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THE DYNAMIC OF LIFE.

THE DYNAMIC OF LIFE

BY

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“The Dynamic of Faith,”

“The Dynamic of Service,”

“The Dynamic of Redemption,”

etc., etc.

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FOREWORD

THIS is an intensely interesting book.

It is certainly fresh. If one begins to read it, one wants to read on and on.

But more than that, it is enlightening. It gives clear teaching on the holy life, that pleases God. And in these 'last days,' many are desiring to be "made white."

And more still, it is inspiring. Surely, through reading it, many will be able to behold the glory of the Lord, and will be 'changed.'

Here deep spiritual truth is taught. But not only so, it is illustrated by thrilling incidents from the Mission Field in Japan. So that one gets an insight into the work going on there.

It has a message from God. Read it. Pray over it. Let it search your life. And pass it on, so that others may be blessed.

BARCLAY F. BUXTON.

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INTRODUCTORY

THE following pages need some apology for being admitted to the sanctuary of the printer's office !

The reception given by the Christian public in many lands of the preceding volume, entitled "The Dynamic of Faith," has encouraged me to trespass still further on its generosity, and hope for as lenient a criticism of this book as it has given to its predecessor.

(Of that volume three editions in English, two in French, two in German, one in Swedish, and one in Japanese, do not seem to have exhausted the patience of its readers ; for an edition in Chinese and a second in Japanese are being called for.)

The subject is so important that I send forth the present work, in the hope it may help others also into a fuller life of faith and that "affectionate confidence" in God, which is the secret of holy living and dying.

The contents of the following chapters have been penned in scraps of time and on scraps of paper saved from other tasks, and yet tasks that have contributed largely to the form in which they appear.

With impaired health, I had ventured back to my old field of labour for fifteen months, and sought in the sphere allowed me by such limitations, to help in the training of a fine band of young evangelists and at the same time to visit those already trained in their fields of labour.

Among other courses of study, I was led to lecture on the "heroes of faith," as they are recorded in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews ; and in my travel in the country, visiting the little churches and their pastors and listening to many interesting stories of God's wonderful grace, I was deeply impressed with the similarity of the

working of God the Holy Ghost in times, places and circumstances very far removed the one from the other.

I have ventured therefore, while reproducing in an abridged English version portions of my Japanese lectures, to add by way of illustration, stories of saints in heathen lands, that have come under my immediate notice, heroes and heroines of faith, "mean, unnoticed and unknown" in this world, though destined in the world to come to shine as jewels in the crown of our Redeemer.

I offer no apology for so doing, because as I have pointed out elsewhere, our Lord and Master Himself, in seeking to provoke His own people to jealousy and faith, referred them continually to the miracles of grace and victories of faith among heathen peoples even of that day. The judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, the repentance of Nineveh, the queen of Sheba, the cleansing of Naaman, the widow of Zarepta, the Roman centurions, yes, more than one of them, the Syro-Phœnician woman, all these were instances employed by the Lord, to bring conviction to the orthodox and self-complacent religionists of His time.

From the public I ask again for a lenient criticism on what has been hastily put together, in the midst of a busy life and somewhat enfeebled state of health.

From God, Who has so graciously allowed me to visit once again the field of labour appointed to His unprofitable servant, I ask His blessing upon this record of His grace and goodness.

A. PAGET WILKES.

WIMBLEDON, 1931.

CHAPTER ONE.

A
National Gallery

“ How shall I describe to you what I found in the New Testament. I had not read it for many years and was prejudiced against it, before I took it in hand. The light that struck Paul with blindness on his way to Damascus was not more strange than that which fell on me, when I suddenly discovered the fulfilment of all my hopes, the highest perfection of philosophy, the key to all the seeming contradictions of the physical and moral world.

“ The whole world seemed to me to be ordered for the sole purpose of furthering the religion of the Redeemer : and if this religion is not Divine, I understand nothing at all.

“ In all my studies of the ancient times, I have always felt my want of something ; and it was not until I knew our Lord, that all was clear to me. With Him there is nothing that I am not able to solve.”—

Prof. MAX MULLER (in a letter to a friend).

“ He who wrote that Book (The Bible) made me.”—

A CHINESE CHRISTIAN.

“ I believe in the Bible because it *finds* me.”—S. T. COLERIDGE.

CHAPTER I.

A NATIONAL GALLERY.

" Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

—HEB. xi. 1-3.

THE eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is to be our theme of study in the following pages, has been called the *Westminster Abbey* of the Bible. Perhaps a more correct designation would be what I have entitled our chapter, *The National Gallery*, of the Hebrew people. I propose therefore that we regard it as such, and imagine ourselves moving along its corridors to contemplate and learn from these ancient portraits, as depicted by the Divine Artist, the Holy Ghost.

Before entering the building, it may be best to consider its perspective and position in the Epistle itself. The theme and message of the letter to the Hebrews is stated in its opening words, " GOD HAS SPOKEN." In the second chapter we are bidden in the most solemn manner to take heed lest we ignore and neglect that utterance. The third chapter repeats the warning to listen to the voice of God the Holy Ghost. The Epistle closes with the same theme, the VOICE OF WORDS (xii. 19), the VOICE OF BLOOD (xii. 24), and the VOICE OF GOD SPEAKING FROM HEAVEN (xii. 25). This voice, this word, this message, this heavenly utterance is no ordinary manner of speech ; for we read, " God hath spoken to us by His SON." " Christ " then, " THE WORD of God " is the theme of our Epistle. Under these circumstances we should naturally have expected the writer to refer us to the life of Christ as depicted in the Gospels, His

birth, death, resurrection, and ascension ; His words, His works, His miracles, and His teaching, His character and His walk with God the Father, His compassion and sympathy with the sorrowing sons of men. We find, however, no such thing. The Holy Ghost takes us back into the Old Testament and shews us Christ the Word, enshrined in type and figure. Through the type He reveals the Anti-type, and listening to the voices of the past, He bids us hear God speaking to us through His Son.

If we were to enquire of any ordinary intelligent Jew brought up in the faith of his fathers, what were the great outstanding features of the Hebrew theocracy, without any hesitation he would reply, "They are seven. (1) Jehovah God, the God of our fathers. (2) Palestine, our national home. (3) Moses, our great lawgiver and leader. (4) The High Priesthood. (5) The Covenant of God given us on Mt. Sinai. (6) The sacrificial system of worship. (7) The Holy Temple, the centre of all our religion and devotion."

If asked further for any other special object of reverence amongst his people, he would at once refer us to the great galaxy of Jewish heroes, and take us with him into the National Gallery, a portion of which is opened for our inspection in the eleventh chapter of our Epistle. What our Jewish friend has just told us, constitutes the framework of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the whole of which is built up upon this very plan. *Chapter i.* speaks to us of Jehovah as God. *Chapter ii.* of Jehovah as Man. *Chapters iii.-iv.* speak to us of their National home, the land of Rest, and of Moses the great leader who led his people thither. *Chapters v.-vii.* tell us of the High Priesthood, not indeed that of Aaron, but of one greater far, Melchisedec, the Priest of the Most High God. In *Chapter viii.* we read

of the New Covenant written upon the heart, in contrast with the old upon tables of stone. *Chapter ix.* reminds of the great sacrificial system, telling us of Blood better than of bulls and goats. In *Chapter x.* we read of the Temple of God, even Christ Jesus, Whose flesh was rent like the temple veil of old, that we might enter the Holy of Holies together with Him our ascended and glorified Lord. "God hath . . . spoken unto us by His Son," the great Antitype of all these Old Testament figures. In them we look and see Christ: through them we listen and hear the voice of God.

Our response to that voice is FAITH. To make it plain to us how vital, and how essential, how spiritual, how practical that response is, we are admitted into the National Gallery, and bidden look at the "great cloud of witnesses," to learn from them, that all they received and learned, and did and suffered and enjoyed, was through the mighty power of faith. This they declare to us, was the way *they* responded to the voice of Jehovah their God. This was the great Dynamic of *their* life.

As we enter then this sacred gallery, a very superficial inspection of the portraits reveals one or two striking facts.

We *first* of all notice that the Divine Artist, has been most careful in the choice of His exhibits. His purpose evidently has been to select portraits, that will illustrate all the various phases, crises, and epochs in Christian experience. At the same time, there is no repetition, no prodigality of material, no duplication of portraiture.

The *second* thing we observe, as we pass along the gallery is the extraordinary accuracy of order and arrangement. All is true to the sequence of spiritual experience. For example, the pictures that confront us at the entrance, speak to us of salvation by faith: we are taught at the

very outset, that before we can act and do and accomplish anything, we have to receive, to be born from above, to enter into life. Before we can obey, we have to trust; that though faith without works is dead, yet working without faith is death doubly distilled. This order, as we shall see, is carefully observed all through the chapter.

The *third* thing that draws our attention, as we look a little closer, is the fact that the portraits are all arranged in pairs, of which one is complementary of the other. The writer presents to us fourteen pictures to illustrate seven experiences or phases in the Christian life, two pictures to each phase. A cursory glance makes this abundantly plain. The first two portraits that face us, as we enter, are those of Abel and Enoch, both illustrative of saving faith, the former in an atoning sacrifice, the latter in a living presence.

The second pair, Noah and Abraham, speaks of Faith's separating power. The former unto death, the latter unto life.

The third pair, Sarah and Abraham, teaches us the secret of the fruitfulness of faith, or the power to propagate life, the former by receiving strength to receive seed, the latter by letting it fall into the ground to die.

The fourth pair, Isaac and Jacob, are both death-bed scenes, the one blessing his sons, the other his grandsons.

The next pair that follows, Joseph and Moses, presents us with a wider purview, the deliverance of a nation, Joseph by remaining in Egypt, Moses by coming out of it.

The sixth pair are both landscapes rather than portraits. One portrays the "passing over" of death, the other a "passing through it."

The seventh are battle scenes, one describing the total destruction of an enemies' stronghold, the other the deliverance of one of its captives.

The Artist would fain continue the portrayal of many others, but space prohibits ; and so the remainder of the chapter suggests rather memorial tablets than full-sized portraits. As however we look and read, we discover faith once more to be the power that enables weak men and women to suffer and die, as well as the dynamic, which empowers them for life and service.

And now before we enter the Gallery, let us stand and read the golden words emblazoned on the lintel and portals of the Building, telling us the function of this strange Dynamic. The definition is Divine. We are told *first* of all that it assures the heart and *secondly* that it satisfies the mind.

I. The Assurance of the Heart.

" Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of facts not seen, for thereby the elders had witness borne to them." (Original Greek.)

" Faith is the substance of things hoped for." The word " substance " is of great interest. The discovery of the Papyri has thrown a flood of light on colloquial Greek ; and we find the word *ὑπόστασις*, translated " substance " in our Authorised Version, was not infrequently used for what we speak of as " title deeds," documents which give an assured guarantee, that what we are expecting to come into our possession, will certainly be ours. We may, of course, hope for all sorts of things, building castles in the air, desiring to become millionaires or kings of commerce ; though there may not be the remotest chance of any such thing. But if we have in our possession the actual title deeds of a property, which at the moment may belong to others, our hope is of a very different order. We have an assurance that eventually the property will pass into our

possession. Such is faith ; it is the assurance that things we hope for and desire, are in reality ours. We have a reason, a real and true reason for our expectations, a ground work or substance, a guarantee that our hope is not mere aerial castle building. We do not wildly hope and passionately desire things, which we have no reasonable expectation of ever receiving or being or doing. Faith in the promises of God presents us with a sure and certain guarantee that what we hope for we shall obtain !

But it is more ; for we read that Faith is " a conviction of facts not seen." Here again the original language is instructive. Whereas in the first clause of our definition the word " things " is expressed by the article and the neuter of the participle " hoped for," in the second clause it is expressed by the word *πραγμάτων*, " facts accomplished." Faith then is a conviction of accomplished facts, even though they are not yet visible to the eye of nature. It is obvious that a faith such as this is a very different thing from the cheap and easy going believism of the present day. No wonder St. Peter calls it " precious " ! No wonder he speaks of it as something " obtained," or received from God ! No wonder he tells us that the double means whereby it was vouchsafed to him was *first* the righteousness of God the Father, " Who is faithful and RIGHTEOUS to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness " (1. John i. 9), and *secondly*, " the righteousness of the Saviour " Who, " if any man sin, is an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the RIGHTEOUS " (1. John ii. 1, 2).

What is it then that faith actually accomplishes ? What are its peculiar and essential functions ? We shall, of course, understand more fully as we listen to the voices of these dead heroes still speaking to us across many mil-

lennia. But ere we enter, we are told this most blessed of all secrets, that true faith assures the heart. "By it," we read, these heroes of old "had witness borne to them." And yet we need to add a further word. Though as we have seen, faith is spoken of as a divine bestowal, yet there has to be the co-operation of the human heart and mind. Just as a seed (to which the Lord Jesus likens faith, Luke xvii. 6), containing the germ and principle of life, cannot operate and fructify without the co-operation of the soil in which it is sown, so faith which is "the gift of God," the work of the Holy Ghost, can only function, when exercised by the heart and mind of its recipient. The heroes whose portraits we are going to view, will all tell us this. Before ever they did and dared, suffered and died for the glory of God, they had witness borne to them by God the Holy Ghost that they were in His will, called, chosen, commissioned to do the thing which they were commanded. The medium whereby this assurance was conveyed to their hearts was faith. They dared to appropriate God's amazing statements and promises; they did not stagger at apparent impossibilities; and as they "closed in with Christ," the Holy Ghost vouchsafed to them the witness from heaven.

Fletcher of Madeley says: "When I stand in unbelief, I am like a drop of muddy water dried up in the sun of temptation, but when *I do believe and close in with Christ*, I am like that same drop of water, lost in a boundless bottomless ocean of light, life, purity, love, and power."

This is the co-operation of the soul that brings the witness. It is this "closing in with Christ," God's Word to the world, that makes it possible for the Holy Ghost to bear witness with our spirit, that we are "children of God," "heirs with Christ," that we are "sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all," that we are

“well pleasing to God,” and that we are in His will, fulfilling the task assigned to us, and so enabled to do exploits for our God. To all these things separately, and generally in sequence does the Divine Spirit bear witness ; if for each and all we will “only believe” in God’s way and order.

2. Satisfaction of the Mind.

“Through faith we UNDERSTAND that the worlds were framed (or readjusted) by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

But faith does more than assure the heart ; it satisfies the mind. Our text runs, “By faith we understand . . .” Thank God, faith is not an emotional subjective experience ; it is an exercise of our rational faculty. The particular truth that faith is said in our text to apprehend is the mystery of creation. The early chapters of Genesis present no perplexing problem to the believing soul. It “understands” by faith that the operation of God’s *creative* power differed fundamentally in *kind* from His power manifested in the forces and processes of evolution which we see going on around us to-day. The Word declares that the works of creation “were finished from the foundation of the world” (Heb. iv. 3), and will never be repeated until that day, when God creates a new heaven and a new earth. The seventh day of rest is still running its course.

As to the processes of the original creation, the inspired Word of God is absolutely silent. Herbert Spencer’s captious objection to what he calls the “Carpenter-like theory of Creation,” which he supposed the Genesis account to teach, is entirely beside the mark, a mere bogey of straw, set up and knocked down to amuse the fool of Psalm xiv. 1.

If the seventh day still running its course, consists of

several millennia, we may well suppose the other six days were of the same duration, especially as the inspired narrator takes the greatest care to use entirely different terminology, in speaking of the natural day and the creation day. The former He calls "day and night," and the latter "evening and morning." In dividing the one into "day and night," he sets the words in that order: while in speaking of the latter as evening and morning, he puts the period of twilight or darkness before that of light or morning. The inspired page then is silent as to the *processes* of Creation. The true believer ventures no theory on the matter; but he does believe that the forces or processes employed in Creation, differed *in kind* from the processes of mutation, development and evolution which we see going on around us to-day.

This the modern theory of evolution rejects, contending that there were no forces or processes in the origination of things, differing *in kind* from those we find in operation to-day.

Why is it that the believing soul finds no difficulty in accepting the narrative of Genesis, as it stands? Surely it is because he has experienced the creative power of God in his own nature. He knows with an assurance that can never be doubted, that the salvation and renewal of his own heart has not been the product of evolution, but rather the result of God's Creative act. He is a "new creature or creation in Christ Jesus." Like David he has cried, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," and when God has answered his cry, he knows that *his* world, the world which "God hath set in his heart" (Eccl. iii. 11), was created anew by the word of God, and is "not made of things that do appear."

It is of this faith in the Creative power of God, that we are going to learn in our National Gallery. The portraits

of these bygone heroes are going to speak to us of this thing, the mighty wonder working power of God.

Faith in God's Creative power was the dynamic of their life, inspiring, impelling, constraining them to receive, and do, and suffer, and die for His glory and the good of mankind. They believed, and believing they watched God at work. They ceased from their own works. To them God was the mighty worker, to Him they gave all the glory. This is the lesson that is hardest for man to learn. But until we do learn it thoroughly in every department of life and service, we disappoint our God and have to repent in dust and ashes, thankful enough if at the end of the road those ashes in which we have repented are not all upon which we have to feed.

Before we cross the threshold, and begin our study of these heroes of faith, I would fain put into the hands of my readers a leaflet written many years ago containing words of counsel, worth their weight in gold, to earnest souls who are seeking to understand experimentally the way of faith :—

“ I am very anxious,” says the writer, “ to guard your minds against those loose ideas of the nature of faith, which represent it as something which gives, as well as takes.

“ There is much confounding of what the old divines call ‘ Legal Repentance,’ an exercise which from the nature of things, precedes faith and prepares for it, with that consecration of soul which follows faith. The former is simply the product of self-love, an earnest desire for deliverance from an evil that threatens our destruction, an act to which we are constrained, not by love, but by law, a very different act in its nature, from that which follows a true faith, wherein by the power received from Him we yield

ourselves wholly and joyfully to God. Though these two acts are inseparable as the two operations, by which we exhale the fetid breath of our own system and inhale the pure air of God's atmosphere ; yet it is a legal gospel which tells you that you can give anything acceptable to God, until you have first received from Him.

“ The disposition to give or consecrate oneself to God is no part of the essence of faith, it is the effect of faith.

“ The very thing you are seeking, the whole thing you are seeking is the *power* to yield yourself wholly to God. There never was an expression which more perfectly contains the pith and substance of the Gospel than the famous one of St. Augustine, ‘ Give what Thou commandest and then command what Thou wilt.’ Under the law we are for ever trying to give something to God as a condition of receiving something from Him. To talk of this as being an exercise of faith and thus a condition of life, when it is so evidently the love which is the fruit of faith, shews a zeal for the law which is not according to knowledge.

“ I am very earnest on this subject ; because this mixing of giving and receiving in the act of faith was my great error for a long period. Nothing is more obstructive to the life of the soul, and nothing that I have ever learned so greatly helps its progress, as to be in this matter so clearly delivered.”

May God use these weighty and golden words to us all, as we enter the National Gallery of God's ancient people to learn from them secrets concerning this great Dynamic of the life and progress of the soul.

And now as we pass within the portals of our chapter, what is it that we expect to see ? Or if I may change the

metaphor somewhat abruptly, what will the pattern of this beautiful mosaic disclose to our attentive study ?

We shall see faith operating in all sorts of places, under all sorts of conditions, achieving all sorts of wonderful results. We shall see it in worship, in the daily walk of life, in the crowded arena of a godless world, in the tent and in the town, at the cradle, and on the dying bed, in the palace and in the cottage. We shall see it on the battlefield and in the beleaguered city, in the terror by night and in the perils of the sea, and in flight from the foe.

We shall learn something of its source and its secrets, its doings and its rewards, its motives and its testings, its visions and its mysteries, we shall discover too the material from which it weaves its beautiful patterns and designs, the righteousness, the faithfulness, the power and love of God, the blood of Christ, His Spirit, and His exceeding great and precious promises, the warp and woof of its wonderful fabric.

We shall discover that the possession of this heavenly talisman is confined to no particular class, or age, or sex, or race. We shall find it in primitive ages in the first martyr, in the earliest saint, in the preacher of righteousness, and the prophet of things to come, in the founder of a race, in a homeless wanderer, in a barren wife, in a heathen harlot, in statesmen and prince, handed down from generation to generation, from grandfather to father, from father to son, from son to grandson, in a general leading his army into battle, in a whole nation migrating to its destined home.

We shall find it to be the dynamic of life indeed, and see it worshipping, walking with God, preaching in the face of obloquy and shame, pitching tents in lowly plains, climbing Pisgah's heights, seeing the Eternal City, beholding things to come, sacrificing all that is dearest, com-

manding blessings from above, comforting the dying, and handing on the torch of revelation to generations to come, seeing far into human destinies, casting aside thrones and pearls and life's brightest flowers, suffering and self-sacrificing, redeeming men and saving a nation, leading conquering armies into battle and capturing the enemies' strongholds, inspiring through the testimony of a single soul and one base and ignoble at that, two millions of God's chosen people.

These are what we shall see in this National Gallery, see and wonder whether in our own unprofitable, fruitless life we know anything about its power at all. May God the Holy Ghost anoint our eyes and prepare our hearts to "profit" by these mysteries, and so find, ere it is too late, that with us too faith can be life's greatest dynamic in this world and in the world to come.

CHAPTERS TWO AND THREE.

The
Dynamic of Salvation

CHAPTER II. ABEL : THE ATONING SACRIFICE.

CHAPTER III. ENOCH : THE ABIDING PRESENCE.

“ The moment I consider Christ and myself as two, I am gone.”—

MARTIN LUTHER.

“ May the powerful grain of faith remove the mountains of remaining unbelief, that you may see things as God sees them. . . . Then you will cry out with St. Paul, ‘ O the depth !’ . . . Then you will take Christ to be your life ; you will become His members by eating His flesh and drinking His blood : you will consider His flesh as your flesh, His bone as your bone, His Spirit as your spirit, His righteousness as your righteousness, His cross as your cross, and His crown (whether of thorns or glory) as your crown ; you will reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through this dear Redeemer. O my friends, let us believe and we shall see, taste and handle the Word of Life.”—

JOHN FLETCHER OF MADELEY.

CHAPTER II.

ABEL : THE ATONING SACRIFICE.

" By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts : and by it he being dead yet speaketh."—HEB. xi. 4.

As we enter the vestibule of this great National Gallery we are confronted with the portraits of two, what to some may seem, almost prehistoric characters, Abel and Enoch. From them we are to learn the great Dynamic of Life—Faith in the Living God. Others that follow will teach us that *Faith* too is the dynamic of holy living ; but in the very dawn of history, and so at the very entrance to our Gallery, we are to learn the secret of that strange mystery—the Soul's New Birth. As I have endeavoured to point out in the opening chapter, the Holy Ghost has grouped the portraits in pairs, each couple giving us the picture of a single truth looked at from two different aspects. The story of Abel tells us of faith in an atoning sacrifice, while that of Enoch speaks of faith in a living presence—Faith in a Crucified and Risen Saviour.

This same double portrayal is given us in the early ministry of the Lord Jesus by the Apostle John. In the third chapter of his gospel, we are shewn that the Work of the SPIRIT is to give life to the soul : the work of the SON to be lifted up upon the Cross : the work of the FATHER to give His only begotten Son to the world. In the fourth chapter, on the other hand, we see that the work of the SPIRIT is to give satisfaction and joy : the work of the SON, to stand, a living Saviour, at the sinner's gate : the work of the FATHER to seek the worship and adoration of the redeemed soul. How blessedly one complements the other ! Such is the full-orbed, satisfying secret of a full salvation.

Our present study, however, is the story of Abel and the results of a living prevailing faith in an atoning sacrifice. Of this great dynamic the sacred writer tells us the three-fold effect.

I. "By Faith Abel offered a Better Sacrifice than Cain."

We may give our imagination a little licence, as we endeavour to recall the tragic scene as depicted in Gen. iv. in the very dawn of human history. We may suppose, as the brothers went forth to present their offerings to their father's God, fully cognisant of the tragedy of Eden, that Abel, the younger, watched with intense earnestness and interest his brother's worship. He saw, what to most observers, would be a perfect offering, the choicest selection of the products of his labour; but as the younger brother looked and waited, he saw no evidence that the offering was accepted. No joy lit up his brother's countenance; there was no evidence of assurance; there was no light in his eye; no song of praise on his lips; no hallelujah on his tongue. All was perfunctory and formal; all was desperately human; there appeared no evidences of divinity, no atmosphere of heaven; no light or fire, or flame from above.

Abel was deeply moved, no doubt, as he observed these things. We are not told, whence Abel learned the reason of his brother's failure, or the secret of his own victorious and satisfying faith. But we do know that "faith cometh by hearing." Did he then betake himself to his sorrowing parents to learn from them why they had substituted the skins of slaughtered beasts for their aprons of fig-leaves? We know not! All that we *do* know, is what happened. And in that happening we can read the movings and exercise of Abel's soul.

He learned, or shall we say, came to understand that God demands not a gift, not an offering of our possessions, not the "labour of our hands." No! the desire and demand of our God is ourselves, "My son, give Me thy heart" is His gracious call. God has made us for Himself. He craves our fellowship and our love. It was here Cain had failed. He had no intention of giving himself wholly and utterly to God. He only gave of his possessions. He merely sought to gain His favour for his own ends. He wanted to make a convenience of Jehovah. He sought that God should be his henchman; he had no intention himself of being the *servant* of the Lord. His only god was himself; and all his concerns centred round that important person. Abel saw through the hollowness, the wickedness and the folly of worship such as this. He wondered no more why there were no evidences of acceptance, no heavenly tokens of joy. And so he set himself to offer his own heart and all its affection to his Maker and his God.

Alas! alas, he had not proceeded far on his quest before he was confronted with two insuperable difficulties: (1) A guilty conscience and (2) A sinful nature.

(a) *A guilty conscience.* What guilt was this? We have no reason to suppose that Abel was a sinner above the ordinary. There is no evidence that, like a prodigal son, he had spent his days in riotous living! No! no! But these are not the only things that constitute guilt; it is not these only that make a man a sinner. Our God forgotten, our Maker ignored, our Father forsaken, our King disowned, the Author of our life and being flouted: our Saviour treated with shame and contempt, the Lord of the universe unrecognised, the Giver of all good things disregarded and unthanked, the Love of the World's great Lover unrequited and disdained,—it is these things that

make even the whitest moralist guilty before God and condemned, utterly eternally condemned by all the laws of His Universe and the unanimous verdict of heaven's jury, the angels and archangels around the Throne.

Abel knew he was guilty. Yes, here was the beginning of his faith. He believed, utterly believed in his own lost, undone condition, and in consequence he knew that the offering of his heart was unacceptable to his Maker.

(b) *A sinful heart.* But a closer examination of himself and all his inward life revealed a deeper need and a greater barrier to a consecration acceptable in God's sight.

He found, alas! an unwillingness to surrender wholly all his claims to self-possession. He discovered a strange misgiving, an ugly mistrust of the goodness of God, a fear that He might require of him more than he was able to perform or willing to yield. He had enough spiritual perception to know that God could accept none but a willing offering. A grudging consent, a forced capitulation were not what God required. And so in addition to his guilt, he realised that entrenched within his nature, was a very citadel of rebellion, a stubborn recalcitrant spirit, born and cradled in hell—inherited from his parents, a fearful legacy from the tragedy of Eden. Every honest soul convicted and illumined by the Divine Spirit acknowledges the truth of this diagnosis. The faith of every saint that has ever lived, has begun at that point. But, thank God, a faith such as this does not leave us there. It points and leads and urges onward to a still further and deeper faith in the willingness, the faithfulness and the power of our God.

Our text tells us that "by faith Abel offered a better sacrifice." There was a constraining, compelling force within his soul that urged him, not merely to understand,

reflect, and talk about these things or make him an orthodox theologian, but rather in desperate need to present and plead and press for its acceptance an offering well-pleasing to a Righteous and Holy God. That constraining, compelling force, we are told, was faith !

As he reflected on the goodness of the Creator, His righteousness and His love, he was increasingly convinced that *with* Him there must be a remedy ; *to* Him there must be a way ; and *from* Him there must be a power to accomplish even the impossible. From his mother he must have learned the gracious promise that one day, born of a woman, should come the Redeemer to bruise the serpent's head, and destroy all his works. From his father he heard too of the covering of their nakedness with skins of beasts slain on sacrificial altars. He was simple enough to believe it all, distressed enough to put his faith to the test ; and so he found within his soul a mighty, driving, persuasive force, compelling him to offer a better sacrifice than that of Cain, his brother. We see him standing at the altar, with bowed head and humbled heart ; we see his hand laid upon the head of the lamb about to be slain, transferring his guilt to the innocent victim ; we watch his lips move in broken confession of his guilt ; and then, as the blood flows and the life ebbs slowly away, he dares to believe that all his guilt has been removed. There is no flippant, easy-going believism, no mere self-complacent orthodoxy, here. Rather is there that spirit which made the Zulu convert say, " The Cross of Christ *condemns* me to become a saint."

But the sacrifice is not yet complete. The greater need is not yet met. There still remains indwelling evil, that strange and fearful bias which in such unnatural fashion made him fear and mistrust and doubt. Reason rebuked it all as foolish and malign ; but it was there all the same.

The mistrust of his *heart* refused to yield to the scorn of his *understanding*. He found it entwined in the fibres of his very being, an evil that baffled every attempt to dislodge it from its stronghold.

But, thank God, his faith failed not ; he saw in its clear and unfailing light, a remedy and a real salvation. With trembling hands he lifted the now lifeless body of the victim, and laid it upon the altar. Once more those hands are laid upon the lamb ; once more he looks heavenward, and once more, as the fire descended and consumed the offering, he dared to believe that the fire of the Holy Ghost would destroy all within him that was displeasing to his God. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God . . . as an offering for sin (R.V.) condemned (to death) sin in the flesh." He learned through faith in the type, the truth of the great antitype ; that not only are we pardoned and justified through the BLOOD of the Lamb, but that we "are sanctified through the offering of the BODY of Jesus Christ" (Heb. x. 10) ; that not only has He "made peace through the BLOOD of His Cross," but "He hath reconciled us in the BODY of His flesh through death, to present us holy and unreprouable in His sight" (Col. i. 20-22) ; that "we are become dead . . . by the BODY of Christ" (Rom. vii. 4) ; that through His slain and broken BODY "the BODY of SIN" in us is "destroyed" (Rom. vi. 6) ; that while "we have *boldness* to enter into the holiest through the BLOOD of Jesus," yet it is through His "flesh," i.e., His broken BODY, we have the *power* to enter there, finding that BODY indeed "a new and LIVING Way," i.e., a way that *moves* us along with itself, as we rest *unmoveable* therein !

The sacred writer now goes on to tell us of the second effect of Abel's faith.

II. "By Faith he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts."

It was this blessed testimony that Abel longed to possess. It was this that he saw was lacking in his brother's worship ; without it there can be no peace of heart, no praise and no thanksgiving : when this is wanting there can be no joy and certainly no outward testimony to others. How can we witness to men, what God has not witnessed to ourselves ? This is the great lack of the Church of Christ. As John Wesley's father lay dying, he called his son to his bedside and said, " The inward witness, John, the inward witness is the proof of Christianity."

The Holy Ghost here tells us two things about it and its working and its nature.

1. *By faith Abel obtained it.* St. John tells us also that " he that believeth hath the witness in himself," not, be it observed, " he that hath the witness believeth." Alas ! how many are looking for the inward witness in the wrong quarter ; they are waiting for some inward assurance of the Spirit before they believe God. They will look for ever in vain. The basis of our faith, the groundwork of our assurance, is the blessed sacrifice of Calvary, historical, concrete, actual—the most wonderful and amazing FACT in the world's history. The Holy Ghost absolutely refuses to vouchsafe to us any inward witness or any assurance, until we fix our eyes, lay our hands, and rest our hearts upon that wondrous offering, confessing with our lips our faith therein. In Abel's case it was faith in God's demand for and provision of a sacrifice for sin, a faith that made him offer it in God's appointed way ; it was this faith that made it possible for God to bestow upon him the witness, that he

was righteous. Both imputed and imparted righteousness were his ! These are the two most blessed gifts of God in Christ Jesus.

The second thing which the Holy Ghost tells us about its nature is :

2. *That God testified of his gifts.* This inward witness was no sentimental matter : it was not something manufactured by his emotions ; it was not an experience to be explained by the laws of psychology. It was a divine endowment : it was something given of God, a supernatural bestowal. God Himself did really testify of his gifts and bear witness that he was righteous. Abel really did have a sense of " peace *with* God " (Rom. v. 1) and a consciousness " of the peace *of* God " (Phil. iv. 7) that the world and no human being in the world could ever give or take away.

As we read the story in Gen. iv. at first sight it would appear that Abel brought only one offering, a sacrifice of blood ; whereas the writer to the Hebrews speaks of more than one. He calls them " Gifts " ; and so as we turn back again to the historian's account, we read, " God had respect to ABEL *and* his offering." We have already seen this to be the case. Abel, after observing the failure of his brother and its cause, realised that God was demanding not an offering or a present, but the presentation of himself and all his faculties of body, soul and spirit.

This was one of his gifts, and the other was the firstling of his flock. One was the sacrifice of blood, the other that " living sacrifice " of which we read in Rom. xii. 1-3. Now it was of these two " gifts " that God testified. It was the testimony vouchsafed concerning these two things that brought assurance to Abel that he was righteous before

God, accounted so through the blood of the Lamb and made so through the sanctifying fire from heaven.

Let us then particularly observe the two things to which the Spirit bears witness.

He first bears witness, as I have already observed, to the sacrifice of Calvary. He concentrates our gaze and our faith upon that. The truth of the blood of Christ is no longer a mere theological dogma or article of creed; it becomes real and vital to the soul. The Cross is a refuge, a very present help in time of trouble and fear and doubt. It is a glorious reality. The Holy Ghost always bears witness to this most precious of all gifts. He assures us that we have peace *with* God, peace through the blood of His Cross. We are expressly told—Acts v. 31, 32—that it is to *these things*, i.e., Christ crucified, exalted to give repentance and remission of sins, that the Holy Ghost bears witness.

Secondly, He bears witness to the offering of ourselves. He lets us know that we are accepted in the Beloved. There is no peace of soul to the man or woman who is content with having given themselves to God. Peace only pervades and fills the spirit when we know that HE HAS ACCEPTED WHAT WE HAVE GIVEN. Here again we are expressly told that the Holy Ghost bears witness with our spirit that we are sons of God, i.e., accepted in Christ Jesus (Rom. viii. 16).

And that assurance that He has accepted the gift of ourselves is granted only to the believing soul. We *must* believe. The basis and groundwork of that faith is told us in Gal. ii. 20, where we *ourselves* and not merely our sins, are said to be crucified with Christ. "God forbid," says the Apostle Paul elsewhere, "that I should glory save in the Cross (not whereby I have been pardoned and forgiven,

though that of course is blessedly true, but) whereby I have been crucified with Christ." That is the altar that sanctifies the gift and makes it acceptable to a Holy God. Thank God that death and deliverance come experimentally to our souls, not through *our* sufferings or struggles or resolutions or consecrations, but through the broken body of the suffering Son of God, whereby we are sanctified and so accepted of God in Christ. The Holy Ghost bears witness *when* we believe, *as* we believe and *while* we believe. This witness of the Holy Ghost is clearly stated to be through the written Word (Heb. x. 15, 16) and therefore necessarily received by faith.

An old writer puts it thus :—

" It is the blood of Jesus alone that cleanseth from all sin ; not penal sufferings ; not mortifications of any sort ; not anything that we have ; not grace already received ; not anything we are or can be ; not death or purgatory ; no, not the purgatory of all our doings and sufferings and strivings put together. No, no ! Christ is the procuring meritorious cause of all our salvation. He alone forgiveth sins and He alone cleanseth from all our unrighteousness. *Faith is the only condition and shares in the omnipotence it dares to trust.*"

III. The third effect of Abel's faith declared to us by the sacred writer is :—

"By Faith he being dead yet speaketh."

How we may thank God that it is his faith that speaks, and not his martyrdom, faith in the blood of the Lamb and not in his own. We cannot all be martyrs ; and though his own blood did speak and cry to God for vengeance, yet the blood of the lamb which he slew and

offered, speaks better things than that. By his faith he still speaks to anxious, weary, sinful souls. Abel's life subsequent to the great event of which we are thinking, was brief indeed, a few hours or at most a few days ! It would seem a life thrown away. There was no opportunity for Abel to show forth in his life the fruits of the grace which he had received ; and yet that short life, crowned with martyrdom, has spoken to millions of souls through the ages ; and together through all eternity we shall commune with the world's first martyr of God's most gracious ways.

With heart overflowing with joy, a deep abiding peace in his spirit, his lips bursting forth in song, a radiance upon his face, he hastens to tell his brother the glad news. We read that " Cain talked with Abel his brother," not of the crops, or the weather, we may be sure. There could be only one theme that day. To Cain the Pharisee such exuberance of spirit, such joy and happiness was an abomination. Like thousands of his brood all down through the ages he found murder in his heart, and decoying his victim into the fields, with one swift blow of his dagger, silenced for ever, as he thought, the witness to the atoning blood. Thank God, he was mistaken. Abel's FAITH still speaks ; it still tells us that it brings peace and joy to the soul. Yea, and much more, it brings courage to witness to a hostile hating world, and power to lay down our very life in defence of the glorious truth of God's uttermost salvation.

Is this only a tale of the past ? I will let another Oriental tell his story. The Divine Spirit moves still as He did 6,000 years ago. The paths are still the same. The way, the remedy and the power are available for all who will only believe. Our friend, whose testimony I quote, I have known intimately for nearly thirty-five years.

After witnessing a remarkable moving of the Spirit of God among some of his friends, he says :—

“ . . . I retired silently that night, went to bed, and when I woke up at four o'clock in the morning I found a Japanese friend was praying by my bedside. He seems to have been all through the night, and he was just, as it were, breathing the Breath of the Holy Spirit. I went out of my room, and went to pray on Castle Hill. I was entirely broken down, melted to tears. There I found my heart and sought a blessing. But I found tears and confession were not real blessing. A broken heart is not salvation. No substantial reality was left. After several hours' earnest and humble praying I was again disappointed, but still expecting to get a sure blessing, from Himself, I determined to get it by consecration and fasting, deciding not to come down until I got it, whatever the cost might be. I went up the mountain, putting off my shoes, falling on my face, bringing everything into His presence. I was waiting to get some sure answer, to be accepted permanently by Him. I waited from two o'clock in the afternoon till eleven o'clock at night, taking no food from the day before that. I could not get an answer. One moment I had given up my all upon the altar, and another moment came back to myself, and no separation and no change. I repeated it again and again, but tried in vain. I was weary and exhausted, and tempted to come down. However I heard a clear voice and got a sure answer : ' Therefore Christ offered Himself, and died for you.' As you cannot give up yourself He became a substitute, perfect and acceptable unto Him. In Him and by Him I shall be accepted, and I am accepted. It was so simple, and it seemed to me too simple, to take hold and to satisfy an answer to such long expectations. But it was clear to me, a very personal talk from heaven. I could not get further light, so I firmly grasped by naked faith and without any feeling, and came

down back to my home. But it was a wonderful grace. When I woke up next morning, bright sunshine filled my room and my heart was filled with heavenly light He gave me power too to confess all my sins ; and when I obeyed and opened my secret heart, confessing my sins to man as well as to God, the Holy Ghost came in with wonderful power. That night His presence overwhelmed me, my very body seemed broken and my bones out of joint. His wondrous love overflowed me. His consolations entered the inward depths of my being. Yes; I had grieved Him by my treacherous heart during so many years, but He finally got the victory over me. Since that hour I am being kept in Him and in His holiness."

So truly is Faith the dynamic of life to the soul of man whether 4,000 B.C. or 2,000 A.D. Laus Deo.

CHAPTER III.

ENOCH : THE ABIDING PRESENCE.

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death ; and was not found, because God had translated him : for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him : for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

—HEB. xi. 5, 6.

THE second portrait in this great picture gallery of the world's early saints is that of Enoch. The Holy Ghost, selecting as He does from so large a galaxy of heroes, is not only careful in His choice, but takes the greatest pains in the arrangement of His pictures. It is right that at the very entrance of the gallery, we should find Abel's altar and his grave. Faith in the Blood of the Lamb is the very A.B.C. of Christian experience, and yet Faith in a Crucified Saviour is only efficacious, because He is no more either on the Cross or in the Tomb. Hence the story of Enoch follows. Enoch then introduces us to a faith in a Living Presence, a risen Lord, with Whom we can walk and talk, till He calls us to be with Him for ever. As I have already pointed out, these two portraits make a complete whole, presenting us with a picture of a perfect saving faith,—faith in both a crucified and a living Saviour. The position too of the portraits is all in order. Later on we shall read of heroes who *did* things ; we shall learn of a faith that constrains to *action*. But here at the very door of our Westminster Abbey, we are asked to read the memorials of men whose faith was receptive rather than active. The emphasis is not on their doing but their receiving. This surely is true to all Christian experience. Till we have *received*, we can *do* nothing acceptable to God. The attempt to do and toil and labour and suffer for Christ and His

Kingdom before receiving the gift of Eternal Life and assurance of peace and favour with God, leads only to sackcloth and ashes, and finally to the sorrow of the world that worketh death. We are not told very much of this prehistoric saint in the pages of Scripture : but a careful reading of the gathered fragments, wherein his name appears, reveals more than at first sight appears.

