

Pastor and People.

A PRAYER.

Father, take not away
The burden of the day,
But help me that I bear it
As Christ His burden bore
When cross and crown He wore,
And none with Him could share it,
In His name, help, I pray.

I only ask for grace
To see that patient face
And my impatient one,
And that mine grow like His,
Sign of an inward peace
From trust in Thee alone.
Unchanged by time or place.

HAVE FAITH IN GOD.

BY REV. E. WALLACE WAITS, B.A., KNOX CHURCH,
OWEN SOUND.

All grandeurs and mysteries roll up into, or condense themselves in this grandeur of grandeurs and mystery of mysteries—God. Do not try to measure Him, or to account for Him; but "have the faith of God!" What I know about this God I have learned from the Son of the Carpenter. He seemed to be a long time in saying anything about God. The first time He spoke He called Him "your Father." The next time He turned to the topic He said, "The Heaven is God's throne." Intellectually our God is as unthinkable, as mathematically the horizon is unmeasurable. The unthinkable is not something contrary to thought, but is something above thought, as the immeasurable is not a quantity which disproves figures, but exceeds them.

At first this command would seem to be the easiest possible thing to do—"Have faith in God." It is in reality the hardest of all things! A review of past experience will show that it is a hard task for the human heart sometimes. Without faith no grace is possible to a man who knows himself. Conscience is troubled, and to the mind all things spiritual are in a mist, sometimes "a horror of great darkness" till you believe. This is not a word to be dissected or anatomised in the usual style of pulpit surgery. It is to be repeated until the music comes out of it. It is the refrain of a song. It is in fact, any one of a thousand beautiful things; it is a sunbeam in winter; it is the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; it is a glimpse of blue in a dark sky; it is the voice of the turtle when the rain is over and gone. It is in this spirit that I propose to treat it, gladly yielding myself to all the temptations of its charms, and going with glad willingness through all the range which it opens to my delighted imagination.

Observe that the exhortation was spoken to disciples. Let them not think of faith as a mere happy device for obtaining personal salvation with rest and comfort. It is to abide—the habit of the reverential mind and the principle of the obedient life. Faith is far mightier than it seems. "All things are possible to him that believes."

Faith lends its realizing light;
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly;
Th' Invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye.

Without faith there can be no salvation, no vital godliness; neither can there be any maintenance of the Christian life, nor advancement in Divine things. Every Christian is "kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." For, says the apostle, "by faith ye stand."

Notice the influence of faith on the believer himself. Nothing so increases the moral energies, so as to make a man more than himself. It is the engine in the secret chamber of the heart that propels all the wheels and instruments of thought and effort in the Christian soul. See that you feed the engine by meditation on God's truth; for, if it stops, every good movement of the soul is paralyzed. The Bible describes it as "the substance of things," etc. A Christian sailor when asked why he remained so calm in a fearful storm, replied, "I am not sure that I can swim; but if I sink I shall only drop into the hollow of my Father's hand, for He holds all these waters there."

Think of the direct communication of faith with God. It is comprehended in the designs of the all perfect One, that he should pour out the spirit of prayer and faith on us, and we should by believing prayer react on Him. Alas! we have a sort of faith for asking, but do not hold fast faith for receiving—like the brethren in Jerusalem, who knocked at heaven's gate to obtain the release of Peter, and could not believe that heaven's answer was knocking at their own gate while they prayed. Have not merely the forms, but hold fast and keep in readiness the faith of God. A man may possess a weapon, perhaps his great-grandfather's sword, and is content to know that it is somewhere in the house, but because he cannot lay his hand on it in time of need, is as defenceless as though he had none. We may somehow possess a faith, perhaps more our ancestors' than our own. When the disciples were afraid on the sea, Christ asked them, "Where is your faith?" You seemed to have some—what has become of it? Has the sea swallowed it up? Or has the wind dispersed it? Perhaps you are one of those timid ones who are afraid to trust Christ—to believe all the promises of God's word, not daring to apply them to yourself. Dear friends, you have a merciful High Priest, a loving Saviour, to deal with. "He will not quench the smoking flax," etc., if you have a spark of real love to Him,

