promises, His love encourages us, His commands direct us and His promise assures us of His pardon and peace. As surely as Moses lifted up the serpent of brass and all the bitten Jews who looked at it were healed, as certainly Jesus has been lifted up on the cross, —that every lost sinner who looks to Him may be saved. None will be disappointed.

But the Christian is to look to Jesus whose words and example will guide him safely through every change and every trouble till he reaches his Father's house.

The command is not to look to any of these noble men mentioned in the preceding chapter. With all their faith and virtue they have their faults, and were we to look to them as our example we would be in danger of imitating their failings rather than their faith. Neither the old Testament nor the New points to any perfect men, hence we are permitted to look to Jesus as a perfect example. What should encourage all in looking to Jesus is the fact that He was under a course of training and was made perfect through suffering. That though he were a Son He learned obedience by the things

which He suffered, and being made perfect He became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him (Heb. v. 9). Although He was in the form of God, he took upon Him the form of a servant, was found in fashion as a man and humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2). The school in which Jesus gained perfection was so severe that no Christian however weak and unworthy need despair in looking to Him. Jesus will hold him by his hand living and dying.

When the apostle compares the faith of the Old Testament saints with that of the Christian he makes this distinction—Jesus is

THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH.

He is not only the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him, but He is also the author and finisher of the faith by which they are saved.

When faith is mentioned in the New Testament with the article before it, it stands for the Gospel or the system of our salvation, for *what is believed* rather than *believing* it. Thus Paul preaches *the faith* which he once destroyed; that is, he preaches the Gospel (Ep. i. 23). And when about to be offered, said, I have kept *the faith*; that is, I have kept the Gospel pure from any human corruptions (11. Tim. iv. 7). In Jude ii., he exhorts the brethren to earnestly contend for *the faith* once delivered to the saints i. e., for *the Gospel of salvation* which Jesus delivered to the apostles for all time and for all places in these words, "Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 15-16).

After Jesus has delivered *the faith* (that is, *the gospel*) to these saints, "He was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God." And they went forth and preached every where, the Son working with them and confirming the word with signs following. (Verse 19-20).

Thus Jesus in person ceased to speak, but these saints, the apostles, preached *the faith* while their Master was in heaven, and fulfilled His promise to them in verse 17-18, confirming their work with miraculous powers. He was the author of the gospel, and they faithfully proclaimed to the people what they had received from Him. It was a great message, altogether new and strange and startling, but the miracles which they wrought in the name of Jesus proved to be a message of mercy from the Son of the living God.

And here we may observe that "these signs" in verses 17 and 18 were not promised to him that believeth and is baptized (as some think) He promised salvation but not miraculous powers. But these signs were promised to the saints to whom *the faith* was delivered, to follow them and to confirm the word of faith which they preached. They received these gifts direct from heaven. And although the Apostles were permitted in some cases to impart some of these gifts to others and in one case where an Apostle first preached the Gospel to the Gentiles, the miraculous power came direct from heaven on those that heard the word, the promise of signs following was only to the Apostles, and so Mark records its fulfillment in the 19th and 20th verses.

The Gospel which Jesus had delivered to the apostles they faithfully preached first to the Jews then to the Gentiles. Although many rejected it many others believed and turned to the Lord. They also taught the believers all things which Jesus had commanded them and He was with them always. They were led by the Holy Spirit and spoke as He gave them utterance. One by one of them suffered unto death, cheerful by looking unto the great Author. They lost their life but "Kept the faith." This went on for over sixty years and "the faith" got a hold of men that can never be

broken. At length the Lord came from heaven to finish the faith which He had once delivered. The Apostles were all dead but John. Before he had drunk the martyr's cup he saw a most glorious Person, "like unto the Son of man," (a likeness which the glories of heaven will never obliterate). Although He was the same Jesus on whose breast he had reclined, and who had on the cross left him in charge of His mother, John could not stand the sight of the glorified One till his right hand touched Him, then He spoke to him and told him to write in a book what he had seen and heard. The Lord showed John in this Revelation what the Gospel did for the faithful on the one hand and the misery that awaited its rejecters and opposers on the other. At one time he was taken into the New Jerusalem to see the glory of God and the Lamb, to hear the songs of the angels and to listen to the more moving songs of the redeemed out of every nation and from every kindred and people and tongue, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, who are before the throne and shall praise Him forever and ever. At another time He is pointed to the terrible company outside of the city doomed to an eternal companionship with all the hateful enemies of God, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented forever and ever. There is something very touching in looking to Jesus, whose closing His last book and finishing the faith as if he said to John, "Lift your pen and stop till I again give vent to the feelings of My heart for a lost world, till the dying fully understand what I mean and what I feel." "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say Come. And let him that heareth say Come. And let him that is athirst Come. And whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii.)

Original Contributions.

"LET NO MAN DESPISE THEE."

This injunction to Titus is as essential and appropriate to us now, as when given to him, and is as important as any injunction in the Word of God.

It may appear to us quite impossible to prevent others from despising us, especially since our Saviour who was without sin, "was despised and rejected." But we understand He was despised without a cause; just so should we understand this injunction to Titus—Let no man have a cause or reason to despise thee. This teaches us that we alone are responsible for our character; that it is not what others say or do, but what we say and do ourselves that makes us what we are. If the conduct of others could make us good then Paul's injunction would have been to others, that they must not despise Titus but think and speak well of him.

But the question naturally arises, Why is it necessary that we should be respected? If our character is our own what difference will it make to us whether others despise or respect us? We often say, "I don't care what others say or think of me." If we would allow ourselves to think a moment, we would never give utterance to such a sentiment. Is it not virtually saying we do not care what the Word of God says? The injunction is too plain to be misunderstood. "Let no man despise thee." If we have no care as to the respect of others, we will not be likely to live so that others may not despise us.

While it is true that what others say of us will not effect our character, it is equally as true that it will effect our reputation. Character is what we really are in the sight of God; but reputation is what we are in the sight of men. If our reputation is lost, our influence is lost and also our usefulness.