First, we may speak of his times. There can be no doubt that they were very evil days, and though the deluge in the time of his great-grandson was "many days hence," the universal wickedness and appalling violence (as described in Gen. vi.) of that period could not have been the product of a day or a decade or even a century. In Enoch's age the rottenness of society had already begun. He was a contemporary of Lamech, the Cainite (see chap. iv. 19-24) ; and from that narrative we learn that society was in an evil case. Polygamy was already practised. The influence of women was considerable. Naamah (her name means Beauty), the sister of Tubal Cain, is especially mentioned as evidently a conspicuous figure in society. Women are not mentioned in genealogies. Hence there must be some reason for making an exception in her case. Her beauty was remarkable ; and the Rabbins have given free play to their imagination in the stories they have invented concerning her. The short narrative describes the advance in agriculture, metallurgy, and music ; and then follows a poem, sample of the literature of the day. It is a lyric in praise of ferocity. It is distinctly vigorous in style and marked by the parallelism which became the distinguishing feature of Hebrew poetry. In it Cain's sin of murder is spoken of, not as a sin to be ashamed of, but as a deed of ancient heroism, not comparable, however, with the glory of Lamech, whose wrath shall be tenfold. With this

boastful poem in praise of armed violence and bloodshed, joined with indications of luxury and a life of pleasure, closes the only passage of Scripture which gives us any actual information as to the state of society in which Enoch lived ; but it is enough for our purpose. He lived and moved in evil times.

The *next* thing we learn about this man of God, is that he was neither mystic or monk. Though he walked with God he walked among men. We read that he begat sons and daughters. He was an ordinary, social, human being. He bore the responsibilities, anxieties and cares of husband, father and citizen. He lived a normal life. He was a pattern of holy living among ordinary people. He did not shut himself away from the haunts of men, and yet we read, " He walked with God and pleased Him," and thus became the model for all time of those who shall be counted worthy to escape the tribulation that is to come to pass on the earth, and to stand before the Son of Man. He was translated that he should not see death, like Elijah of later days, like the Lord Jesus Himself (after He had tasted death for every man), and like those members of Christ's bride and body, the Church, who are ready and waiting for His Coming again.

The *third* thing we learn about this man of God is that he was a seer of things to come. Even in those primitive days, there seems to have been the clearest vision of the Coming of Christ. The Apostle Jude tells us of his knowledge of these things, and how he prophesied to the people of his day. " Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints." So close and intimate was his walk with God that he had knowledge of the secret things which belong only unto Him. As the Apocrypha tells us, " On the earth was no man created like Enoch " (Eccl. xlix. 14).

The *fourth* aspect that we get from the Scriptures of his striking portrait, is that he was a fearless preacher of a judgment to come. Did Noah, that great "preacher of righteousness," inherit from his forbear this great legacy of Evangelism? We know not. But we do know that Enoch thundered in his day and generation against the wickedness of his age. Of that wickedness I have already spoken. A careful reading of Jude's Epistle reveals more fully how desperate it was. In Jude 14 we read, "And Enoch also prophesied TO THESE . . ." (R.V.) Who "THESE" were, is told us in the preceding verses,—men self-righteous and cruel as Cain; covetous and unscrupulous as Balaam; ambitious and vain-glorious as Korah; "brutes without reason"; "sunken rocks that appear not"; "shepherds without fear"; "clouds without water"; "trees without fruit"; "waves without shame"; "stars without direction"—a desperately apostate people. Their special sin, and so the special subject of his preaching, was their "defiance of God." Six times over the word "ungodly" occurs in Jude's short letter (verses 4, 15, 18: "ungodly men," "ungodly," "ungodly deeds," "ungodly action," "ungodly speeches," "ungodly lusts"). We may be sure that Enoch's life was no path of roses. Like all true prophets of God, that rebuke the sins of their age and seek to turn men to righteousness, he must have had his share of calumny and reproach, opposition and persecution, bitter, blatant and unrelenting. God does not treat or lead all His saints alike. In Abel's case faith resulted in a martyr's death; in Enoch's case, a glorious translation, an escape from "the sorrows of the grave." He delivered Elijah *from* the clutches of a cruel Jezebel, but leaves John the Baptist *in* her hand. He suffered James to be brought from prison to the scaffold, while Peter He passes from the

prison to a home of prayer and praise. Thank God, He giveth grace to bear whatsoever He shall appoint !

And now we turn to our text, Heb. xi. 5. Here we learn three things about the patriarch Enoch :—

1. That it was on account of his faith that he was translated so as not to see or taste of death.

2. That before his translation, God bore witness of that faith telling him that it was well pleasing in His sight.

3. That this disposition of soul, this spirit of faith meant (a) An acceptance of God's invitation. (b) A believing in God's unchanging presence ; and (c) A conviction of His abundant willingness to reward all who will diligently seek Him.

I. "By Faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death."

I am well aware that Enoch, like Abel before him and Noah who follows, is a type of the Lord Jesus. In these studies, however, we are not considering that aspect of their portraits. Our concern is rather with them as men of like passions with ourselves, and so as patterns for every true believer.

Here at the very entrance to the Gallery in which we are to study various phases, crises and epochs of the Christian life, we are directed to the final *dénouement*, the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour.

Enoch, whose message and ministry was full of this theme, himself shared "as one out of due time" in the destiny reserved for us, who in this later day, are looking forward to His coming. Through his story, however, our attention is directed to one thing only, viz., that preparation of heart, which alone can qualify us for having any

part in the first resurrection. We learn what to a casual reader, must come as a surprise, that the sole qualification is Faith.

In turning back to the original narrative in the book of Genesis, we come to rather a different understanding. There we gather that it was his walk with God, his communion and fellowship with Him, that made his translation possible.

And yet there is no disagreement in the two accounts. For here in the Epistle to the Hebrews we are simply told that the secret of the fellowship was a life of faith.

A word of warning must not be considered as out of place. In speaking of faith as the sole qualification for a participation in the rapture of the Church, this certainly cannot mean the mere holding of orthodox views as to eschatological events ; for it seems lamentably certain that many who, like the five foolish virgins, " go forth " to meet the bridegroom in orthodox expectation of His coming, will, alas ! have to hear from behind the closed portal, " I know you not."

Nor can it mean a determined belief that it shall be so. If only we believe determinedly enough that the Lord will take us hence, irrespective of our walk with Himself and life of communion and inward holiness, the thing will be, is a dangerous proposition ; and its error is here counteracted by unfolding the kind of faith which God requires of His waiting people. A life of faith then, a life of fellowship and communion with God, a walking in the Spirit, these are the things that prepare the soul for that glorious event, the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Though we are told nothing whatever in detail about Enoch's walk with God, and His fellowship with Him, the following remarks on this deeply important theme must not be

considered as a digression. The Scripture in unfolding a life of communion with God, speaks of three distinct experiences :—

Fellowship with the Father (I. John i. 3).

Fellowship with the Son (I. Cor. i. 9).

Fellowship with the Holy Ghost (Phil. ii. 1 ; II. Cor. xiii. 14).

Many of God's choicest saints have borne testimony, that in their own life, communion with each person of the Trinity as a distinct and separate experience has been both real and definite and clear.

Fellowship and communion presuppose a common interest ; " Can two walk together except they be agreed," agreed in the direction they take, the goal to which they are going, the topics of their conversation, in the purpose of their journey, in the interest of mind and heart ? Can man walk with God on any other conditions ?

Fellowship with the Father. Need we be in any doubt as to the consuming, passionate interest in the Father's heart round which all communion with Him must centre ? Verily nay ! The object of His love, the One in Whom He delights, the glory of heaven, the joy of His heart, the cynosure of every eye among angels and archangels, can be none other than Christ Jesus. All fellowship with the Father must centre round the Son of God. The theme of St. John's Epistle is fellowship with God and the glory of that theme is the " Son." In no other portion of Scripture does this title of the Lord appear with such frequency. Fellowship then with the Father apart from the Son is unthinkable.

Fellowship with the Son. In what does the world's Redeemer take delight ? What is the theme upon which He would fain commune with His own ? There can be but

one answer, His Father. This was all His delight and joy when upon earth. He came to reveal His Father's love, His glory, His will, His way. It was the Father that sent Him, it was He that taught and led, upheld and empowered Him, and it was He that gave Him words to utter and works to do. The first recorded word of the Lord Jesus was "My Father's business." The last recorded word upon the Cross was "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." The first recorded word after His resurrection was, "I am not yet ascended to My Father. . . . I ascend to My Father and your Father." The last recorded word to His disciples as He left them, "It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." Communion then with the Son of God will ever centre round His and our Father ; His glory, His will, His word, His way, His power must ever be the one consuming interest between us, as we walk together along the highway of Holiness.

Fellowship with the Holy Ghost. For nearly two millennia the Holy Ghost has been absent from heaven. He has come down to earth to dwell among the sons of men. Of what shall we commune with Him ? The burden of the Spirit is the salvation of sinners and the sanctification of the Church of Christ. This is His task, this is His burden, this His delight. For what else doth He care, save to glorify the Father and the Son in the salvation of men and preparing the saved ones for that glorious day when Christ shall come again, when sin and pain and death shall be no more, and God shall be All in all.

The saving of men, is this too our delight ? The sanctification of the people of God, is this our joy ? That God the Father and God the Son shall be adored and glorified, praised and trusted, satisfied with and magnified among

the sons of men, is this the desire and ambition of our hearts? Then fellowship with God the Holy Ghost will be our daily portion, yea, our very life. What its secrets are, the story of Enoch discloses to all who will read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest his life and testimony.

“By faith Enoch walked with God.” This faith has been described by Charles Finney as “affectionate confidence in God.” Is there any flower in God’s garden more beautiful than this? Is there any fragrance on Life’s highway of sweeter perfume? Yes, this is the greatest thing on earth. All things are possible to him that can believe in this fashion. This is the mysterious, sweetening grace that prepares us for the Coming Again of our Lord and Master. It should be the supreme aim and object of our life, to increase and abound in this blessedness. To quote the words of William Bramwell:—

“Here the world, the noise of self, all is gone: and the mind bears the full stamp of God’s image. Here you talk and walk and live, doing all in Him and to Him. Continual prayer and turning all into Christ in every house, in every company, all things by Him, from Him and to Him.”

II. “By Faith . . . he had this testimony that he pleased God.”

We have described faith as an “affectionate confidence in God.” Of this we read, God gave His testimony, that it was well pleasing in His sight. And such a faith as this carries its own testimony with it. If toward any one we have an “affectionate confidence,” we are thereby assured of its acceptability.

This testimony of God vouchsafed to our soul that we please Him, is a testimony to our faith, for without it, we cannot please Him. This ability to believe, this deliverance

from all fear, mistrust and suspicion, is heaven below. William Bramwell, quoted above, writing to another friend, in speaking of faith such as this says :—

“ I have for some months been labouring to attain that point. . . . The Lord has given me this blessing. I now feel the full effect of that passage, ‘ He dwells in God and God in him.’ . . . I grieve but it is in God, I rejoice but it is in God. I speak but I find it is God. I am tempted much but unmoved in God. When you receive this cup of salvation, the effect will be the clamour of self is over : the slavish fear of being nothing is over : the soul keeps its place in God. It is ready for all that can come upon it. It bears, it thinks no evil ! O this heaven of God’s presence ! this opening into glory ! This weeping over a lost world ! This being willing to lay down your life for the Church ; God is all. . . . Here the noise of self, of the world, and of the devil is over. All is burning, all is rest, yet all is calm within. The eye is fixed, the soul established, the tongue loosed, and all in the Spirit. Here the Lord teaches and the Lord supplies continually. Amen.”

A testimony such as this, exactly describes fellowship with God. All the features of communion with Father, Son and Holy Ghost are depicted there. And the secret of it all, is that “ affectionate confidence ” in the Lord purifying the heart and ushering in the Holy Ghost to the innermost sanctuary of the soul.

III. “ He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.”

I have already observed that in Enoch’s case, we are told nothing in detail of his walk and fellowship with God. We know that its source and secret was faith ; this faith

I have attempted to portray ; but in the passage before us, we are told merely of its initial stages, the rendezvous, or God's appointed meeting place, the conditions under which a life of fellowship begins. And this is perhaps all we need to know ; because a life of communion is merely the continued maintenance of these initial principles and conditions. "As we have received Christ Jesus, so we are to walk in Him." If we know the way *to* Him, then we know also the way to walk *with* Him.

These initial principles, these beginnings of a life of faith, are described as (1) An acceptance of God's invitation ; (2) A belief in His unchanging presence ; and (3) An assurance that He is abundantly willing to reward those that seek Him. These we may now consider.

1. *The acceptance of God's invitation.*

"He that cometh to God" are the exact words employed to express this initial experience. What music is in that simple word, COME ! It is the very marrow of the message. If "All have sinned" is the *A*, and "Behold the Lamb of God" is the *B*, then certainly "Come unto Me" is the *C* of Christ's Gospel. The words are plain ; it is not "he that is *dragged* or *driven* Godward," but he that has heard the gracious Call, "Faithful is He that CALLETH you, Who also will do it," and has responded thereto. It is true that in a perusal of the Gospels we find the Saviour saying "Go" as often as He said "Come" ; and if our "Coming" to Him does not result in a "going" to "tell our brethren what great things He hath done" ; a going "into all the world to preach to every creature" ; a going "first to be reconciled to our brother" ; a going back "to sell all that we have and give" ; a going "into the highways and hedges to compel the people to come in," we may begin to doubt if we have truly responded to His gracious invitation

at all. That is certainly so ; but on the other hand, before we attempt to go forth on our life's mission, let us be assured that we have COME unto our God. Alas ! how often are we content with sending messages and gifts, requests and supplications, telegraphic and telephonic despatches urgent in their demands for needed supplies, and blessings, but have never yet " Come," i.e., have never brought our *selves* in all our pride and sin, self-will and self-pleasing, our weakness and waywardness, our laziness and lukewarmness unto Him Who still calls. We believe not in His *call* ; in so far as we are religious at all, we are legal still. We can hear only *commands*, echoes of Sinai ; we have never exercised a faith responsive to the *call* of Him Who must be the Friend of sinners before He can be their Saviour.

In the eighteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel is recounted the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. Immediately following it we read of the Lord Jesus meeting them both in real life, " The young ruler " and " Zacchæus " respectively. To the former He said " Go," to the latter He said " Come." What a wealth of instruction there is for us here ! To the Pharisee who supposed he needed but a little further instruction on the Way of Life, answering a fool according to his folly, the Saviour bids him " go " and " do." How swiftly did he discover to be true, what he faintly heard the Master telling His disciples, as he turned on his heel, that with man it was impossible for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. To the Publican who, though rich in this world's goods, was poor enough in spirit and in righteousness, but who, thank God, *knew* it only too well, the Saviour cries, " Come, come down," and I will enter not only your home but your heart. In a moment the miracle was wrought !—a rich man was saved ! That

which was impossible "with man" was easy enough when God took the case in hand. Whereas the Pharisee went away sad at heart, tightening his purse-strings as he went, the other hastened home, rejoicing in spirit, to write cheques, sell his stocks and shares, and dispose of his luxurious home that he might give to the poor and so lay up treasure in heaven.

In his walk with God, Enoch began at God's appointed meeting place; he came, he brought himself, every part of that self, good, bad, and indifferent, to God's *rendezvous*. He came to take upon him the divine yoke, that thing which bound him to his Lord, so that he could not go astray or start aside to bye-path meadow. 'Twas thus his walk with God began. He believed utterly, wholeheartedly in the gracious call of the Lord of hosts, and believing he came and proved and praised: he came, he saw and *was* conquered!

2. *Faith in His unchanging Presence.*

"Must believe that He is" are the actual words of our text, which the Holy Ghost employs to express the second phase in Enoch's faith. If coming to God is the *work* of Faith, Faith in His Presence is its *rest*. That presence is a never changing, ever abiding reality. "I AM" was the great synonym of Jehovah. He that cometh to God must believe that He IS. It is a categorical Imperative; he *must* believe, that is to say, if he is to please God. To that little word IS, we may add what we please,—gracious, long-suffering, slow to anger, plenteous in mercy, faithful, willing, Almighty to save. We may, nay, we must add more. Regarding it as the expression of the ever present tense, we "*must believe*" that if we have come just as we are to His appointed place, He IS receiving, IS forgiving, IS cleansing, IS filling, IS fulfilling His promise; that He

is doing it now at this very moment. His working is an ever present reality. Alas! how few ever get to this place! They are ready enough to believe that God will at some time, in some way and somewhere do these things and be all to their needy souls, but that "God IS," alas! no.

John Wesley, writing on the theme of "*Entire Sanctification*," speaks thus:—

"... Look for it then every day, every hour, every moment. Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it now, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works you want something to be done first, before you are sanctified. You think, 'I must first be or do thus or thus.' Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith you may expect it as you are: and, if as you are, then expect it now. It is of importance to observe that there is an inseparable connection between these three points—expect it by faith; expect it as you are; and expect it now. To deny one of these is to deny them all. Do you believe we are sanctified by faith? Be true then to your principle and look for this blessing just as you are, neither better nor worse, as a poor sinner that has nothing to pay, nothing to plead, but 'Christ died.' And if you look for it as you are, then expect it now. Stay for nothing. Why should you? Christ IS ready and He IS all you want. He IS waiting for you: He IS at the door."

3. Assurance in His abundant willingness to reward those who diligently seek Him.

"Must believe that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

Enoch went to the *rendezvous* and though there was no visible sign of the Presence of God, he *did* believe that He

was there. He said to his own questioning heart, "God IS. Yes, He IS here according to His promise, though I see Him not"; but he was not content with that. He dared to believe that the hidden, unrevealed Presence, a Presence which he never doubted, would be revealed if only he sought diligently with all his heart. We need to observe with care, however, that he did not seek as though the Presence was not already there. He recognised it as there, though not yet revealed to his consciousness. Many, alas! seek, but do not believe! A still larger number believe, but will not take the trouble to seek. They rest in an easy-going, cheap and shallow believism, and so they never find, and they never, never "walk with God." A victorious triumphant faith, a faith that pleases God, is that attitude of soul that *comes* obedient to the CALL, dares to *believe* that GOD IS, and then believingly *seeks* to be rewarded by a manifestation of that PRESENCE.

As we would beware of seeking without believing, so let us beware of believing without seeking,—seeking Him, the Lord Himself; and in this our search for Him, oh! let us pay attention to the secret in our text. "We *must* believe that He is a REWARDER," that He *desires* to reward. This is His essential nature. Our business is not to persuade an unwilling God, but to believe in His abundant willingness. He is far more desirous of rewarding His servant than we are to be rewarded. How often our faith is centred on our own earnest desire and passionate seeking, rather than upon the longing of our God to bestow. A clear apprehension of this principle puts a courage, hope and determination into the seeking of His face. "We *must* believe that He is a REWARDER." These are the blessed secrets in our search for the Lord HIMSELF. These are the things in which God takes delight. These are the things

that make a walk with God possible ; and these are the things that will ensure a translation to be for ever with the Lord.

And now, in conclusion, a word of re-emphasis. I have pointed out that in the story of Enoch we are only told of faith's initial stages and have said this is enough for us to know. Yes, enough if we remember the lesson which a great saint has expressed for us in a few simple, yet luminous words. Writing of that faith which purifies the heart and keeps it filled with the Holy Ghost, he says :—

“ Never expect your Heavenly Father to keep His covenant except *on the ground of your acts of faith*. This faith must be like a pendulum of a clock, it must keep moving, to put the whole soul in motion. And as your faith increases, you will mount up more quickly, run faster, labour more, love more, rejoice more, and drink the cup with greater cheerfulness. . . . I never had more pleasant walks by faith in the heavenly country. I see the company and I live amongst them : for we are come to an innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect.”

William Carvosso, the old Cornish farmer saint, expresses the same truth when, in his quaint style, he says :—

“ I see I must cast myself upon Christ moment by moment, in order to make any progress in the divine life. One act of faith will give me a lift, but one act of faith will not do ! . . . The Lord has been showing me of late that as I cannot live by one act of inspiration or breath, but must breathe on and draw the electric vital fire into my lungs together with the air, so must I believe on and on and draw into my soul the divine fire of Jesus' love, together with the truth of the Gospel.”

As we have begun, so are we to continue. As we have

found, so we shall continue to find. As we have met the Lord, so shall we continue to walk with Him.

Let us gaze awhile at these two portraits of Heaven's heroes. Through faith they received each a witness from on high,—Abel that he was righteous before God, and Enoch that he walked with Him in white, well pleasing in His sight. The portraits in our Gallery that follow will teach us other things. We shall see faith as a mighty driving force, compelling to action and the accomplishment of great deeds and wonderful achievements ; but here, as we start, let us linger awhile in the vestibule of Christian experience ; and learn afresh secrets that are fundamental, and without the knowledge of which we can never in life accomplish anything capable of standing the test of that fire, which is going to try every man's work of what sort it is.

Again, I would call witnesses that are still living and can tell us that the God of Enoch is their God, and that the first principles of faith whereby he found God as a rewarder of them that seek, are the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. One, a Japanese lady whom I have known for twenty-five years, and who has walked with God, sent me only a week ago an account of her conversion. The story is so striking and so exactly illustrates the faith of which we are speaking, i.e., coming to God, believing that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek, that I cannot but translate and subscribe it here. She says :—

“ Until I reached the age of eighteen, I was full of life and spirit, and thought I could do anything I wanted to, in my own strength and wisdom ! At the age of nineteen, however, I began to see something of the state of this world. It appeared to me pitiless,

cruel, hypocritical, and full of uncleanness. I found myself plunging into a state of awful pessimism. As I drew near the marriageable age, I felt utterly unwilling and disinclined to begin the responsibility of married life and decided to remain single. I had left my mother's care when quite a child. I had heard of people leading secluded lives, away from the world, and living a pure life. This was brought to my mind with renewed force: and I began to enquire about the possibility of becoming a Buddhist nun.

"It was not long, however, before I had a serious nervous breakdown. My father and relations were deeply concerned about my state, and urged my brother and sisters and acquaintances to encourage me all they could.

"I had a friend in a neighbouring village who, after enquiring the cause of my melancholy, gave me a small book to read. I think it cost about twopence. It was a New Testament. I began to read it eagerly and sincerely, and my heart was considerably lightened. I had no real friend in this world but, as I read, it seemed as if there were the possibility of having One.

"One day my father, in great distress at my condition, went away into the mountains for a change of environment to see if he could get rid of his burden. Coming to meet him from the opposite direction, he saw Mr. M., a Christian pastor with whom he had a slight acquaintance. After exchanging greetings, he unburdened his heart and told him he had no one in whom he could confide and no one to help him. He had not met Mr. M. for so long that he had forgotten all about him. He now realised that this meeting with him was not a mere accident but 'guidance from heaven,' as he put it (he knew nothing of Christianity). He asked Mr. M. to visit me, but on no account to say he had been requested by him to do so.

"Mr. M., before they parted, prayed by the roadside for guidance, grace and wisdom. From that day he

came to see me from time to time, and had several talks. I continued reading my New Testament. Up till now the book had been a source of comfort and encouragement. It now began to condemn me and almost crush the life out of me! Imperfect as I was I thought up to now that I was righteous, and despised everyone else. I now saw the contrary, and was in utter despair. I finally decided to take my life, wondering how I could do it without causing trouble and inconvenience to my friends. I was now twenty years old. On April 26th of that year, in the evening I went to the river running not far from our house, and stood looking at the waters rushing past. As I stood there reflecting on death, suddenly a ray of light penetrated my soul. 'There is a world to come! The soul never dies! It must stand naked before the judgment seat!' While reflecting thus, I felt I could not die, and yet I could not live. Suddenly I heard voices of my two sisters calling me, and I returned home with them.

"Some little time previously I had read a striking tract written by Mr. Loomis, of the American Bible Society. The gist of it was as follows. During the Japan-China War a number of Chinese prisoners of war were quartered in Hiroshima. Mr. Loomis obtained permission to visit them with testaments and tracts. Among them was a Chinese officer, who had no use or time for literature of that kind. Shortly afterwards, however, he was court-martialled for some crime committed in barracks, and was condemned to death. When face to face with death, he began to pray somewhat as follows: 'Oh! God, if there is a God, please send Mr. Loomis again to this prison that I may learn the way of peace. If, in answer to this prayer, he does visit me I shall know that Thou art a living God, and I will accept everything he says as from Thee.'"

"That night in a dream Mr. Loomis saw the face

of this officer. It was so vivid and real that he feared something had happened to him. He hastened to Hiroshima to enquire, and was surprised and relieved to find him in good health. The officer, filled with amazement and gratitude, told him his story, and Mr. Loomis led him to Christ. Through the official in charge seeing and hearing the whole scene, his execution was postponed one day, then three days, then a week, then a month and later, six months. Finally, he was reprieved altogether. After peace was declared he went back to China and became a preacher of the Gospel. I was now once more deeply impressed with this story and so utterly in despair that I decided to do the same. I prayed, 'Oh! God, if thou art God, please send me once more Mr. M. to show me the way of peace, and I too shall know Thou art a living God, and will accept all that he tells me as from Thee.'

"That evening, as it was getting dusk, sitting in the window with, I am ashamed to say, only a scrap of faith in my heart that my prayer would be answered, I saw Mr. M. approaching the gateway of our home. I rushed to meet him. He seemed surprised to see me, and said, 'Last night I saw you in a dream. So vivid was the apparition that I felt assured that something had happened to you. My wife urged me to come to-day and see. I have only been able to get here at this late hour.'

"You may imagine my delight in realising that God had really heard my cry. I listened with open heart and mind to what the pastor had to say, and took it all as from God Himself. From that hour, all my twenty years of sin and despair were erased from the book of His remembrance. All my debts were cancelled. I entered into the peace that passeth all understanding, and could only cry out in the words of the Psalmist: 'Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who

forgiveth all thine iniquities ; Who healeth all thy diseases ; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; and crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercy.' ”

Oh ! how willing is God to reward them that diligently seek Him. Here, in the story I have narrated, were two heathen souls utterly unacquainted with God or His ways, yet when led of the Spirit (and that all unknowingly) to fulfil the threefold condition that Enoch fulfilled long ago, they too sought and found and learned the secret, not only of turning to Him and finding life eternal, but of walking with Him in righteousness and holiness all the days of their life.

CHAPTERS FOUR AND FIVE.

The
Dynamic of Separation

CHAPTER IV. NOAH: THE DIVINE WRATH.

CHAPTER V. ABRAHAM: THE DIVINE CITY.

“ It was not by interceding for the world in glory that Christ saved it. He gave Himself. Our prayers for the evangelisation of the world are but a bitter irony, as long as we only give what costs us nothing, and draw back before the sacrifice of ourselves.”—FRANCIS COILLARD.

Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest, to give and not count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not seek for rest, to labour and not ask for any reward, save that of knowing we do Thy will. For Thou, O Lord, art worthy !
Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

NOAH : THE DIVINE WRATH.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."—HEB. xi. 7.

As I have already endeavoured to point out in the introductory chapter of this volume, the Holy Ghost through the inspired penman has not only made a most careful selection from the many national heroes to illustrate the various phases, crises and epochs in Christian experience, but has grouped the portraits in pairs, each couple portraying a double aspect of a single truth. We have already seen this exemplified in the first two.

Our second pair, the portraits of Noah and Abraham, are no exception to this order. The portrayal of Saving Grace (Abel and Enoch) is followed by that of Separating Power (Noah and Abraham). And of these worthies one is separated from the world unto its destruction, the other is separated therefrom to lay the foundations of a new and mighty people. Mere separation in itself may be nought but Pharisaism, as that word in itself connotes. Nor is Pharisaism confined to the monk and the ritualist. Alas ! we may be good (?) Evangelicals and yet Pharisees after all. There will and must be separation for the true believer, but it will be a separation which, in the power of the Holy Ghost, brings both condemnation to one and life to another.

We step aside then to contemplate for a while that great preacher of Righteousness, Noah, to learn from his rugged features something of the conflict to which those who are righteous like Abel, and have learned like Enoch to walk with God, are called. In the short crisp vignette

presented to us in a single verse, by the Sacred Writer, much that we learn of Noah elsewhere is of course eliminated, but as we can hardly understand or appreciate the magnificence of the portrait, without seeing it in the perspective and background which belongs to it, we will glance at some of the omitted aspects.

Noah was a man of prayer. Four times over is Noah classed with the two great intercessors, Daniel and Job, by the prophet Ezekiel (xiv. 14, 16, 18, 20).

Noah was a prophet. St. Peter tells us that he was a preacher of Righteousness.

Noah was a saint. In the narrative of Gen. vi. we are told that, like Abel, he was righteous before God, and like Enoch he walked with Him.

Noah was a chosen vessel; for perhaps the most significant of these designations is, that "he found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. vi. 8). Evidently the grace or favour that he found was no ordinary thing. Of all of us who have any saving knowledge of Christ, can it be said that "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is with us. In Him we have all found favour in the eyes of a Holy God. The grace however vouchsafed to Noah was of a richer kind. But of this more anon.

Noah was a lonely soul; for we need to observe that his times were wicked beyond all imagination. In the six verses of the sixth chapter of Genesis (verses 5-7 and 11-13), are packed in the most concise fashion, an amazing record of the wickedness, corruption and violence of Society, universal, without exception, all the day and every day, unrelieved by any gleam of goodness, among all classes, everywhere, in heart, mind, purpose, and action.

With this background to our picture we turn to the features of the portrait. In this and all the other pre-

sentations that follow, we are going to see faith as a mighty, driving force ; as an active, urgent, constructive principle. Faith without works, i.e., a faith that does not impel to action of some kind or another, is dead, or at best a sentimental religiosity, if I may be allowed to coin the word. For faith is not a mere intellectual assent to historic facts, spiritual truth and the declared revelation of the world to come. Nor is it *merely* a passive and receptive faculty, though it is that. It is much more : it is a divinely implanted power, born in us of the Holy Ghost, that dynamic of Life, which constrains and compels and urges to action, suffering and death, if need be, for Him Who has loved us and given Himself for us.

We are not told anything about Noah's personal salvation, or the faith whereby he was justified, as we were in Abel's case : though we do know that, like Abel, he was righteous before God (Gen. vi. 8).

Nor are we told anything about the way he learned the secret of walking with God, though we do know that, like Enoch, he had learned that secret (Gen. vi. 8).

With that aspect of faith in Noah's life we are not concerned. The faith of Noah that we are considering is the faith that, after he had been justified and after he had learned to walk with God, empowered him for service and sacrifice, a service that was a strange and almost fanatical undertaking.

The seventh verse of our chapter, in which the story of Noah is portrayed, contains in the original Greek only twenty-seven words. In this microscopic compass an amazing amount of history, philosophy, moral and spiritual truth is conveyed. We are considering, however, only the dynamic of his life work—Faith, and of this we are told :

(1) Its expression ; (2) Its fruit ; and (3) Its source.

I. The Expression of Noah's Faith.

"By faith Noah prepared an ark."

A true and living faith must express itself in some concrete fashion. And here we are told the strange form, utterly fanatical as it must have appeared to the people of his day, which that expression took in Noah's case.

The particular form in which faith expresses itself, is generally the thing that causes offence, condemns the unbeliever, and brings persecution upon ourselves. Alas! how many who are supposed to have saving faith, possess it in so mild and feeble a fashion, that no one is either offended, or blessed thereby. Well may we take heed to the Apostle's warning, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in THE faith."

I have already referred to that striking expression found in the Genesis narrative, "*But Noah found GRACE in the eyes of the Lord,*" and have pointed out that this favour vouchsafed to him was, more, much more than that saving grace which is given to all believers.

It was rather the privilege, responsibility and honour of undertaking the task of preparing an ark, which for all time was to be perhaps the greatest type of Christ's finished work. This grace and favour of being instruments specially chosen to erect a Divine habitation was granted to others.

Of *Moses* we read, "The Lord said unto him, Thou hast found GRACE (or Favour) in My sight." And it was to him that the plan and design of the tabernacle was entrusted. It was he that constructed the sacred habitation of God in the wilderness.

Of *David* we read, "He found FAVOUR (Grace) before God, and asked to build a habitation for the God of Jacob "

(Acts vii. 46). And though he never actually constructed the temple, yet it was to him that God entrusted the plan and design of the whole building : and it was he who prepared all the materials for building God's dwelling place among His people.

Of *Mary* we read, " The Angel of the Lord said unto her . . . Thou hast found FAVOUR (Grace) with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb . . . a Son . . . JESUS." It was she that was chosen to be the medium through which the Holy Ghost " prepared a body " for the Divine Son, God the Father's dwelling place on earth, that He might be incarnate among the sons of men.

Of *St. Paul* we read, that to him " was given the GRACE (Favour) of God whereby was made known to him the great mystery," the Church of Christ, God's dwelling place in this dispensation (Eph. iii. 2-9), whereby the Holy Ghost Himself is even now Incarnate in the world.

Of others too, in later days in their little sphere and measure, can the same thing be written. They have found GRACE, special grace before God, and have been called to build monuments and habitations of His goodness and mercy. George Müller, Hudson Taylor, General Booth, of our own day and generation, come readily to our remembrance, men wholly separated unto God, like Noah and Abraham of old.

We may well pause awhile and search our own hearts, and ask unto what has faith separated us ? Has our faith in Christ and His salvation expressed itself in any such clear and definite fashion ? Have things unseen, the coming judgments on a godless world, so moved our hearts, that faith therein has constrained us to pray, preach, and prepare for the salvation of men.

Do let us be convinced of this fact, Faith as opposed to

mere belief always constrains to action, because it moves and operates in a moral sphere, a sphere of life where the forces of evil, suffering and death are so overwhelming that faith must either work or wither, do or die, prevail or perish.

Faith, like life itself, must find an outlet for expression, and seeing that it lives and moves and has its being in an evil, godless world, that expression will entail conflict, suffering, pain, and loss, though it will bring victory and reward.

II. The Fruit of Noah's Faith.

We pass on now to consider the effect of his believing. To what end and for what purpose did he exercise faith in God? What did his obedient confidence accomplish? A study of these things will encourage souls for all time to go and do likewise. Those effects were three.

(1) He saved his own household; (2) He condemned the world; (3) He inherited the righteousness which is by faith.

1. *He saved his own house.* As I have already pointed out, we are told nothing of Noah's personal salvation, or the faith whereby he was justified before God. But we learn here that it was through his faith as expressed in the preparing of the Ark, that he saved his own household. We need not assume that the members of that household themselves were very distinguished members of the "household of faith." The recorded incident in the life at least of one of them is sad reading indeed. We are reminded of Lot's family, similarly saved through the faith and intercession of Abraham. Was it that his sons and their wives were deeply impressed with the unwavering faith of their

father? Foolish as his asseverations and preachings and warnings and, above all, his carpentering must have seemed to them, yet his faith substantiated by a life of fellowship with God, his praying and devoted pleading with the godless folks of his day, convinced them that there *was* something in it after all.

All this is undoubtedly true : but there is more. That strange power that God has given to us, not only to intercede for others but to believe for them, repent for them, confess their sins and by faith lift them into a place of safety, must surely have been exercised by this man of God. It is a lesson that we are slow to learn, that by faith we have power to remit the sins of others according to that most wonderful but, alas ! most woefully misinterpreted commission vouchsafed to us by the Lord Jesus Himself (St. John xx. 23).

Thus writes the biographer of a mighty man of God of an earlier generation :—

“ It was with him a conviction that sin must be repented of by some one, and if sinners would not repent themselves, the people of God must repent in their behalf. . . . He carried out the same principle into the matter of faith. ‘ It is possible,’ he said, ‘ to believe for a penitent,’ and in confirmation of this opinion he has related instances in which, when he has been labouring to exert this faith of sympathy, actual faith has arisen correspondingly in the mind of the sinner ; and the power of God, and the joy of salvation have burst upon both as they simultaneously appropriated the atonement of Christ.

“ ‘ We are capable,’ he said, ‘ of acting upon men. A divine influence is connected with every Christian. God and Christ require it of us. We have power with God for them. Their state must be looked at with as much particularity as possible. The Atonement must

be believed for them, the promises of the influence of the Holy Spirit must be seized and pleaded for them. Their hardness, profanity and pride and carelessness will give way."

St. Paul, in writing to his friend Philemon, told him that he was praying that "*the communication of his faith might be effectual* by the acknowledging of every good thing which was in him in Christ Jesus." Is our faith so? Blessed as it is to believe for ourselves; it is yet more blessed when we can believe for others and so communicate thereby the riches of His grace to their souls. This power of communication is said to be the result of recognising and acknowledging that every good thing within us is due to the imparted righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

Am I mistaken in concluding that Noah's faith was of this order? Surely not. Oh, that we would go and do likewise!

2. *He condemned the world.* What strange fruit for faith to bear is here! But so it was. The wording of the Greek text in this connection is slightly ambiguous. The pronoun "whereby" might refer either to the Ark or to the word "faith," with which the verse commences. Both these words are in the feminine gender. We prefer, however, to take it as referring to faith for various reasons, grammatical and otherwise. By his faith he condemned the world. Condemned it for what? Condemned it for the sin of unbelief, which was its eternal undoing.

"This is the condemnation" that men believe not, says the Scripture (St. John iii. 19). It is scarcely too much to say that men are not primarily in hell because of their sins, but rather because they have refused the remedy provided for them. If that be so then the damning sin of mankind is its unbelief.

The people of Noah's day saw daily before their eyes a monument of living faith ; they heard daily the witness and the warning of a believing soul. They were without excuse. Not only were they rebuked for their sinful ways ; but a road of safety was marked out for their wandering feet ; and a place of refuge was built ready to hand.

We are reminded of the last recorded words that Christ ever spoke to the unbelieving generation of His day. " I am come a light into the world that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness. . . . He that rejecteth Me and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him ; THE WORD WHICH I HAVE SPOKEN the same shall judge him at the last day." On that day there will be no need for Christ to pronounce a further word of judgment. The very words, which in this day of grace are messages of mercy, will in that day be a sentence of death. Mercy rejected, overtures of peace flouted and ignored will be man's death warrant. Self-condemned by his own unbelief, he will perish without mercy.

So was it in Noah's day. " By his faith he condemned the world."

3. *By faith he became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.* He saved his own : he condemned the world. But what of himself ? What did *he* gain by believing God ? We read, he inherited the righteousness which is by faith. Can this mean that before he built the Ark, and within its refuge was saved from the devastating waters, he was not a justified soul. Surely not ! Before ever he was commissioned to build or warned of things not seen, he was righteous before God and walked with Him.

What then was this inheritance ? What this great reward that he received from God, this " righteousness which is by faith."

St. Paul, in writing of this great theme, has two striking phrases,—

“ Faith counted for Righteousness ” (Rom. iv. 5).

“ Righteousness which is of God by faith ” (Phil. iii. 9).

The first expression is used in connection with his doctrine of imputed righteousness, and refers primarily to Abraham. Seven times in Scripture (once in Genesis, four times in Rom. iv., once in Galatians, and once in James) do we find the words, “ Abraham believed God and IT was counted to him for righteousness.” Faith in the Lord Jesus and all that He has done for us, is not, of course, in itself righteousness, but being a divinely implanted thing, and hence containing the embryo of all good, all righteousness and all holiness, it is counted so by God ; and thus the non-imputation of our sins that are past through His atoning blood, and the imputation of our faith in the Lord Jesus, a living Saviour, constitute the two component parts of God’s imputed righteousness.

The second expression, “ the righteousness which is of God by faith,” is something entirely different. It is an *imparted* thing. The phrase is used by St. Paul of himself ; he expresses the longing that when Christ appears, he may be found in Him, in possession of this blessed inheritance. It is inconceivable that Paul could have any doubt in his mind as to his *justification*. That surely was settled for ever in the Apostle’s mind. His apprehension was, that though justified freely by His grace, yet he might in that day be found living his Christian life in his own energy and his own strength, rather than by virtue of Christ’s righteousness IMPARTED to him daily by His indwelling.

So was it with Noah ; the faith whereby he was justified, and led to walk with God, led him also in obedience to God’s warning voice, to take heed and obey and build the

ark, and so find himself possessed of that blessed power, the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost, whereby he drew daily from the wells of salvation, "pardon, holiness and heaven."

III. The Source of Noah's Faith.

"Moved with fear."

Faith in its expression is at times strangely akin to fanaticism and yet in reality is as widely distant from it as the poles from each other. Fanaticism is the product of hallucination, coupled with an utterly unwarranted idea of one's own self-importance, bred of an unbalanced judgment. The sources of faith are far otherwise.