a grain of saving faith. He sees, and approves, and longs that you may have much faith, and consequently, much peace and joy in believing. Oh, pray earnestly for more faith; exercise the faith you have, and rest not until you are full of faith and the Holy Ghost. This doctrine of faith is no doubtful experiment or religious novelty. What faith in God could do before the coming of Christ, let the eleventh chapter of Hebrews declare. There you will walk through the gallery of historic portraits of patience and godliness; and under each the Holy Spirit has inscribed the words, "By faith." We are hurried, however, through the gallery at the last. And why? It is that we may see the witness nobler still, the chief among ten thousand, "Jesus, the author and finisher of faith." What faith did in the man Christ Jesus, let the four gospels tell. He was God and man; but we are not to think of Him as exerting His own latent divine resources to exalt and empower humanity. He acted and suffered as the Son of Man, who perfectly trusted in God. Take the temptation of Christ in the wilderness as an illustration of this fact.

What faith accomplished through Christ's immediate followers, let the Acts of the Apostles tell. They, too, were anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, and did mighty works, for God was with them. By the same principle did Christian missionaries hazard their lives, in the eighth and ninth centuries, to push such Christianity as they knew into the habitations of heathenism, in central and northern Europe. By the same principle of faith did the great Reformers shake the world and turn the battle to the gate. And what has the history of our own Church been, in its wonderful origin and in all its spiritual successors, but an illustration of what faith can do? The late American revival began with a prayer meeting, at which there was only one man present for the first part of the hour; and the late Irish revival is traced to the earnest labours and faithful prayers of one Christian lady. Do all you can. Use the means, preach the Gospel, send men abroad, give money, form societies, hold special meetings, etc.; but have no faith in these—let all the faith be in God. Perhaps some are looking to you; see that you look to God only. Renounce self-trust, and cast yourselves alone at the feet of Jesus, that you may afresh receive power from on high. See that your faith be with love to Christ and all the brethren. He who has a loveless faith is nothing. But he who has faith and love can never be insignificant or unprofitable. Put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

Cling to the mighty One, cling in thy grief.
Cling to the Holy One, He gives relief!
Cling to the Gracious One, cling in thy pain,
Cling to the Faithful One, He will sustain.

"Have faith in God"—when the north wind blows and morsels of ice strike thee cruelly in the face, and the storm is so hard upon thee as to prevent thee seeing the feeble light set in the friendly window for thy guidance, and when thy cry for help sinks in the roaring wind and is never heard by human ear, when the tempest breaks down thy worldly prospects, when the floods foam upon thy hearth and drown the fire which was thy last comfort—then, "Have faith in God." This is Christ's command. Faith will save thee. Hold on. Trust. Say, "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him." When life goes hard in the family; when children die; when income declines; when ventures are like ships bringing back nothing but loss; when the meal lessens in the barrel and the oil runs slowly from the cuse; when the fig-tree forgets to blossom, etc.; when you go out in the morning and bring back at night nothing but weariness and hunger; when every chamber is a sick-room, and every window an out-look upon a grave-yard, covered with snow; when the last coal is in the grate, and children cry for bread which you cannot give them, only believe! This is Christ's teaching; who can receive it? It is easy to believe in the day of prosperity. But Christ's instruction is not merely given for that hour. "Have faith in God"—when sin is most keenly felt; when remorse darkens around the soul; when every memory is a sting; when every anticipation is a judgment; when conscience becomes a scorpion in the breast—then, Have faith in God! "He that believeth shall be saved," etc. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Jesus says to each of us, "According to thy faith, be it unto thee." "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Do not argue, only believe; do not speculate, only believe; do not fret thyself with many questions, only believe; do not expect to have every mystery cleared away, only believe; do not lift up thy little dying self against the Everlasting, only believe. Again and again, let your heart say, "Lord, increase my faith!"

JOHN KNOX'S CONFLICT WITH QUEEN MARY.

The following account of John Knox's conflict with Queen Mary, is taken from an able Biography of the Great Reformer, published by the Religious Tract Society:

