

HAVE FAITH IN GOD.

By Rev. John T. Price.

Not to teach the importance of fruit-bearing, but to inculcate a lesson on the importance of faith, did Jesus curse the fig tree. It was not the season for figs. The tree was not responsible for what could not be according to nature. To curse this tree under these circumstances would be far from right, but Jesus, taking the circumstances as he found them, knowing that the apostles were in need of knowing the value of faith, he pronounced a curse upon this tree in the presence of His apostles.

The next day when Peter called attention to the fact that the tree had dried up to the roots, Jesus made clear His reason for pronouncing the curse—"If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed," He had said on a former occasion, ye shall be able to do great things. Now He says, "Have faith in God," for "whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart," it shall obey him; showing that by faith these men were to gain victories, and extend the kingdom.

But what is faith in God? We all recognize the importance of faith, and so need to know what it is to have faith in God. Faith in God is first of all "taking God at His word and doing what He commands us to do." He spake to Noah in a very dry time and, when there was no sign of a flood great enough to justify the building of an ark, and commanded Noah to build such an ark for the saving of his family from its destruction, telling Noah there should come a flood. Noah had faith in what God said to him, took God at His word and did what God commanded. This was faith. God commanded Abraham to go out from Ur to a land which he should after inherit, and Abraham, not knowing where the country was nor how far, left Ur, went out, was led into Canaan, which was given to him and his posterity for a possession. He took God at His word and did what God commanded.

Faith in God is committing ourselves to God for deliverance and protection. The three Hebrew children fell into the hands of the wrathful king of Babylon, who cast them into the furnace of fire. These young men committed themselves to the God of the Hebrews to protect them and deliver them from the fire, and when the king went and looked into the furnace he saw not three men there, but four, for the Lord had sent his angel there to protect these men and to deliver them. Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, but he trusted God and the angel shut the mouths of the lions and saved Daniel.

Again, faith in God is reaching into the future and bringing God's blessings down to the present. Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure from Egypt of the children of Israel and made his brethren promise that they would take his bones with them and bury them in Canaan. This was seeing the triumphs of divine grace and the deliverance of his people and the possession of that good land before it actually occurred. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." It is reaching out into the future and seeing the fulfillment of God's glorious promises and enjoying the fulfillment long before the fact.

Does the hand of affliction rest heavily upon you, have faith in God. Have you been overtaken by misfortune? Have faith in God. Are you troubled and perplexed by the things that come in the course of a life time? Have faith in God. Has death entered your home and robbed you of a loved one? "All things work together for good to them who love God." Have faith in Him who has said, "When thou passest through

the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overthrow thee."

If you would do great things for God, have faith in Him. If you would overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, have faith in God. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—Cumberland Presbyterian.

A PRAYER.

When Thou callest, our Father, give us readiness of heart to answer and obey. If we have gone far astray from Thee, even through lawless living, to the fields of hunger and of loneliness, awaken memories of our forsaken home and turn our hearts to Thee. Thou has made the great beginning and our affection is but an answer to Thy love. We bless Thee that Thou dost not love us in the measure of our good but because we are Thy children. So shall doubt and despair be far from us as we listen for Thy call. We hunger for the bread of life which Christ alone can give. We thirst for water from the living fountains. Blessed be Thou who biddest the hungry and the thirsty come! With eager and expectant hearts we turn to Thee. O satisfy us with the bounty of Thy house and let Thy goodness lead us. Amen.—Philadelphia Westminster.

OUR THOUGHTS OF HEAVEN.

Life changes all our thoughts of heaven; At first we think of streets of gold, Of gates of pearl and dazzling light. Of shining wings and robes of white, And things all strange to mortal sight. But in the afterwards of years

It is a more familiar place, A home unhurt by sigh or tears, Where waiteth many a well-known face.

With passing months it comes more near.

It grows more real day by day. Not strange or cold, but very dear— The glad homeland, nor far away, Where none are sick, or poor, or lone, The place where we shall find our own. And as we think of all we know

Who there have met to part no more. Our longing hearts desire home, too.

With all the strife and longing o'er.

—Author unknown.

PLIABLE.

Even the men of the City of Destruction derided Pliable for running back when once he had started. Be sure that worldlings, whatever they may say, do watch those that start out in the Christian way, and admire them, in spite of themselves, when they persevere. And if they backslide, as Pliable did, even worldlings are ashamed of them, though they may praise them to their faces.

All sorts of Christians have their Slough of Despond, but some, like Pliable set out of the marsh on the side next the City of Destruction, and some, like Christian, set out on the side next the Celestial City; and that makes all the difference in the world. The Slough of Despond may be only an incident in your course, or it may be the entire defeat of that course.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

Monday.—The great lesson: wisdom (Prov. 1: 1-9).

Tuesday.—Obedience to God's Word (Prov. 3: 1-10).

Wednesday.—Avoidance of evil. (Prov. 4: 14-27)

Thursday.—Diligence (Prov. 6: 6-11; 24: 35).

Friday.—Value of righteousness (Prov. 11: 1-11).

Saturday.—The value of silence (Prov. 25: 8-15).

LESSONS FROM BOOK OF PROVERBS.*

By Robert A. Speer.

When human experience has learned some universal principle of common life, it has helped itself to remember its lesson by putting it in a proverb. A true proverb embodying a real principle of action is worth more than gold if we will live by it.

The Book of Proverbs is made up of the wise maxims of its day. If Solomon knew all these and acted upon them, he deserved his reputation for wisdom. It is one thing, however, to have a written collection of wise sayings, and it is another thing to live a wise life. Most of us already know a great deal better than we are doing.

The Book of Proverbs tells us that its purpose is to make us wise. The opening sentences declare its character:

"The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

"To know wisdom and instruction; to discern the words of understanding;

"To receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness and justice and equity;

"To give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

"To understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise, and their dark sayings."

But it recognizes that wisdom is not a mere matter of maxims of philosophy. It is a personal relationship to God. The first word of the Book of Proverbs is the last word of the Book of Ecclesiastes. The preacher ends where the teacher begins.

"The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge."

"Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

The first section of the Proverbs appeals to us to hold aloof from sin and the company that entices to sin, and to hold fast to God and the law of God. This is wisdom, and wisdom is the rare and precious treasure. Those who have her are safe. No fears harrow them, remorse is a stranger to them.

But wisdom it not a selfish personal possession. The wise man can and will help the needy. He will not eat his morsel alone. He will look for the opportunity to give aid to those in distress. The blessing of those who were near to perishing will come upon him. And he will not be impoverished by what he gives. He will discover that the law of the husbandman applies to all life. The giver will have. It is not he that withholds, it is he that scatters who possesses.

Those have least for themselves who share least with others.

But we do not get to give by profligacy. There must be effort and toil and frugality. Generosity is not the same as folly. Giving to the needy does not require foolishness of stewardship. Don't assume liabilities which you often have no right to assume and cannot meet. The old days, we see, were not so different from ours.

All the wisdom of the Proverbs is in one verse of the first Epistle of John. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked." If we will be like Christ, we will be the ideal of the wise king. We shall do much more than that—we shall be the sons of God.

The Book ends, as all wise books of men ought to end, with an exaltation of Godly mothers; "grace is deceitful and beauty is vain." The advertisements of any modern magazine confirm this word of the Proverbs, "But a woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised."

*Y.P. Topic, 4th April, 1909: Life Lessons for Me from the Book of Proverbs; Prov. 8:1-17.