As we study the separate portraits of these ancient heroes, it is easy to observe that the particular characteristic of God's dealings and providences which moved them to action, differed in each individual case. The righteous holy love of his God discovered to Abel his own exceeding sinfulness. The longing desire of the Creator to walk and hold communion with the creature, led Enoch into a holy life of fellowship. With Noah, a vision of unseen things, faith in the coming judgment of God, moved his soul with fear. As he lived and moved in the realm of the unseen and the eternal, the voice of God in his soul was so insistent and plain, the conviction of the coming deluge was so overwhelming, that he staggered not under the weight of obloquy, ridicule and shame daily heaped upon him by a scoffing world, but pressed on through to victory. Yes, and he still speaks to those who are "foolish" enough to believe that there is a judgment to come, a hell to escape and the wrath of the Lamb from which to flee.

There is a silly and popular fashion among the so-called

theologians of the day, seeking to be wise above what is written and assuming a lofty air of superiority, of utterly discrediting fear, as a motive worthy of creating faith, and moving men to moral action. It is spoken of as mere superstition or a relic of unenlightened days. And yet experience teaches in matters of every day life that of the four motives which impel men to action—fear, hope, faith, and love,—fear is the first in psychological order and first in moral power. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” It is written everywhere on every page of the Scriptures: nor is it confined to the Old Testament. The Lord Jesus used it more freely than any other motive! In parable, in narrative and in discourse throughout the four Gospels it cannot be hid.

The Apostle Paul while declaring that the love of Christ constrained him, in this very passage where the constraint of love is emphasised, tells us that he too was “moved with fear”; for “knowing the terror of the Lord,” says he, “I persuade men”: and all through his writings, his constant and solemn warnings are envisaged in a background of alarm, lest he should fall short of the grace of God, and standing before the judgment seat of Christ be a castaway, find the door shut at His coming and be ashamed at His appearing.

It is a very significant fact that the only two men, of whom in the pages of Scripture the actual words are used that “they walked with God,” were Enoch and Noah. Both of these men, more than any others, were preachers of coming judgment. It takes a very close walk with God, as well as a very courageous faith, to be entrusted with these dreadful secrets.

It is moreover eminently true that in modern times, those who have walked in closest fellowship with God have

had more fearful visions of the wrath to come than are vouchsafed to the ordinary Christian.

Of William Bramwell, the one who preached his funeral sermon before a weeping audience of ten thousand, declared :—

“ Never did I behold a fallen child of Adam, whose moral renovation was so complete, nor one who was so angelic and saintly. He appeared to be everything the Lord designed him to be.”

This same William Bramwell thus writes to a friend :

“ You know I have been about three months in the furnace. This mystery of God I know not now, but I know He was with me. The glory I experienced was beyond all I can now relate. I was filled with mercy ; I could have shouted mercy continually. *Yet I never had so clear a view of the torments of the damned.*”

and again, in writing to another friend, he says :—

“ Though I have been in the furnace yet I can assure you I have had such views of the glory of heaven and the torments of the damned, that if I have strength, I shall pour out such blessings and curses as I have never done before.”

Jonathan Edwards, Wesley, Whitfield, Finney, and many others who have been used to lead vast numbers to repentance and faith, bear the same testimony. But perhaps the most striking witness is that spiritual giant, John Fletcher of Madeley, that apostle of love acknowledged by all of his own and succeeding generations the world over, to have been one of the most saintly servants the Lord has ever had in modern times. The records of his preaching and faithful dealing with men, his writings and his letters all bear witness to the extent which his

faith in the fearful reality of a judgment to come, had upon his life and service.

Returning from many years' service in a heathen land to so-called Christian communities, one is increasingly convinced that the message needed for our times in these Protestant lands is the preaching of Noah. The condition of society before the Coming again of Christ, is by the Saviour Himself likened to that in Noah's days. Should not the message then be his? The apostasy is so dreadful; the increasing power of Rome, the emptying churches, the return to the idolatry of the middle ages, the ravages of modernism, the devilry of spiritualism, the worldliness and luxury of the godless, the heresies and cults among so-called Christian churches, the criminal hypocrisy that calls abortion a crime and birth control a virtue, the peril of Bolshevism, these and many other dreadful evils, apart altogether from the extraordinary signs of the times in other directions, ought to convince any thoughtful student of Scripture that the days of Noah are upon us once more.

Oh! for an Enoch or a Noah to warn men to flee from the wrath to come, the wrath so near at hand. I am speaking now of the message needed in lands that have been almost overwhelmed with Gospel light and privilege for centuries.

To all who read these lines, who long to walk with God and yet realise that the price to be paid for such communion is no light one; that the price that Noah paid, a lonely path, a storm of obloquy and shame, ridicule and disappointment is the same to-day as then, to such I would say that until "faith's vision keen" has viewed the realities of Divine wrath as well as of Divine mercy, the power to preach as Enoch and Noah did, will be an impossibility.

And yet may I append as a model for all preachers of

our day and generation some faint echoes from the pulpit of the saintly Vicar of Madeley :—

“ I conjure you by the majesty of that God before Whom angels rejoice with trembling ; by the terror of the Lord, Who may speak to you in thunder, and this instant require your soul of you ; by the tender mercies, the bowels of compassion of your Heavenly Father, which are moved in your favour, all ungrateful as you are ! I conjure you by the incarnation of the Eternal Word, by Whom you were created ; by the humiliation, the pains, the temptations, the tears, the bloody sweat, the agony, the cries of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ ! I conjure you by the bonds, the insults, the scourgings, the robes of derision, the crown of thorns, the ponderous cross, the nails, the instruments of death which pierced His torn body ; by the arrows of the Almighty, the poison of which drank up His spirit ; by that mysterious stroke of Divine wrath, and by those unknown terrors which forced Him to exclaim. ‘ My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ! ’ I conjure you by the interests of your immortal soul, and by the unseen accidents which may precipitate you into eternity ; by the bed of death upon which you will soon be stretched, and by the useless sighs you will then pour out, if your peace be not made with God ! I conjure you by the sword of Divine justice, and by the sceptre of grace ; by the sound of the last trumpet, and by the sudden appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, with ten thousand of His holy angels ; by that august tribunal, at which you will appear with me, and which will decide our lot for ever ; by the vain despair of hardened sinners, and by the unknown transports of regenerate souls ! I conjure you from this instant, work out your salvation with fear and trembling ! Enter by the door into the sheepfold. Sell all to purchase the pearl of great price. Count all things dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Let Him not go till He blesses you with that faith which justifies, and that sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord. And soon transported from this vale of tears into the mansions of the just made perfect, you shall cast your crown of immortal glory at the feet of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and before the Lamb Who has redeemed us by His blood : to Whom be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the power for ever and ever ! Amen."

Oh ! that the warning of things not seen, that moving of fear in our souls might make us say what Whitfield, another great preacher of righteousness of a later day, declared :—

" Everything I meet with, seems to carry this voice with it, ' Go thou and preach the Gospel ; be a pilgrim on earth : have no particular or certain dwelling place.' My heart echoes back, ' Lord Jesus, help me to do or suffer Thy will. When Thou seest me in danger of nestling, then in pity, tender pity, put a thorn in my nest to prevent me from it.' "

CHAPTER V.

ABRAHAM : THE DIVINE CITY.

" By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed ; and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise : For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."—HEB. xi. 8-10.

As we turn away from the great character we have been studying, we find ourselves face to face with its complementary picture, the portrait of Abraham, to learn a still deeper and richer lesson of Faith's separating power. Abraham is one of the great outstanding figures of all time. Not only was he the founder and progenitor of the Hebrew race ; but in him and through him (according to the Divine promise) all the nations of the earth have been, are being, and will be blessed.

His name is mentioned at least 120 times in the pages of Scripture. He was and is the father of the faithful ; and upon the story of his faith is based the greatest and most fundamental of all Christian doctrines—Justification by Faith. And yet, strangely enough, in the Hebrew National Gallery, it is not to illustrate this aspect of faith that he is presented to us.

If we eliminate the names of the six heroes mentioned in verse 32 of our chapter, there are only eleven full-sized portraits depicted by the sacred writer. Of those eleven, five are taken from Abraham's family,—two of Abraham himself, one each of Sara his wife, Isaac his son, and Jacob his grandson ; if we include Joseph, his great-grandson, the number is brought up to six.

As I have already pointed out, the Heavenly Artist

has presented us with two separate portraits of the great patriarch. We are now to consider the first only, as delineated in verses eight to ten of our chapter. We are going to see the separating power of faith; and the particular features of it emphasised are four:—

(1) Its obedience; (2) Its outworking; (3) Its continuance; and (4) Its secret.

I. The Obedience of Faith.

"By faith he obeyed."

Obedience implies a recognition of law or command: it further implies subjection to authority, or a realised sense of a master on the one hand and a servant on the other. It is obviously evident then, in an environment largely idolatrous and debased, Abraham, true to the monotheism handed down by his forbears, was already a servant of the Living God, and a servant of no common order. Hence God was able to issue to him commands of no ordinary kind.

About to create a new race, with whom the purity of monotheistic faith could be eternally enshrined and preserved, it was necessary to separate the one with whom He was about to make an entirely new beginning. I have said the commands were of no ordinary kind. Making all allowance for movements of emigration current at the time, the order to forsake his home, his kindred and country on the one hand, and on the other to go to a land unknown, unseen and not even indicated, and to do it alone, was a severe strain on the courage of any man. The narrative tells us that it was faith that enabled him to obey.

It was not fanaticism, nor fear, nor emotion; it was not ambition or any desire to better himself; it was not in

imitation of somebody else, and it was certainly not caprice nor whim nor imagination, nor indeed all these put together, that moved him to make so strange a venture. "By *faith* he obeyed." If obedience implies a recognition of law and command, faith implies an acceptance of promise. An understanding of this is most important. God never issues commands difficult to obey, without making promises easy of acceptance. The former would only repel. To counteract so strong a centrifugal force, the centripetal power of promise must be applied. The reason why obedience is so hard to some, is that they have never felt the mighty attractive force of the promises of God.

As Abraham looked at the exacting commands of Jehovah, every instinct of his nature must have shrunk in fear and disinclination from doing what was bidden. But the vision of the Lord that dictated so hard a task, brought also with it gracious, heartening, attractive, wonderful words of promise. It was faith in the *promises* that enabled him to obey the *commands*. We cannot emphasise this fact too strongly.

How many have shrunk back from obeying God's call to the Mission Field, for example, because they have never seen the magnitude, and never felt the attractiveness of the exceeding great and precious promises.

We turn back then to the original story as narrated in Gen. xii. to see what those promises were. There we read :

- (a) I will make of thee a great nation.
- (b) I will bless thee.
- (c) I will make thy name great.
- (d) I will make thee a blessing.

As the Patriarch listened to these wonderful words, and turned them over in his mind, as they took possession of his heart, and as he dared to accept them at their face

value, the hardships and difficulties of this proposed journey, seemed insignificant enough. As often as he was tempted to fall or falter by the way, these extraordinary, unequivocal and definite declarations of Jehovah so burned in his heart, fired his imagination, and put fresh courage and determination into every fibre of his being, that obedience became a joy and a delight.

The particular point that the sacred writer here in Hebrews emphasises is the *faith* of Abraham. Many like him have seen and understood, and in some sense delighted in the promises of God, and no doubt have in some measure been influenced thereby; but there has never been any very deep and radical movement in their life; they have not been profoundly affected: their course of life has not been fundamentally changed; and the reason is not far to seek. They have never seen the promises of God as the most attractive thing on earth, and never felt their magnetic power. In other words, they have never APPROPRIATED or ASSIMILATED them by *faith*. But that is just what Abraham did: he DARED TO BELIEVE GOD, and at once proceeded to give evidence thereof, by an obedience to God's commands, which alone would make it possible for Him to fulfil His promises.

"I will bless thee and make thee a blessing." Can anything be more wonderful than this,—to make us a blessing to men, to promise that our life shall not be a poor wasted, fruitless thing, but a force in the world producing effects that shall last throughout eternity?

In this step of faith Abraham avoided the Scylla of fanaticism on the one hand, and the Charybdis of ease on the other. We read, "When he was called," and not before. How easy it is to imitate others in undertaking some venture of faith; but here in Abraham's case, his

faith only thrust him forth into the unseen and the unknown
WHEN HE WAS CALLED.

But that call will come to us sooner or later in some form or other, if we seek God's face and ask for His best !

God is seeking not only men to worship Him in spirit and in truth, but He is everywhere looking for bold, hazard-loving spirits, who will count it all joy to do and dare, and die for His dear Name. To such, a call will most certainly be given.

II. The Outworking of Faith.

"By faith, he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country."

How did this strange venture turn out ? Let us follow Abraham along this uncharted route and to this unknown destination. He duly arrived, and on his arrival was assured by God that this was the promised goal and this the land that he was to inherit. It is important to remember, as we accompany this strange pilgrim and look at the portrait before us, that he lived in a day of great architectural enterprise, great cities, and great buildings ; palatial residences abounded in the land from which he came. Archæological evidence is very plain on this point. As he continued his way and went down to Egypt, there too he saw magnificent temples, palaces, and monuments all around him. He has now come to his own. Surely he will commence plans for building, if not some big city, at any rate, a spacious dwelling place for himself and family. But no, we read he sojourned, as if it were a strange country in which he was only a passing traveller. And he did it *by faith*. As we read his life in the book of Genesis, we find that the only things approaching real estate that he secured were, a graveyard, a well, an altar, and a tent.

He bought a graveyard, he dug a well, he builded an altar and pitched a tent. What strange faith was this? What idiosyncrasy? What a queer figure this old man must have cut before the people of his time! We can almost hear them saying, "A strange old man! A good fellow no doubt; in fact, quite a remarkable character in many ways; but there is an eccentricity about him, an odd strain in his make up! We really don't understand him. He has plenty of this world's goods: he is quite capable of buying a fine property and building himself a good house; but, no he lives all the time in a tent! And to crown all, we hear that he goes about saying that in course of time the whole land in which he has come to stay, is going to be the national home of his descendants. Well! well! Some folk have queer notions. But after all he is a harmless, benevolent old gentleman! So we'll let him go on his peculiar way."

But Abraham was not an eccentric at all. His extraordinary line of action was the result of very clear and calm reflection. He knew exactly what he was doing, and why he lived this unworldly life of faith. And faith is neither fanaticism nor eccentricity. A careful reading of the eleventh chapter of Genesis reveals the secret. In that chapter we find two remarkable edifices, if I may so say. The one (verses 1-9) represents human design, energy, combination, and method. The other (verses 10-32) speaks of God's way, God's architecture, and God's design. Men in their pride and rebellion against God's authority, had formed a strong and powerful Association, and had proceeded to erect a magnificent monument to perpetuate their name and glory. The materials too had to be manufactured by their own skill and industry.

The world's subsequent history of Empire building,

and the erection of monuments to the gods of commerce and industry, the determination all through the ages, and more particularly in this age, to apotheosise humanity, are all in keeping with this early attempt of the human race to do without God, and dispense with a heaven in the world to come, by making this world our earthly paradise.

In the latter half of that chapter, verses 10-32, a passage which is to many readers merely a dull and dreary catalogue of names, we read of the Divine Way. It was a way not of combination but of separation. God selects and separates. It was the way not of an inorganic structure but of a living organism. The materials for His proposed building were "living stones," human souls, called and chosen and kept, not manufactured bricks and mortar. The design was not to "make a name" for men, but to glorify the Name of Jehovah. He chose for its beginning a descendant of Shem (a Name); and that descendant was the subject of our portrait. It is inconceivable that Abraham should have been unfamiliar with the past history of Babylon, Nimrod and Babel: it is equally inconceivable that "this friend of God" should have been unacquainted with God's ultimate purpose and design, and the ways of its fulfilment. We do not know how much Abraham knew at this stage of his pilgrimage, but he must have heard and learned enough for him to believe intelligently, and so be perfectly content to sojourn in his own country as though he were only a foreigner.

III. The Continuance of Faith.

"By faith . . . he dwell in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise."

It is one thing to start out on a noble enterprise and quite another to continue therein to the end, especially

when there is very little to shew for one's pains, and scarcely any evidence that the proposed venture is working out according to plan.

The old man is getting on in years. His son Isaac is fully grown! Surely he will abandon this Bohemian way of living, build a decent residence and spend his years in comfort. But no. Isaac has to be trained in this strange way of life, as he too is "an heir with him of the same promise." And so the years go on and Jacob, his grandson, is born. Abraham's life is drawing to its close. Can he not now give up this manner of life? No, not even yet! His faith still holds him to God's appointed way. Many a time must he have pondered over God's wonderful promises.

"I will make of thee a great nation. I will bless thee, I will make thy name great and I will make thee a blessing."

As the years passed rapidly on, and Abraham realised that *he* was never going to see the fulfilment of these promises in his lifetime, *he* was never going to see his descendants becoming a great nation, *he* was never going to know the greatness of his name, and *he* was never going to behold the world-wide blessing which God had said should be his portion, had he been like most twentieth century believers, he might have replied to God,—All these things which you have promised me, will not come to pass till long after I am dead and buried and forgotten! "Forgotten," Abraham? No, not that. Never that! Well, dead and buried! they will be no good to me. It is all very well to know that my descendants are to become great people, and possibly men in all lands may call me blessed. But, what is that to me now? O Lord, what am I going to have now? I have left home and kindred and country, and lived a poor pilgrim's uncomfortable life all these years. What am I to get in exchange?

But Abraham did not talk like that. His faith was of a sublimer kind. It lived on higher places : it had a farther reaching vision, a wider outlook, and a more glorious expectation : or if I may abruptly change the metaphor, there was never any flicker in its flame, never any smouldering in the fire, as it burned on and on ever brighter and warmer upon the altar of his heart. This brings us to :

IV. The Secret of His Faith.

"For he looked for the city which hath the foundations whose architect and maker is God." (R.V. marg.)

The patriarchs of these early days, as we saw in Enoch's case, had a remarkable revelation of things to come. It was so in Abraham's case. As the friend of God he walked with Him, and so learned to "look for" the city which hath the foundations. We need not suppose that, like the seer on Patmos Isle, he actually saw the Apocalyptic vision, but rather like St. Augustine of a later day, he saw it by faith, though in a purer, clearer light, undimmed by that ecclesiasticism which blurred the eyes of Monica's son. St. Augustine saw, as he thought, the "City of God" built here on *earth*, a strange building, the materials of which were a motley mixture of spiritual truth, Neo-Platonic thought, and ecclesiastical traditionalism. His "City of God" formed the basis of the mediæval theory of the Papacy. How different was Abraham's vision ! He saw it COMING DOWN out of heaven.

The emphasis in our text is on the expectation and longing of his heart, rather than on the actual vision of the city ; and yet the wording employed clearly implies that he did by faith see the city, its foundations, its architect,

and its builder. He could not look and long for that of which he had no clear conception or idea.

I. *He saw the City.* He saw it in its spiritual purity. He saw it in its unity, the one great Church of the living God, living stones gathered from every nation under heaven. He saw it COMING DOWN out of heaven and not built here upon earth. The spurious counterfeit of the Church of Rome, with all its man-made ecclesiastical forms, man-organised and man-directed, man-administered, man-cursed organization, was not in his purview. No, he saw the true and living Body of Christ, His blood-bought Church, "*coming down out of heaven as a bride prepared for her husband.*" He saw her in her unity and purity. He saw her as St. Paul saw her. His vision was large and wide and far. He saw her in her entirety. Alas! how few of us ever see her so. Even the most spiritual of us only behold the particular portion with which we are concerned; with the Christians of the land wherein we are labouring; the souls who have been given to us and to our care. We look, alas! from the low level whereon we stand. How few reach Pisgah summit! how seldom we look from the top! How rare is the vision of the City of God in its full proportion! And so we fail to get a proper view of our own insignificance. We are unwilling to live in tents and sojourn as in a strange land.

Moses too, like Abraham, beheld the vision. He was "faithful in ALL his house," that house of God to which even we of a later day belong. Ezekiel too was commissioned "to shew the HOUSE to the house of Israel that they might be ashamed" of their selfishness and self-centredness. St. Paul, beholding it also, complained that he had no one with him save Timothy who would disinterestedly care for the Philippian saints. "All," he said, "think only of their

own things," their own spiritual needs and enjoyments, and have not at heart the interests of the Lord Jesus.

This is the blight on the Churches to-day ; they have but little vision of the Body of Christ as a whole. They exist almost entirely for themselves, or at best are interested in securing a species of uniformity, a mere oneness of outward organization, utterly irrespective of its worldly and unspiritual condition. St. Paul tells us in the Ephesian letter three wonderful things about the Church of Christ. First, that it consists of several edifices (" each several building," are his exact words) fitly framed together to form ONE Building. Secondly, he calls it a HOLY Temple. Thirdly, he says it is God's HABITATION (Eph. ii. 21, 22).

It is the first of these aspects that concerns us for the moment. St. Paul saw in vision the separate bodies of believers, of Jewish, Greek, Roman, and other nationalities, each preserving their own peculiar national characteristics, and yet all fitly built together to form one glorious edifice. It is true the figure is changed from that of a City to a Temple, but the vision is one. Oh ! that in these closing days of our age, we too, like Abraham, Moses, Ezekiel, and St. Paul, might see " the City " thus. If we were able to see it so, in the power of the Holy Ghost, our life and way of living, like that of Abraham, would be in the tent, on the altar and at the well.

2. *By faith he saw its Architect.* Abraham saw far more than the City. He beheld its Architect. Was the Lord Jesus speaking of this, when He said, " Abraham rejoiced to see My day : he saw it and was glad "—the " day of the Lord," not merely the day of His humiliation and Cross and Passion, but the day when He shall come again, to rule and reign, the day when the living stones of His temple, hewn and shaped and polished in the world's rough

quarries during all these millennia, shall be brought together and builded in exceeding great magnificence, the day when "He shall be admired in all them that believe" at His appearing? To Abraham this day was a glorious reality: so vividly did he believe it, that it obliterated from his vision and outlook all earthly splendour; and purified his heart from any desire for the glory of the world, which passeth away with all its grace and fashion.

John the Baptist, as he watched the crowds who had hung upon his lips, disappear and found his popularity gone for ever, was able to say, "Christ must increase and I must decrease," making haste to add the reason for so amazing a testimony. "The friend of the bridegroom," says he, "rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. THIS MY JOY THEREFORE IS FULFILLED." He was satisfied, utterly, completely satisfied with that. The world, yea, the religious world had lost all its charm for ever.

So with Abraham, as he saw the mighty Architect and saw His day, he was for ever spoiled for the world and its ambitions. He had no desire to build either city or mansion for himself, he was engaged in a far bigger enterprise.

3. *By faith he saw the Builder.* In the erection of material edifices the architect and builder are never the same person. In Abraham's vision, we are told that God Himself was at once both Architect and Builder. And yet the designing and the building are two separate processes, one by God the Father, the other by God the Holy Ghost. Of this St. Paul reminds us when he says, the Church "is builded together for an habitation of God *through the Spirit.*"

Alas! how often is the Holy Ghost organised out of all our undertakings. Unrecognised and unsought, how

can He do His own mighty works ? We plan and build, and build and plan. We organise and determine, and determine and organise, till the grieved Spirit has to leave us to our folly and failure and fall. Abraham had a vision of the Mighty Builder, and though more than once he came near disaster, he kept his hands off God's building and lived in a tent to the end of his days.

This assurance that he saw the Builder makes it evident that, the city he saw was a spiritual building. Oh ! that we too might see the Holy Ghost and for ever be delivered from creating religious organizations, sects and denominations, societies and leagues and alliances to the glory of man and the disappointment of the Heavenly Architect.

4. *By faith he saw its foundations.* Foundations are things not generally open to the view, they are hidden things buried out of sight. St. Paul speaks of the Church's foundations when he says, "it is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone."

Was it these the patriarch beheld ? Did he see himself, Isaac and Jacob, three men in a tent, pilgrims and strangers on the earth among their number ? God was seeking to lay the foundations of the great Hebrew race and subsequently of all the true Israel of God. By faith Abraham saw what God was needing and he cried, "Here am I," willing to be out of sight and out of mind. He saw the foundations of the city, and because he saw the glorious superstructure to be raised thereon, he rejoiced to be one of them. Blessed vision ! Blessed victory of faith ! All nations shall yet call Abraham blessed.

I would, in closing, emphasise that Abraham's vision of the city was by faith and not by sight. As he walked and talked with God, he learned of His great and mighty pur-

poses. He saw the city through the telescope of Divine Revelation. As we are told in verses 13-16, he saw the promises afar off, yes, very far off in time and space ; and yet so clear, so vivid were they to him, that he " embraced " them as though they were at his tent door. The day of Christ, which he rejoiced to see, was as near to him as the morrow, though it was millennia away ! He was just as happy and contented to know that the city would not be till the " end of the days," as if it was taking shape before his eyes. So sure was he of that glorious day ! Blessedly indeed does faith inspired of the Holy Ghost obliterate both time and space from the philosophy of the man who walks with God. Such visions as these are not uncommon as men draw near to the end of the road, filling them with regret if not with remorse that they have lived with so little sense of eternity's values in view. But to Abraham the vision came in the morning of his days, shaping and moulding, directing and inspiring, all his energies and all his powers.

Ere we pass on to look at the two portraits that follow, may we pause awhile to make enquiry of our own souls. Has Faith been a separating thing with us ? Have we been weaned from the vanity, the glitter of worldly ambition ? Yea, more, has the religious world lost all its charm and attraction for us, because we have seen the city which hath the foundations, and we too have rejoiced to see Christ's day, yea, have seen it and are glad ? How willing, strangely willing, is the Great Architect to show us the plans and designs of His City, and how wonderful too that the Builder, God the Holy Ghost, is prepared to take us into co-operation with Himself, if we are willing to be hidden stones, in order that we may shew forth His praise, His skill, His workmanship, and His glory.

Thank God, these things are not mere visions of the past. Hidden away in obscure corners of the earth unknown to the hurrying throngs in our crowded cities of Western civilization, God has still His witnesses to the separating power of faith.

I have recently returned from a deeply affecting service, the funeral of one of our younger Japanese colleagues, cut off in the prime of life. As one of those whom he had led to Christ told of his last hours, there was scarce a dry eye in the congregation.

Sent to labour in the little town of M—— which, in March, 1927, had been completely destroyed by earthquake and fire, one-fifth of its population perishing in the flames, he took the place of Mr. T., the devoted young evangelist who, crushed beneath the falling roof of his house, was burnt to death at that time.

He indeed lived the life of a pilgrim and sojourner. Every day, wet or fine, storm or sunshine, found him cycling and, when the snow was too deep, trudging on foot into the hamlets and villages far up on the mountains seeking to save the lost. He was perhaps the most ideal country evangelist I have ever met; utterly modest and unassuming, filled with zeal for the Lord's glory, he had a vision, like Abraham of old, of the Eternal City, and was conscious that his task was to gather from the quarries of these western hills, in far Japan, stones for the city not made with hands.

Suffering from pneumonia and pleurisy his body was ablaze with fever, and yet when a young pastor from a neighbouring town came to minister to him in his last hours, his first enquiry was as to the condition of the flock his friend was caring for. He seemed utterly oblivious of

his own condition. He was concerned only with the souls of men.

Not many hours before he died he asked for pen and paper. Three sheets and the Japanese brush used for writing were brought to his bedside. With the greatest pain and effort he wrote in a sprawling hand on the first sheet : " Last night was Gethsemane for me. Never have I had so fierce a conflict in all my pilgrimage."

On the second : " To-day it is my cross, but not too hard for me to bear."

On the third : " To-morrow will be my glorious resurrection."

He could write no more, but to the young brother evangelist at his side he said : " As I lie here under this single lamp, gasping a hundred fiery breaths a minute, I want you to know they are breathings of prayer every one." Still later, as the fever seemed to flame still more fiercely, he said : " Truly pneumonia is a veritable fire." Then, after a pause, he gasped, " Fire ! yes, the hotter the better ! Through fire shall this body of mine pass into peace." Speaking a little later he said : " I shall soon be mounting up with wings as eagles, not by faith alone, but in reality." And again : " This morning I could but cry aloud, Oh ! God is love ! God is love !" And then as his life ebbed slowly away he cried : " Oh ! this is life indeed ! My heart is filled with joy."

It was a touching sight to see the little church, built in memory of the first pastor, filled to overflowing with country folk, some of whom he had led to Christ, others who were seeking the Lord because of his ministry.

At the close of the service, as I turned from the weeping congregation who had come to honour their dead pastor, I gazed on his face now rigid in death, garlanded with the

blossoms of early spring. There was deep and restful peace ; no sign of pain or struggle marred his features. As I thought of this faithful servant of the Lord, once utterly lost in the bewildering darkness of idol worship, called, chosen, commissioned, and faithful unto death, my heart was full of praise.

How bewildering is that darkness I will let one far more competent than I, tell us out of his own experience.

Mr. T. Michibata, now a Christian pastor, was for many years a Buddhist priest of one of the most influential sects in this country. He was already high up in the priesthood when he was converted to God, and turning his back on all worldly prospects, he became a despised Evangelist of the hated Christianity.

In his book, "From Buddha to Christ," he tells how that in thirteen years he had conducted 287 funerals of Buddhist believers. As the officiating priest, he had to take a last look at the faces of the deceased. Never once did he behold a face at rest : never once did he see depicted on the features of the dead, anything but gloom, sadness and despair. He goes on to say that after a time he became so sickened at heart in this his professional work, that he found it necessary to drink heavily before he went to funeral services, so that his vision would be blurred, or at any rate the sight of those miserable faces should not haunt him. On one occasion he drank so copiously that he was unable to officiate at the funeral at all.

After his conversion he attended the funeral of a Christian believer in one of the Osaka churches : and then for the first time in his life, he beheld a dead man's face in perfect peace. For the first time he saw and realised that only in Christ is there victory in death : that in Him alone is

there triumph over the last great enemy, and that through Him alone has death lost its terror and its sting.

Most certainly did I too, realise it afresh as I looked into the face of our beloved brother Iida.

I could but reflect and repeat, Yes, it is well worth while ! All the prayers, self-denial and love outpoured by friends in the homeland receive an abundant reward in such a sight as this.

Praise be to God for the vision of the Eternal City, vouchsafed to such souls as these, and for the faith that separated our brother from all worldly ambition and glory, making him a good and faithful servant of the Lord Jesus. For most truly, like Abraham of old, did he behold Christ's Day and was glad.

CHAPTERS SIX AND SEVEN.

The
Dynamic in Life

CHAPTER VI. SARAH : LIFE.

CHAPTER VII. ABRAHAM : LIFE MORE ABUNDANT.

“ When Lepaux, a member of the French Directory, complained to Tallyrand that his new religion, ‘ Theophilanthropy,’ was not very successful, Tallyrand replied sympathetically, and advised him to ‘ go and get crucified, be buried, and rise again the third day, and then go on working miracles, raising the dead, and casting out devils.’ ”—ANON.

“ I believe that God the Father Almighty raised His Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead.”—Words used continually in every difficult situation of his life by a CHINESE PASTOR.

“ Oh God ! Thy record I believe,
In Abraham's footsteps tread,
And wait expecting to receive
The Christ the promised Seed.
“ Faith in Thy power Thou seest I have,
For Thou this faith hath wrought ;
Dead souls Thou callest from the grave
And speakest worlds from nought.”

—CHARLES WESLEY.

CHAPTER VI.

SARAH : LIFE.

" Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful Who had promised."—HEB. xi. 11.

As we pass along the corridor of our Gallery the next pair of pictures that confront us are the portraits of Sarah and yet another of Abraham himself. Sarah and Rahab are the only two selected from the noble army of Bible heroines to illustrate Faith as Life's dynamic. And Sarah naturally comes first as the primal ancestress of the Hebrew race. The particular aspect of truth which she together with her husband are here cited to illustrate, is the fruitfulness of faith. Life and life more abundant are thus shewn to be possible only to the believing soul. Motherhood is a great and gracious privilege, a deep-seated instinct, a solemn responsibility. This is eminently true in the spiritual sphere. Every Christian has or should have this holy ambition, the desire to be a winner of souls, to travail in birth as St. Paul puts it, over the conversion of sinners.

Sarah and Abraham are called as witnesses to encourage us in this blessed vocation. Sarah tells us the secret of Life, spiritual motherhood; while Abraham's story on Mt. Moriah lets us into the deeper secret of "Life more abundant": for if a corn of wheat fall not into the ground to die, it abideth alone, but "if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."

There are seven outstanding incidents in the life of Abraham; the two most striking of which are the miraculous birth and the willing sacrifice of his son Isaac. The first is a type of the Incarnation, the second of the Cross and

Passion of the Saviour. It is these two incidents that the Holy Ghost employs to teach us the lessons of life and life more abundant. For the moment we are concerned with the first ; and the birth of Isaac is attributed here to the faith of Sara, and not as we should have expected from the Genesis narrative, to that of Abraham. " By faith even Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed."

When in response to the gracious assurance that God was his " exceeding great reward " (Gen. xv.), Abraham asked of the Lord, " What wilt Thou give me ?" God at once made answer that He would give him three things : (1) A land for his inheritance ; (2) A son for his heir ; and (3) A people, descendants who should become a great and mighty race. It was further made known to him that it would be through this son, miraculously born, and only through him that the promised posterity would be vouchsafed. In our present study we are only concerned with the second of these gifts—the promised son, the type of the great antitype. It is only through Him, the great Antitype, that the soul-winner can obtain any spiritual posterity. Only as He shall be born and formed and revealed, and abide in our hearts, can we ever expect to bring forth fruit unto God, or travail ourselves in birth over the souls of men. The story then of Isaac's birth and the faith of Sarah enabling her to conceive seed, is a type not only of the historic Incarnation of the Son of God, but also a picture of Christ Himself born within the human soul. In other words, the secret of an Indwelling Saviour is here unfolded, for our understanding, if haply it may stimulate us to become winners of souls through that Divine immanence. Our Lord Jesus Himself, in describing the inward revelation of His promised presence, uses this very illustration: " A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her

hour is come ; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world : and ye now therefore have sorrow : but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice."

Before looking at our portrait, we may turn to the pages of the New Testament and seek to learn from the Apostle Paul what he has to tell us of this great theme—An Indwelling Christ.

I. CHRIST REVEALED WITHIN.

"But when it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen ; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."—GAL. i. 15, 16.

When after he had met the Lord on the Damascus road it was further made known to the Apostle that God would give him an *inward* revelation of His Son, he tells us he did not go up to Jerusalem to learn from the apostles of Christ's earthly life, His miracles and teaching, the details of His death, resurrection and ascension, as a preparation for, or as a means to the promised revelation ; but he went into the solitude of the Arabian deserts, there to wait on God the Holy Ghost. It was there that he received : it was there that he saw and heard and found. It was there that Christ was revealed within ; and it was a revelation with a purpose. That he might be a winner of souls, that he might preach Christ among the heathen, that he might travail in birth for the salvation of men, these were the purposes of God for His servant. From that hour Christ became all in all to the Apostle. Henceforth his one and only theme was Christ and Him crucified. The promise of the Lord was fulfilled, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He shall glorify Me : for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you."

Truly St. Paul was strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man that Christ, the real Christ, not a poetical, theological, social, ideal Christ, but the saving, sanctifying, satisfying, suffering Christ might dwell evermore in his heart by faith. Christ was REVEALED within him. Like Sarah, he received strength that he might conceive seed, even the seed of a mighty mountain-moving faith.

II. CHRIST FORMED WITHIN.

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."—GAL. iv. 19.

If a Christ *revealed* within makes Him all in all to the one who receives the revelation, Christ *formed* within surely makes Him real to others, who know us and who live and walk with us day by day. His form becomes visible to men through us. What that gracious form is like we are told by the same Apostle. In writing to the Philippian converts, he tells them that Christ "took upon Himself the FORM of a servant," and so was obedient unto death. Humility and obedience were its features. And again we note that all was for a purpose, the purpose of saving a lost world and sanctifying a carnal Church. It is very commonly misrepresented that, the only need for humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God is our sinfulness: undoubtedly both our sins and our sinfulness are reasons enough for so doing. But it is a most egregious error to suppose that there is none other. There was no sin in the Sinless One, and yet the outstanding feature of the Saviour's life was His humility. "I am meek and lowly in heart," He cried. That was the only feature of His own moral beauty to which He ever called attention. For what purpose then did He Who "was without sin" humble

Himself? Was it not that He might save? Did He not stoop to conquer? Did He not take His place with the meanest and lowliest among the sons of men that He might make them sons of God and joint heirs with Himself?

Such is the need with us; we cannot save others unless and until such a Christ as this be formed within. It is through Him and only through Him that the promise holds, "Come ye after Me and *I will make you* to become fishers of men." That "coming after" is but another name and word for following in the steps of that Great Servant of humanity, the Son of God; it is another representation of the same truth, Christ the meek and lowly One being formed within the soul.

III. CHRIST LIVING WITHIN.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."
—GAL. ii. 20.

The word in our text translated "liveth" is entirely different from the word "dwell" employed in the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, where Christ is spoken of as "dwelling in the heart by faith." The Apostle has no intention of conveying any such idea in the Galatian passage. The word "life" is the same as that contained in our word Zoology. Its meaning is rather that Christ within is the source and principle of spiritual life, the great dynamic of the soul. He further defines the secret of that life, as "the faith of Christ," implying that Christ within the soul reproduces in us *His* faith. The very faith that He exercised when He walked on earth, is now seen and reproduced in us. On one occasion the Lord Himself used that remarkable phrase, "Have the faith of God" (ἔχετε πίστιν θεού), connoting far

more than the usual phrase, "Faith in God." In the original language of the New Testament there are several different ways of expressing "faith in God." The one that Christ employed on this particular occasion differs from them all, "Have the faith of God." This surely must connote the very faith which God the Father had in His beloved Son, when He sent Him forth on His divine mission, that faith which the Father had in the Holy Ghost, when He sent Him forth on the day of Pentecost, that same faith which the Father had in His own Word, when He said, "Let there be light and there was light." Oh! to be filled with such a faith as this.

Of this faith Christ is the author. Living within the soul He alone can create and reproduce it in us His people. An indwelling Christ then is not only the source of light and illumination wherein and whereby He Himself is revealed to our consciousness: not only is He the Fountain-head of all lowliness of soul and humble service; but He is also the source of that living faith, whereby we walk with God, and live a life well-pleasing unto Him.

IV. CHRIST DWELLING WITHIN.

"Wherefore I desire that . . . He would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man: that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."—EPH. iii. 13, 16, 17.

The third chapter of this epistle begins, "For this cause I Paul." Then follows a parenthesis extending to verse 13, when the Apostle repeats the words, "For this cause I bow my knees." He here discloses the reasons for his prayer. Those reasons are given us in the preceding chapter. He had reminded these converts from heathenism that they were now "fellow citizens" with the saints, and "fellow members" of the household or family of God.

He goes on to say (chapter iii. 6) that they are "fellow heirs," "fellow members of the body" and "fellow partakers of the promise." He therefore bows his knees to God as "Father of the one great *family*," and he prays that they may be so strengthened by the Holy Ghost inwardly, that Christ may be able to make His *home* in their hearts by faith; in other words, that Christ may bring that blessed *family feeling* into their hearts, and so make them, not alone, but with all the saints together, comprehend the love of Christ in all its breadth and length and depth and height, not merely to them personally and one by one, but to all the *family* of God. Christ dwelling in the heart, making His home there, sheds abroad His love to all His people. He is the source and spring of all our love to the brethren, which is an unerring indication that we are filled with the Holy Ghost.

For Christ to thus come and abide, we need as the Apostle reminds us, a "strengthening" by the Holy Ghost. Like Sarah who "received" strength to conceive seed, so we too need a strengthening of the inner man, our desires, our will, our determination, our prayer life, and above all, our faith, if Christ is to come and make His home in our poor, shrivelled hearts.

There are other blessings that flow from this divine well-spring of life, an indwelling Christ. St. Paul tells us (Col. i. 27), "Christ within is the hope of glory"; that He is the power to convert (Gal. ii. 8). The Lord Jesus Himself declared His indwelling to be the secret of prevailing prayer (John. xv. 5-7), and says that when He comes to abide within, He will spread a banquet of satisfaction and joy (Rev. iii. 20). Of these things lack of space prevents us writing in detail. If, however, before we turn again to contemplate the portrait in our National Gallery, we re-read

the passages I have cited from St. Paul's letters on this great theme, we find there the fourfold secret of Christ's Indwelling. We learn first of all (Gal. i. 16) that there has to be a divine revelation. "The Spirit of wisdom and revelation that we may know Him" has to be bestowed. We learn, secondly, that Christ formed within will only be possible, where there is deep agonising and earnest prayer (Gal. iv. 19). Thirdly, we are taught that Christ living within is only possible to the man who has been crucified with Christ (Gal. ii. 20) with all his ambitions and pride and sinfulness; and, lastly, we are told that we need the empowering of the Holy Ghost (Eph. iii. 16), Who after He has discovered to us our own unutterable weakness, is prepared to strengthen us for the Divine Indwelling.