Mary, Queen of Scots, landed in her native kingdom on the 19th of August, 1561. She became at once the star of all eyes, not only in Scotland, but throughout Europe. The widow of the heir of the throne of France, the reigning sovereign of Scotland, and the heiress presumptive of England, the young princess was already a personage whose destiny must decide the wavering balance of Christendom. England, nominally Protestant, was still largely, perhaps predominantly, Romanist; Scottish Protestantism was only a year old; and the great house of the Guises were confident that their brilliant daughter would ere long bring back both to the faith. And with Scotland and England united under a Roman Catholic queen, the

whole north would easily be restored to the See of Rome. Mary understood her high part and accepted it with alacrity. Fascinating and beautiful, keen-witted and strong-willed, she would have found herself at home in this great game of politics, even if it had not for her one element of intense personal interest. For all men knew that the turning-point in the question would be her marriage, and that the chief prize of the game was the hand of Mary Stuart. Knox, on his side, understood the situation equally well. Very shortly after her arrival, he preached in the Metropolitan Church of St. Giles, and "inveighed against idolatry." One mass, he said, was more terrible to him than ten thousand men landed in the realm. Scarcely had the voice of the preacher died away (a voice which, as the English Ambassador soon after wrote to Cecil, though that "of one man, is able in an hour to put more life in us than six hundred trumpets continually blustering in our ears") when the queen sent for him to Holyrood. Then ensued the first of those famous dialogues between Mary and Knox recorded for us by the Reformer's strong pen. He easily satisfied her as to his theoretical "Blast" against women.

"But yet," said she, "ye have taught the people to receive another religion than their princes can allow. And how can that doctrine be of God, seeing that God commands subjects to obey their princes?"

"Madam," said he, "as right religion took neither original, strength, nor authority from worldly princes, but from the eternal God alone, so are not subjects bound to frame their religion according to the appetite of their princes."

This, of course, led on to the doctrine of non-resistance.

"Think ye," quoth she, "that subjects, having power, may resist their princes?"

"If their princes exceed their bounds," quoth he, "and do against that wherefore they should be obeyed, it is no doubt but that they may be resisted, even by power."

The queen's logic, even as reported by her adversary, was almost faultless, and she never failed to come up to the next point of the argument. So she now raised the question what a prince's religion should be—

"Ye interpret the Scriptures," she said, later on, "in one manner, and others interpret in another. Whom shall I believe? and who shall be judge?"

"Ye shall believe," said he, "God, that plainly speaketh in His Word; and farther than the Word teacheth you, ye neither shall believe the one nor the other. The Word of God is plain in itself; and if there appear any obscurity in one place, the Holy Ghost, which is never contrarious unto Himself, explains the same more clearly in other places."

Both parties to the argument sustained it with fairness as well as ability; but Knox seems to have conceived none of the hopes which others entertained as to his royal pupil. He was right. Mary had no intention of considering the questions so zealously put before her. Next year, however, she went so far as to invite him to come and tell her privately when he thought anything was wrong in the court, rather than preach on it. Knox absolutely declined, and invited her instead to come to the public preaching of God's Word. The resentful queen turned her back on him; and as he went away, "with a reasonable merry countenance," he caught the whisper of one of the attendants, "He is not afraid!" He turned upon the whisperer. "Why should the pleasing face of a gentlewoman affray me? I have looked in the face of many angry men, and yet have not been affrayed above measure."

CHRIST IN THE PSALMS.

The letter of Paul to the Hebrews is an argument dissuading them from apostasy. In it he instituted a comparison between the Mosaic and Messianic dispensation. Angels were the most exalted agency employed in the ministrations of the former dispensation, while Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the head of the new dispensation. But Christ is transcendently superior to the angels. Therefore obligations to respect and adhere to the New Dispensation are correspondingly greater.

The first chapter of Hebrews, from the fifth to the fourteenth verse, is devoted to this proof; viz.: that Christ is superior to the angels.

In the argument Paul gives us a splendid illustration of his familiarity with and reverence for the word of God, as well as an exhibition of his logical method of wielding the sword of the spirit. These verses contain seven quotations from the Old Testament. And of the seven, all are from the Book of Psalms except the second.

Dr. Jenkin, in his commentary upon the Book of Hebrews, asks the question "Why? Is it because the Psalms are more clearly doctrinal than the other Scriptures? Is it because they embody the essence of all practical religion? Or is it because, being more constantly used in worship, they were more familiar, better known and appreciated by the people? Whether any or all these are sufficient to account for the fact or not, this lesson ought most assuredly to be received from the fact, viz., the Church should very highly appreciate the Book of Psalms and by no means exclude these heaven-inspired hymns from the matter of her praise. She should never so cultivate and improve music as to silence David's harp and to suspend singing in the family and drive it from the Church into the organ loft."

Is it ignorance or is it prejudice that so often gives utterance to the remark "There is no Christ in the Psalms"?