In this connection I cannot refrain from quoting some remarkable words describing her own experience, written by one of last century's saints:—

"With me it was thus. I was humbled and self-emptied and Jesus became my all in all. I felt myself all weakness (yea, as I never did before) and He all my strength. I all nothingness. He all fullness. I all helplessness. He omnipotence. I flew from myself and escaped to Jesus. He received me graciously, freely, without money and without price, without worthiness, or faithfulness, and became all my salvation, and all my desire. Humbled in lowest abasement at His boundless condescension and filled with love, I felt I was one with God."

Surely Sarah must have had some such experience as this, when the mighty miracle of Isaac's conception was wrought in her. Certainly it was true in her great antitype. When the power of the Highest overshadowed Mary and that holy thing which was born of her was called the Son of God (Luke i. 35).

And now we turn aside to learn from this saint of olden time, the lesson of faith, whereby this mighty miracle may be reproduced even in us. We are first told of that which faith accomplished for her and then its great secret.

I. Faith's Accomplishment.

"By faith even Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age."

"Even Sarah!" Poor sceptical, doubting, unbelieving Sarah! Yes, "*even Sarah!*" received power from on High. The story of Sarah's laughter, first of unbelief and then of faith, together with the naming of the child Isaac (Laughter) as well as Abraham's smile of incredulity, is told us in chapters xvii. 17; xviii. 12; and xxi. 6 of the book of Genesis.

None realised more fully than she, that when her laughter of cynicism and unbelief was turned into the laughter of faith and joy, it was God that did it. "And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh and all that hear will laugh with me." The laughter of scepticism was perfectly natural. The whole proposition was so ridiculous, unheard of, contrary to all experience that her loud guffaw at the back of Abraham's tent was the most natural thing in the world. If the most learned savants from the universities of Chaldea or Egypt had assured her the thing would be, she would have been perfectly justified in her mocking merriment. Do we find an echo in our own hearts to all this? Are we saying that with us at any rate an Indwelling Christ can never be! *We* can never be winners of souls. From us, as good as dead, there can never spring multitudes of souls to people heaven. We have heard great divines, we have read literature which has greatly

appealed to our hearts telling us that it can be, but we know better, we know that with us at any rate it is impossible. We have not laughed as Sarah did : rather have we sighed and wept, and finally given up in despair.

Was Sarah, and are we justified in this laughter of scepticism or these tears of despair ? Most certainly if the astonishing promise had been made to her by Chaldean savants and to us by theological professors ! But it was and is not so !

God had already appeared to Abraham and in the most solemn manner told him it should be ; had changed both his and Sarai's names and repeated the assurance that she should give birth to a son : and now to convince Sarah herself and secure the co-operation of her faith, He draws near in human form and a third time repeats the promise. And what about us ? Has not God appeared to us also ? Has He not assured us that we should receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon us ; and lest there should be any fear that so wonderful a promise was limited to some special class, He has made it plain beyond all misunderstanding that " the promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off as many as the Lord our God shall call " (Acts ii. 39). Of this too there are many witnesses. Thousands of God's servants, utterly weak, ungifted and unqualified, as the world counts qualifications, to be winners of souls, have proved that God is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever ; and that " even Sarah," in modern as well as in bygone days, can be endued with power from on high. Oh ! that we would hearken unto our God, rebuking both the laughter and the tears of unbelief. Grievously we may have grieved Him ! but as with Sarah, so with us, there is time, still time to repent and turn again and believe our God. Then shall God *make*

us laugh, and the mockery of unbelief shall be turned into the merriment of faith.

Faith, mighty faith the promise sees
 And looks to that alone,
 Laughs at impossibilities
 And cries it shall be done.
 'Twas most impossible of all
 That here sin's reign in me should cease ;
 Yet it shall be, I know it shall,
 Jesus, I trust *Thy* faithfulness.

And now we look once more at this strange portrait, to learn the secret of Sarah's triumph.

II. Faith's Secret.

"Through faith even Sarah received . . . strength . . . because she judged Him faithful."

The Apostle Paul, in writing to his Ephesian converts, "having heard of their *faith* in the Lord Jesus and their *love* to all saints," tells them that he is led to pray for them more particularly in the matter of their faith : he then goes on to unfold the contents of his prayer. "I am asking for you," he says, "that God will give you the Spirit of . . . Revelation in order that you may know . . . what is the *hope of your calling*." That is to say, he asked that by the Holy Ghost they might understand what grounds they had for expecting that, what God had called them to, would actually materialise : that they might be able, as St. Peter puts it, "to give an answer to every man who should ask them a reason of the hope that was within them."

When God has called us, what grounds have we for hoping, expecting, and believing that His call will be effective ? St. Paul himself gives us the answer, "Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it." He uses these

words in connection with the great theme of sanctification (1. Thess. v. 23, 24). Herein lies our only hope, His FAITHFULNESS. It was this glorious hope that the Holy Ghost made real to Sarah. By His power she was enabled to judge God FAITHFUL. God "willing more abundantly to shew the immutability of His counsel, confirmed the promise by an oath." So majestic, so immutable, so absolutely assured did God's faithfulness appear to Sarah, that ridiculous as it all seemed to the eye of nature, she "laughed at impossibilities and cried, It shall be done." To such a faith in His faithfulness as this, God responded and bestowed the strength to conceive seed.

Of Abraham it is said (Heb. xi. 19), "accounting that God was ABLE." With Sarah, however, her faith was focussed on His FAITHFULNESS. She became convinced that God could not lie. To this faith God could not but respond. Our faith in His willingness and even in His power may be comparatively feeble; but if we resolutely in the power of the Holy Ghost see His faithfulness, and His "abundant willingness" made plain by His promise and His oath before our face, and dare to believe, then unto us also, as "even to Sarah," shall be bestowed the power to conceive seed: and the Lord Jesus shall be revealed and formed and live and dwell and work and rejoice and pray even in our hearts, so that through us and the souls God shall give us, shall be born a multitude of saints, peopling heaven and appearing with us at His appearing, a "crown of rejoicing" and "of glory that fadeth not away."

A few weeks ago, I was visiting one of the country churches founded and pastored by one of our more experienced evangelists. Very weary after the morning's service I was resting, when I was summoned to meet a lady

who much wanted to see me. Going downstairs, I was greeted by a woman about forty years of age. There was something about her appearance which, without any pretence at beauty, was very attractive. Her face bore marks of suffering and pain. Though unrecognised by me, she seemed to know me well. In revealing her identity, she brought back to my mind a story of twenty years ago, when as a girl in a large school in Tokyo she had been brought to Christ with several others in a rather remarkable series of meetings I once held, a short account of which appears in "Missionary Joys in Japan." She then told me her subsequent story. Marrying very soon after leaving school, a professional man, a Christian (though largely nominal, I fear), with no one to help her in things spiritual, she drifted into a cold and backslidden state, though still attending church. All the joy of salvation and the peace she had found in Christ was lost, and she became once more outwardly careless and indifferent to spiritual things, though at times she longed inwardly to find once more what seemed to have gone for ever.

As time went on, a second child was born, alas! a cripple. This was an additional sorrow: she could not help feeling it to be a punishment from God for her backslidden state. She prayed and sought to return to the Lord, but in vain. She knew no one who could understand or help. Some two or three years after she developed what turned out to be cancer of the stomach. In its earlier stages she paid but little heed, not knowing the gravity of her malady. Her one and only desire in life was to get healing for her child.

As the disease increased, hearing the doctor's diagnosis she became utterly hopeless. "Again and again," she said, "with the child in my arms I made up my mind to throw

myself in front of an oncoming express and yet was strangely prevented." But relief was at hand.

She was invited to go and hear Mr. Tsuge (I refer to him in more detail in a later chapter). Apparently without knowing who she was, he seemed to fix his eyes upon her and said, "There is some one in this gathering that is in desperate need; the time is short. The Lord is able to do a quick work," or words to that effect. On the third night, she was smitten with the keenest conviction and in deep humility she found her way back to the Saviour. She sought an interview with Mr. Tsuge. Hearing of her trouble in body as well as soul, he laid his hands upon her and prayed the prayer of faith. From that moment the healing power of the Lord commenced. Within a month every trace of the cancer had disappeared. A careful examination by a leading specialist in the city revealed no trace of the dread malady.

She was greatly interested to hear from Mr. Tsuge that his father in the gospel was the same as her own, and from that time she had prayed daily that she might see me once more. Only that morning had she heard of my return to Japan, and my presence in the city of ——. She was overjoyed at being allowed to meet me again.

But to return to her story, her troubles were not yet over. As the days went on the rejoicing in her new-found salvation and the healing of her body, she became conscious, deeply conscious of indwelling sin, and a still deeper longing to know Christ as an indwelling, abiding presence took possession of her. Mr. Tsuge had now passed away to his heavenly home, and so could help her no longer. She got much help and teaching from the one whose church she now began to attend, but it did not fully meet her need. She gave much time to prayer in spite of her busy home

life. At every opportunity she sought the Lord's face. The conviction of her inward corruption grew deeper daily. At last in despair, she was able to attend a series of meetings given entirely to prayer. Nothing was said in any of them that met her need ; but the Lord Himself drew near. Once more helpless, weary and heavy laden, she dared to believe, and the Cross in all its sanctifying power was revealed to her soul as remarkably as it had been when she sought His saving grace ; and then the Presence, the eternal, abiding Presence of the Saviour, was made known within. Yesterday she came to visit me again. As I looked at her face, now at perfect rest and yet bearing the evidence of all the strain and stress and suffering through which she had passed ; as I listened to her story and learned from her lips the intense soul hunger and passionate longing to know an Indwelling Saviour, surrounded though she was with all the comforts of life, and heard how with little or no spiritual help she had found the Pearl of Great Price, and now set free from the cruel strangling power of unbelief, she had discovered the blessed alchemy of faith, I realised that the Holy Ghost is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever, and is no respecter of persons ; but at the same time I could not but remember the thousands of self-complacent, self-satisfied souls in our Christianised lands, to whom no such vision has been vouchsafed, whose hearts, even if they have been through the crucible of sorrow and pain, seem to be entire strangers to that priceless passion, the desire for an Indwelling Christ, which stirred in the bosom of this their Japanese sister.

Oh ! that the separation of ten thousand miles might be no barrier to her voice reaching some one at least on English shores, and that through my crude penmanship these lines might awake in their heart a desire to know

Christ, as an uttermost Saviour and an eternally abiding Presence.

Remember not only Lot's wife, but remember that "Even Sarah received strength to conceive seed when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful that promised."

Oh! for a beatific vision! Oh! for a holy ambition! Oh! for a mighty persuasion! Oh! for an indomitable perseverance! Oh! for hope against all hope! Oh! for that Divine laughter, wherewith God can make believing souls merry in the presence of impossibilities; for of such is the Kingdom of heaven; and the violence of such a faith as this takes it by force. God has "called us to His Kingdom." "Faithful is He that calleth." And if by the Holy Ghost, that spirit of revelation for which the Apostle prayed, we know "the HOPE of His calling," we too shall prevail and say with Sarah, "God hath made me to laugh and all that hear shall laugh with me."

CHAPTER VII.

ABRAHAM : LIFE MORE ABUNDANT.

“ By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac : and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called : accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead ; from whence also he received him in a figure.”—HEB. xi. 17-19.

As we pass from the portrait of Sarah, the first great heroine of faith, to study its complementary picture, the second one of Abraham, we observe a sort of memorial tablet lying between them, on which is inscribed (verses 13-16), almost in letters of gold, a monumental epitaph. “ These all,” i.e., Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, all the members of that wonderful family, “ died in faith.” Their life of faith was crowned with a glorious death of faith. They died believing that the better country prepared for them by God was theirs ; they died believing that God would not be ashamed to be called, The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and that for all time, and who knows but that for all eternity, God would take delight in affixing their names to His own !

Oh ! that on our tombstone might be inscribed such words as these. Is this too lofty an ambition ? I trow not. I have no doubt whatever that the Lord of hosts is not ashamed to be called the God of Wesley, the God of George Müller, the God of Hudson Taylor ; yea, and of many more, He is not ashamed to be called *their* God.

With only a cursory glance at this votive tablet, we move on and take our stand once more before Abraham, this the greatest of all the patriarchs. No other race on the earth’s surface, except the Hebrew, can trace its ancestry and origin back to a single historic personage. It is fit

and proper therefore that in this Gallery of Hebrew portraiture, we should find a second representation of him, through whom all the families of the earth have been, are being, or shall be blessed.

As I have observed more than once in the preceding pages, these portraits are all arranged in pairs, each pair illustrative of a single truth. This, the second picture of Abraham, is the complement of Sarah's, illustrating the fruitfulness of faith, and is to declare to us the secret of "Life more abundant."

To many so-called modern minds the story of Abraham's sacrifice is an offence. They find it difficult to believe that God, at least the God of the New Testament, could have ever issued such a command to His servant.

This is no place for apologetics; and I imagine that very few of my readers will be troubled by any sceptical questionings either as to the authenticity or the morality of this wonderful story. Still before letting him speak to our hearts, a few words may not be out of place. It was, of course, no uncommon thing in Abraham's day for parents to offer up their children in sacrifice to heathen deities. Hence this command in itself would not necessarily have shocked an Oriental mind, as it does an Occidental of the twentieth century. In some sense, was it not imperative on Jehovah's part to demonstrate the folly and wickedness of such a practice? He will make it plain that the fruit of our body cannot atone for the sin of our soul, that "God's ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts, that as the heaven is higher than the earth so are His ways higher than ours." He must make all men know that if His Justice demands a sacrifice, Love will provide it. That the God, Who as a God of righteousness requires satisfaction for broken laws, is also a God of love,

and will see to it that "mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other," through His own providing. God will provide the sacrifice.

And now we turn to our text. The salient features of that remarkable narrative, as reproduced in the three verses of this chapter, are four in number,—the TRIAL, the WORK, the BASIS, and the SECRET of Abraham's faith.

I. The Trial of Abraham's Faith.

"Abraham, when he was tried. . ."

In the original narrative the chapter containing the story, commences, "*After these things* God did prove Abraham." God has a time, as well as a way and a purpose for testing and proving His servants. Abraham's life had been one long series of testings. He was tested in relation to his home and country (Gen. xii. 1-5); his possessions (Gen. xiii. 5-16); his relations (xiv. 12-14); his success (xiv. 17-24); his patience (xxi. 5); his natural affections (xxi. 11). Through them all he had come forth as gold. God had been first in his life every time. And now it is the hour, God's hour, to put him to the supreme test.

Abraham had so abundantly proved the love, faithfulness and power of his God, that he was no more staggered at, what the sceptics call, this outrageous, unnatural command, than he had been at the extraordinary and supernatural promise of Sarah's conception. God knew that He could trust His servant as well as be trusted by him. His purpose, as we know from the Scripture narrative, was as in Job's case to prove to angels and men and devils that His servant feared and loved and served Him beyond all else in the world. We gather, furthermore, that it was in

the mind of God to hand down for all time, through His servant, the most perfect type (in so far as any type can be perfect) of the sacrifice of His own only begotten Son for the world's salvation.

But may we not see a further purpose? The Lord Jesus has told us that "Abraham saw His day and was glad." Was it not on Mt. Moriah that that vision was vouchsafed? Could any other human being better understand the agony of the Father's heart in giving His only begotten Son to die for a ruined world, than one who was called to pass through this strange and fearful experience? Was it not on this day that, as the tide of anguish ebbed in his own soul, he understood the unfathomable depth both of suffering and of love in the heart of God Himself? In other words, we may well believe that the purpose of God toward this His servant and friend, was to give him through EXPERIENCE a revelation of His own heart. Oh! how he must have exulted in the love of God, as he saw Christ's day through that experience. Torn with agony over the sacrifice of his dearest, his heart had as suddenly been healed through the gracious provision of God. But God, though He spared Abraham, spared not Himself. He allowed the avenging sword to smite His own. And as Abraham went through the agony of so fearful an anticipation, the parting with his own, his dearest, his only begotten one, he came to understand, as in no other way he could have understood, something of that Divine anguish which wrung the heart of God, when in compassion for perishing humanity, He sent forth Christ to a death of obloquy, suffering and shame! "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"

II. The Work of Abraham's Faith.

"By faith . . . he offered up Isaac . . . he offered up his only begotten son."

We have seen something of the purpose of a tested faith. We turn now to see what it was that Abraham was actually called upon to do. What was it that Abraham was asked to surrender? It was not a matter of sin, or some evil habit, that he was told to forsake. It was not the matter of some good thing, which though not in itself evil, might be a hindrance in his heavenly race. It was not some temporal blessing that God had bestowed upon him, and now thought fit to take away for his eternal well-being. It was not even some spiritual experience that God proposed to withhold from His servant.

Had faith been tested thus, reason could have raised no valid objection! No, Abraham was called upon to offer up something far different, even his own beloved son, Isaac, the one God had given him, the one miraculously born, the one in whom all the promises of God were vested, the one without whom even God could not fulfil what He had pledged, the one through whom the promised posterity was to come, the one for whom he had waited so long, the one for whom even Sarah had been enabled to believe, the one in whom all his hopes were centred, the one without whom his own name could never become great and he could never be a blessing to the world, the one in whose interest he had cast out Ishmael from his home, his all in all, the apple of his eye, Isaac, who had filled his soul with joy; Isaac, the one they had named Laughter—"for God had made them laugh." Could it be possible? Could this be what God commanded? Could this be the way of faith? Was it not fanaticism, fear, hallucination, delusion, that made him hear what he thought was the voice of God?

Nay more, was it not altogether contrary to the character of Jehovah, as hitherto revealed, to make so extraordinary and so extravagant a demand? What would the heathen say? How should he answer the calumny of a scoffing world? Was not Jehovah after all only a deity like one of their own? These and a thousand other such perplexities must have besieged Abraham's soul.

All this added to the bitter grief of losing his beloved child, the sorrow of his mother, the pathetic submission of the boy himself prepared to obey his father even unto death, was enough to unnerve and crush the strongest, stoutest heart.

Such was the work that Abraham's faith had to do; such was the suffering, the strain and the test it had to endure. What has all this to do with us? In what sense can this story of Abraham bring any practical vital lesson to our own heart? Shall we ever be called upon to make any such sacrifice? What does it all mean in present day spiritual experience?

As we have already seen, the miraculous birth of Isaac is typical of that great and vital experience, an Indwelling Christ, revealed and formed within the heart, living and dwelling there, rejoicing, empowering and inspiring the secret springs of the soul. Without this a walk with God and a life of soul-winning are impossible!

Are we to infer then that this has to be surrendered? Yes, even this may become an idol; our deepest spiritual experiences, our conscious enjoyment of Christ's presence, if regarded as ends in themselves, the beauty which the Lord has put upon us, may turn into corruption, when we make a spiritual subjective experience, rather than the objective Christ Himself, our satisfaction and joy.

God would have Abraham, for a while at least, walk by

naked faith, stripped of all natural comfort, "that his hope and faith might be in God." That our life in God may be yet more abundant, the Lord has often to treat us so, that our joy, as well as our hope and faith, may be in God and God alone. He asks us to surrender even our happiest moods and subjective experiences, not indeed that He may take them from us for ever, but that He may give them back to us once more in fuller, deeper, purer measure. In Abraham's case, God never suffered the sacrifice to be made. When he was willing and obedient, the Lord was satisfied. As father and son came down together from Mt. Moriah that day, their hearts must have been filled with a rest and calm ineffable, that no words can describe. These then are the secrets of "life more abundant." In this connection I cannot refrain from quoting some remarkable words of John Wesley ; writing on a somewhat different subject, that of "good works" as the fruit of a living faith, he says :—

"Good works do not receive their last perfection till they, as it were, lose themselves in God. This is a kind of death to them, resembling that of our own bodies, which will not attain their highest life, their immortality, till they lose themselves in the glory of God, wherewith they shall be filled. . . . This cannot be done otherwise than by making them (i.e., our good works) in a spiritual manner die to God, by a deep gratitude, which plunges the soul in Him, as in an abyss, with all that it is and all the grace and works for which it is indebted to Him—a gratitude whereby the soul seems to empty itself of them, that they may return to their source, as rivers seem willing to empty themselves, when they pour themselves with all their waters into the sea.

"When we have received any favour from God we ought to retire, if not into our own closets, at any

rate into our hearts, and say, ' I come O Lord, to restore to Thee what Thou hast given ; and I freely relinquish it, to enter again into my own nothingness. For what is the most perfect creature in heaven or earth in Thy presence, but a void capable of being filled with Thee and by Thee ; as the air which is void and dark, is capable of being filled with the light of the sun, who withdraws it every day to restore it the next, there being nothing in the air that either appropriates this light or restores it. Oh, give me this same facility of receiving and restoring Thy grace and good works. I say, *Thine* ; for I acknowledge the root from which they spring is in Thee and not in me."

So it is that in seeking " life more abundant," God becomes our All and in all.

He emptied my hands of my treasure store
 And His covenant grace revealed ;
 There was not a wound in my aching heart
 But the balm of His breath had healed.
 Oh ! tender and true was the chastening sore
 In wisdom that taught and tried,
 Till the soul that He sought was trusting in Him
 And nothing on earth beside.

III. The Basis of Abraham's Faith.

" Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead."

And now we seek to discover what it was that warranted so mighty a faith as this, and enabled the patriarch to be obedient unto death. That he actually believed the sacrifice had to be made, there can be no doubt whatever. That he talked it over with his beloved boy and had his willing submissive co-operation, is equally probable.

What was it then that made him walk up the mountain side that day with so unfaltering a step ? What was it that steadied the hand uplifted to slay ? Our text gives us

the answer. He "accounted that God was able to raise him up even from the dead." He firmly believed that for him the first Easter morn would be on the morrow; or that God would raise his boy from the dead that very day. We know that this was in his mind, when he said to the young men waiting at the foot of the hill, "I and the lad will go yonder and WE . . . WILL COME AGAIN TO YOU" (Gen. xxii. 5, R.V.). Had Abraham any warrant from experience for expecting such a miracle? Had any ever been raised from the dead in those parts hitherto? We are not told so? But he had other evidence; he had other warrant for his faith? Had ever child been born so miraculously as his? If God could produce life in so barren a soil as Sarah's womb, most assuredly could He give "life more abundant," even a resurrection from the dead.

Many a time in those long waiting days must he have wondered why God delayed the fulfilment of His promise; sorely tempted had he been to murmur and to despair. But since then he had praised God ten thousand times that the birth had been delayed, and that the child was not given till all possibility of natural generation had ceased. Every day as he looked at him, he was reminded of God's miracle-working power, and knew beyond all doubt that the promises of God would be fulfilled. Had Isaac been born in accordance with the ordinary laws of nature, many and many a time would Abraham have had cause to wonder, whether after all his expectations were not founded on some hallucination, or the unwarranted optimism of his own imagination. Such then was the basis of Abraham's faith. He "accounted that God was able to raise him up even from the dead," and such accounting was warranted by the miracle of Isaac's birth.

Is it too profane an illustration to suggest that the naked blade in Abraham's hand that day, was not much more than the surgeon's knife? Bending over his patient, the skilful surgeon knows it is necessary to wound and wound deeply. The patient, unconscious and almost as good as dead, lies helpless under his hand; but the surgeon's skill, based on a long and varied experience, enables him to use the knife in intrepid fashion, because he knows the sufferer will come to life again and walk abroad once more.

In Abraham's case there was no confidence in any skill or miracle-working power of his own. His confidence was in his God, the great Physician. He believed in "the power of *His* resurrection." He "accounted that God was able to raise him up even from the dead," and so, in obedience to the Physician's word, he lifted his hand to make the fatal wound. But the Physician suffered it not. No, His power to raise from the dead must be reserved for a later day, when the Prince of Life and Lord of Glory should come and demonstrate to God's universe, that "He alone is the resurrection and the life," and that we, "who by Him believe in God that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory," should "have all our faith and hope in God." The miracle of the Resurrection has its basis in the miracle of the Incarnation. If the latter be true the former necessarily follows.

IV. The Secret of Abraham's Faith.

"By faith . . . he gladly received the promises."—xi. 17, R.V.

And now as we look once more on the features of this prince among men, we ask whence came these secret springs of faith? Where lay the secret of his strength more mighty

than that of Samson? Again our text makes it plain. Abraham "gladly received the promises." "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." The word *ἀναδέχομαι* has a variety of meaning, "to welcome, to receive kindly, to undertake, to assume the responsibility of," etc., suggestive of that still stranger word employed in verse 13, where Abraham was said to "greet from afar" the promise of God. As he rose up and went to his tent door to welcome his heavenly visitors and, as Rahab of a later day, "received the messengers" (Jas. ii. 25) with peace, so Abraham "received gladly" and welcomed into the sanctuary of his soul the promises of God. The particular promise that fortified his faith and burned like a constant flame within, was "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." It was this that made him cry out like Job, "Though He slay me (i.e., in Abraham's case, his son) yet will I trust Him." "Whatever temporarily happens to him, matters not," he cried, "because God has pledged that he is to be the one, in whom all my seed shall be called. Isaac *has to be* one of the foundations of the City of God! Has not God 'willing more abundantly to shew unto me an heir of the promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by *two* immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie I might have a STRONG consolation. . . .'" The secret springs of Abraham's faith then lay away back in his earlier days. He had received ineradicably the words and promises of Jehovah. They had sunk deeply into his soul. They were a rock immovable, a light that could not be put out, his meat night and day, they were "exceeding great, and precious."

The Lord Jesus in His High Priestly prayer, as recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St. John, had only one thing to say to His Father in praise of His disciples, "*They have*

received My words." There was no mention of their having forsaken all to follow Him, no eulogy of their consecration, their zeal, their love, or their devotion. The only thing that commended them to God's infinite grace, was that they had "received the words" of the Saviour. Tens of thousands had heard these same words: thousands had wondered and admired them; thousands more had understood them; hundreds had profited by their healing power; but it was only a little flock, a small company that had "*received them,*" deeply into their soul. This was the Saviour's joy, "They have received My words." Oh! the power of His promises! Oh! the folly of men, with whom the word of man has such weight, causing them to fear or smile, to come or go, fly or follow, to rejoice or despair, and yet who pay no heed to the Word of the living God, and trample under foot the exceeding great and precious promises of His Divine Son.

God still talks to men. This is the main theme of the Hebrew Epistle. He talks to men in clearer fashion than He did of old, because He "speaks to us by His Son."

Faith can only come by "hearing" this His Word, the Eternal Word, Jesus the Son of God, in Whom all the promises of God are Yea and Amen.

God still speaks thus to men, and though the story I am about to relate has very little parallel in many respects to that of Abraham, yet in one issue it is so strikingly illustrative that I offer no apology for narrating it here.

Mr. N. was a poor hopeless, profligate drunkard, and deserted on that account by his wife; he had an only child, a little girl to whom he was passionately devoted. Fully conscious of his own wretched wickedness, he was determined if possible to protect her from evil, and see as far as he could, that she grew up to be a good woman!

Though knowing nothing of Christianity and caring less, he was influenced to send her to a Christian Sunday School. The child was impressed with all she heard, and never rested till her father was brought under the sound of the Gospel at our Kobe Mission Hall. He came, listened, learned of the way of salvation, and was interested, but never dared to start heavenwards. Not long afterwards, he was held up in a crowd over some rice riots. The police having to arrest some, included him among the number, though he was entirely innocent of any attempt to stir up the crowd. He was given three years penal servitude. In prison he found himself more than satisfied, as he had no temptation to drink and debauchery, and told the warder he really wished he could stay on at this Government institution !

The authorities soon saw that they had on their hands the wrong man, and that evidently he was no rice-rioter. They trusted him and gave him some considerable licence, eventually reducing his sentence by half.

In the meanwhile Mr. M., one of our evangelists, visited him, and though visitors generally are only allowed to see prisoners in the presence of one or two warders, he was permitted to have a private talk. Mr. M., himself a monument of divine grace, led him to Christ.

Coming out of prison he was baptised, and at once began to testify freely of what the Lord had done for him, in the open air. Shortly afterwards he was attacked with cancer of the tongue. He visited several hospitals. The doctors all pronounced his case hopeless : so advanced was the disease that he was unable to swallow even a little milk. But the miraculous happened. At the weekly prayer meeting he asked for special prayer. The prayer of faith was prayed ; and at once he found himself able to swallow with comparative ease. From that moment the

healing commenced. Within a few weeks the whole thing had disappeared. With renewed joy and zeal he began to testify not only to God's saving but to His healing power.

It was not long after this that his one and only child, the apple of his eye, was taken ill with a serious disease, and after a long and tedious illness passed away in wonderful triumph as they sang at her bedside, at her own request, a hymn of the Lord's Coming. Her death nearly broke his heart : all the joy passed out of his life. Nothing seemed to console him ; and finally he determined to take his own life. Writing a letter leaving all his earthly belongings to his neighbours, he stole out one dark night to the seashore. And yet, before he plunged into his watery grave, he thought, " Well ! I must pray ! " The thought of suicide is so common and so ingrained in Japanese human nature that even in the minds of Christians, if young and uninstructed, it is hardly regarded as sinful. He knelt on the seashore, wind and wave sounding his death-knell, and cried somewhat as follows to God : " Life is no more worth living. You have taken from me the desire of my eyes, my only joy and treasure, my only child. Please take me to be with her in heaven." And like a flash of lightning God spoke, yes, spoke to him in and " through His Son." By the Holy Ghost he was shewn in a way he had never even dreamed of hitherto, the LOVE THAT GAVE JESUS TO DIE.

It seemed as though God said to him, " You murmur and complain that I have taken from you your dear one. What about My Beloved Son, Whom I spared not for your and her salvation ? "

Once more, as with Abraham of old, through *experience*, bitter, sad, heart-breaking *experience*, the Lord saw fit to reveal to this erstwhile poor drunken heathen, the unsearch-

able riches of His grace and love in giving His only begotten Son for perishing men and women.

He sprang to his feet and, abandoning for ever all thoughts of suicide, he hastily returned home to destroy his farewell letter. From that night he entered upon a new life indeed, to witness not only of God's saving and healing power, but of His sanctifying and satisfying Presence. He has pointed many to Christ since that day. So it is that once more there has sprung from one, and him as good as dead, spiritual sons and daughters, to be a praise unto the God of Abraham.

Only last night it was a touching sight to see him and a fellow Christian, another ex-jail bird, with a story even more remarkable than his own, after giving their testimony, leading another poor prodigal, just out of prison, to the feet of the Saviour.

God still speaks: and His voice is ever as from the beginning through His Son.

CHAPTERS EIGHT AND NINE.

The
Dynamic in Death

CHAPTER VIII. ISAAC : BLESSING HIS SONS.

CHAPTER IX. JACOB : BLESSING HIS GRANDSONS.

“ Oh ! gift of gifts ! Oh ! grace of faith !
My God, how can it be,
That Thou, Who hast discerning Love,
Should'st give that gift to me ?
“ How many hearts Thou might'st have had
More innocent than mine !
How many souls more worthy far
Of that sweet touch of Thine !
“ Ah ! Grace into unlikeliest hearts,
It is thy boast to come ;
The glory of thy light to find
In darkest spots a home.
“ Oh ! happy, happy, that I am !
If thou canst be, O faith,
The treasure that thou art in life,
What wilt thou be in death.”

—FABER.

CHAPTER VIII.

ISAAC : BLESSING HIS SONS.

"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come."—HEB. xi. 20, R.V.

IN the present volume, we are seeking to illustrate from Scripture the truth that in every step of the believer's life and in every phase of Christian experience, in every crisis of Divine leading, faith is the dominant factor, the great dynamic whereby in all things we are able to live a life well-pleasing to God.

Life from the cradle ("By faith Moses, when he was *born*") to the grave ("By faith Jacob, when he was *dying*"), and every phase of experience between these two terminals, has to be dominated by the Divine Spirit, operating in response to faith in the soul.

We turn now to another pair of portraits in our Gallery, Isaac and Jacob, both of whom are members of Abraham's family. I have elsewhere spoken of them as death-bed scenes. This is hardly accurate in Isaac's case, for though he was on the brink of the grave ("Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim so that he could not see"), yet it was not till some years later that he joined the great majority. However, for the purpose of illustrating the point I propose to emphasise, it is to all intents true.

In the life of Isaac, as recorded in Genesis, there are but four outstanding incidents,—his miraculous birth, his sacrificial offering on Mt. Moriah, his betrothal, and the blessing of his sons. It is the last of these that the Holy Ghost selects to illustrate the mighty power of faith: and we thank God that it is so!

To how many thousands of God's aged servants has this single verse been a blessing untold. If these words shall meet the eye of some such, may they bring again a message of encouragement and inspiration. Yes, even "in the day when the keeper of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few and those that look out of the windows be darkened; and the doors shall be shut in the streets when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird and all the daughters of music shall be brought low . . . the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail, because man goeth to his long home and the mourners go about the streets"; yes, even then (for Isaac was just there), it is possible to do exploits that the Holy Ghost deems fit to put on an eternal record. Isaac's eyes were dim and his natural force abated. But his vision of heavenly things was keen and clear, his spiritual force failed him not. Faith, the great dynamic of his life, inspired him still. "By faith he blessed his sons."

Has *our* day gone? Are we at the end of the road? Has God nothing more for us to do? We can no longer work or toil for the Master? We seem a burden to those around us; we have to be tended almost as assiduously as at the beginning of our pilgrimage when we were yet in the cradle. The only thing we have to look forward to is the great assize, "the judgment seat of Christ," when we have to give an account of what we have done in the body. Is there nothing more in which we can bring glory to God before we go hence and be no more seen? Let Isaac teach us! Let the portrait of the aged patriarch declare the wondrous grace of God. As long as we are in the flesh, as long as our poor "vile body" is on the earth, the Holy Ghost can strengthen the enfeebled brain, and quicken the

failing heart and inspire the dull desire, to see eternal things and by faith bless God's chosen servants " even concerning things to come."

The verse that stands at the head of our chapter, in the original contains but eleven words. And yet in them what a wealth of meaning lies enshrined !

I. " **By Faith Isaac blessed . . .** "

To a superficial reader of the Scripture familiar with the story as told in Genesis xxvii., this statement must appear one of the most amazing and incredible in Holy Writ. He would naturally say, " Well, if there ever was an incident in Scripture where faith was lacking, surely it is in the narrative of Isaac blessing his sons ! The old man was utterly deceived ; he imagined he was blessing his firstborn Esau, when in reality the younger boy was fooling the father and robbing his brother of his rights. In what possible sense, can it be truthfully said that " Isaac blessed his sons *by faith* " ? That he had blessed them " *by accident* " would surely have been a statement nearer the truth ! In what sense can it be said that Isaac was inspired by faith in the matter ?

The exercise of Isaac's faith was not the mere expression of a pious wish : and it was not an earnest prayer, or a longing desire ; it was not a passionate entreaty for the bestowal of God's blessing : it was not mere haphazard guess-work as to the probable turn of coming events. It was none of these, all of which might have found expression in the patriarch's heart and lip, without any exercise of faith at all. No, no it was of a deeper and a different kind. The old man had the clearest vision of things to come ; he had an understanding of God's mind and purpose as to the

portions provided for both the older and the younger sons respectively.

He knew furthermore, beyond all possibility of misconception, that God's promised portion for the firstborn was unalterable; he realised still further the wonderful privilege which he as father had of conveying and confirming that portion. He knew that when the blessing had been bestowed, even by so poor a representative of God as himself, it was irrevocable. Had the blessing which he pronounced over Jacob been merely a pious wish, an earnest prayer, a devout hope, or some passionate entreaty, as indeed *our* prayers mostly are, he could and would have revoked and cancelled it all, as soon as he discovered his mistake; but no, it could not be! His prayer was prayer in the Holy Ghost. He had conveyed and confirmed what God had provided and promised and now unalterably bestowed. I repeat it. His prayer, if such the blessing he pronounced may be called, was prayer in the Holy Ghost; it was no glib pronouncement of the first thing that came into his head; no, nor even of some carefully premeditated sentiment. By faith in God's ways, by faith in God's provision, by faith in God's promises, by faith in God's amazing grace in allowing a poor fallen creature of the dust to irrevocably convey the blessing, by faith in this his astonishing privilege, he blessed his sons "concerning things to come."

Yes, even though by a strange and untoward accident, nay more, by deceit and fraud, the blessing had been conveyed to the wrong recipient, it could not be undone. No cancellation or revocation was possible; so assured was the old man of his privilege and power to convey and confirm, that he dare not alter the thing that had gone out of his lips.

There is no evidence in Scripture that Isaac was acquainted with what had transpired between Jacob and Esau in their younger days. Esau had deliberately sold his birthright and the wonderful honour of being a progenitor of the Hebrew race for a mess of pottage. Of that honour he must have been familiar. It is inconceivable that he should not have heard from parents and grandparents alike the future destiny of the Hebrew people, and the glory of being one of its progenitors. But, alas ! it was all nothing to him ! At that time no doubt he saw no connection between the "birthright" and the "blessing," though he might have known that with the loss of the former, that of the latter was a foregone conclusion. Alas ! he had no cause for complaint ! He had only himself and his folly to blame for the disaster.

Of that tragedy the old man knew nothing, and so when he discovered the fraud that had been so ruthlessly palmed off upon him, he left the matter in the hands of God. No doubt he recalled his own experience, remembering that Ishmael, the firstborn, had been set aside by God in his own favour. He could not understand the mysterious ways of Providence, but he left these eternal issues in His hand. The strange mistake had arisen through no fault of his own. The matter was beyond both his ken and his power ; and so he left it there. "By faith" in God's unscrutable ways "he blessed his sons."

II. By Faith Isaac blessed his sons.

I have already emphasised the fact that, the blessing of Jacob and Esau was not the expression of a pious wish or the offering up of an earnest prayer on their behalf. It was rather a prophetic utterance, a conveyance of a Divine provision, already settled in heaven. It was a case of

“commanding the blessing,” as the Psalmist says. In olden times this seems to have been a usual practice at the deathbeds of patriarchal saints.

Is it a lost art with us? Has that power been withdrawn? We think not. There is much in the New Testament that would suggest that power to “command the blessing” and to communicate our own faith to others is vouchsafed to the man who walks with God.

The Lord Jesus spoke on more than one occasion of this strange and blessed power. He called it “saying faith” as distinct from “praying faith.” “If,” said He, “you shall have faith as a grain of mustard, ye shall SAY unto this sycamine tree, be thou plucked up by the root” (Luke xvii. 6); and again, “If ye have faith and doubt not . . . ye shall SAY unto this mountain, Be thou removed . . .” (Mark xi. 21); and then He adds, as though it were something distinct, “and all things whatsoever ye shall ask in PRAYER, believing,” etc. (ver. 22).

The apostles in most cases did not pray over the sick, but they spoke the word; like the Lord Jesus Himself, they “commanded the blessing” and it was done.

Peter, in healing the lame man at the temple gate, said, “Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee,” and disclaiming still further the possession of any stock of holiness or power in himself, went on to say that what he had given the man, was “faith in the name.” He had communicated this blessed power to the poor cripple.

St. Paul prays for Philemon that he too might have power to communicate his faith to others making it effectual by the acknowledgment that every good thing within him was in and through the Lord Jesus.

The Lord’s wonderful commission to His disciples that, when filled with the Holy Ghost, they could remit and

retain sin, seems to shew that He expects us to "command the blessing," to repent and confess and BELIEVE on behalf of the would-be penitent. This is the privilege of the man who walks with God !

"Have the faith of God," said the Lord Jesus to His disciples who expressed surprise that at the mere WORD of Christ the fig-tree had been suddenly withered. "The faith of God," the faith that God had and exercised, can be none other than faith in His own word when He said, "Let there be light," and there was light. It can be none other than the faith which He had in His beloved Son, when He sent Him forth to die for a ruined world. It can be none other than the faith He had in the Holy Ghost, when He sent Him forth on the day of Pentecost to do His mighty work. Oh ! that we may have this faith in the Word, in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, so that we too may "command the blessing" and speak the word of power.

III. "He blessed his sons . . . concerning things to come."

What then was the "commanded blessing" that Isaac was able to convey and confirm to his sons ? The Holy Ghost emphasises in the Hebrew letter that it was "concerning things to come," and it is of this that we propose to speak.

Turning back to the Genesis narrative, we find that in Jacob's case the blessing was repeated. (Esau, on the other hand, received only one benediction.) The first occasion is narrated in chap. xxvii. 28, 29 ; the second in chap. xxviii. 3, 4. As in all Jewish outlook the promised blessing was in terms of temporal prosperity, and though it was "concerning things to come," it had in Isaac's mind

no doubt only reference to the material increase and power of the Hebrew race.

We however, with history behind us, can see a double fulfilment. God had promised that Abraham's seed should not only be as the sand by the seashore (an earthly race), but also as the stars in heaven for multitude (a heavenly people). The word of promise, as inspired by the Holy Ghost, had a far deeper and wider and fuller content than Isaac ever knew.

In chap. xxviii. 3, 4 the blessing which Isaac gave to his son on the eve of his departure is fuller and more explicit than that narrated in chap. xxvii. Its terms are threefold :—

(1) The increase and material prosperity of Jacob's posterity.

(2) The blessing of his grandfather, Abraham.

(3) The possession of the promised land.

We have already alluded to the spiritual interpretation of these terms. The phrase, however, "the blessing of Abraham" (xxviii. 4), quoted by the Apostle Paul in Gal. iii. 14, is so striking that we refer to it for a moment. "The blessing of Abraham" can surely mean none other than "justification by faith." This is the foundation blessing of all the true Israel of God. That blessing was not confined to Abraham alone, as the Apostle reminds us when he says, "It (i.e., faith) was imputed to him (Abraham) for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone . . . but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

Isaac makes no mention of himself, or the share that he had in making history. He stakes all his hope and expectation on the blessing promised and vouchsafed to his father

Abraham. But as I have observed, it is to the aspect of " things to come " that the Holy Ghost draws our special attention, so that we need not dwell on any other, as we look once more at the portrait of this great historical figure.

Jacob and Esau were still young men standing on the threshold of life. To them the present was the supreme reality. Doubtless their interest in " things to come " was comparatively lukewarm, though in Jacob's bosom the honour of the birthright must have already begun to burn as a beacon fire.

Isaac, on the other hand, was standing at the exit of life. His pilgrimage was almost over. Life and all its solemnities, life and all its vanities were passing like a panorama before him. Nay more, life with all its privileges, opportunities, and responsibilities now appeared in all its startling perspective silhouetted against the coming glory ; things that most suppose for ever dead, to Isaac were alive once more, rapidly moving toward him, to appear as witnesses at the great assize, when he must stand to receive good or bad at the hands of his righteous Judge.

Alas ! to most men as their exodus draws near, Life appears but a dream, a reverie, a memory and a regret. It was Lord Beaconsfield, another illustrious Israelite, who at the close of his pilgrimage exclaimed, " Youth is a mistake, middle life a struggle, old age a regret " !

Thank God, these were not the reflections of his great forbear ; for he had a vision of " things to come," and saw that those things are being constructed out of things present. The passing and ephemeral things of time and sense, if handled aright, and moulded by the Divine Workman, can be transformed into eternal realities never to perish. No wonder he blessed his sons " concerning things to come," if so be that his boys might understand that " he

that doeth the will of God," even in this passing present, " abideth for ever."

With most of us life is a very individual thing. Our salvation and our whole Christian life even are merely personal matters. We do indeed understand that we are members of a whole, but in most cases it hardly interests us. Our work, our service too are terribly individualistic. We are concerned, desperately concerned with the things and people in our own vicinity. We fail, pitifully fail to see our position in the whole scheme of things, the importance of things to come and our relationship thereto.

Isaac knew well enough that, though to most life in this present evil world is but a passing show, yet to the saint of God doing His will, every act and word and thought has a profound significance in relation to future events, and can never be isolated from " things to come." For it is only as we keep our eyes on the future, seeing the relationship of the individual to the whole, that we can properly estimate the value of our life and the service that God has committed to our charge.

The Apostle Paul, though never underrating the importance of the present, the duty of the moment, the value of individualism whether in the person or the group, yet never lost sight of " things to come " ; he saw the future Kingdom and beheld the Church, the Bride, the Body of Christ as one glorious whole ; and with that vision realised the value and importance of every unit that goes to make up that whole.

As we have seen in the story of Abraham, he also beheld the city, its architect, its builder, and its foundations. He beheld the whole.

Isaac is no longer on the foothills of life. They are all

behind him now. He turns and looks backward, and then peering into the future sees with prophetic vision the life and character of Abraham his father stretching as far as eye can see, on and ever on into the future,—still moving and influencing men and generations yet unborn. He sees and knows that one day there will be a glorious resurrection ; every living stone prepared for the walls of the new Jerusalem shall be fitted into its place : he understands, what we too in this a brighter day ought to understand, that “ things to come ” are the real things, and though moulded and shaped by the Divine Architect, are made of materials gathered from the present.

Jacob went on his way. In what sense the blessing commanded was an effective thing and a vital experience his subsequent life revealed. From that day forward he passed through many vicissitudes. He had many a failure. His life was a strangely eventful one. As he left his father's tent, his primary object was to escape the anger of his brother, make his fortune in the land of his forbears, and incidentally to find a wife and make a home. But God was with him. He met him at the very outset of his journeyings. Indeed Jacob's first night at Bethel, sleeping on mother earth and seeing a ladder set up to heaven, was the night of his conversion. He had had no vital firsthand spiritual experience till that time ; but from that night onward he was born from above. The blessing of his father was confirmed. The God of Abraham and the blessing of Abraham were his ; and though he had much to learn through painful experience, the “ God of Jacob ” was with him ; and we find him years later, as he too drew near to the “ great divide,” fully conscious of the glory of his position, and empowered, like his father before him, to bless the sons of Joseph, as he lay dying in the land of

Egypt, with the very blessing that he had received from Isaac.

As we stand in silence before the portrait of the patriarch, holding in our hands his cryptic epitaph, does he not speak across these many millennia to our hearts? What does he say?

He bids us first ourselves get and maintain a vision of things to come, and in our life work see its relation to the final purposes of God. This will enable us to see it also in its relation to the life work of others. We shall see the whole glorious edifice, the City of God coming down out of heaven, constructed of materials gathered here on earth. Such a vision in the power of the Holy Ghost will be beatific indeed, transforming our lives, sanctifying our motives, inspiring our thought, filling us with praise and adoration, and ever urging us onward to redeem the time and "gather up the fragments that none of them be lost."

Secondly, he reminds us that we too have the power by faith to communicate this vision to others. God has ordained us, commissioned us and empowered us to bring down blessing on others: we can "command Him concerning the works of His hands." We can believe for others; we can say, "Be thou removed," "Be thou plucked up," "Be filled with the Spirit," "Be thou clean," and it shall be done.

Again I repeat it. Oh! for a holy ambition to imitate this "cloud of witnesses," and ere we pass away from this "bourne of time and sense," when we shall have no more the privilege of believing our God, press on in the race for the obtaining of the heavenly prize.

Again I want to impress on my reader that these things are not mere tales of other and bygone days. The Holy Ghost is always up to date. I have never been so deeply

impressed with the commanding power of faith as on my recent visit to Japan.

Palm Sunday, April 5th, 1914, there came into the tent pitched where our Mission Hall now stands, a poor drunkard, an artist by profession, utterly unacquainted with the barest elements of Christianity. That night he was arrested by the Spirit of God and truly converted. I have written of his conversion elsewhere, as well as of the glorious baptism of the Holy Ghost which he received some four or five years later. (See "Dynamic of Service," pp. 101, 239, 240.)

After the latter experience he was at once commissioned and thrust forth into a remarkable ministry. Alas! that ministry was all too short. He passed away to his heavenly home soon after I had returned to England in 1925.

As I have moved about and seen the result of his service, the thing that has impressed me most is the "authority" of faith, of which I have been writing. He seemed to speak the word and it was done,—the Lord working with him, and signs following. Men who are now pastors of some twenty-six churches, all brought to Christ through him, corroborate my story. His converts, at least those whom I have met, all impress me with the depth of the Spirit's work in their soul; while those upon whom he laid his hands for healing (and they are many) live to testify of the power of God operating in obedience to his commanding faith. One, a doctor, given up by his colleagues, suffering from acute kidney trouble, delights to tell of God's healing power.

Another, the head of two hospitals with a large nurses' training institute, one of the leading physicians in one of the largest cities in the Empire, a man of long and varied experience, with an American medical diploma, originally a Naval Surgeon and sent by the Admiralty to take a special

course in London, was naturally sceptical of anything like Divine healing. Earnest Christian as he was, becoming convinced by what he saw and heard, and determined to investigate still further, he followed Mr. Tsuge round and heard him speak on seventy different successive occasions, but never once did he hear him repeat himself or use the same passage of Scripture a second time. That a man unlettered as Mr. Tsuge was (he had received no education after the age of fifteen), could hold the attention of his congregations riveted by his words, see sinners converted at every meeting, saints sanctified, not to mention the remarkable cases of healing on every hand, without ever repeating himself, was enough to convince any sceptic that he had received the anointing of the Holy Ghost in an uncommon measure. So convinced was Dr. —, that he built a place of worship for his converts on his own property, and often invited him to come and pray for patients in his hospitals.

The brother-in-law of this physician, a wealthy financier, condemned to death from internal cancer by Tokyo specialists, was raised up in answer to his prayer of faith and is alive to-day, though well advanced in years, to tell of God's mighty power.

Only yesterday I was spending the day with this very doctor (he is an old and much esteemed friend). Knowing of his wide experience in matters medical as well as Christian living, I asked him to tell me of instances of what God had done through our brother, Mr. T., which had come under his personal observation.

He was willing and enthusiastic enough to respond to my inquiries. One of his own daughters, for whom both he and his two sons (both surgeons with diplomas from leading American Universities) were absolutely convinced

that an immediate operation for appendicitis was imperative, was instantaneously raised up after Mr. T. had prayed the prayer of faith. His wife, a most devoted and earnest Christian lady, was similarly healed of a chronic and apparently incurable malady.

Another of his sons, while experimenting in a laboratory, got a piece of glass embedded in his eye. This caused excruciating agony. The leading oculists of this city were consulted, but they failed to remove the splinter. Our brother Tsuge laid his hands upon him, and by the commanding prayer of faith the pain instantly ceased, and from that day to this he has had no further pain or inconvenience.

We were riding together in his car at the time of our conversation. He suddenly told his chauffeur to stop: and stepping out of the car we called at the house of a lady some sixty years of age. She came out to greet me, and then told me her story of how her breast had been cut to pieces in the attempt to remove a malignant cancer. She had had five operations in all, and finally when the knife could do no more a fierce treatment of radium proved equally unavailing. She unbared her bosom and shewed me the scars of knife and fire. The doctors assured her that nothing more could be done. My friend, Dr. S., was one of those who had originally diagnosed her case. Knowing nothing of the Gospel, she was induced to go to Mr. Tsuge. Hearing of her case, he laid his hands upon her and with the prayer of faith brought the mighty healing power of God into her poor afflicted body. This was the means of her turning to the Lord; and her radiant face told me she had found Him as mighty a Physician for her soul as He had been for her body. For five years she has been proving His power to satisfy as well as heal.

On our way to the station the next morning the chauffeur again pulled up the car at the door of one of the leading professional men of the city, and his wife came out to greet us. She too had been healed of internal cancer some six years previously through our brother's prayer of faith.

These are only a few instances of God's healing power in answer to the commanding of Mr. Tsuge's believing prayer. And yet this was not his most important work. He was commissioned to preach the saving grace of God to sinners, and the sanctifying baptism of the Holy Ghost to God's people.

At his death some twenty-six churches had been formed, all of them self-supporting. Not a farthing did he or his churches receive from any foreign Missionary Society.

His home-going was a glorious victory, but attended with a strange pathos. He himself, so mightily used of God in the healing of others and especially of cancer, was struck down with that very disease. When he realised what it was, in an agony of soul he besought the Lord to let him die any death but that. A martyr's death, he said, however painful, he would gladly die, but for the honour of His name as a testimony to God's healing power to which he had so faithfully borne witness, he entreated the Lord with strong crying and tears, that he might be raised up again from the bed of that sickness. This petition God graciously granted, and for another year he moved hither and thither, urgently pleading with sinners to be saved and saints to be sanctified. It was during that year, some three months before he actually passed away, that the lady whose case of restoration and healing I have already described in a preceding chapter occurred.

Excessive labour, much prayer, little rest, brought him

low once more, and he passed away in a pæan of praise and victory to be with the Lord he served so faithfully.

The last occasion on which I saw him, was in his home, where sixty young people were residing to be taught the lessons of faith and prayer, that he had learned so well. He introduced me to them all as his spiritual father, and then, as we bowed in prayer (tears were streaming down my cheeks), he laid his hands of blessing on my head. We parted. I can see him still at his garden gate bidding me farewell, his uplifted hand ! his finger pointing to heaven ! We parted, never to meet again on this side of the river. But the " commandings of faith " of that erstwhile heathen drunkard, live ever with me, rebuking my unbelieving spirit and making me cry unto God, " Unprofitable servant ! Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his."

CHAPTER IX.

JACOB : BLESSING HIS GRANDSONS.

"By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."—HEB. xi. 21.

THERE is no name that occurs so frequently in the pages of Scripture as that of Isaac's son. Throughout he is called both Jacob and Israel. Nearly one thousand times do these two names appear. In this great Portrait Gallery, therefore, we should expect that the Holy Ghost would present us with some incident in his career to illustrate the meaning and power of life's great dynamic. That career was full of incident. His first experience at Bethel, his blessing at Peniel, and his second experience at Bethel, the tragedy of his bereavement, his meeting with Esau, all these and more were full of pathos and spiritual import: and yet they are all passed over, and as we turn aside from the portrait of his father Isaac, we are bidden to look on the picture of a dying man, and there behold perhaps the greatest triumph that faith can accomplish. What we have seen in the case of Isaac is truer still of Jacob. When man, feeble creation of the dust, is on the eve of returning to dust again, so long as he is in a state of consciousness it is but natural that he shall be concerned with his passage through the dark waters and what awaits him on the other side. But the believing soul cleaves not to the dust. "Jacob, when he was dying," was so at leisure from himself, freed from fears and misgivings that he too could "command the blessing" concerning things to come, in even fuller and more spiritual fashion than his father had done before him.

This triumph of faith in the face of the last great enemy

is so outstanding that the Holy Ghost presents us with three representations thereof. (Isaac, Jacob, Joseph.) On the epitaph that lies between the portraits of Sarah and Abraham, as we have already seen, are the words, " These *all* died in faith " (inclusive of Jacob). But here there is more. We are taken to Jacob's dying couch not only to see him dying in faith, conquering the last great enemy, but to see him more than conqueror, bringing down, conveying, confirming the blessing of eternal things upon his grandsons (semi-Gentiles though they were), and so upon all the subsequent Israel of God.

The point of emphasis is, of course, Jacob's faith. The light that shines upon his dying features is the light of faith. The canvas though several millennia have passed over it, is still radiant with this, its heavenly glory.

The picture is a striking study. Three generations,—father, son and grandsons are there. The cryptic description of the scene by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews draws our attention to three of its features :—

1. The two lads standing by their grandfather's dying bed.
2. The hands stretched crosswise to convey the blessing.
3. The old man's attitude of worship when he has finished his task.

These then,—The Blessed, The Blessing and The Blesser,—we will now consider in turn.

I. The Blessed.

" By faith Jacob blessed both the sons of Joseph."

We turn to the detailed story of the exodus of Jacob, and read of his closing hours in the forty-eighth and forty-ninth chapters of Genesis. As soon as it was known in the

court of Pharaoh that the old patriarch was breathing his last, Joseph, fully alive on the one hand to the realities of the patriarchal blessing, and on the other hand of the possibility of his sons who had been born of a Gentile mother, being excluded from the direct line of succession, hurried off with his two lads to the bedside of his dying father.

There was no movement on the part of his eleven brothers. Apparently they had no sense of the value and power of their father's blessing. There was, at any rate, no movement of faith in their souls. They had to be summoned by their father (chap. xlix. 1) to hear his dying charge. May we not suppose that if one or more among them had been alive to spiritual realities and, like Joseph, in a spirit of faith had entreated a blessing from their father, they would have received far more than the mere prophetic charge, in some instances nearer a curse than a blessing (see xlix. 4, 5-7, 17, 27), that he eventually pronounced over them. Oh! to realise the responsibility of believing God. A mere quiescent assumption that what comes to us is necessarily God's will for us, that fatal lethargy of spirit which robs so many of God's best, is not faith at all. Our business is to seek and find out what His will for us is, and then by strenuous, insistent activity of soul, plead and claim and receive, thus delighting our God, satisfying our own spirit, and stirring other lethargic souls to go and do likewise.

Hence it comes about that in the portrait before us, we see only the old man's grandsons standing at his bedside. His own sons are not there. The story of his prophetic charge delivered after he had summoned them, and as recorded in the forty-ninth chapter, finds no place in the great portrait gallery of our chapter.

The radiance of peace and joy on the countenance of

the dying patriarch, the earnest eager expectancy of faith in the eyes of his beloved son Joseph, the look of wonderment and surprise on the faces of the two lads, make a picture already beautiful in its setting still more beautiful.

A word of digression at this point, must not be regarded as out of place. Here, as in all Scripture, there is a prophetic as well as a historical and a spiritual significance. The two boys, Manasseh and Ephraim, are typical of the Church of Christ in this our age and dispensation. They were the sons of Joseph (Scripture's greatest type of Christ), born in Egypt, born of a Gentile mother, born after the tragedy of his humiliation, born after his exaltation. Joseph's brethren, on the other hand, who betrayed and sold him into Egypt, are the great type of Israel after the flesh, the present Jewish race still alienated from God.

The Church of Christ is made up of regenerate Jew and Gentile. The Jewish portion is the older, and so represented by Manasseh. The Gentile portion is the younger but the more numerous, and is represented by Ephraim. Hence the crossing of the patriarch's hands and the bestowal of the firstborn's inheritance on the younger son.

There is, alas ! to-day in England, a strange cult that fancies it sees in the Anglo-Saxon race its lineal descendancy from Israel. The people of the United States are supposed to be the posterity of Manasseh, while those of the British Isles are those of Ephraim ; and in so far as there is any consistency of exposition by the leaders of this extraordinary cult, the remaining eight tribes are supposed to be represented by the people of Europe. Why, therefore, the theory should be called British or Anglo-Israel it is difficult to understand. European-Israel or Americo-Israel would more accurately describe the situation. If this strange theory were true to facts, and thus practically all the inhabitants

of Europe and America are the descendants of the ten lost (*sic*) tribes, the puzzle would be—find the Gentiles!

The whole beauty of the spiritual type is marred by this crude and materialistic line of interpretation. It is sufficient to point out that it is accepted by very few of truly spiritual or deeply taught servants of God, while it is universally and totally rejected by all members of the Hebrew race, whether Jewish or Christian.

The same spirit of faith that enabled the dying patriarch to see and understand the will of God, moved mightily in the heart of his son Joseph, constraining him to bring his boys to receive the blessing. We would again emphasise what we pointed out in the preceding chapter, viz., the power to convey the blessing. The dying breath of Jacob was not a mere prayer or expression of spiritual longing on behalf of his two grandsons! With the opened eye of faith he saw eternal realities, he beheld the purposes of God, His will and His design; and so in the boldness and assurance of the Holy Ghost he commanded the blessing from above. His trembling voice, his feeble hands, his failing breath were the channels through which the blessings of eternity were conveyed both to the type and antitype, in the persons of the two lads born in Egypt.

II. The Blessing.

“By faith Jacob BLESSED . . .”

And now we inquire as to the nature of the blessing that he conveyed. We notice at once that it is more spiritual, more definite and more personal than that which he himself had received from his father Isaac. It is easy to follow the old man's thinking as we read the language of his lips. Every word he uttered tells us of the thoughts that hurried

through his heart. His own life, as well as that of his father and grandfather, were under review. The blessing he bestows is woven from materials of his family history. If I may so say, it was the blessing of heaven poured through the channel of human experience. It was no mere expression of theoretical or theological orthodoxy. It was the blessing of a man who experimentally knew the ways and grace and power of God. Can true faith ever work in any other fashion, or through any other channel? It is only the man who has known and walked with God, that can by faith bring down upon others a blessing which he himself, however inadequately, has experienced. The emphasis was not only, as in Isaac's case, on "things to come," but also on things that had been and on things that are. He first invokes the blessing of the Triune God, secondly he bequeaths them the legacy of his name, and finally prays that their posterity may be a multitude among the nations.

(1) *The Invocation of the Triune God.*

"God, before Whom my father Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day. The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads."

The God of Abraham (God the Father), The God of Isaac (God the Son), The God of Jacob (God the Holy Ghost); The God that led, the God that fed and the God that redeemed, bless the lads.

The benediction of the dying patriarch is no theological discourse, no invocation of a God far away, the great Creator of the Universe, the Lord of heaven and earth; no, it is warm and living, personal and experimental, the blessing of a God Who has been nigh to him and his fathers, the God of their homes, the Friend of their family, the

Companion of their journeyings, the Provider of their needs. We know not how far in those early days there was any clear understanding of the Trinity; but the saints of old spake more than they knew. In the charge vouchsafed to Moses, he was told to bless in the name of the Triune God (Num. vi. 24-26). All down through the ages, there have been those who have had the clearest understanding and experience of communion with each Person of the Trinity. Dr. Owen's quarto volume on "Communion with God," the writings of Marquis de Renty, who said he "ever carried about with him an experimental verity of the Trinity," the deathbed utterances of many of God's choicest saints bear witness thereto. Here are the dying words of one mightily used of the Lord in the nineteenth century:—

"Glory to Thee, O Father. Blessed be Thy name. Do not I love Thee, O my joy, with all the force left in my poor exhausted nature. Thou wilt let me glorify Thee in the death I die.

"Glory to Thee, O Christ! my strong Helper, I confide in Thee, I trust in Thee Whose face I shall behold in righteousness.

"Glory to Thee, O Holy Ghost. Thou art respondent to my faith. Thou art here, Thou art mine, Thou art my Comforter.

"Blessed Triune God!"

Jacob too, in those far off days, inspired by the same Holy Ghost, breathes the same ecstatic fire; and in it the humility that cannot be hid even in the cryptic phrasing of our text, shines with unusual brightness. While commanding the blessing of Abraham and Isaac upon the boys, he adds, "before Whom they walked." But he does not say this of himself. The remembrance of his own wayward running, his scheming, planning ways suffered him not to give so bold a testimony. Abraham and Isaac he knew

well enough had walked before Jehovah, but, as for himself, how could he ever say that *his* life has been " a walk before the Lord " ?

As he thinks of his *own* pilgrimage he says, " the God that fed me and the God that redeemed me from all evil." Yes, his mind went back to the deliverance God had vouchsafed him from the well-deserved wrath of his brother Esau, the bondage of Laban, and the terror of Shechem, brought upon himself by his own disobedience, the famine in Canaan, the sorrow of his bereavement. These and a thousand other redeeming mercies passed in review before the dying patriarch.

(2) *The Bestowal of the Name.*

" Let my name be named upon them and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac."

Jacob had little to leave his sons. In spite of all his worldly wisdom and clever ways, his wandering life closing with the famine in Canaan had left him but little with which to make his will. But he had one priceless legacy, the gift which God had given him, a new name, the name of " Israel," a prince with God. This was an eternal possession, that time could never take away, nor do aught to tarnish its splendour. The name too of his grandfather (Abraham (that also was a new name), the name of his father Isaac, " Laughter," the very names that God was not ashamed to affix to His own, he bequeathed to the lads. Long years after Moses was bidden of Jehovah thus to bless His people—" And thou shalt put My name upon the children of Israel and I will bless them." And many years later still the Lord of Glory bade His disciples go forth and baptise penitent believers into the name of the Father (Who saves from all care), the name of the Son (Who saves from

all guilt), and the name of the Holy Ghost (Who delivers from all sin), that we who are the saved of the Lord, might for ever bear the name " Sons of God " (for " He was not ashamed to be called our God "), " Brethren of Christ Jesus " (for He was " not ashamed to call us brethren "), " Temples of the Holy Ghost." Oh ! what a legacy is this ! Oh ! to make our boast in the names that God has put upon us and use them in prayer and intercession before Him, a heavenly talisman, wherewith to open all the treasure houses of eternity.

Why should I fret, for am I not a *son* of my Father ? Why should I doubt, for am I not a *brother* of the Lord ? Why should I be defeated or defiled, for am I not a *temple* of the Holy Ghost ? Oh, for the power by faith to put these gracious names and the blessings they connote on our own children, whether after the flesh or after the Spirit.

One other word before passing on. It is very striking to observe in the pages of Scripture, how frequently the phrase, " The God of Jacob," occurs ! What a heartening has this been to Christians of all time, if God had only been the God of Abraham, the spirit of many of us might well have failed. But that God could be Jacob's God and still be God, is a wonder enough to encourage the most despondent soul.

How Thou canst love me as Thou dost
And be the God Thou art,
Is darkness to my intellect,
But sunshine to my heart.

(3) *Prayer for Fruitfulness.*

" Let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

This was the third portion of the patriarch's blessing. The presence and blessing of Abraham's God, the legacy of

the new name giving power to prevail with Him in prayer, are crowned with the third great benediction, the increase of God's people. "The Israel of God" is the pregnant phrase which the Apostle Paul employs in speaking of the Church of Christ (Gal. vi. 16). How abundantly has this commanded blessing been realised. "Let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." With eyes dimmed with age and closing in death did the old man behold from afar that which was revealed to the seer on Patmos Isle? "After this I beheld a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues stood before the throne and before the Lamb clothed with white robes and palms in their hands . . . they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Most certainly as he spake the words in faith, so in faith also he must have seen, however faintly as from afar, their fulfilment. We in this a later day, as we look around the earth, rejoice as we behold in every land an ever growing multitude of redeemed souls who, though "mean, unnoticed and unknown" in the eyes of the great ones of the earth, will one day be revealed at His appearing a glorious company that no man can number, to His eternal praise and glory. But have we the vision of the dying patriarch? Do we see it as God's desire to fulfil His promise? Is it our joy thus to behold the purpose of God? Would it be on our lips if we were dying, this longing desire for God's glory world-wide and beyond the limits of the days in which we live? Thank God, thousands of His saints can testify that the story of Jacob's exodus is no figment of the imagination. They too have rejoiced to see Christ's day, the day of His appearing; they saw it and were glad.

III. The Blessor.

"By faith Jacob . . . worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff."

We pass on now to concentrate our gaze on the figure of the dying patriarch himself. The whole dramatic scene, as narrated in Genesis, is rich in incident. The Holy Ghost has selected but few of its salient features for reproduction, and therefore those He *has* selected He intends to be particularly arresting. Every stroke of the artist's brush is instinct with life! Every word in the narrative is alight with heavenly flame! The closing words, therefore, are no mere idle phrasing. The chamber is filled with the very peace of heaven. Silence reigns! We see father and sons still standing with bowed heads, loth to leave so sacred a spot. The old man's voice is stilled. He bows in worship.

As Joseph and the two lads entered the chamber "Israel strengthened himself and sat upon his bed" to perform his solemn task. Now all is over; and he worships, leaning upon his staff. The head, snowed with many years of toil and trouble, those hoar hairs that he feared would go down into the grave in sorrow over his long-lost boy, are bowed in praise and adoration that the "God of Jacob" had been better, oh! far better than Jacob had ever thought or could have imagined. "Jacob worshipped, leaning on his staff." Carelessly have we read those words often enough, but to an imagination capable of divine inspiration they are pregnant indeed.

A study of worship in the pages of our Bible would reveal to us some very gracious lessons. Worship does not consist merely of confession or prayer, no! nor even thanksgiving. Worship is the attitude of a soul completely satisfied, an attitude of praise as distinct from thanksgiving. We *thank* God for what He has given to or done for us.

We *praise* Him for what He IS. It is no wonder that God seeks for men to worship Him. Alas ! He finds but few.

The occasions when men worshipped Jehovah, as told us in Holy Writ, if studied with care, would provide much food for reflection, heart-searching and aspiration. Here is one.

We have seen at the beginning of our chapter that in meeting with the last great enemy we should expect to find yes, and we do find that in most cases the soul is occupied with its own struggle, filled oftentimes with remorse, regret and strange misgivings ; but Jacob's last tourney with the foe was not so. It was a gallant victory. Blessedly at leisure from himself, he was concerned only with the need of others. He was not only conqueror, he was more than conqueror, a spoil gatherer, determined that the devil as well as death should be defeated, anxious that the promised, provided blessing prepared for his grandsons should not fail to materialise through any failure on his part. That this was no dying swan song, no final bracing up of his own natural energy is revealed by this sweet and silent worship.

How often have those of us whose privilege it is to labour in heathen lands, been called upon to witness triumphs such as this.

I cannot refrain from citing one that has come under my immediate notice.

I am penning these lines in a distant hamlet hidden away in the hills of Western Japan. The young evangelist in charge of the little flock is sitting beside me. In response to my query, how the Gospel reached this place bringing its saving power to its former saints, he told me the following story :—

“ When we opened up the town of M., some years ago, with a tent campaign, two of the converts were

a chemist and his wife, the couple in whose house we are now resting. He had lived a very profligate life, but when he turned to the Lord, he was marvellously converted. About a year since, on the death of his father, he returned to his native village and, setting up the business in his old home, acts as the apothecary of the whole country-side, being often in more demand than the doctor: while his wife, a trained nurse and midwife, has an entrance to many homes.

“ He at once began to witness to Christ and His salvation. He reports to me serious cases of sickness, so that I am able to visit them. Last year a very pitiful case of a dying consumptive took me to the shack where he was living. Deserted of his friends through fear of the dread disease, he lived in this shanty of a few boards put together. The weather was bitterly cold. His wife had died just before I got there; she lay dead at his side; he could do nothing. His old mother was the only one to attend to him, coming in from the home of her elder son near by.

“ After a few visits he was most blessedly saved. His last words to his old mother were, ‘ Do not mourn for me: I am going to my heavenly home of glory. All that I ask of you is that you seek the Lord and meet me in heaven.’

“ Against his brother, a heartless wretch who had deserted him, he had the most vindictive feelings. All this was suddenly changed: and of the £3 : 0 : 0 he had kept stowed away to cover his funeral expenses he begged that part might be used to soften his brother’s heart and so lead him to Christ.

“ I was deeply moved at this incident and asked the Lord to bring me in touch with other such cases, hidden in these lonely mountain hamlets. Three days after laying this matter definitely before the Lord, He answered in the following remarkable way:—

“ A woman of about sixty-five years of age, whose

mother long ago had been a Christian and taught her child of the one true and living God, came to the chemist's wife asking if there was anyone who could visit her husband and tell him of her mother's God. Mrs. W. at once sent for me : I went and found far up the valley, in one of these mountain pockets, the object of my search. He too was in the last stage of tuberculosis, and in a most miserable state both in body and soul. Altogether I visited him seven times before he passed away.

" On my first visit he opened his heart and told me his story. The son of a wealthy man, in fact the leading man in the whole district, he soon fell upon evil times and lost all his property. The one and only real friend he had and trusted, died. Of his nine children, he had none in whom he could confide. With the loss of his wealth all his popularity disappeared. At last his health gave way, a prey to the savage ravages of tuberculosis. For six years his strength of will kept him from despair, but now, a few weeks before I got there, this too had gone : and I found him the most miserable human being that it has been my lot to see.

" I at once proceeded to preach the Gospel, and left him with Matt. xi. 28 and John xiv. 27. The second time I visited him, after much prayer, I dealt with him very faithfully about sin and its remedy. When I had finished speaking, he burst out into uncontrollable weeping, confessing his sins to Almighty God, and then in simple faith we turned to the Cross. As I rose to go, he turned to me and said, ' I feel as though I had been born over again,' although in neither of our conversations had I used this expression or spoken of the New Birth in those actual words.

" On my third visit, the sight that greeted me was blessed indeed ! He seemed almost in an ecstasy of peace and joy, and said, ' This room has been filled all day with the presence of the Lord Jesus. I know

that He is a LIVING SAVIOUR.' I had not particularly referred to Christ's resurrection and ascension on my previous talk.

"The fourth time I went to see him I took with me Bros., H., T., and our friend the apothecary to witness his baptism. Mr. H. said that before he could baptise him, he must ask him a few questions as to his faith. 'Do you believe that through the death of the Lord Jesus all your sins have been pardoned and put away?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'I believe that He died for my sins; but I believe, yes, I *know* more than that.' 'What is it that you believe and know in addition to that wondrous fact?' 'I know,' he answered, 'that Christ is alive for evermore.' Bro. H., astonished at his answer, said, 'I think I need ask you no more,' and proceeded with the service.

"He insisted on kneeling up in his bed. In vain Bro. H. tried to persuade him to remain in a reclining posture. 'No,' he said, 'the awful spear within has been taken away: my heart is melted within me, I am strengthened with His joy.'

"Afterwards his wife explained what he meant by 'the spear within.' 'During the whole forty years of our married life,' she said, 'till his conversion, I have never known him to speak to me a kind or endearing word. I have been treated as a chattel or a slave. The very sight of my healthy body seemed to enrage him and, if he could, he would have driven me from the house. Since the Lord has saved him all has been changed; he is a transformed man; truly the "spear within" has been taken away.'

"A week before he passed away, he made his final deposition. He had no wealth or lands to leave behind, but in a firm hand he wrote as follows:—

1. My religion all my life long has been Buddhism, as taught by the Zen Shu sect. This I utterly renounce.

2. I herewith give notice that all my connection with the temple, in which I have acted as chief official, is entirely severed.
3. I wish all my children to be summoned by telegram for my funeral.
4. Immediately at my decease I wish hymn No. 143 to be sung, 'His grace aboundeth more.'
5. I wish all my family to remember that while the hymn is being sung my soul is returning to God Who gave it.
6. I wish no one but my wife and children, and the nurse who has attended me, to touch or look on my body after my decease.
7. My coffin shall be carried by my children to the grave.
8. My earthly remains shall be interred in the family burial ground, under the large cherry blossom tree.
9. There my body shall rest in peace. As my dear ones lay these earthly remains to rest, never to be seen by them again on this earth, I bid them remember I died in perfect peace. I died in joy. I died with a smile on my lips to rest for ever.

"As his end drew nigh, like Jacob of old, he blessed his children. He charged them to seek neither wealth, ease, fame, nor position, but only to learn how to put their trust in the Lord Jesus. Six of them, the older ones, promised that they would seek to obey that charge. The mother and eldest daughter have since been brightly converted."

The funeral was a wonderful time. All the village were deeply moved as our young evangelist told the events as above related.

The head priest of the temple, absent at the time, hurried back and in his grand canonicals read a message of

condolence. Among other things he said, "Our deceased friend all his life long was a leading official of the temple here. This position he renounced. Buddhism is not a religion of faith, but of interior enlightenment. This enlightenment he found too difficult to obtain and so abandoned it in favour of Christianity, which is a religion of faith."

Such was the doorway through which the Gospel of God's grace entered the valley in which so many scattered hamlets lie.

The God of Jacob still lives. His mighty power can still save and sanctify and make the dying praise and worship and bequeath a blessing on coming generations.

By faith Jacob (as also the one whose story I have just related) worshipped. By faith he knew that his dying breath had not been spent in mere idle words. His was no mere pious wish! but inspired of the Holy Ghost, he had by faith commanded the blessing from above, and by faith he bows and worships. No wonder Balaam, of a later day, cried out, "There shall come a star out of Jacob. . . . Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion . . . who can count the dust of Jacob. . . . Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his."

CHAPTERS TEN AND ELEVEN.

The
Dynamic of Leadership

CHAPTER X. JOSEPH : IN EGYPT.

CHAPTER XI. MOSES : OUT OF EGYPT.

Thus speaketh the Lord unto us:—

Ye call me MASTER and OBEY me not.
Ye call me LIGHT and SEE me not.
Ye call me WAY and WALK me not.
Ye call me LIFE and DESIRE me not.
Ye call me WISE and FOLLOW me not.
Ye call me RICH and ASK me not.
Ye call me FAIR and LOVE me not.
Ye call me ETERNAL . . . and SEEK me not.
Ye call me GRACIOUS . . . and TRUST me not.
Ye call me NOBLE and SERVE me not.
Ye call me MIGHTY and HONOUR me not.
Ye call me JUST and FEAR me not.

If I CONDEMN you . . . BLAME me not.

AN INSCRIPTION IN LUBECK CATHEDRAL.

CHAPTER X.

JOSEPH, IN EGYPT.

"By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."—HEB. xi. 22.

THE purview of Faith's achievements is widening. Faith in relation to individuals and to families gives place to its exercise in relation to a nation.

The two portraits that now engage our attention, those of Joseph and Moses, are to teach us of exploits performed by single individuals on behalf of their country. It is true that in the days of Joseph the families of Abraham's descendants were not yet a full-grown people, but they were a nation in the making even before he died. A national self-consciousness was developing with startling rapidity, and thus shaping the outlook and conduct of Jacob's greater son, demanding a careful walk, lest by a precipitate zeal and premature action, he should anticipate God's guidance and so bring disaster on the Divine programme.

Joseph is perhaps the most perfect type of Christ presented to us in the Old Testament. He is the only character in Holy Writ of whom no fault is recorded. His biography occupies twenty-two chapters in the book of Genesis. His life was essentially a life of faith. With the exception of the dreams in his early years, there is no mention of any theophany being vouchsafed to him as was the case with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Never once do we read that God appeared to Joseph, whether by angel or vision or special revelation. He lived and walked by faith and faith alone.

There is hardly any life story in the pages of Scripture so replete with dramatic incidents as that of Joseph ; none more full of pathos, none more moving, and none more exciting in its *dénouement*. .

Incidents illustrative of his living faith in the God of his fathers abound. It would be difficult to make a selection therefrom. Each incident seems more striking than the preceding. It is therefore with deep interest and curiosity that we turn to see which of them the Holy Ghost has chosen for His purpose.

Are we disappointed at the choice ? We certainly are amazed ! For if ten thousand persons had been asked to select from Joseph's biography the most outstanding of all his doings and sufferings, expressive of faith in God, not one I suppose would have made the selection which the writer to the Hebrews, inspired by the Holy Ghost, has done ! " By faith he gave commandment concerning his bones."

I know of no passage in Scripture that should assure the honest doubter of verbal inspiration more convincingly than this. None but God the Holy Ghost could ever have written these words.

We are again introduced to a deathbed scene. The writer seems determined to shew us the blessedness, the certainty and the fulness of victory over death. As I have already emphasised, there is more than victory, more than conquest, there is a taking captivity captive. There is in all the three pictures presented to us, not only a deliverance from fear, misgiving, doubt, and all the usual distresses associated with the last conflict, but a vision of eternal things. Joseph, like Isaac and Jacob, sees time in relation to eternity, and his single life work in relation to the destiny of the race that God was preparing to be a blessing to the

world : he was burdened that God's purposes through the coming ages should not be thwarted by his posterity. His work of faith, as he lay dying, was not like that of Isaac, to bless his sons "concerning things to come," nor yet like that of his father to bless his grandsons. Though it is with things to come that he is concerned, it is rather the work of confirming and strengthening the heart of his people. This then is the selection of the Holy Ghost from the thrilling career of Jacob's greater son.

In the briefest phrasing we are referred to the closing verses of the book of Genesis ; our attention is drawn to two facts, that by faith (1) he made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and (2) gave commandment concerning his bones. These we will consider separately.

I. Prophetic Faith.

"By faith when his end was nigh he made mention of the departing of the children of Israel." (R.V.)

The original narrative tells us that in his final charge to his people he referred them to God's oath made to his fathers and then demanded of them an oath toward God.

It is not difficult to follow the thought of the dying patriarch. His solicitude is easy to understand. No doubt in his retrospect, reviewing the marvels of God's goodness, grace and power as experienced in his dramatic pilgrimage, he was full of adoration and praise. No doubt he too worshipped even more devoutly than his father Jacob. But there was a burden on his heart, a charge to be delivered : he reviewed his life work, not only in the light of God's goodness, but also in its relation to the destiny of his people.

It is true that he had saved the people of Egypt from the horrors of famine and national disaster, a great life

work indeed ! but that was not the pre-eminent purpose of his call and commission. He viewed himself primarily as the preserver of his people, God's instrument to guide and guard them till they were ready for the great exodus. For that they were not yet ready ; even at his death they were still *in statu pupillari*. No doubt he recalled what must have passed through his own mind at the time of his exaltation. Lifted from the dungeon to the throne, and endowed with all that wealth and position in the greatest of the old world empires, could command, he could have returned to the land of his fathers, crowned with glory and honour, there to do what Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had failed to do, i.e., to build up a kingdom and establish himself and his brethren and their children in the promised land. But Joseph walked with God, and though his brethren's " time was always ready " his, like that of his great Antitype, " had not yet come." In a later day Moses will have to leave Egypt in a storm of rage and hatred, and lead his people out in the face of opposition and obstacles untold, but the way for Joseph was to sit still and in faith wait in patience for that which his eyes longed to see, and yet which he knew he would in this world never behold,

And now he has come to the end of his earthly road, and he looks beyond the river, beyond the eternal hills. Is there half a fear that he may have lived in vain and that the end for which he was called, chosen and commissioned and endowed may after all never eventuate ; that the posterity of his great forbears may fail in their mission, may settle down in ease and wealth and prosperity in their adopted land ? Knowing human nature and, above all, Jewish human nature, the nature of Jacob and his own brethren as he did, he must have had his forebodings ; but not for long. The light of faith soon scattered the gloom that

clouded his brow. "*By faith* he made mention of the coming Exodus."

What that faith was, and in what he rested, is told us in the original narrative (Gen. i. 24)—"And Joseph said, I die, but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land into the land which He swore unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." There is no foreboding here! There is not a tremor of fear that what God had promised should fail. "God will surely visit you." Yes, He surely will! And why? Because He hath sworn! The sentiment, if not the words of Heb. vi. 17, was like a blazing beacon in the heart of this dying hero. "God WILLING MORE ABUNDANTLY to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel confirmed it by an OATH that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have STRONG consolation." Oh! that these words in all their cumulative majesty and strength would "console" our vacillating spirit. "More abundant willingness"! "God's OATH"! "Immutably confirmed," "a double immutability"! "The impossibility of a Divine lie"! "A strong consolation." As these verities surged through the soul of the dying patriarch, no wonder he was able to deliver his charge to his brethren "in faith." He makes no mention of his own achievements, nor even of the wonders that God had wrought in his own life. These neither he nor they could ever forget; but his faith rests not there: it rests on something beyond and outside himself: it rests on the Word of the living God spoken to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

He knew he had fought a good fight and was finishing his course with joy; and he knew that because he had done the will of God the spoils from that battlefield and prize from that finished course would "abide for ever." He

realised the place which his one short life, here to-day and gone to-morrow, would fill in the counsels of eternity and in shaping the destinies of multitudes of the human race.

All this he knew, but with enlightened vision, enlarged heart, quickened faith, and strengthened spirit, he thinks of his beloved people, he longs for them to glorify God and, like himself, to fulfil the destiny to which they have been called, and abide for ever in the promised land.

II. Sacramental Faith.

"By faith Joseph . . . gave commandment concerning his bones."

In giving his charge to his brethren he had reminded them of God's oath. And now he exacts an oath of them, and gives them, so to speak, a sacrament of the covenant. Every covenant of God has its sacrament. Bishop Hall speaks of the fruit of the tree in the Garden of Eden as "sacraments growing before the very eyes of Adam and Eve." In His covenant with Noah God gave the rainbow, to see; in that with Abraham, circumcision to feel; in that with the people of Israel, a Sabbath to keep; in that with David, the sun, moon and stars to observe; in that with us, bread and wine of which to partake in remembrance of His dying love. But here in the covenant made between Joseph and his brethren, how strange a sacrament—his bones!

The wealth of Joseph must have been very great. He was second only to the king. Very large legacies must have been left at his decease to his sons and brethren. Of this Scripture is absolutely silent. These are all trifles of no account when thousands of years are but as days and days as thousands of years. In his recorded will the only legacy referred to is "his bones." This clause in his will,

the only clause as far as we know, is given us in somewhat more extended form in the original narrative. "And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel and said, 'God will surely visit you,' and ye shall carry up my bones from hence They embalmed him and put him in a coffin in Egypt" (Gen. l. 25, 26).

The certainty of God's visitation is repeated and with it the solemn instruction as to the obsequies of his coming interment, ratified by an oath. The details of these instructions are not told us, but there is no difficulty in realising what they were.

First, his brethren were forbidden to bury him in Egypt. Familiar as we now are with the magnificence and pageantry of funeral obsequies, among the high ones in that land, we can understand the amazement and consternation which this ultimatum must have caused. Joseph was next to the king. There had never been a greater benefactor, a wiser administrator, a nobler character than he. The nation is to be denied the privilege of according their last honour to this their friend and saviour! It is an unheard of situation! utterly unreasonable and wrong.

Secondly, the body must not be taken into Canaan to be buried as his father had been. This prohibition is even stranger and more unreasonable than the former. If the body of the great national benefactor cannot be interred in the land he so greatly benefited, it will at least be possible to bury him elsewhere with the pomp and honour due to his name. The nation recalled the munificence and prodigality of honour which they had accorded to his father merely out of respect to Joseph a few years before. The perusal of the account of Jacob's interment (Gen. l. 7-13) reveals how impressive it must have been. Magnificent as the funerals of Egyptian kings and princes were in

their days, they could not have far excelled in splendour the burial of this strange and lonely Hebrew. We read that " *ALL the servants of Pharaoh,*" i.e., the most magnificent court of those days ; " *all the elders of his house,*" i.e., the vast number of the Imperial Household Department ; " *all the elders of the land of Egypt,*" i.e., the magistrates, mayors of cities, councillors of states, governors of provinces and officials of departments, in fact, the whole civil service ; " *all the house of Joseph,*" i.e., all the retinue and equipage of Joseph the Prime Minister himself ; " *all his brethren and his father's house* and their households, men and women " (only the children were left behind), accompanied with a suitable cortege of cavalry and military escort, described as " a very great company," carried his remains across the desert, a very long and weary road into Canaan. So great and representative a gathering was it, that the natives of the land supposed it to be a national disaster, a whole nation in tears. All this magnificence displayed to a stranger was out of respect to the man whom the king and all the nation had with good reason delighted to honour. And now he himself is dead ! What will his interment be like ? unparalleled in the annals even of Egyptian necrology ! But no, it is not to be ! The nation must have stood aghast at so extraordinary a decision !

In the third place the body is not to be buried at all, anywhere, for the present. It has merely to be embalmed and kept in a coffin in Egypt. We do not know that the Egyptian people, whether high or low, were given to understand the reason for this strange decision. That mattered but little, if at all. Joseph's brethren knew and the people of Israel of that, and each succeeding generation knew, and that was enough. It was not merely that Joseph, like every true servant of God, abominated the

apotheosis of man, and was determined that his interment should never provide an opportunity for adulation and flattery. There was much more than this in his pregnant prohibition! I have already stated it. His body was to be a sacrament, a sign of the solemnity of the covenant contracted on his dying bed.

This was perhaps one of the most momentous acts of that momentous career. By it he would indelibly impress upon the people of his time and on all succeeding generations the solemnity of his brethren's oath, and the immense importance of the coming event to which it pointed. He would have them understand that all his own distinguished career, his remaining so long in Egypt, denying himself the honour of going to the land of his fathers, all his thoughts and prayers and desires were directed to one goal, viz., the exodus of his people in God's appointed time into the land which He had promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give to their seed.

His body was eventually taken with the departing Israelites (Exod. xiii. 19) and duly interred in the northern mausoleum (Josh. xxiv. 32), a place of rich historic associations, bought by Abraham (Acts vii. 16), enlarged by Jacob (Gen. xxxiii. 19), given to Joseph (Gen. xlviii. 21, 22), near whereby Jacob had dug his historic well, and subsequently the scene of the Samaritan revival (John iv.).

Through the long weary years of waiting for the promised day, that silent monument, a coffin in Egypt, spake to the people in mute appeal and eloquent testimony of the faith of their great forbear. Even when a generation that knew not Joseph arose, as they passed and re-passed the shrine wherein the body lay, the spirit of their departed saviour must have spoken ceaselessly to their heart, "Lest ye forget! Lest ye forget!"

Of what does the faith of Joseph speak to us? Though dead millennia ago, he still has a message to the people of God. As he lay dying, all the things of time and sense receded from his vision; his eyes beheld clear and outstanding, like two mighty mountain peaks, the people of God and the promised land; while in his ears, now deaf to the plaudits of earth, the praise or censure of men, there sounded in sweeter and clearer cadence the Word of Jehovah, the promise and the oath.

All this speaks to us of One greater than Jacob's son, even Christ Jesus. Ever before Him, as He drew near to His cruel exodus, the vision of His redeemed ones, the people of God, and the outpoured Spirit, the Promised Land of the New Testament—these two glorious objects were constantly before Him. He had come to earth, had lived and suffered and was now to bleed and die that the purposes of God in regard to these twain might be accomplished. The pledge that all would be fulfilled, that the Promised Comforter should come, and that His Church should be led into the promised land, was His own resurrection. His body should rise again, and of this should His servants be the witnesses. This was the longing desire of the Son of God, that His people should enter into the Promised Land. God's people! and God's promise! The Holy Ghost indwelling the Redeemed, these were the great objectives of the Son of God!

And we who are called to walk in fellowship with Him, to share His thoughts, His longings, His disappointments, His sufferings and His joy, is this our consuming desire? Have we seen the City of God coming down out of heaven? Have we seen the great company of the Redeemed, ONE glorious body? Have we caught a glimpse of "things to come"? Can we, like Joseph, die to all the praise and

plaudits of an empty, dying world, that we may encourage the people of God to go up and possess the Land that still flows with milk and honey, an earnest of that heavenly Canaan prepared for all those that love Him and wait for His appearing ?

A perusal of the dying hours of David Brainerd always brings to mind these victories of the departing patriarchs, Isaac, Jacob and, more particularly, of Joseph :—

“ My thoughts,” he says, “ have been employed on the dear old theme, the prosperity of God’s Church on earth. As I waked out of sleep I was led to cry for the pouring out of God’s Spirit and the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom which the dear Redeemer did and suffered so much for.”

“ Oh that God would bless and succeed what was written to the benefit of the Church. Oh that He would *purify the sons of Levi* that His glory may be advanced.

“ My heaven is to please God, and glorify Him, to give all to Him, and to be wholly devoted to His glory ; that is the heaven I long for, that is my religion, and that is my happiness . . . I do not go to heaven to be advanced but to honour God . . . to love and please God in all.”

He expressed on his deathbed a full persuasion that he should see in heaven the prosperity of the Church on earth, and should rejoice with Christ therein.

Amid all the suffering of his emaciated frame he was so blessedly delivered from all personal considerations as to his own happiness or security or reward, that his one consuming desire was to see and know that the Bride of Christ, His Church, His Body was being blessed and purified and prosperous. This was all his desire, so completely was he filled with the Third Person of the blessed Trinity.

In one of his dying moments he said he found an inexpressible love to those whom he looked upon as belonging to Christ, beyond almost all that he ever felt before. To use his own words, "It seems like a little piece of Heaven to have them near me."

The same glowing desire burned in the soul of another spiritual giant of last century, Reginald Radcliffe. Like a blazing beacon it shone on those gathered around his bed to watch his passing.

To his wife he said, "I was praying the prayer I love so much." She enquired, "Was it, *Thy will be done in heaven as on earth*"? "No," he replied, "it was PRAY YE THE LORD OF THE HARVEST, THAT HE WOULD THRUST FORTH LABOURERS INTO THE HARVEST."

His last words, spoken with great difficulty from his extreme weakness, were, "I want—I want—I want Christians to go over all the world spreading the glad news."

In the words of Col. Wilmot Brooke, "May this his last message to the Church on earth, be sanctified to the Church of Christ, and may we all be stirred up thereby to tell it out among the heathen that the Lord is King."

These saints, like Joseph of long ago, all died in faith, and so had a vision of the coming glory of the Lord.

May our end be like theirs. Amen and Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

MOSES, OUT OF EGYPT.

"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to be evil entreated with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible."—HEB. xi. 23-27, R.V.

THE second of the fifth pair of portraits now engages our thoughts. The deliverance of a nation is the theme. The scene again lies in Egypt. As we have observed, Joseph delivered his people by remaining in the land, Moses delivers them by taking them out of it. Joseph began his life in a dungeon and rose to a throne. Moses began his life in a crown prince's palace and closed it in a waste, howling wilderness. So diverse are God's ways with His children.

The life of Moses, like that of Joseph, is full of dramatic episodes, and like his also was a wonderful type of Christ. The parallel is extraordinary. Pharaoh sent word to slay the children at the time of his birth; Herod did the same in the Saviour's day. Moses was hid by his parents; so too was Christ. Moses was told to return, for they were dead that sought his life; these very words were used too of Christ. Moses wrought miracles in Egypt; Christ in Canaan. Moses instituted the Passover in Egypt; Christ in the Promised Land. Moses fed the multitudes in the wilderness; so too did the Lord. Moses fasted forty days in the wilderness; so also Christ. Moses commissioned twelve men; Christ did likewise. Moses appointed seventy to help him; Christ too did the same. Moses received the

law on Sinai and gave it to the people ; Christ received the laws of the Kingdom on the Mount and gave them to us. Moses was an advocate with God ; so is Christ for us. Moses died on Mt. Nebo ; Christ on Mt. Calvary. The devil disputed with Michael about the body of Moses ; the devil's children did the same with the risen body of the Saviour.

From this wonderful mosaic it is interesting to observe which of the many dramatic incidents the Holy Ghost selects to illustrate His theme. Faith was the dynamic of the great Lawgiver's life. Grace and not law was the driving compelling factor in all that he did and accomplished. Hence the selection from such a galaxy of incidents is not easy. The greater part of his public life was spent in the wilderness as the leader of his people, but not a single instance of the faith that he exercised there is drawn from any episode during that period.

The selected illustrations are all taken from his life in Egypt and his conflict with the powers of darkness there. The selections are four in number. By faith he was hid from Egypt's peril. By faith he refused Egypt's position, pleasure and treasure. By faith he forsook Egypt's palaces. There too by faith he instituted the Passover for his people. These are the four selections. It will be observed that no other picture in our gallery is so life-sized. In all the others only one incident is chosen from each. Here, however, we see faith at the cradle, faith in early manhood, faith in advancing years, growing, deepening, progressive, aggressive, victorious faith in God ;—faith first in his own experience, freeing him from all the entanglements of the world, the flesh and the devil, and then faith in his life-work, faith for his people, faith that delivers a nation.

In this chapter, however, we shall only consider three of the cited illustrations, reserving the fourth for a separate study.

I. Faith at the Cradle.

"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment."—HEB. xi. 23.

Moses was cradled in Faith. He was hidden and protected by the faith of his parents. Of how many of God's chosen servants can this too be said. Many of us will never know what we owe to the faith of our fathers and mothers. Ten thousand thanks to God for a godly parentage.

In Moses' case, however, the parents' faith was more, far more than that of most. It was sacrificial, courageous faith. Its exercise was a life or death matter. Disobedience to the cruel king's command meant loss of all that life held dear, if not of life itself. Yes, Moses' cradle was a crucible. Many storms were to pass over his head in the coming years; so it was fitting that he should begin early. His cradle was in the waters; he was baptised as an infant, not regenerate thereby, but regenerate through the faith of his parents, and like John the Baptist, of a later date, filled with the Spirit of God from his mother's womb.

We are told the secret and source of this parental faith; the story runs, "because they saw he was a proper child,"—the word *ἄστειος* is used, "fair" or "goodly." Stephen, in his great *apologia* (Acts vii.), in speaking of this same Moses, uses the same word but qualifies it (*ἄστειος τῷ θεῷ*) "fair to God." Was it that his parents, looking at their bonny infant, saw in him a second Joseph? With the instinct peculiar to those who walk with God,

they somehow were constrained to believe that this babe of theirs was to be a chosen instrument in God's hand. Faith has a strangely keen vision. The Magi, visiting the paltry stable at Bethlehem, saw not the mean surroundings, the lowly peasant, and the cattle's crib. They only saw and knew the Saviour of the world: so too did the shepherds. So too Simeon, guided by the Spirit of God, beheld with the eye of faith the form of the Son of God in the sleeping Babe, Who to the eyes of others appeared no different to the many infants brought by their mothers that day to the temple courts. So too was it with Anna, as she came into the temple and burst forth in songs of praise and gladness, when with the eye of faith she saw in Mary's bosom the world's Redeemer. There was none to tell them save the Holy Ghost, no eye but the eye of faith could have discovered Deity in so strange a guise.

The parents of the babe in Egypt saw and knew that he was "fair to God," and so in faith that God would protect and deliver His own they hid the child, trusting him rather to the crocodiles of the river than to the mercies of the king and his courtiers.

Moses was cradled in faith. From his very birth he was destined to teach all succeeding generations that the only dynamic of Life is Faith in the living God.

II. The Faith of Early Manhood.

"By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to be evil entreated with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward."—HEB. xi. 24-26.

Faith in early manhood is a very fragrant flower. Self-confidence, ambition, zeal, and activity are what we usually associate with youth. The need of dependence on

God, a sense of our own weakness and insufficiency, and hence a simple, quiet confidence in the Lord are seldom met with in our Universities. Generally speaking, the bitterness and disappointments of life have to be tasted, ere the soul learns to turn and trust and stay itself upon God. It is all the more beautiful then when it does appear, and that in least expected places. Such a place was the court of Pharaoh in the days of Moses.

He had now arrived at man's estate. We learn from Stephen's apologia (Acts vii.) that he was highly educated, brilliant among the young men of his day, well-versed in the secular learning of Egypt. He was endowed too with gifts of eloquence ("mighty in words" is what St. Stephen says). What a flood of light this stray expression throws on his character! His one plea before God at the time of his commission was that he could not speak. Well did he know that "mighty in words," as he had been in the days of his sojourn at court, his earthly eloquence availed nothing in the work of God.

He was also "mighty in deeds." Already his gifts of administration and leadership were in evidence.

It is not too much to say that he had all that this world could offer; he was "exceeding fair," highly educated, eloquent and gifted, with wonderful earthly prospects! What more could he desire? what more could he want to satisfy him or enable him to make his mark in the world? But he had more. He was adopted into the Imperial family and brought up as the Crown Prince. He had all the wealth he could command; and the pathway of pleasure, all the pleasure of society, literature and art, lay open before him.

Position, wealth and pleasure are the three prizes which the world offers to its devotees. For these things men live

and die. For these things they sacrifice all : their spirit, soul and body are offered on these gaudy altars. Alas ! the majority of mankind never succeed in their quest, but it is not for want of trying.

In Moses' case, however, it was different, he was already in possession of them. He started life where most worldlings end it. Position was his, the pathway of pleasure was at his feet. Wealth was there for him to enjoy it all. But he was not and could not be satisfied ! A nobler vision had appeared on his horizon. Stephen tells us that " when he was well nigh forty years old it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel." He had not yet seen Him Who is invisible ; the burning bush in the lonely desert had not yet revealed to him the mystery of godliness : but he had seen enough : and now with deliberate purpose he sets himself to resist the " lust of the flesh," " the lust of the eyes," and " the pride of life," " He refuses to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." He declines to take a position to which he had no right, to base his career on a lie.

This decision was far reaching, for it involved the abandonment of a life of ease and pleasure, and a forsaking of all the wealth that was his by right of his position. In one moment and at one step, he cast from him all that life offered of Name, Wealth and Enjoyment.

" Ah, yes," you say, " he had at the age of forty years learned enough of court life and its ways. Often must the sentiments contained in the pathetic words penned by Sir Walter Raleigh at the Elizabethan court, have come to his mind,—

' Where strained
Sardonic smiles are glozing still,
Where mirth's but mummery,
And only sorrows real be.'

“ And after all was he not of an alien race ! The wheel of fortune turns very swiftly. Thrones are tottering things. Position is often a very perilous peak ! ”

These reflections may have aided him in his decision. He was no child. His knowledge of Egyptian history, of men and things in general, the ways of the world, and the court world in particular, may have helped to mould his thoughts and shape his action.

All this may be true, but these were not the things that moved him. Many a man as noble, as gifted and as endowed with common-sense as Moses was, perfectly familiar with the uncertainty of life and the fickleness of fortune and the treachery of society, has never been able to abandon his pursuit of life's unsatisfying vanities till his days have gone beyond recall and he has found himself at the end of the road, miserable, deluded and undone.

Lord Byron, who sought pleasure as the aim of life with all his might, cries out at the end of his pilgrimage, “ The worm, the grief, the canker alone are mine.”

Voltaire, who made a god of his wisdom (?), as he drew near the grave exclaimed, “ Would to God I had never been born.”

Jay Gould, the multi-millionaire, moaned aloud as he lay dying, “ I suppose I am the most miserable devil on earth.”

No, no, it was more than the reflection of the fickleness of fortune, the uncertainty of riches and folly of selfishness that influenced Moses in his great decision. It was more even than the altruism of which Stephen tells us : it was the mighty, moving dynamic of Faith. Noble as his desires to help his people must have been, mere altruism in itself had not the power to dispossess the soul of hedonism and cast down the idols of fame and name and gold.

(1) *By faith Moses saw the ways of God.*

After finding it within his heart to help his people and deliver them from their bondage, how often must he have remembered the power and influence of Joseph. If only he could be another Joseph, how easily could he deliver his suffering compatriots! and why not? Was he not in the Crown Prince's palace? Could he not influence the king and all the court? He had brilliant gifts and powers. God had evidently put him there for that purpose; he had come to the throne for such a time as this. Such was the language of common-sense. But Faith talks otherwise. As he began to reflect on the career of his great forbear, and got an insight into the ways of God, he at once began to suspect the plausible arguments of his own reasoning. Heroes are not trained in palaces; the University that Joseph attended was not the lecture halls of Heliopolis. The deepest lessons of life are learned in the school of experience. The hatred of his brethren, the pit, the Midian caravan, the vile temptress in his master's house, the dungeon, the ungrateful butler, these and all the lonely years of Joseph's life, passed like moving pictures before him. In them he saw God's ways and the vision humbled his soul. Faith triumphed. The God that raised Joseph from the dungeon to the throne should be his God.

(2) *By faith Moses saw God's people.*

"By faith he chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

He knew that to deliver his compatriots he had to suffer with them, he had to get down to their level; he had to leave the palace and go back whence he came, to the cottage of his parents. This "choice of affliction" came from a vision of the people of God. It is not a "choice of affliction" for its own sake in the vain hope that it will purify

the soul. We can never be purified or refined by our own sufferings. We are not called upon to take up our own cross for our *own* crucifixion. No! no! a thousand times no! We are crucified with Christ! It is His sufferings not ours that purify the soul: the purpose of *our* cross-bearing is for others. It is only as we get a vision of the people of God in their need, and with it a desire to help and bless and lead and deliver, that we can choose such a pathway. Faith sees the people of God, the "riches of His inheritance in the saints." Faith sheds abroad in our hearts not only God's own love for His beloved Son (John iii. 35); not only His love to a dying world (John iii. 16); not only His love to us individually (Gal. ii. 20); but to His Church, the chosen of God (Eph. v. 25-27).

Faith made him choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. It was faith that enabled him so to choose, because by faith he saw the preciousness of God's people. He understood that, carnal and unspiritual as they were at the time, they were God's peculiar treasure created for His glory.

(3) *By faith he saw the recompense of the reward.*

Faith made him see still other things. By faith he had seen God's way and God's people. He now beholds God's reward. The Lord Jesus spoke on two or three occasions of the "great reward in heaven." "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you . . . for My sake, for great is your reward in heaven." It was this, the "reproach of Christ," that Moses saw to be "greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." The "reproach of Christ," something to be enjoyed and not endured; not that Moses had any vision of the world's Redeemer or the living Messiah Himself. But he that visits a saint in prison, sees him hungry and

feeds him, thirsty and gives him drink, sick and ministers to him in the Lord's name, does it unto the Lord Himself.

The riches of the kingdom of heaven were to yield great dividends. The reproach of Christ was to meet with a great reward. Did Moses see them? Did he know what they would be in the coming days, a harvest of souls, the privilege of being an untold blessing to countless multitudes all through the ages, a name almost the greatest of Old Testament saints? Did he know he would be handed down for all time as the "meekest man on earth," one with whom Jehovah talked as a man talketh with his friend, a great Prophet like unto Christ, a great Redeemer, a great Legislator, a great Builder, a great Historian? Did he know these things? Yes, by faith he saw the recompense of the reward. Like the Saviour, of Whom he was so great a type, he "humbled himself," and so God was able to "exalt him." Like the Saviour, he "took upon himself the form of a servant," so that God was able to make him "Lord." Like the Saviour, he "made himself of no reputation" so that God was able to give him a name which was above every name in Jewish annals. Had faith seen none of these things, and had he been content with fame, name or gold in Egypt, posterity would never have heard of him. The utmost that he could expect, would be the glory of being discovered as a mummy by some twentieth century Egyptologist, and his hieroglyphics deciphered on some of the buried stones of Memphis.

III. Faith in Advancing Years.

"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as seeing Him Who is invisible."—HEB. xi. 27.

Moses in faith has seen all these things, the ways, the people, and the reward of God, and seeing them had cast

behind him Egypt and all its blandishment and charm. But he had not yet seen Him Who is invisible. That sight was yet to come. But now we read that having obtained it, this yet greater vision, he was enabled to leave Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, able to defy all the power and majesty of the greatest monarch of his day. He had forsaken Egypt once before, left it in fear, left it to save his life, left it (though he did not know it at the time) so that a vision of the invisible God might be vouchsafed to him. Now he forsakes it again and forever. This time he leaves it without fear, he leaves it to save, not his own life but that of a nation, leaves it because he *has* had the vision, the reproach, the shame, the cross, the contradiction of sinners. He endured because he had seen Him Who is invisible. The story of that revelation is told us in the opening verses of the third of Exodus. In the burning bush he saw Him Who cannot be seen, the invisible God. The lonely shepherd had passed and repassed thousands of the little accacia shrub, but never before had he seen one ablaze and yet unconsumed. He turns aside to behold, and God speaks to him from the midst of the bush. Did he see in parable, his people in the furnace and yet preserved? Did he see in parable himself and its miracle, a single life, insignificant, frail and fleeting, as the lowly shrub, aflame yet undestroyed? Did he see the Word of God ablaze with His presence? Did he behold in type the Christ of God? Yes, all these no doubt he saw, if not at once, at any rate in after days as he thought thereon. He beheld the fire, warming, enlightening, purifying fire, and in it he felt the power and presence of the living God. Jehovah the God of his fathers spake to him, as he bowed and worshipped, the invisible One.

There he received his commission. There the former

Moses, now self-confident, now in despair, passed away, and he knew that God would possess his commonplace, feeble, fearful, fainting spirit and make him a burning, consuming fire in the presence of his enemies. That vision destroyed for ever all fear of the earthly monarch and the powers arrayed against him. It was a vision of faith; he beheld, it is true, the outward emblem, but God he saw not. On Sinai's mount he was yet to behold a more wonderful revelation, but this, his first vision of the Lord of Hosts, was his lifelong inspiration.

Here is the secret of all power, a vision of God in His Word, a vision of God in Christ, a vision of God in a human soul.

Many like Moses have seen the ways of God, the people of God and the reward that God offers to His faithful and obedient servant, and are yet powerless to accomplish the mission He has called them to. They have not yet seen Him Who is invisible. The vision of the burning bush in the lonely deserts of Sinai has not been theirs.

To those that seek it will be given; the Holy Ghost, the Divine fire, warming, enlightening, purifying the soul, the Gift of the Father promised to all who will diligently seek and follow on to know the Lord, will *quicken* us to call upon His name (Psa. lxxx. 18); *enlighten* us to know the hope of His calling (Eph. i. 18); *strengthen* us to believe in Christ's indwelling presence (Eph. iii. 16, 17); and *enlarge* us to love and live and suffer for the people of God (II. Cor. vi. 11-13).

In closing, I set alongside of each other two startling pictures from modern life.

The former, a Dives indeed, is drawn by the man himself on the eve of his unhappy exodus. One of London's financial magnates, he took his own life and on the night

before his suicide wrote his own confessions. They appeared in one of the leading London dailies as follows :—

“WHILST ON THE THRESHOLD OF ETERNITY I WRITE MY LAST ARTICLE, REVIEWING LIFE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF ONE WHO IS LEAVING IT FOR EVER.

“I have entertained royalty, called dukes and earls by their pet names, been on the inside of politics, owned a yacht, run a large racing stud, owned a theatre, had interests in newspapers, brought off some of the largest financial deals, raised over one hundred and fifty million pounds for various undertakings, promoted prize fights, subsidised boxers, given large sums of money to charity, made over £750,000 in one day, been feted by all, and called ‘Jimmy ——’ by a world of people.

“From this it must be agreed that I am entitled to an opinion on life.

“Yes, I have had the thrills of life. I have known what it is to be hungry, I have also known what it is to have all that you desire and to have thousands waiting to eat out of your hand.

“I have felt the injustice of life, and I have had its lucky rewards.

“I have been guilty of folly, but I have never refused a pal.

“I have won in a single bet on the racecourse £100,000, and I have played bridge for a shilling a hundred with more gusto and joy.

“I have had my own special train to Manchester, yet, in 1900, I had to walk from London to Rochdale for the simple reason that I had not my train fare.

“I have won the Royal Hunt Cup and many big races.

“I have known men and women who, while you were useful in cash or kind, spoke kindly and even affectionately of you : and changed to aloofness when your bank balance dwindled.

“ On the last day of my life, before my eyes, my brain unwinds the film of the past. In quick succession episode after episode unwinds, and I can now judge that life to-day is nothing but a human cauldron of greed, lust, and power.

“ Gone are the nice feelings and contentment, and in their place is a roaring, hectic existence.

“ The love for money, power, sex, is only equalled by the lust of the Bolshies to recreate the world.

“ Late to bed, lurching with ‘ The Jollys ’ and ‘ Pollys, ’ talking the same scandal, only different names being substituted from time to time.

“ Each day succeeds the previous one, with each individual having the same desires—more money, less work, more gaiety.

“ To-day there are two sects who lead the merry dance, and their followers are legion—namely, the wealthiest libertine and the haughtiest woman.

“ Never in the world’s history have there been so many followers of the two sects named above.

“ A new Midas appears. The whole of them make for him. Whilst his wealth lasts he can give parties and presents. He is the sole talk of the night clubs and a certain social set. He has ‘ pars ’ in the gossip columns, and he thinks he is second only to God.

“ Let his money leave him, and the only friends he will have left will be remorse and regret.

“ Life is no longer charitable except to the lucky ones. It is one drab day after another, one half of the world seeking new pleasures and vices, and the other half groaning at their lot.

“ Judging from the above, it does not look as if one misses much by sleeping for evermore.

“ But stay ! At this final moment of my life I look up from my writing and see before me the photo of my wife and our three bonny babes.

“ My wife’s eyes seem to be devouring me with love and adoration.

“ My boy’s impish smile seems to say, ‘ Hallo, Dad !’ while my daughters seem to be looking from under the eyelashes in a shy blissfulness of love, while their lips seem to be trembling with the kisses they would give me if only they were here.

“ At last I know what life is, and why we don’t want to leave it.

“ My eyes again seek the photos. Over them comes a film. My head swims. My heart throbs, and I bend my knees and look to God, for I have been guilty of the folly of gambling, and the price has to be paid.

“ God bless you, my bonny wife and kiddies, and also bless those who did not forget—JIMMY —.”

The second picture is that of a young Japanese evangelist, a modern Lazarus, if you will !

In its setting it bears no resemblance to the story of Moses, at least in his early years, and yet the revelation that God gave of Himself in the burning bush on desert sands is strangely akin to His manifestation on the mountain side to this young Japanese, resulting in the same passionate devotion that inspired Moses to forsake all and follow Him.

Only a few weeks ago I was visiting two churches in the suburbs of a great city in Japan ; bright, keen little groups of believers, standing monuments of the devoted life of Mr. Fuchizaki, the young Japanese evangelist to whom I refer. I quote from a little brochure written by a J.E.B. missionary, Mr. Dyer :—

“ Born in a home where the luxuries of life, as well as many of its necessities were denied him, he early learned to develop a disposition of contentment and unselfishness, which in his later years moved him to share at the point of sacrifice everything which he possessed. I have never met, East or West, a more utterly selfless and self-denying spirit than dwelt in the frail body of Mr. Fuchizaki. Left an orphan at the age of eleven years, his mother, moved by strong

motives, as Samuel's mother of old, took him to the temple and dedicated him to the service of the gods—the only gods she knew! It was thus that he found himself in early life committed to the tender mercies of the priests of heathenism, and his boyhood years were spent under their care in listening to lectures on Buddhism, memorizing the Buddhist writings, and performing the duties attaching to the life of an acolyte of the temples.

“ From temple to school, and from school to temple, so the hopeless years dragged on, until he reached the age of eighteen, and then the moment of his spiritual awakening came. With a great cry in his soul for ‘God,’ he flung off the shackles of the temple to seek Him Whom to know is life eternal.

“ There followed a long and weary quest after God until, compelled by an overmastering desire to find Him, or perish in the attempt, he put together a little food, and taking a piece of canvas for a covering, went out into the mountains and there spent his days in his lonely search for God. The longing of his soul, however, remained unsatisfied, and such a sense of loneliness swept over him, he told us, that he was compelled to find companionship somewhere, and found it with the birds of the forest trees, and the fishes in the mountain pools. So tame did they become, as he sought their company, and so accustomed to his presence, that he gave names to them, and found that they came and went at his command.

“ Coming once more from the mountains to his home he stayed a short time, but still found no answer amidst the din and noise of the city to the weary longings of his soul. It was during this interval that he obtained some Christian literature, and with this in his possession went back once more to the solitude of the mountains. With the message of a Divine revelation standing out from the printed pages, and Nature in all its beauty unfolding itself before him,

he began to consider the beginning of all things. But Nature alone had no comforting word to speak. With outstretched arms, stirred to the very depths by an intensity of desire, the cry of his soul equalled Job's of old—' Oh, that I knew where I might find Him ! that I might come even to His seat.'

" God heard the cry of that lonely soul, and step by step he was led on until Reason and Revelation coming into perfect agreement, alone on the mountain side, beneath the overhanging trees, he stood face to face with his Creator. Light had penetrated the darkness, and God in part had revealed Himself to this seeking soul. Hardly realizing what was happening his glad heart responded to the Divine, and coming down from the mountains he knew that he was not his own.

" Not very long after this he was brought into contact with Mr. Sawamura, the Principal of our Bible Training Institute who ' expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly,' and had the joy of leading him into a real experience of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus. From that moment his choice was made, and he went out henceforth to follow in the footsteps of his Saviour.

" For two or three years during his own hard and bitter struggle with poverty, he did a most Christlike work in the alleviation of sorrow, and suffering, and want, in the poorer districts outside the city of Kobe, where he lived. Single-handed, and with supreme devotion, he sought to keep a roof over the head of his mother and other relations, together with a few orphan children and other suffering ones who, like himself, had been brought to the verge of destitution, and for whose support he, with a triumphant faith in God, made himself responsible. He deliberately set his face against doing merely ' social work,' and his cry ever was, ' Lord, give me souls.' In order to impart true value to all his labours he attended the classes

in our Bible School, desiring to qualify as an evangelist, and thus be able to preach the Gospel of God's saving grace. As the months passed he became conscious of an ever-increasing burden for the multitudes of children and young people. Going out between his hours of study and daily work, into the streets and suburbs of the city, as well as into the surrounding hamlets and villages, he gathered around him, as by some irresistible powers of attraction, the children and young people wherever opportunity offered, and lovingly taught them about the 'Friend for little children,' and numbers of them were brought to know the Lord Jesus as their own Saviour. Then he turned his own home into a meeting place for the great numbers of children who thronged to hear the story of Redeeming Love from his lips. He had the joy of seeing his own mother, who, at one time, greatly opposed him, turn to the Lord in brokenness and contrition, as well as his brother and other of his relatives and neighbours, in addition to many of the children of the district in which he lived.

"Then came his call to wider ministry. The Sunrise Band, the Junior Section of the Japan Evangelistic Band, hearing of his gift for work among young people, invited him to become one of their special Evangelists to the children of Japan. In this call he clearly saw the leading of the Lord, and gladly responded, involving though it did, long and tedious travelling by land and sea in all sorts of weather, as well as frequent and prolonged absences from home and exacting meetings for children of ten days' duration connected with our Tent Missions in opening up unevangelized towns through our Forward Movement Evangelism. I have known him on these occasions to hold as many as four large meetings a day for the children, who refused to be satisfied with less. Sometimes I have slipped away from the adult services in the Tent, to see him surrounded by

crowds of children, literally packing to the doors the house in which these extra services were being held, because their hearts had been stirred during the afternoon services for children in the Tent.

“ All these arduous and exacting labours made demands on an already weakened constitution, which left no reserve of physical power. I have seen him after the children's meetings in the Tent have finished, go to the room where we have been staying together and throw himself, pale and exhausted on the quilt, seeking to regain strength for his next endeavour. He never spoke of himself, never spared himself, never pitied himself.

“ During August, 1929, another Tent Mission was planned. We wonder if he expected this to be his final effort for the Kingdom. He was utterly unfit for any service, and we finally sent him away for rest, but his elder sister died, leaving an orphan boy, and he perforce had to return to Kobe with added responsibilities. During the Tent Mission, he collapsed more than once through absolute fatigue. He would crawl home and fling himself or fall helplessly on his bed. In front of the Christians he was full of force, and refused to use or hear words of moderation. But by himself, he spent hours trying to recover enough strength for the next step. His mother had lost her sight as the result of her hard life of poverty and struggle. He had to care for her, for the younger brother was a conscript in the army. He would not admit defeat and fought bravely on to the last, preaching in the Tent and elsewhere, but all the time slowly succumbing to that dread enemy, consumption. Who can measure the fruit of this life laid down? Who can tell the joy in the presence of angels because of this life taken up?

“ In the very early hours of Saturday, November 16, a warning having been sent round, several of our J.E.B. workers, and all the Rokko Christians, assembled

round his bed. His whispered word was, 'It is no longer I that live, but Christ. All thanks be to Him.' And all we could say was, 'Amen. Hallelujah.' Then, turning to his mother, he said, 'Mother, you are Christ's. We are all Christ's. Everything is His.' He was asked if he would like to meet the Sunday School children, but said, 'I would like to but I can't. Nevertheless, I will some day.' The Christians approached him one by one and whispered their names in his ear. To all his final word was, 'Be stedfast. Don't let the Lord's work down.' And thus his last words were words of comfort and encouragement. The presence of the Lord was so real, and His glory so manifested, we could only, through our tears, rejoice in Him and praise Him. About 5 a.m. on the next day Sunday, with wonderful peace he was swept into the Land of Victory, there to be 'for ever with the Lord.'

"We laid him to rest in a wonderful spot amongst the beautiful hills of Kobe. The children had their own little funeral service, and many and pitiful were their tears. Then, each one carrying a flower, they followed the dear body to its last earthly home. What will be the final fruit of his service, only eternity will tell; but some have given themselves to the Lord for His service, and these, at least, are the fruit of Mr. Fuchizaki's Christlike life and ministry.

"Yes, these, as well as the Church of Christ in Kajiya, and later in Rokko, together with nearly every Sunday School connected with the Japan Evangelistic Band Forward Movement evangelism, in twenty or more other towns and cities.

"He had none of this world's wealth to give, but he gave *himself* until at the early age of twenty-seven, exhausted with the sacrifice, he lay down to die, and from the very threshold of Heaven, his final words, as a challenge from the Lord Himself, come to you

and me, ' Be stedfast. Don't let the work of the Lord
down.' "

Hero of God, well done,—
Thou didst gird thy armour on,
In the strength of His dear Son,
At His word hast laid it down
To receive from Him a crown.

Hero of God, farewell,—
Thou hast joined the white-robed throng,
Thou dost sing the Victor's song,
In the presence of thy Lord,
Entered into thy reward.

Could there be a greater contrast than between these two, one a miserable millionaire, brought up in Christian (?) England, putting an end to his own career, and the other a penniless lad in a heathen land, after laying down his life for Christ's sake, carried triumphantly into Abraham's bosom, and leaving behind him many to call his memory eternally blessed ?

By faith he too " endured as seeing Him Who is invisible."

CHAPTERS TWELVE AND THIRTEEN.

The
Dynamic of Deliverance

CHAPTER XII. THE BARRIER OF BLOOD.

CHAPTER XIII. THE BARRIER OF THE HOLY CLOUD.

" Fight the good fight of faith. Break through all temptations, dejections, wandering, worldly thoughts, all unprofitable companions, and the backwardness of an unbelieving heart and carnal mind. Struggle, I say, till you touch Jesus, and feel healing, comforting, virtue, proceeding from Him ; and when you know the way clearly to Him, repeat the touch till you find that He lives in you by the powerful operation of His Holy Spirit.

" You must remember also that it is your privilege to go to Him by such a faith NOW and every succeeding moment, and that you are to bring to Him nothing but a careless, distracted, tossed, hardened heart, just such an one as you have NOW. Here lies the great mistake of many poor miserable but precious souls. They are afraid to believe lest it should be presumption, because they have not yet comfort, peace, joy, love, etc., not considering that this is to expect the fruit before the tree is planted. Beware then of expecting any grace previous to believing."—JOHN FLETCHER OF MADELEY.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PASSOVER: THE BARRIER OF BLOOD.

"Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them."—HEB. xi. 28.

IN the introductory chapter, I have referred to the two scenes now to engage our attention, as landscapes rather than portraits. And yet in the one before us there is a central figure, and that figure is Moses.

Hitherto we have considered his faith as it related to his own personal life and character and training. Here, however, we are called upon to see it as the dynamic of a life work, the deliverance of a nation.

These two landscapes might be entitled "The Passing over of Death" and the "Passing through Death" respectively. The two incidents described therein speak to us of the two aspects of the great Exodus. A careful perusal, however, of the two verses in which these scenes are described reveal the fact that in the former the pronoun is in the third person singular, "*By faith HE instituted the Passover.*" In the second it is in the third person plural, "*By faith THEY passed through.*" In other words, the means by which the deliverance of the Hebrew race was effected, is attributed to the faith of a single individual and that individual was Moses. The actual exodus, however, demanded an exercise of faith by the people themselves. The most interesting and instructive episodes in the long life of this our hero were subsequent to the event of which we are writing. His pilgrimage through the wilderness, his leadership, his legislation, his generalship, his wisdom, patience and communion with God provide us with almost unlimited illustrations of his mighty faith.

But the Holy Ghost refers to none of them. Not a single scene between the Exodus and the taking of Jericho, forty-one years distant, is depicted in this our National Gallery.

The one great outstanding act of Moses' faith in his public life, viz., the institution of the Passover, is the only one selected by the Divine Artist. We do not wonder at this however, for of all the important and instructive incidents in the Old Testament, this of course is the most momentous! This was the beginning of the Hebrew national life. This was the foundation of their Worship; this was the greatest event in their history. This was the clearest type of the sacrificial work of the World's Redeemer. To it the Jew ever looked back. By a remembrance of it he was instructed and warned and comforted. Again and again it was in subsequent times employed to remind the people of their bondage in Egypt, the miracle of their deliverance, the mighty power and tender love of their God. Memorial celebrations of it kept with peculiar solemnity marked every religious revival and return to the faith of their fathers. For several thousands of years it has been perpetuated, the never to be forgotten memorial of their national beginning, and their eternal separation from all other peoples on the face of the earth. It was of this Pascal Feast that the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "With desire have I desired to eat it with you."

To the seer on Patmos Isle was granted a vision of the glories of heaven, and amid them all the most glorious, the most entrancing, was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The blood of the Lamb, the wrath of the Lamb, the song of the Lamb, the bride of the Lamb, the marriage of the Lamb, the book of the Lamb, the throne of the Lamb, these are the all engrossing, all satisfying themes of angels and archangels, yea, and will be of all the count-

less hosts of the redeemed throughout the ages of eternity.

We do not wonder then, that a faith which apprehended something at least of these eternal verities, should be selected by the Holy Ghost as the greatest of all the life works of Moses.

By faith Moses kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, i.e., the Pascal Feast and the Pascal Ritual.

Incidentally we would observe that the word "kept" is scarcely an accurate translation, nor is the Revised Version Marginal rendering, "instituted," much better. The word in the original is simply "made." Its meaning in the present passage seems to be "caused it to be observed."

The thoughts suggested by the concise statement of our text centre of course round the faith of Moses, rather than round the actual ritual or observance of the Pascal Feast. What was it that Moses actually believed? Why did he believe? How far did the eye of faith behold? Was he concerned only with the immediate deliverance of his people? Did his faith envisage the great Antitype? Was he conscious that his faithfulness in God's house of that day would affect "all His house," whereof *we*, the Church, all down through the ages are members?

It was perfectly possible for God to have brought His people out of Egypt some other way. His methods of deliverance, as subsequent history proves, were varied and diverse. Of this Moses must have been aware. Why then this way? Surely Moses' obedience to God's commands was not a mere blind obedience. He acted in faith. He believed of course that God would fulfil His word and save His people through the appointed means, but surely he believed much more.

He believed with a heaven-born assurance that the

slain lamb, the sprinkled blood, the Pascal feast, were to be the very fundamentals of the Hebrew national religion. The need of sacrifice, the demand for atonement, the escape from impending judgment, must ever be the conditions under which deliverance from bondage, affliction and pain is possible. His people knew none of these things. The only things they were conscious of and desirous of deliverance from, were the bondage of their Egyptian taskmasters, the slave-drivers' lash and the misery of their condition. Of impending judgment they knew little and cared less !

Even when the dramatic events had actually passed, his people were only able to see "the acts" of God. Moses alone saw and understood "His ways" (Psa. ciii. 6), the rationale, the necessity, the wisdom and the grace that lay behind the Pascal Feast and the sprinkling of the blood. Herein is the value of Moses' act.

But in Moses' faith there was more. If there is one mighty act of faith recorded in the Word of God more to be observed, more to be thankful for than the rest, this act of Moses is the one. Mr. Moody declared that the twelfth chapter of Exodus was the pivotal chapter of the Old Testament and one of the greatest in the Bible. What then was it that Moses did for us and the whole Church of the Living God ? In the light of Calvary, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, we can understand what Moses only saw in parable and figure ; but, it was through Moses that we can see more than the Gospel narrative of Golgotha reveals ; for the Lord Jesus Himself in unfolding the mysteries of His own sacrifice to His disciples after His resurrection found it necessary to refer them to the typology of the Old Testament (Luke xxiv. 27, 44-46). Calvary was not a mere isolated fact of history. It had long been foretold in prophecy, long been prepared for in type, long been

revealed as God's eternal purpose. The Pascal Feast and blood of sprinkling instituted through the faith of Moses was the greatest and most pregnant event not only in Jewish history but in the history of the world prior to the Incarnation and Passion of its great Antitype the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Moses saw the great event from afar dimly in the distance, yet to be accomplished, saw it only in type and figure. But we see it in prophecy foretold, in history an accomplished fact, sealed by the Resurrection, confirmed by the coming of the Holy Ghost, and crowned with ten thousand times ten thousand, trophies of redeeming grace, and yet we doubt ! Oh ! how culpable, how appalling such unbelief must appear to heaven and its denizens. No wonder the Lord Jesus declared : " Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father, there is one that accuseth you, even Moses."

I. The Pascal Ritual.

" By faith he instituted the sprinkling of the blood that the destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them."

As I have already observed, to the children of Israel the escape from Egypt and its bondage was their first and perhaps their only consideration. Their miraculous deliverance, if this alone had been recorded, wonderful as it was, would have lingered in the memories of a few succeeding generations and been enshrined in historic records for the days to come. But faith saw farther and deeper. It was not escape from the sword of the Egyptian, but from that of Jehovah, that had to be immortalised. The passing over of the destroying angel was not a deliverance from Egyptian bondage, but a deliverance from the righteous wrath of

God. It was not till after the people had got away from Egypt and its entanglements, that the meaning of the sprinkled blood could be realised. All they could think of at the moment was their physical deliverance : but as the days passed on, as the experience of their wilderness wandering revealed to them the rebellion, the unbelief and the murmuring of their hearts, the significance of the blood sprinkled upon the lintel (a piece of ritual never repeated in the subsequent celebrations of the Passover) must have brought a more searching conviction, a brighter light, a more humble gratitude, a deeper peace and a more abundant joy to every thoughtful and penitent soul.

The deliverance from Egypt was an historical fact that vitally concerned the forbears of their race, but the story of the sprinkled blood was a different matter. It was a story for all time. It spake of a righteous God, of the wages of sin, of a sacrifice yet to come, a timeless eternal principle, a universal need and a universal remedy. It was salvation from the guilt of sin. This it was that faith beheld. This it was that Moses immortalised. Herein lay the value of his institution, a value for all time. It is true that the Egyptians had now to reap what they had sown ; for long had the blood of the murdered Hebrew infants been crying for vengeance. " Vengeance is Mine, saith the Lord, I will repay " ; the time for that repayment had come at last. But the Hebrews had also to learn that it was through no goodness of their own, that they too could escape the judgment of Jehovah. The foundation of all character is based on forgiveness and unmerited grace. Love when analysed into humility, gratitude and sympathy (virtues exercised in relation to self, God, and mankind respectively) can only spring from that source. This it is that faith beholds, and this it was that constrained Moses

to command the sprinkling of blood. It was done in faith ; it was done before there was any visible sign of judgment ; it was done in all the confident assurance that the destroying angel would most certainly appear. The tragic event justified his faith and proved it was no hallucination, thus assuring us for all time the certainty of a coming judgment, no less than the certainty of deliverance therefrom. This then had to be enshrined for ever in the annals of the Hebrew race, an eternal principle, to be revealed in all its glorious and awful majesty by the Cross of Calvary.

II. The Pascal Feast.

"By faith Moses kept the Passover."

If what I have written above is true of the sprinkled blood, it is still more true of the Pascal Feast. As far as the actual leaving Egypt was concerned, the Israelites were not in any way *materially* assisted thereby. The meal taken prior to the journey could have been an ordinary one, as far as their mere *physical* needs were concerned. The need of this sacred communion, this common meal, this partaking of the slain lamb, was something far deeper : it was known only to the believing soul and seen only by the seer's prophetic vision ! It is true, of course, that the command for every member of every family to unite in a common meal, at the same hour, with girded loins, and to do it in haste with knapsack filled with a bread ration, would facilitate their departure ; but other instructions given in detail, to eat with bread unleavened, with bitter herbs, to roast the flesh and leave none unconsumed till the morning, could serve no such purpose. No, the partaking of the Pascal Feast was a deeply symbolic act, a spiritual sacrament fraught with solemn meaning, conveying in type

the most sacred of the lessons we learn to-day at the Cross of Calvary.

By faith Moses instituted the Pascal Feast. What his faith dimly apprehended and what those lessons were and are for us, the Lord Jesus Himself has made known. In the immortal passage (St. John vi.) He has declared to us the meaning of feeding upon the Pascal Lamb.

1. "*Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life*" (St. John vi. 54).

After the lamb had been slain and the blood sprinkled on the doorposts so that every passing Egyptian could see and scoff (herein is evidenced the need of an open confession of Christ, thus drawing upon ourselves His reproach), the lamb had to be consumed. The flesh of the lamb had to be eaten by the one who had slain it. The victim which had laid down its life for the slayer, was now to sustain the slayer's life! Oh! what a parable is here! We, whose sin has been the cause of the Saviour's death, are invited to partake of His flesh and His blood, and feed on Him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving. Here, surely, is more than forgiveness, more than the "passing over" of God's righteous judgment. Here is the secret of eternal life, here is perhaps the greatest of the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven.

2. "*He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him*" (St. John vi. 56).

Of the seven sacrifices ordained to the children of Israel (one given us in the book of Exodus, five in the book of Leviticus and one in the book of Numbers) only four were allowed to be eaten; and of these four only one could be partaken of by the worshipper himself. The other three, in so far as they were eaten at all, were the priest's portion.

No sacrifice but the Pascal lamb, the whole of it, could be eaten by the offerer. It is of the Pascal Lamb that the Lord Jesus is speaking. Shall I say more wonderful even than the gift of eternal life, is the indwelling presence of the Saviour Himself. Here we are told that if we eat His flesh and drink His blood He will abide in our hearts ; the risen, ascended, glorified One will dwell there, when we feed on the Crucified One. St. Paul reminds us of the same truth. When he says, " Christ liveth in me," he tells us that this is only possible, because he " has been crucified with Christ." This identification with Christ on His Cross is only another way of saying that we feed on and assimilate the flesh and blood of the Son of God. Blessed as it is to have escaped the wrath to come through the blood of the Lamb, more blessed as it is to have received eternal life, yet still more blessed is it to find Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, because we have learned to eat His flesh and drink His blood.

3. " *As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father : so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me*" (St. John vi. 57).

Here is yet another, shall I say even deeper lesson. The Lord Jesus in this passage reveals to us the secret of His own life, His words, His acts, and His miracles. He tells us that " He lived by the Father." All that He did and said daily was inspired by the Father and wrought through His power.

If our life would be a replica of His, if we too would follow in His steps, we shall have to eat His flesh and drink His blood. As the food of which we partake, not only nourishes our bodies but actually becomes part of our flesh and bone, our blood and muscle, so our partaking by

faith of His sacrificial death and life will cause us to assimilate and share His very life and character. His humility, His love, His patience, His dependence on God will be ours. We shall live by Him even as He lived by the Father. As the living Father in sending Christ pledged Himself to supply all the needed power by the Holy Ghost to His own beloved Son, so the Lord Jesus in sending us out of Egypt into the wilderness and thence into Canaan, pledges Himself to supply all our need, if only by faith we will feed on Him in our heart with thanksgiving.

4. " *This is that bread which came down from heaven . . . he that eateth this bread shall live for ever*" (St. John vi. 58).

" He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life," yes, hath it here and now ; but there is more, " he that eateth," i.e., goes on eating and partaking thereof, " shall live for ever," i.e., shall enter into a life of eternal blessedness and glory. The trespass offering which was allowed to be eaten also, was a continuation of the Pascal offering. It was a guarantee that the life received through the initial eating of the Pascal Lamb, would be continued and maintained and for ever perpetuated throughout eternity. " If we endure to the end we shall be saved " : if by faith we *continue* to eat of His flesh and drink His blood, we shall enter into life eternal. There need be no forfeit of the gift of eternal life which He has already given us : there need be no blotting out of our name out of the book of life. The Lord has provided amply for all our need and all our walk and all our entrance into His heavenly Kingdom. The only condition is a feeding by faith on His finished sacrifice.

The story of the Exodus is a drama in two acts. The first is that which we have been considering, the Pascal

Feast, the sprinkled blood, the sitting still in readiness to depart, the sacred meal, the girded loin. On that memorable night in every Hebrew home there was peace, expectation, joy and light ; all were awake. In every Egyptian home all were asleep ; there was darkness, death and, finally, the cry of agony.

The second act of the drama is depicted in our next chapter, the *actual* departure from the land of bondage.

The one speaks to us of being right with God ; of pardon, redemption, and a shelter from the wrath of judgment. The other speaks to us of regeneration, deliverance from bondage, escape from the power of the world, the flesh and the devil. These are two aspects of one and the same salvation, experiences coincident in time but absolutely distinct in spiritual meaning. It is true there can be no regeneration without forgiveness and no forgiveness without regeneration ; but these respective significances must never be confused.

The faith exercised by Moses was concerned with the former. By faith he provided a shelter for his people from the impending judgment. So far our consideration of the great theme has been confined to the nature or content of Moses' faith. We cannot, of course, suppose that he realised the magnitude of his undertaking, or understood its vast significance all down through the centuries. He was concerned primarily, if not altogether with the immediate crisis of the hour, though it is impossible to suppose that at least in the fuller revelation he received on Mt. Sinai, he did not come to understand the relation of the great sacrificial system to the Antitype yet to be revealed.

We need, however, in the light of our chapter to consider awhile, not merely the content and nature but the power of his faith. The energy and efficacy of faith is its

real theme. As I have observed, there is no repetition and no prodigality of illustration in this our picture gallery. Each instance teaches a different and distinct lesson. The sacrifice of Abel is not repeated here. That spoke to us of faith as the agent of personal salvation. Here, however, in Moses' cases it is faith for the salvation of a nation. By it the great lawgiver had power to arrest the attention of all his people. Their feverish haste to be gone without delay was strangely stilled. He was able to focus the attention of every home and every heart on this all absorbing theme, the Pascal Feast and the sprinkled blood, and thus make it possible for God to manifest His delivering power. Thank God, the story of Moses is not unique. All down through the ages it has been repeated. Martin Luther heard the great trumpet call, "The just shall live by faith," on Pilate's staircase, and leaping to his feet found himself free for ever. To quote his own words, "Then I felt myself born again as a new man and I entered by an open door into the very Paradise of God. . . . Truly this text of St. Paul was to me the gate of heaven."

That trumpet call relayed through the lips and pen of the great Reformer awoke the world. "By faith" Martin Luther instituted the great Reformation that the blight and curse of Rome should not destroy the whole Church of the living God.

What was true of Luther was true of Wesley. The preaching by the Wesleys of the truth of Sanctification, as well as a present and free salvation, in the words of Lecky, the historian, "saved England from a revolution worse than the French one," but it did more. The faith of Wesley found expression in the lives of multitudes and put its stamp on some of the great world movements of the Spirit. The Salvation Army owes its mighty force, if not its very

existence, to Wesley's *influence*, while the China Inland Mission, responsible under God for the salvation of multitudes from that great country, owes its origin to a product of the Wesleyan revival.

Lack of space prevents my quoting other instances equally remarkable. The faith of a saint saving a nation, the faith of a single believer moulding a multitude, the faith of one putting ten thousand to flight, oh ! what encouragement is here ! Would that the perusal of these words would stir up someone in this our day and generation to hear the Lord's voice, " Whom shall I send ? Who will go for us ? " and to make reply, " Here am I. Send me," someone who, like Moses, has been cradled in faith, and who, like Moses, also has counted all things but loss that he may win Christ. I am well aware that the faith of Moses that saved a nation was not the product of a moment ; it was no mere sudden flash of spiritual genius. It was the product and outcome of those deep experiences that we have observed in the preceding study : but if by chance the simple thoughts conveyed in this chapter should meet the eye and reach the heart of some young believer just setting out on his life work, I can but pray that they may kindle in him a holy ambition to so behold the sorrows of a world dying unevangelized, that he too may be willing to suffer with the people of God, deeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of a modern Egypt, and seeing Him Who is invisible, be empowered by the Holy Ghost so to believe God that he may be used of the Lord to put ten thousand to flight and bring multitudes into the land that floweth with milk and honey.

I do not suggest that any who will read these pages, will be a Luther or a Wesley, but rather that each of us in the limited sphere assigned to us should realise not only

our responsibility, but the inestimable privilege and the mysterious power of bringing deliverance to other souls, of believing for them and by faith of placing that sacred barrier of blood about them, so that the destroying angel shall pass over, and thus they shall be enabled to escape both from the wrath to come and from the powers of darkness that beset and pursue them here and now.

Experience in the mission field provides one with almost numberless instances of this our privilege and power. One such example, brought to my notice only a month ago, must suffice.

Visiting a group of little country congregations, I found myself in a large city at their centre. I was introduced to the cashier of a big hospital, attached to the University. Here is his story. A man of good education, he early gave way to drink, and drifting hither and thither, he found himself in Corea without employment. He succeeded in getting into the frontier police force. In charge of a lonely station, he continued his heavy drinking, and returning one night hopelessly intoxicated upset the lamp, thus causing a conflagration that reduced the whole place to ashes. He reported the matter next day, accusing Coreans of arson. Remorse of conscience and weariness of life made him resort to the revolver. The bullet, missing his brain, brought him however to the verge of the grave. For some time he lay between life and death. Finally recovering, he was discharged from the hospital and dismissed from the force.

Returning to Japan he entered a mining school. There a few weeks of discipline were quite enough for him ; and, fomenting a strike among the students, he was again dismissed. He then secured some clerical work at the Ministry of Education through the kind offices of an old friend.

Drunkenness again proved his undoing ; and he was dismissed once more. His friend was shortly afterwards transferred to the University of —, and again, to give him another chance, had him installed in the office of the hospital, where I met him. Drink and debauchery were close at his heels, however, and very soon, after an attack of delirium tremens, he was taken to an asylum. Unable to get any intoxicating liquor he recovered and was allowed to leave.

At this point a servant of the Lord, the pastor of a church not far distant, who had known him years previously, like Moses of old, determined to place that wonder-working barrier of blood around this poor enslaved victim of the devil. He invited him to his home, took him in, and before many days were passed led him to the Cross. The deliverance was immediate : the transformation was an amazement to all. As time went on his friend, the official at the University and the head surgeon of the hospital, both of them as indifferent to the claims of Christ as they were ignorant of His teaching and power, were so impressed with what had taken place, that without any restriction they permitted him to proclaim among nurses, patients and office staff the Gospel that had wrought such wonders in him.

Some thirty-five souls gather weekly to pray and praise and listen to the Word.

In the large beautifully equipped hospital he is allowed the use of the board-room for his weekly meeting, while for me he arranged a gathering in one of the handsomely furnished lecture-rooms of the University, to which the hospital is attached. A company of some seventy listened to my address—patients, nurses, and members of the office staff.

I was greatly impressed with his strength of character and forcefulness of personality. Truly he shines as a beacon set upon a hill, where under ordinary circumstances it would be impossible for the Gospel to be proclaimed.

The point of my illustration, however, is that prayer of faith by which, in all his hopeless and degraded condition he was lifted into the arms of the Saviour, the prayer of that man of God who put around him the barrier of blood and so made it possible for the Holy Ghost to save him from his Egyptian darkness and bondage, and make him in turn a saviour of men.

Oh, that some who read these lines could get a vision of the glorious privilege, the pressing responsibility, and the wonderful power that is at the disposal of any who will forsake all and follow Christ into the dark purlieus of heathendom.

Nearly thirty-five years have come and gone since I started out for the Mission Field. Would that I had the pen of a writer ready enough to make men see what I have seen and heard and felt of people sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death; yes! but thank God! of much more, viz., the power of His most precious blood to bring mighty and miraculous deliverances. Theologians and theorists, philosophers and professors at home may sit in academic chairs and discourse eloquently enough on the various theories of the Atonement, and yet, alas! see little, and I fear in many cases know less of its actual delivering power, such as we continually witness, power revealed to men and women, who in body, soul and spirit are enslaved and who in mind are dwelling in the habitations of Egyptian darkness—power revealed often enough not in response to their faith, but to the faith of those who, like Moses, have been called and commissioned, and who have come to learn,

albeit too slowly, the secret of exercising faith not merely for themselves but also on behalf of those to whom God has sent them. Those who have witnessed such deliverances can afford to smile at the arid, fruitless sophistries of many of our modern philosophers who, like priest and Levite of old, have no wine (His most precious blood), no oil (His most blessed Spirit), no bandage (His most holy Word) to heal and bind up the broken, bruised humanity lying on the highways of heathenism. Methinks their dignity would be lowered if they had to ride upon a humble ass like their Divine Master ; and so they have none whereon to set the wounded soul that waits and calls for some despised but good Samaritan.

To one who has seen these things, the most pathetic and tragic spectacle awaits him as he returns to the land of his birth. He sees young life like a tumultuous Niagara, spending its force to but little purpose. He sees tens of thousands of young men and women (calling themselves Christians) not knowing what to do with their lives, while their parents are often bewildered as to what profession to choose for them. Such a sight in non-Christian lands suggests no tragedy ; but that after nearly two millennia of Christianity such a state of things can exist in Christianised communities, while countless hosts of Christless souls wait at least to be told that God loves them and Christ died for their salvation, is enough to amaze angels and archangels, and make them marvel that a God of judgment can tolerate this Laodicea of Western Christendom so long, and delay His purpose of removing her candlestick.

Truly Christ's command to preach the Gospel to every creature, is of no more interest to the average Christian (?) than the dullest maxim that Epictetus ever propounded !

That scores of thousands of Christian ministers and workers should concentrate on our little spot of God's earth, called the British Isles, and that scores of millions sterling can be spent annually on the upkeep of themselves and their institutions, and that this state of things should have been going on for centuries, while the inhabitants of vast continents have had no opportunity of even hearing the message, never seems to occur to the average Christian (?) as peculiar, or anything but the most natural thing in the world. Such reflections as, "Any poor fool will do for a missionary" or "other religions are just as good as Christianity" are equivalent to telling their Master to His face that He did not know what He was talking about, when He *commanded* that every creature under heaven should hear *His* Gospel.

Truly, truly, do men die for lack of knowledge, and "where there is no vision the people perish."

CHAPTER XIII.

PASSING THROUGH : THE BARRIER OF THE HOLY CLOUD.

"By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land : which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned."—HEB. xi. 29.

THE picture now before us portrays one of the most dramatic incidents in the Bible if not in the history of mankind. And when we remember that all that the world holds most dear in spiritual values has been handed down to us through the annals of the Hebrew race, may we not say that the incident we are about to study is also one of the most momentous in the world's history.

The Israelites have now left Egypt and are well on their way, but the greatest peril is yet to be faced. Shut in by the mountains on the one side, a waste desert on the other, with an impassable sea in front of them, these two million souls, scantily armed, ill-provisioned and without experience, are pursued from behind by the veterans of Seti, that Egyptian Napoleon, and the trained forces of Rameses, his even greater son. I cannot give a better and more vivid description of the whole scene, than by quoting from Dr. John Smith's "The Permanent Message of the Exodus" :—

"When the command to advance was given, Moses had borne in upon him what was to be done. God forecast the issue, also, in the utter overthrow of the Egyptians. And now let us try to realise the scene. Remember there were at least two millions in the ranks of Israel, of all ages, from infancy to those of advanced years. It is high sun-down, when, having sighted the pursuing Egyptians, they get into line to march across. At that time, the incident just referred to occurred. The cloud which had been leading them went back and stood behind them, stretching as a

black impenetrable mass between them and their foes. On the side next Israel, however, the cloud seemed aflame. Can you not see the lurid glare, the sea stretching dark and indefinite away, the moving masses silhouetted against the sand? Just then a mighty east wind began to blow. Two winters ago in Luxor we heard the explorer Naville, tell how, on the lake of Geneva and elsewhere, strong winds in certain directions have been known to make profound depressions in the waters. This was a wind of God, however, charged with a special mission, and like a great ploughshare it clove the Red Sea in twain, starting from the eastern shore, till right before the Israelites stood a swept pathway, and two mighty walls of water, one on either side.

“What an eventful night, reminding them of that other so recently past, when the destroying angel smote the firstborn! But here was an angel of salvation leading them on to liberty. How long the passage was we cannot tell; perhaps two or three miles. All night long the host would keep crossing; soldiers, women, children, cattle, showing the haste which they acted on that passover night. One wonders what the Egyptians thought, as they lay encamped on the other side of that impenetrable mist. Of course on the sand there would be no crashing noises as on stony streets. But through the impenetrable wall there would come signs of movement, the shouts of leaders, the lowing of disturbed and frightened cattle. At last the earliest grey of morning invades the night. The cloud has lifted, and lo! the Israelites, their journey well-nigh done, are disappearing through that wondrous avenue, whose flanking ornaments were water-cliffs, and whose way was the bed of the sea. What harnessing and leaping into chariots, what hoarse cries of command and hurried forming into line! We have no trace in the narrative of Pharaoh's going with them; but there went all Pharaoh's horses

and chariots and horsemen. Still the great wind bellowed, still the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled, still the cliffs stood up on either side of the discovered sea-bottom, but even the latest Hebrew wayfarer was far across.

“With precipitate step they dash on. Troop after troop sweeps into this strange defile. They never stop to ask themselves whether this is not a work of that terrible Hand which had so often smitten them, and of which they did well to stand in awe ; or, if the thought arose, their pride and thirst for victory sweep it from their minds. We confess to be greatly fascinated by the sight of these prancing hordes. In their pride, in their security of victory, they seem an emblem of those forces of human egoism, which in every age are seen riding full-tilt against the cause of God, only to be overwhelmed. ‘It came to pass in the morning watch, the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and troubled them.’ They felt they were not making progress. In the sinking sand the wheels rocked, loosened, threatened to fall away. Though their horses leaped violently their traces’ length, the chariots hardly made way. And then, when it was too late, they began to think that this was of God. They saw their imminent peril. ‘Let us flee from the face of Israel,’ they cried. But they had dared God to the utmost ; they had contravened their own promise and command. ‘Stretch out thy hand,’ says God. ‘And Moses stretched forth his hand, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared.’ Ay, and as the new day dawned, they, the representatives of an old order of force, were being whelmed in the flood, while the vanguard of the Kingdom of God stood safe on the sea-shore. Through the mounting waters they haste, but when the great fluid walls returned to the sea-bed, they swept over chariots and horsemen till not one remained !”

As we turn from this vivid description to its very brief epitome in Hebrews xi. 29, we are reminded that the secret of the perilous and yet victorious march was Faith in God. And yet, if we read carefully once more the original narrative contained in Exodus xiv., we find it difficult to reconcile this statement with the facts as recorded. As in the case of Isaac blessing his sons, so here it would at first sight appear as though faith were entirely lacking. We read only of panic and despair, murmuring and bitter invective against their leader and deliverer. If ever faith were wanting, we should have said it certainly was on this occasion.

Had our epitome said, "By faith he (Moses) led them through the Red Sea," etc., we could have understood it, but no, it is definitely stated that by faith they, this poor panic-stricken multitude, passed through the waters. The purpose of our study will be to find out first the nature of that faith, and secondly its secret and its power.

The Nature of their Faith.

These apparent discrepancies in the sacred text, which when analysed prove to be no discrepancies at all, ought to convince any honest doubter of the reality of plenary inspiration.

Our text very definitely speaks of the faith that carried the people through the opened waters of the Red Sea. It has no reference to the opening of those waters. The faith that opened them was Moses' faith, not theirs. Camping on the seashore, the people were filled with terror and dismay. The Psalmist describes their unbelief, "Our fathers understood not Thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of Thy mercies; but provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea" (Psa. cvi. 7).

Deliverance appeared utterly impossible. The *cul de sac* was cruel in its impassability.

As soon, however, as the way was opened, faith revived and prevailed. Do you ask in what sense was there any need of faith? Were they not able to walk by sight? Reflections such as these betray a strange lack of imagination. Let us try and picture the scene once more. To quote from Dr. Smith's description,—

“ Still the great wind bellowed, still the lightning flashed and the thunder rolled, still the cliffs stood up on either side of the discovered sea-bottom ” ;

or to quote the inspired Psalmist,—

“ The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee ; they were afraid : the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water : the skies sent out a sound : thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven : the lightning lightened the world : the earth trembled and shook. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.” Psalm lxxvii. 16-19.

The scene must have been terrifying indeed, enough to make the stoutest spirit quail, the hissing waters, the roaring gale, the long almost unending avenue, the descent into the abyss, the ascent on the other side, the long trail of two million souls, women and children and cattle ! Any moment the crashing billows might descend and overwhelm them. There could be no escape : death was certain. Behind them, it is true, were the hosts of Pharaoh : but surely the safer way would be to turn again and surrender to the foe. At least their lives would be spared. Slavery and bondage even would be better than death and the extermination of their race. Such were the reflections

of common-sense. The temptation to yield was immense. But, thank God, faith prevailed. They dared to go forward. Of the two perils which faced them it is difficult to say which were the greater. Knowing the psychology of human nature as we do, we do not hesitate to say that in face of the terrifying spectacle before their eyes, it must have required courage of a higher order to step down into the abyss than to turn and yield to the hosts behind them. But faith triumphed and they were saved. It was not faith of the highest or the purest kind. It was preceded by despair, murmuring and ingratitude, but it was real faith, a faith that ventured, a faith that self-desperate believed. And as such God honoured it, and wrought deliverance.

The Secret of their Faith.

It has been almost universally accepted that the passage through the Red Sea is a type of Christian baptism, following as it does so swiftly on the redemption of God's people through the atoning blood of the Pascal Lamb. It is, moreover, so called in the tenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. And yet we must beware of limiting it to any such consideration, at least in the churches of Christianised communities. The failure to distinguish things that vitally differ in this connection, has led to much confusion and strife of tongues.

Christian baptism, as intended by the Lord Jesus and His apostles, involved a real death to sin and the world, the flesh and the devil. And such it still is in Moslem, Jewish and Pagan countries, where the rite is considered as the only genuine mark of public confession of Christ, entailing as it does persecution, ostracism and even death. Alas! in Christianised communities it is far otherwise; it has become almost a mere meaningless form, attended with

no reproach, no persecution, no ostracism, and no separation from a worldly and godless society. Certain sections of the Christian Church, realising this to be the case, have sought to remedy the situation by insisting on baptism by immersion, and that of adults only, hoping that the stigma attached thereto, would in some measure be equivalent to the reproach of Christ, which has to be borne by heathen, Moslem and Jewish converts. The particular members of these particular sects who have been so baptised do not appear to have profited very much thereby. They are no more spiritual than true Christians who are members of other Christian bodies, and I fear, being satisfied with conformity to the mere letter of the matter, have failed to see that a "baptism into Christ's death" is a profounder and more wonderful experience, than being physically immersed amid a company of sympathetic fellow religionists.

If we turn to the Corinthian letter (1. Cor. x.), we find St. Paul using the reference to the Red Sea passage in its deeper and more spiritual sense. The closing verse of the preceding chapter reveals a holy Spirit-born apprehension lest after he has preached to others, he himself might be a castaway (the original word "castaway" is a word of the strongest character and used elsewhere in the New Testament of final reprobation), and he then goes on to say, "For (i.e., my reason for referring to final apostacy thus, is) I would not, brethren, have you ignorant how that all our fathers" passed through the deepest spiritual experiences, and yet "they were overthrown in the wilderness . . . destroyed of serpents . . . destroyed of the destroyer. . . . Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

There does not appear to be present in the mind of the apostle any particular reference to the rite of baptism by

water, at least in its form as used in modern Christendom. We would rather suppose that he is referring to that deeper experience, that real testing of faith through which all these Israelites, and indeed all true Christians who have set out to follow Christ wholly, were and are called upon to pass. Certain it is that after such a deliverance as has been described in the preceding study, Satan, the great adversary, will make every attempt to recapture once more all who have started out to flee from the wrath to come.

In fact, after every deliverance and every victory, there follows a testing of faith that almost might be described as a "baptism into death."

But the purpose of our present study is to find out the secret of that faith which carried the Israelites triumphantly through the threatening billows, ready rather to die, if need be, than yield to the hosts of Pharaoh at their heels. That secret is given us in the clearest possible manner by the Apostle Paul in the passage to which we have referred (1. Cor. x. 1, 2).

In describing this experience of baptism he employs four prepositions—UNDER, THROUGH, INTO, and IN. He says they were all *under* the cloud, they all passed *through* the sea, they were all baptised *into* Moses, and were all baptised *in* (or by) the cloud and *in* (or by) the sea.

1. Firstly, he tells us the baptismal elements, the cloud and the sea.

2. Secondly, he describes the experience as being a baptism into their leader's name.

3. Thirdly, he speaks of the process or manner of the baptism as being *under*, not water, but the cloud; and *through*, not under the water.

Here surely we can learn the secret of their faith.

(1) First then, we consider together the baptismal elements. The "cloud" and the "water." The story is told in Exodus xiv. There we read of the protecting cloud hiding the foe, baulking it of its prey, covering it with darkness and confusion, while to the Israelites it afforded a gracious light to guide and comfort.

Can we not find in the pages of the New Testament, the meaning and interpretation of this gracious symbol? Most assuredly we can. "Ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence," for "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and fire,"—that protecting power, that covering of His wings, that illumination which only the Spirit of Truth can give, teaching, guiding, comforting, and revealing things to come, shewing us the pathway, even Him Who is the Way, the way of His Cross, His death. As the Israelites looked behind them no foe was visible, though they knew he was there. Only the covering, protecting cloud from heaven enveloped them and shut them in.

Not only so, but the cloud on its inward side radiated a heavenly light. Down the long deep waterway it shed its ray. As they descended into the abyss of death there was no darkness. The pathway was illuminated with heavenly light, and as long as they walked in its beams they were confident that all was well. This was their guarantee that what was going to be death to their enemies was to them a pathway of light and liberty.

The other baptismal element was the sea itself. Here too, can we not discover in the New Testament its sacramental meaning? Yes, here too we are not left in doubt. "Know ye not," says the Apostle Paul, "that so many of us as were baptised into Christ, were baptised into His DEATH," yes, and buried with Him. The significance of the baptism in the waters of the Red Sea, is a baptism into

death and burial, not *our* own death, but the death of the Lord Jesus. That death, His death upon the Cross, means life to us but destruction to our enemies. Why then should we fear or hesitate by faith to enter into its waters? Does it look as though we should perish if we enter in? That we should lose all that is nearest and dearest and sweetest and best in life? Yes, it looks so. But the light of God's blessed Spirit upon our way should assure us that "things are not what they seem." Baptism into His death means only death to our enemies, our worldliness, our sin, our pride, our hypocrisy, our bondage to the lusts of the world, the flesh and the devil; these things we loved so well when we were in Egypt, these are our real enemies, our deadliest foes, and these can be destroyed so that we see them no more for ever, by the waves that rolled over our Blessed Saviour, the world's Redeemer. *By faith* they were baptised in the sea. With the words of their commander ringing in their ears they plunged into the steep, cold, threatening avenue of waters. "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will shew to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever."

These then are the baptismal symbols, the cloud and sea. These are the baptismal realities, the Holy Ghost and the death and burial of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, bringing shelter and light, life and liberty to our fearful, trembling hearts. Praise be to God that it is faith that carries us through!

(2) And now we turn to consider the significance of this baptism in order to discover still further the secret of that faith.

"They were all baptised INTO Moses."

Again we ask the question, has the New Testament any

light to throw on this remarkable expression? Yes, assuredly it has.

The Lord Jesus, in commissioning His apostles, instructed them "to baptise into the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost." The converts at Ephesus who had received the baptism of John, were re-baptised "into the name of the Lord Jesus," and St. Paul, in the passage already referred to, says, "So many of us who have been baptised into Jesus Christ. . ."

The enveloping and enlightening cloud, the miraculous dividing and restraining of the waters, were due to the presence and faith of the great Captain. As they heard the rushing mighty wind and beheld the parting of the waves in obedience to his uplifted rod, they looked unto him: they knew God was with him, and though they had doubted and murmured, trembled and despaired, though they had reproached their deliverer, yet now beholding the omnipotence of Jehovah working in obedience to his faith and intercession, they took courage and believed. They were baptised into Moses. In his name and under his ægis, under his protecting faith and blessed leadership, trusting in his word and relying on his pledge that God would undertake, they went forward into the waters that every moment seemed to threaten them with destruction.

Is it not so with us the redeemed of the Lord? His Name, His intercession, His presence, are all the guarantee we need. An experimental baptism into His death is only possible when we are baptised into His name and His presence. "The best of all, God is with us," were the last words of the dying Wesley, as he entered the valley of the shadow of death. Baptised into the name Immanuel, "God with us," he found the waterway of death to be the pathway of life. All was solid beneath his feet till he passed safely

over to the other side. And what is true of physical death is true also of death unto sin.

(3) And now all that remains to be considered is the process of that baptism.

“All were *under* the cloud and all passed *through* the sea.”

In the original narrative we read that the pillar of cloud, which had hitherto been their guide, leading the way and shewing the path, now becomes their covering and passes to their rear. The guide now becomes their protector, and reveals their pathway in the waters. “Under the cloud,” they were bathed in its light, and protected by its shadow. Baptism in the cold waters, loses all its terror, through the gracious umbrage and glow of the heavenly cloud. What a picture is this of that “other Comforter.” Called to meet opposition, persecution and death, after the Ascension of the Saviour, the apostles found it easy, because of the Pentecostal baptism. They were enveloped and shrouded in the Saviour’s mantle. The cloud that received Him and took Him out of their sight, the cloud that one day will bring Him back, that cloud in the Person of the Holy Ghost baptised them in its protecting, enlightening suffusion. They too were “under the cloud.” In different circumstances of life we need the varying offices of the Holy Ghost. When passing through baptismal waters we need His protecting, comforting care. He hovers over us, as the parent bird over its young in the hour of danger. Oh! to recognise His gracious duty. Faith can only operate when we rely on Him. How can we step down into the waters, those waters which are death to the world and all its attractions, to the flesh and all its powers, to the devil and all his deludings, unless we are “under the cloud,” unless we rely on the protecting, comforting, enlightening

presence of the Holy Ghost. This then is how Christ, the great Baptiser, baptises ; this is the divine promise ; this the heavenly method, " He shall baptise with the Holy Ghost and with fire." The Holy Ghost does not merely go before, He is not merely our guide, He protects us in the rear : He covers us : He surrounds us : He is over us. They were all UNDER the cloud. It was a real baptism. They were baptised in the cloud. Do we really apprehend the significance of these words ? Have we been enveloped and covered, surrounded and suffused by His presence ? If so, faith is easy. By faith we too can pass through the waters. So it is that we read :—

" All passed through the sea."

Yes, they passed through the waters unscathed ; the threatening billows touched them not. It is true they were waters of death, waters of destruction, but they came not nigh the people of Israel. The waters towered above them and so, in one sense, they were under the waters, but the emphasis of the story is that they passed *through* them into freedom and safety.

They were waters of death. The Egyptians " *essay-
ing* " to pass through were drowned. The contrast in our text is between the words, " By faith the Israelites " and " By trial the Egyptians." No power of nature, no prowess and no skill can take men unscathed through the waters of death. Only faith avails us here.

As I have pointed out, a baptism into Christ's death and burial means a real death and burial ; but it is the death not of ourselves, but of our enemies. In the song of Moses that follows the keynote of triumph is the destruction of the foe. It is not of deliverance from the waters that he sings. Rather is it a rejoicing that the waters had done their work and for ever destroyed the pursuing Egyptians.

He then passes into the exultant expectation that in future days the enemies that should yet oppose their progress, shall hear of the glorious victory and be dismayed.

No wonder Miriam joined in with the chorus, " Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously ; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea."

As we take our last look at this dramatic seascape, and learn yet another lesson of faith's deliverance, shall not we too join in that song ? If faith had brought us through, if we have seen all our enemies buried in the sea, if our death with Christ has meant also a burial with Him in the baptism of cloud and sea, then " risen with Him " we can sing also with the Psalmist, " I waited patiently for the Lord ; and He inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God : many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord " (Psa. xl. 1-3).

Again I call a witness. As I have said, I am anxious that these studies should not be mere interesting stories of bygone saints. Thank God, He is repeating the wonders of His grace even in our days.

I know of no more dramatic replica of this Exodus scene in individual life than the account of his own conversion as told us by a very notorious convict, Mr. Y. Kochi. In it we can almost see the cloud and destroying waters, the light, the fire, and all the splendours of the sacred story. With no human teacher, he depended only upon the Word of God and its Author, the Holy Ghost. He was neither influenced nor hindered by pre-conceived theological theories. In the following narrative, the reader cannot but be impressed with the fact that our friend, though uncon-

scious thereof, was brought out of Egypt and into the Promised Land through the protecting and enlightening power of the Holy Cloud. If ever there was a story in the annals of Evangelism that illustrates the Exodus narrative, it surely is the following.

It is now more than twenty years since I first met Mr. Kochi, just liberated from prison, and from his term of penal servitude for life.

Only recently he has departed to be with the Lord Whom he served so faithfully. His autobiography has just been published, from which I select and abridge a few passages.

After telling how by the age of eighteen he had become a professional burglar, he goes on to narrate that having broken into a house, outraged the young wife of its occupant and murdered her, he then set the place on fire in order to escape detection. He continued his life of burglary, but was finally caught and charged with his crime.

During his trial, till he was found guilty, he was incarcerated with a lot of other criminals. A few days later a young man was thrust into the same cell, also to await trial. They at once set on him and asked him his crime. He quietly replied he had done nothing amiss. This enraged them and they began to knock him about. He bore it all patiently and without a murmur, telling them that he was awaiting trial for preaching Christ in the open air. He had been put into their cell by mistake, and when this was discovered he was taken off elsewhere. Before he left, however, he knelt down and prayed for them. "I was deeply impressed," said Mr. Kochi, "and asked him how he could bear it all so patiently? He had not time to tell me, but he said, 'Get a Bible and you will find out there.'"

How strangely akin to the story of the burning bush. In God's gracious providence, there was thrust into this criminal crowd a life aflame with God. Like Moses of old, the subject of our story turned aside to see the sight, and though many years passed ere he heard the voice of the Lord in his own soul, that vision never left him and became, as he acknowledged, one of the factors in his eternal salvation.

Mr. Kochi's mother came to visit him soon afterwards, and though the prisoners were not allowed any books to read, she saw a Christian pastor and managed to get a New Testament conveyed to him. He had no sense of sin or need, and no desire even to lead a better life. His inclination to read the Bible reveals a strange mentality.

He tells us that he imagined that there was some charm or magic to be found in the book, which would give him power, whatever physical pressure was brought to bear on him, to refrain from confessing his crimes. He was a very poor reader, but as he began to read he found out that the very opposite to what he thought was taught in the Book. It urged him to repent and confess his sins.

He, therefore, threw it away in disgust ! Incidentally I should say that this procuring of a Bible for him led to the conversion both of his father and mother, as he afterwards discovered.

On the way to his trial he managed to escape, but was speedily arrested again, and finally condemned to death for murder. Being under twenty years of age, however, the sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life (i.e., 28 years) with hard labour. He was sent to the convict prison in the North of Japan. He had not been there long, before he succeeded in escaping once more, but was speedily re-arrested ; and nine years were added to his sentence.

How wonderful are God's ways. The story of Peter's deliverance from prison is again repeated. The apostle was not more rigorously excluded from all means and hope of deliverance than the friend of our story. Humanly speaking, not a ray of heavenly light could penetrate the Egyptian darkness of that convict prison. There was no possibility in that criminal settlement of any human being, bringing tidings of deliverance. Warders and officials and criminals alike were all enshrouded in the darkness of heathenism. Nothing, however, is too hard for the Lord, and once more, as I have repeatedly observed in heathen lands, He made use of a dream to enlighten this His servant.

On the second of January, 1890, he had the following remarkable experience. That night he had a dream. A beautiful child in dazzling white apparel appeared at his side and said, "I am sent to thee a messenger from heaven with the Gospel." Holding a book in his hand, he continued, "This is the true Word of God that will teach thee the way of eternal life. I give thee this Book. Fail not to read it, and never forget what I have told thee." On awaking, he at once remembered the young man who, years before, bade him procure a Bible in his Tokyo prison cell. Once more he saw the vision of the burning bush.

He now began to be deeply concerned about his own wicked state and undone condition, and determined to procure a Bible: this he did, but he had almost forgotten how to read. The Japanese language is not alphabetical but ideographic, and each word has to be memorised. The head warder was extremely kind and offered to teach him.

As he read he found a longing desire, a determination, and a power to forsake his sins and, as far as possible, get away from his companions in crime. I should say that sin of an unspeakable character was rampant among them.

The thought of his mother's love, the angel vision, the remembrance of the young Christian's example, related above, and the reading of the Word were the means, in God's hands, of bringing light and life to his soul.

The great change had indeed taken place, not only were outward and grosser sins abandoned, but he found it a delight to do menial service for anyone. These things were no more irksome to him. Moreover, he could no longer keep silence, and began to testify and preach the Gospel to his fellow prisoners. Some were deeply impressed, some were bitterly opposed.

Seven decided to seek the Lord and joined him. He then sent in a special request to the Governor that they might be allowed a separate cell to themselves. This was granted, and so they were able to read and pray together. This infuriated the others, especially a gang of twenty, who threatened to kill them ; but they kept on praying ; and eventually the leader of the gang, the most ruffianly of them all, turned from his evil ways, joined them, and requested that he too might share their cell.

As time went on, some two hundred men were interested and impressed, and sent in a request to the Governor that a Christian pastor might be installed as prison chaplain instead of the Buddhist priest. This was granted, and the Rev. Tomeoka was appointed. Mr. Kochi was even allowed out of the prison compound to help in a Sunday School, opened in his house !

One day the head warden came to him and said, " You are a Christian." " Yes," he replied. " Well then," said he, " I want to have a contest with you. If I win, you'll give up your faith in Christ. If you win, I'll yield to Him." He agreed. God gave him wonderful power in

dealing with that situation. The man acknowledged defeat, but refused to accept Christ. He was deeply disappointed, but years afterwards when he had been discharged, he met him accidentally in the South of Japan and there, to his delight and astonishment, found he had come to Christ. The prison officials realised the wonderful change in his life and were increasingly good to him.

He, however, was beginning to feel more and more dissatisfied with his own spiritual condition. He became deeply convicted of indwelling evil. However much he struggled he found himself unable to deal with the uprisings of his sinful nature. He even found some of his old enemies reasserting their power. He could only cry out in the language of Rom. vii. 24, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death."

The Egyptians were at his heels. The enemy made a final and desperate attempt to recapture their prey. But the protecting cloud kept them at bay, and urged him onward through the waters that seemed so ready to overwhelm him.

He was so burdened that his health was affected. The Governor and the other officials saw it and offered him rest from his work. This he refused, as he did not want to be different from the other convicts. Eventually he completely collapsed at work, and was taken in an unconscious condition to the hospital. He lay in that state for three days. It was a strange experience, almost like that of St. Paul, and he didn't know whether he was alive or dead!

A second time the child he had seen in a previous vision, appeared and said, "Read the Word! read the Word!" He then determined to commit the whole of the New Testament to memory, and asked the Governor if he would allow him a separate cell. This was granted, and within

three years he had memorised the whole of the New Testament.

Having a cell to himself, he began to seek the Lord with all his heart for his full salvation, which he saw so plainly promised in the Book. Once more the Holy Ghost, the pillar of fire, shed His light along the opening waters and revealed to him the power of the Cross of Christ, and the meaning of the precious blood, and empowered him to believe.

The patriarch Job long ago declared, "Ask the beasts, and they shall teach thee." The ant, the coney, the locust, and the spider are commandeered of God to teach us His ways and His secrets. Through the obedience of the ox and the ass man is taught his own stubbornness and ingratitude.

Through a slain lamb and its shed blood were the Israelites taught of sin and its remedy.

So too, in a strange and unusual fashion in his prison cell, with no one to teach or lead or instruct, the Holy Ghost revealed the meaning of the Cross and passion and bloodshedding of the Lord Jesus to this weary soul through the meanest of God's creation. He continues his narrative as follows :—

"It was summer time ; and one night I was in intense agony of soul for the blessing. The place was swarming with mosquitoes. I heeded them not, but on ceasing from prayer, I found I had been bitten almost to pieces, and then looking up I saw scores of these little creatures filled with my blood, resting on the walls of my cell. Like a flash the thought came to me, these are living by your blood, without it they would die and perish ! The Holy Ghost at once applied with wonderful power to my soul two passages from the Word.

1. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him." John vi. 56.

2. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." 1. John i. 7.

He was enabled to believe. Peace flooded his soul : he rejoiced with joy unspeakable. As the thief on the cross found himself in Paradise that very day with the Lord of glory : so did he that very night discover his prison cell to be a Paradise indeed. The Holy Ghost had come to abide. The protecting cloud and the illuminating fire, led him through the waters of death into a glorious life of liberty and power. The death of the Lord Jesus, the Cross, the precious blood in all their sanctifying power were revealed.

By faith he too entered into the Tomb. By faith he passed through the waters, and rejoicingly entered into a new resurrection life. Standing on the other side of the flood, as the Israelites of old, he praised Jehovah for his deliverance and, like them, he found all his enemies destroyed to see them again no more for ever.

On the first of March he had served twenty years of his life sentence. A special reprieve was granted him on that day, and he was removed from the convict prison in the North to a prison in Yokohama, there to serve the nine additional years which had been added to his sentence, without hard labour.

On the way down a special warder, sent to escort him, offered him whiskey and tobacco as a great treat. This he refused, telling him that he was a Christian. "Oh," he said, "then I can sleep without any care to-night. I feared you might attempt to escape." As he passed through Tokyo, he met and prayed with his dear mother, now a Christian, whom he had not seen for seventeen years.

In the new prison he was given very light duty, acting as male attendant and nurse of sick prisoners. This gave him much opportunity of ministering the Word to them.

He again asked for a separate cell, and was allowed special time to wait on the Lord. After serving three out of the nine years, he was liberated and came out into the world once more. On the night of leaving the prison, the Governor took him to his own home as his guest before sending him on his way.

Here I must close. The remaining narrative is of thrilling interest. The Lord continued to mightily use His servant in the conversion of souls. The Government allowed him to visit almost every prison in the land to preach the Gospel.

Not only to this desperate criminal was revealed the barrier of blood and of the holy cloud, enabling him to go forward through the waters of death into a glorious life beyond : but like Moses of old, he became a leader of men, and by his faith he was enabled to bring many, many souls out of Egyptian bondage and darkness into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Truly Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. Hallelujah !

CHAPTERS FOURTEEN AND FIFTEEN.

The
Dynamic of Victory

CHAPTER XIV JERICO: AN UTTERMOST DESTRUCTION.

CHAPTER XV. RAHAB: AN UTTERMOST SALVATION.

“ O great mountain, who art thou ?
Immense, immoveable,
High as heaven aspires thy brow,
Thy foot sinks deep as hell.
Thee, alas ! I long have known,
Long have felt thee fixed within,
Still beneath thy weight I groan,
Thou art indwelling sin.

“ Thou art darkness in my mind,
Perverseness in my will,
Love inordinate and blind
That always cleaves to ill.
Every passion's wild excess—
Anger, lust and pride thou art,—
Thou art sin and sinfulness
And UNBELIEF OF HEART.

“ Not by human might or power
Canst thou be moved from hence,
But thou shalt flow down before
Divine Omnipotence.
My Zerubbabel is near,
I have not believed in vain,
Thou when Jesus doth appear
Shalt sink into a plain.”

—CHARLES WESLEY.

CHAPTER XIV.

JERICHO: AN UTTERMOST DESTRUCTION.

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."—HEB. xi. 30.

WE have come to the two last pictures of our series. The scene of both is identical. One tells the story of the enemies' uttermost destruction, the other of an uttermost deliverance from the wreckage.

Again I would draw attention to the extraordinary care with which the Artist has made His selection. Not a single incident has been taken from the history of the wilderness wanderings. From the Red Sea shore, we are brought at once into the promised land. Even the crossing of the Jordan, a story fraught with the most important lessons for the believer, is omitted. Though there were many cases of faith in that dreary wilderness of unbelief during those forty years, the Spirit of God apparently will not countenance any recognition of those dreadful and God-dishonouring annals by allowing any portrait to appear in this our National Gallery.

These two closing selections, I repeat, have been most carefully made. They are model studies, teaching us the principles of victorious faith in all circumstances of life. Victory, God given, God wrought, God honouring victory is portrayed for us in them. Not only was the triumph at Jericho intended to be a model victory, teaching the Israelites what to expect in all their coming conflicts with the foe, but it is a model for all time.

This stout fortress, this walled city, this enemy stronghold that faced the Israelites immediately on crossing the Jordan, was not merely one of the enemies to be dis-

possessed. It was a representative foe and an outstanding representation and type of inbred evil, that carnality "which doth yet remain in the regenerate." And here is depicted God's purpose and will no less than the way of dispossession, which He has toward all the enemies entrenched in the promised land. That purpose, will and way was utter destruction. It was more than victory. The Israelites were not expected to meet Jericho in conflict at various times, say once a month, and get a continual victory. No, the enemy had to be utterly and entirely destroyed; and so with all the remaining inhabitants of the land. The destruction of Jericho was a model destruction; the way of deliverance was a model way. The God that brought down the battlements of the great city would do the same in every place, if only the lessons of faith were not learned in vain.

He promised (and that promise was fulfilled) that the pursuing Egyptians should be destroyed, and that the people should see them again no more for ever. How true is that to experience. Thousands once enslaved to drink and lust and every evil work, when born again of God's Spirit, have lived to testify that their foes were for ever slain, that the craving for drink and drugs and lust was taken from them, and was as though it had never been. So too has it been with dispositional evil, when God has brought His redeemed ones into the Promised Land of Rest. Many have lived to testify that the dispossession of their inward evils has been as blessed and as radical as the destruction of those outward and grosser forms of evil at the time of their conversion.

In some respects the picture that we are looking at is the most remarkable in the whole series. Every other bears its own signature, so to speak. Under each is the

name of its hero inscribed. But in this war-picture no name appears. There is not even a pronoun to indicate whose faith was responsible for the overthrow of Jericho. But in Scripture even the omission of a pronoun is significant, intending as it does in this case to teach us that God alone must get the glory. It was not Joshua, or the armed host, no, nor the whole congregation of Israelites, who by their faith wrought this miracle. Rather was it God Himself, God believed, God trusted, God relied upon, Who accomplished the impossible.

In the few words of our text referring us back to the story as told in Joshua v.-vi., brief as they are, three of faith's deepest lessons are disclosed : (1) Its Humility, (2) Its Obedience, and (3) Its Patience. These we will consider in turn.

I. The Humility of Faith.

The Israelites had crossed their Rubicon. Jordan was behind them. Their new leader, Joshua, has at once to face embattled Jericho. We find him standing alone surveying the situation and meditating no doubt on ways and means of tactics and strategy. He is suddenly confronted with an armed figure. Supposing him possibly to be the general of the opposing army, he at once challenges him—"Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" "Nay," comes the strange reply, "as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come,"—those mighty hosts of invisible angels, ready to bring deliverance to you and destruction to your foes.

Joshua realises that he is in the presence of divinity. The soldier saint falls on his knees, prostrate before this messenger of Jehovah ! Such a theophany had never been vouchsafed even to Moses. He had seen the burning bush ; he had heard the voice of God in the cloud and in the fire

on Sinai's Mount, but never had he beheld God in human form. But now that they are in the Promised Land, their wanderings over, the Lord Himself appears to assure His servants of certain victory because in their coming conflicts heavenly hosts, led by their Captain, are going to be at their disposal.

“What saith my Lord unto His servant?” breaks from the lips of the astonished Joshua. Again another surprise awaits him. There follows no command to organise or distribute his military forces, but “Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” He Who spake in the burning bush speaks the same message again on the battlefield. The soldier who had gone forth, shod in readiness for any emergency, either to advance or retire, has to learn that in the presence of the Divine Captain and His invisible hosts, he must cease his soldiering for awhile and worship his Lord and his God. Then follow instructions as to the plan of campaign. The assault has to be short and sharp; there is to be no protracted siege; there is to be no waiting for the foe to come out. The battlements are to fall and the walls to be demolished. But no artillery is needed; no battering rams are to be employed. The batteries of heaven are to do the work; the unseen hosts, the invisible cohorts of the great Commander will overturn, and pull down and destroy. The hands of angels will ensure the victory. God alone shall get the glory. Salvation is from the Lord and must be miraculous in its working. “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Such is the victory that faith will behold. When God reveals these secrets to His people, man is humbled in the dust. A vision of God at work silences the strife of tongues. Man's working and man's success always excite either admiration

or envy, praise or criticism, flattery or illwill. But a display of God's omnipotence humbles us to the dust. How true is this in the ministry of evangelism, when God works in real revival power independently of man. The praise or criticism of tongues is stilled. When the eye of faith beholds the working of God, a blessed sense of wonder, adoration and praise fills the soul. The heart is at rest. Such must have been the attitude of Israel's commander. He knew that victory was assured. He had seen and heard the Lord! Do not our own hearts give assent to these sentiments? We who have experienced the mighty delivering power of God, know full well that it was not by struggle or effort that we were set at liberty. We believed and then watched God at work. The impossible was done. We were humbled to the dust, when the walls of our Jericho fell before us, at the bidding of *our* faith it is true, but through the work of invisible hosts and the unseen hands of our great Captain.

Joshua believed the word of the Lord. One touch of the finger of God, he knew would shake the walls of Jericho from their foundations and send their proud battlements tottering to the ground. He who had seen the dividing of the waters, both of sea and river, knew that with God nothing was impossible. He only had to be assured that these were the divine tactics, and that God had decided to work in this particular fashion, and all else was easy. His humbled heart was at rest.

II. The Obedience of Faith.

The man who has had a vision of the will and purpose of God and by the Holy Ghost has been enabled to believe, is always required of God to give expression to the reality of his faith by *doing* something. That something may be

very trifling, and insignificant, very easy to carry out, but it often appears ridiculous and even foolish in the eyes of the world and in the light of common-sense.

Instances of this in Scripture are frequent. We quote but two. The destitute widow seeking means to pay her debt, has to borrow of her neighbours empty vessels, large and small (a humbling experience indeed), as an evidence that she really believed the prophet's word. The armies of Jehosaphat and Ahab have to dig ditches in the desert sand, as a proof that they really did believe the word of the Lord "that without sight of wind or rain the valley should be full of water." So here, in the taking of Jericho, the armed host, led by the priests, has to march round the city walls for six days in silence save for the blowing of the trumpets, and on the seventh day seven times, when at Joshua's command they were bidden to shout the shout of victory. To the enemy within the walls, the whole performance would appear ridiculous. As far as they could see, the only purpose of these daily marches could be to find out if there were an unguarded gate or undefended breach. That they would be disappointed in their search ought to be obvious enough, at least so it seemed to the vigilant forces of Jericho.

The Divine tactics were utterly inscrutable to the worldling foe. They had not the smallest conception of what was going to happen. They knew nothing of invisible hosts or of the Heavenly Commander.

What of the Israelites? They too had seen nothing of Joshua's vision. The report of his interview with the Captain of the Lord of Hosts and the ordered plan of campaign must have sounded like a fairy tale, a dream, an hallucination! But the plans of attack were so definite, the order was so explicit, that they carried conviction on

their very face. But there was still stronger evidence ; the Ark of the Covenant, once more withdrawn from its dwelling-place, was to go before the armed host. Only a few days before had they seen its wonder-working power. Before it, the waters of Jordan had divided and they had crossed dryshod. This was the pledge of God's presence and power. It is true, they had seen no vision, no theophany, as Joshua had, but they had seen the mighty working of their invisible Leader through the presence of the Ark of the Covenant.

After their escape from Egypt, and during their long journey to the Promised Land, the Presence of the Lord had been vouchsafed to them under several remarkable types : the Slain Lamb, the Serpent lifted up, the Smitten Rock, the blossoming Rod, the Tabernacle, the divided waters of Sea and River, and the Ark of the Covenant.

It was the last of these, perhaps the most remarkable of all, that is given to them as a pledge of victory. Within the Ark, and beneath the blood-sprinkled mercy seat, was the Word of God, the law of Moses ! Is there in Scripture any more comprehensive type of Christ Jesus made flesh,—God's mercy seat, the very Word of God, in Whom all the law and the prophets were fulfilled, and in Whom all the promises of God are Yea and Amen ? The Ark of the Covenant is with them (a type without any meaning or significance save to the eyes of faith) ; this to them is the all-sufficient pledge of victory. So is it that the practical expression of faith, foolish and ridiculous in the eyes of the world, is made easy for the believing soul.

Are we sure of the Divine will of our glorified and ascended Captain ? Are we sure of His commands ? Then with our eye upon the Ark of the Covenant, His infallible

word of promise, we can obey unto victory, even though the particular act of obedience required of us may seem foolish enough to our natural understanding.

III. The Patience of Faith.

Faith both in its action and its reward, has its times and seasons. The essential principle of faith in its sentiment is always NOW. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation." "The Holy Ghost saith, *To-day.*" "*This day* I must abide in thy house." "*To-day* shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." As the Japanese proverb has it, "The devil laughs when you say to-morrow." All this is true, but there is always a set time for faith to act, as well as a set time for its reward to be bestowed and its fulfilment revealed.

This has been evidenced in almost all the portraits we have looked at. "Noah *when* he was warned"; "*Abraham when* he was called"; "Sara *when* she was past age"; "*Abraham when* he was tried"; "Isaac *when* he was dying"; "Joseph *when* his end was nigh"; "Moses *when* he was come to years of discretion"; "Rahab *when* she had received the spies in peace." Yes, *then* and not before. In every case there was an appointed time to act, a condition to be fulfilled before the victory could be gained or the promised reward obtained. It was so in the debacle of Jericho. This is the particular point noticed by the inspired writer. We see as in a moving picture the thirteen marches round the city walls, the week of continued faith. the seven times of tested patience. "After that they had been compassed seven days the walls of the city fell."

The seven times of ablution in Jordan's waters by the proud Syrian comes to mind. How sorely must his faith have been tested. Expecting no doubt after each baptism

a gradual and partial removal of his leprous spots, he was kept waiting till the seven times had been completed before he was permitted to see any signs of God's miraculous power to heal. But the word of the Lord, the command of Jehovah was explicit ; in both cases " seven times " was the prescribed limit. They were not left in doubt, neither the Israelitish host nor the Syrian leper ; and hence their unbelief would have been an unpardonable, unreasonable thing. Throughout Scripture the number seven is employed to express perfection. So it is that when God looks down and sees that " Patience had done its perfect work," then and only then can the unseen hands of His angelic hosts send the walls of Jericho toppling to their fall, and then with His invisible touch make the leper clean.

There is no more important lesson for us to learn than this. The patience of believing prayer, as silent as the silent marches around the ramparts of the city, will be crowned with the shout of victory after the seventh time of the seventh day. Each day of such believing prayer followed by no visible change in the situation, will humble our hearts and drive us to more self-desperate and more humble reliance upon our God.

I have pointed out that the taking of Jericho is a story in its primary application for those who have just entered the Promised Land of a full salvation. The entrenched and embattled enemy is a type of the carnal mind which is enmity against God, seeking to block our entrance into the fulness of our purchased possessions in Christ. The story of its destruction is therefore of the deepest import and full of valuable instruction as to how we should believe unto a perfect deliverance.

And yet it is a story also for all time. Jerichos of many sizes and shapes appear in the lives of most saints, and

hence it is a tale of priceless value. How often on the Mission Field do we find it repeated in actual life.

Two or three days ago, I was speaking with an ex-warrant officer of the Japanese Imperial Navy, now about to finish his course at our Bible Institute, a man likely to be much used in the Lord's service. On my enquiry as to how he found Christ, he told me he was first interested, enlightened and awakened to his sense of need through the ministry of the Rev. C. O. Pickard Cambridge, a C.M.S. missionary, who visited him when he was lying ill in the big Naval Hospital of K——. Though he was not actually saved until he returned to his native town, there to be shown the way of faith through a J.E.B. worker, yet, like Rahab of old, he received the message in peace through that devoted servant of the Lord.

To Mr. Cambridge's ministry in that naval hospital hangs a very interesting tale. It is not easy nowadays to find an entrance into Government institutions with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. They are often enough formidable Jerichos; and the story of how God opened the doors of this particular hospital, is so apt an illustration of the theme of our chapter that I cannot refrain from passing it on, to show how God delights to use the small and foolish things to accomplish His great and blessed purposes.

When Miss G., one of our missionaries, was sent to work in the town of K., she found to her surprise that perfect liberty was granted to her to visit the inmates of the naval hospital. An opportunity occurred for her to enquire of the head surgeon, how that permission was granted. Asking him if he were a Christian, she received a reply somewhat as follows:—

“I am not a Christian, but my wife is and my children are being brought up in that faith. As a

young man I was sent by the Admiralty for a special course of surgery to London. Before starting, my friends and relations strongly urged me that whatever I did or did not do, I was on no account to become a Christian. I went to England, however, with an open mind, and was determined to discover if I could from first-hand observation what real effect Christianity had on the young people, and what place it had in their lives.

“ One day as I was walking down a side street of the great metropolis, I observed an errand boy with basket on his shoulder, whistling a popular air and swinging a cane in his hand, walking on the pavement in front of me. Suddenly the cane jerked out of his hand and broke a window pane of the house he was passing.

“ I thought to myself, now I shall see how fast an English errand boy can run. To my surprise he stopped, put down his basket and rang the front door bell. By this time I had come up with him and pausing, I heard him apologise to the owner of the house, saying he had no money with him, but as soon as he received his weekly wages, he would return and pay the cost of the broken window. As he came down the steps to go on his way, I accosted him and asked why he hadn't run away, as no one had seen him except myself, a foreigner.

“ He replied, ‘ You are wrong, Sir, some one else did see me ! My Heavenly Father saw me and He doesn't like His children to break people's window panes, and then run away without paying for them.’

“ I was deeply impressed.

“ A few weeks later, as I was passing into Victoria Station, I saw two or three little redcoated shoe-blacks and, remembering what I had read of Lord Shaftesbury's work, and his shoe-black brigade, I thought I would like to say that I had had my boots cleaned by one of his lads.

“ The little fellow worked away and polished them

till you could almost see your face in them. I paid him double for his job, and told him how well he had done his work. He looked up with a smile and said, 'Well, Sir, I clean boots for the Lord Jesus' sake.'

"I was greatly influenced by these two simple incidents, and I determined on my return to Japan, that when I married, I would seek a Christian lady for my wife and that my children should be brought up in the Christian faith. I also made up my mind to do all in my power to make the proclamation of Christianity possible, through every opportunity that presented itself to me. That is the reason why I have given permission for Christian workers to come and visit the patients and distribute Christian literature. No, I am not a Christian myself. Mine is a very busy life, but when I retire from the Navy next year, I intend to give time to read the Bible and learn Christian truth."

How little did those two unknown lads in London know what they were doing for their Master that day.

Truly does God delight to take the small and feeble things of life to accomplish His mighty purposes. Humanly speaking, those walls would never have fallen, the doors of that hospital would never have been opened to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, if those two boys had either been unfaithful in their work or ashamed to confess their Master before men.

I had heard this story several years ago, and often wondered whether I should ever hear of a sequel. Quite unexpectedly in talking to this ex-naval warrant officer did I learn of one at least. He is a man of much promise. Who knows whether he will not be a mighty winner of souls, reaping a bounteous harvest from the two tiny seeds sown on the pavement of those London streets, thousands of miles away from the place where the first fruits of their

sowing have been gathered in? Who can tell whether there may not be other sequels to our story, unknown to us in this our day, but recorded in the chronicles of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the names of unknown Rahabs be registered, as hers was, in the celestial genealogies? So shall these two unnamed lads rejoice together with the two unnamed spies that visited Jericho long ago, both alike faithful in their task of believing and proclaiming an Almighty and an all faithful God.

CHAPTER XV.

RAHAB : AN UTTERMOST SALVATION.

" By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."—HEB. xi. 31.

WE have reached the end of the Gallery. The last picture of the series is that of a woman. Of all the Bible heroines only two have been selected for full-sized portraiture. We do not wonder that Sara should have been included, but that from the galaxy of noble women whose lives are recorded in the pages of Holy Writ, none else should be chosen except Rahab is an astonishment to many. In the genealogies of Scripture the names of women do not generally appear : in that of the Lord Jesus however, as registered in the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, we find the names of five. The first is Tamar the prostitute, the second is Rahab the harlot and a heathen at that, the third is Ruth a heathen widow, the fourth is Bathsheba an adulteress, and the fifth is the blessed Virgin Mary ; so marvellously where sin hath abounded, doth grace much more abound.

We need not wonder then, that she who was counted worthy to be numbered among the ancestors of the Lord Jesus, should find a place in this National Gallery of the Hebrew race. We turn aside, however, to see this great sight and ask wherein are her credentials. In all Scripture there is a threefold cord not easily broken. In every page we can see the historical record : many thoughtful students have detected the prophetic interpretation, and all who are taught of the Holy Ghost can find the spiritual application.

So is it here. The destruction of Jericho is a type of God's wrath soon to come upon a world, whose iniquity is

well nigh ripe for judgment. The deliverance of Rahab from the wreckage is a type of the Redeemed, the Church of the Living God, the Bride of Christ, once defiled in sin and now called, chosen, faithful, and sanctified. It is not surprising then that her story is given to us in such detail in the original narrative (Josh. ii.). Here in the Epistle to the Hebrews her salvation is attributed to her faith, in James' Epistle it is attributed to her works. The same incident is quoted by both writers to prove their respective points. The reception of the spies in peace is considered by one to give proof of faith, by the other as evidence of her meritorious work. Both are true. A careful perusal of the narrative ought to convince any thoughtful student of the Word that the story of her faith is one of the most wonderful in the whole range of Scripture.

To obtain a perfect view of this her full-sized portrait, I propose looking at it from eight distinct and separate angles. A few preliminary words are necessary to introduce the setting of our picture.

As the Israelitish host had approached the promised land on the outskirts of Kadesh-Barnea some forty years previously, Moses had despatched twelve men to spy out the country and bring back a report to him. He selected the very best from each tribe; each one was a prince. His name and genealogy are recorded. Alas! we know how disastrously they failed, and after leading the whole host astray, perished miserably at the hand of God.

A second time the land is reached: and now Joshua—himself one of the two faithful spies—is leader. He too prepares to spy the land; but this time he takes no chances! Only two shall go, and nameless ones at that. They speedily return. No grapes of Eschol are in their

hands, no detailed report either of the land, its cities, or its people is handed to Joshua. The only thing they present is the testimony of a poor heathen harlot. So mightily were they impressed, so strangely is Joshua moved, so assured and satisfied is the whole waiting host, that without delay they move forward to conquest and victory.

The single testimony of a poor woman, the most degraded of her kind, brings the whole Israelitish people into the Promised Land. We may well linger over the story, and let her speak again across the ages to our hearts ; for truly God delights to take the base things of the world and therewith confound the mighty.

If you open your Bibles at the second chapter of Joshua, you will there see the story of the faith of Rahab that did such mighty things.

I. The Work of Faith.

" And they (two men) went and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there . . . and the woman took the two men and hid them."—JOSH. ii. 1-4.

True faith always acts. It was as much as her life was worth to receive two spies from the enemy ! But she believed God ! She was so deeply convinced of God's way that she was prepared to risk her all on that and so express her faith in action.

Here too is faith's beginning. God sends to us His searching words. Shall we receive them ? They are the sworn foe of all that is carnal and all that is God's enemy within us ! Shall we take sides with God, and " receive His words " ? In the last great prayer of the Saviour, He said to His Father about His disciples, " They have received Thy words." " He sendeth forth His Word " to search our hearts. Only the faith which believes in a God of righteous-

ness and love will welcome it and let it do its work. By nature we shrink from " His fiery glance," " His searching Word " and His diagnosis and analysis of our true condition. But if true faith has convinced us not only of His mighty power but of the blessedness of His will and of His saving power, we shall welcome the Word which He has sent to spy out the nakedness of our needy hearts.

Oh ! for courage to do the works of faith. And this is its primal work, to receive His words. A young man who came to me not long since in deep distress of soul, was led to see that the first step in believing God was to receive the Word of God into his heart. Writing a few days later he says :—

" Oh ! the wonderful grace, love and power of the Lord Jesus ! I love those words ' dare to believe God.' Hallelujah ! But I said (when I left you) ' Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.' And He has been slaying me ; but I heard His voice saying, ' As many as I LOVE, I rebuke and chasten,' so I say ' Hallelujah ' anyway ! I'd rather have His slaying than continue in the miserable failure of a sinful Christian life."

Like Rahab of old he dared to receive the spies in peace.

II. The Understanding of Faith.

" She said . . . I know the Lord hath given you the land."—
 Josh. ii. 9.

True faith is not either sentiment or emotion. It is an understanding thing. " By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." So with Rahab. There was true knowledge and yet not a knowledge that was merely either deductive or intuitive ! It is true that she had learned of the victorious progress of the Israelitish host ; but behind all the facts and figures, behind the tales.

of exploit and deliverance, she saw and believed and knew that it was all God's handiwork and the result of divine power. She said, I KNOW that it is God and God alone that has not only brought you thus far, but has given you this land. When God gives, who shall take away? I know, yes, I know, that God and none other has given it to you! What faith! What understanding! Truly it might have been said of her, as it was of another heathen woman in later days: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Beloved, as we read the facts and figures of our own past histories and those of other saints, are we not able to read between the lines in faith and so boldly declare, I *know* that it is all the Lord's doing and marvellous in our eyes.

Can we say in the face of all that seems to contradict it, "I know that God has given us the Promised Land." Are we deeply and spiritually convinced that it is not our holding on to certain doctrines, not a strong mental attitude to the Cross of Christ, not any work of consecration or anything that we can do or grasp or struggle into, but that the work of Sanctification is God's and His alone: that He really does something *in* us of the Holy Ghost, just as really as Christ did something *for* us on the Cross; that it is God and God alone that must do the work within, or nothing will be done at all.

Blessed is the man that has the understanding of faith.

III. The Hearing of Faith.

"We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you."—JOSH. ii. 10.

Where did she get that knowledge? What is the inwardness of the understanding of faith? I have said it is not merely inferential or deductive, neither is it wholly intuitive.

“ Faith cometh by hearing,” saith the Apostle, and adds, “ hearing by the word of God ” : and yet there is another hearing—the hearing of testimony. Such was Rahab’s. She says, “ We have heard how the Lord dried up the Red Sea for you.” And yet the mere hearing of such testimony may not produce faith. Others had heard the same story : all the other Jerichoites had heard of the deliverance, but their hearing had not resulted in faith. It produced only terror and despair. No ! No ! The hearing of the Word must accompany the hearing of testimony. Beyond the miracle and the wonder she looked and saw God. “ The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath,” she cries.

She heard and dared to believe God, not as the devils believe and tremble, but with something of that confidence in Him that whether in Christian or heathen alike makes it possible for God to respond, arise and do and save and bless. Hallelujah !

And so “ the Word was mixed with faith ” in Rahab that heard it ; and she profited unto her deliverance, her eternal salvation and everlasting honour and glory.

Oh ! to take time and so hear the Word of God spoken to our souls—confirming the words of testimony from the lips of men.

IV. The Prayer of Faith.

“ Now therefore I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord . . . that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.”—

JOSH. ii. 12, 13.

Where faith is true and living in the soul, that soul always prays, not merely the prayer of desire but the prayer of faith. Such prayer is bold, is definite, is large, and such was Rahab’s.

So convinced was she of the certain victory of God's host and that there was no other way of safety other than the way of surrender, that she at once, after testifying of her faith in God's power and its reasons, now boldly asks to be allowed to share in God's goodness and grace. Oh! yes, it is faith such as this that is well pleasing to Him, Who "has gifts for the rebellious also that He may dwell among men."

It is well to observe the order: not first prayer and then faith, but faith issuing in prayer. We do not believe because we pray, but we pray because we believe.

True prayer is the expression of a believing soul. It was so with Rahab. She believed in God, His mighty power, His sure promises, His certain victory, His unalterable will and, in some measure, surely His abundant grace; therefore she prayed and obtained answers to her large petitions.

Oh! what a moving, making thing is faith! A propelling power! An upholding, inspiring force!

V. The Risks of Faith.

"Then she let them down by a cord through the window."—

JOSH. ii. 15.

Faith always takes risks. It was at the risk of her life that she thus sent the spies away, but so assured was she that in the pathway of God's will is absolute safety, that without fear she was quite prepared to venture.

Taking risks without faith may be pure fanaticism. But the more deeply we are assured of God's will and purpose, the more assured are we of His protection even in hazardous undertakings, and so we can intelligently launch out into the deep and let the shore-lines go! even though others have failed and floundered in the very same enterprise.

We do well to remember that those who intend to walk with God will find it a very narrow and sometimes a lonely way.

Opposition will come from those whom we least expected to treat us so ; misunderstandings and taunts of being " sinless perfectionists " will come our way. It always costs to walk with the Lord, but let it be done in *faith*. Let our confident assurance that we are in His Will be the motive power and all will be well.

The spies while searching out the land had brought her a promise of a sure and perfect and uttermost deliverance ; to such she must be loyal ; they, like the Word of God itself, had conveyed to her anxious soul exceeding great and precious promises.

She will risk all for their protection. Oh ! that we may ever do likewise : we shall, if faith makes the promises precious to our souls, knowing that our very salvation depends upon their fulfilment.

VI. The Patience of Faith.

" It shall be that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street his blood shall be upon his head . . . and whosoever shall be with thee in the house his blood shall be on our head."—JOSH. ii. 19.

When we have exercised some definite asking of faith and taken some risk therein, we think that *at once* some remarkable change will take place, or that we shall experience some spectacular deliverance ! It may be that we shall be disappointed ; nothing follows immediately. It is very easy at such times to get disturbed and unsettled. Not so Rahab. She was quite content to wait there in the place of peril till the day of deliverance came. She did not take the matter into her own hands and plan and scheme and rush out of her house and out of the city into the plain

towards the Israelitish camp. No! She stayed where she was calmly awaiting the promised hour, when she and her household would be saved in and from the destruction and carnage all about her. She believed God. She rested in faith.

There is nothing more important in the way of faith than patience. "By faith and patience," we read, the patriarchs of old "inherited the promises." This is a very different thing from easy-going, careless indifference and sloth.

How many of God's children have testified that after stepping out on the promises of God, they are kept waiting for "seven days," ere they begin even to experience the fulfilment. They had to dip seven times ere there was any trace of the cleansing efficacy. But a true and living faith will always persevere, be patient and prevail.

One whom God recently brought into a very gracious experience writes as follows:—

"The meetings came to an end and you went away. I felt no different, but I just clung on 'believing into God.' *The ten days after* I got the assurance that the Holy Spirit had come. My heart was filled with joy and still is, and something deeper than joy to which I can put no name."

She patiently endured as seeing Him Who is invisible.

VII. The Testimony of Faith.

"*She bound the scarlet line in the window.*"—JOSH. ii. 21.

"I have believed, therefore have I spoken," said the Psalmist. True faith will always testify and tell out what the Lord hath done.

In Rahab's case it was not otherwise. She testifies to God, Joshua and all the Israelitish host that she was trust-

ing in Jehovah as her deliverer, and in the promises vouchsafed to her by His two representatives.

Surely the reverent, believing mind will see still more : to it the scarlet line suspended from her window sill will be a blessed emblem of the Redeeming Blood.

True faith will do all it can to consolidate and confirm the step taken by the believing soul.

Rahab burned all her bridges behind her and, like Esther, of later days, no doubt she said, " If I perish, I perish," but I will die believing God.

I like to think that when Joshua, a few days later, stole out alone to survey the city and prepare his plan of attack, he saw the scarlet thread dangling from the window on the wall, and he murmured to himself, " Plucky little woman." If my imagination has not run away with me, then I am right in concluding that the silent speaking testimony of Rahab's faith was a mighty confirmation to the leader's heart.

The philosophy of testimony is very simple :—

(1) It strengthens our own faith and burns all the bridges behind us ; it commits us : and some of us need just that very thing.

(2) It is a blessed advertisement to the One Who has healed us. We owe it to Him to tell out His praises. Testimony should always be to Christ and what *He* has done.

(3) It will bring blessing to someone else, it will encourage others to go and do likewise, or it will make some hungry for the blessing which God has given to us.

VIII. The Victory of Faith.

*" They said unto Joshua, Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land."—*JOSH. ii. 24.

And now for the victory ! The account of her faith rewarded appears in later pages of the Old and New Testa-

ments, the story of the deliverance of herself and family, and marriage into the royal Messianic line ; the epitaph in Heaven's Westminster Abbey were all part of the great reward. But here we read of the victory. So mightily did her faith impress the two spies ; such a fire did it kindle in their imaginations and their hearts, that with haste they return to Joshua and say, " Truly the Lord hath delivered all the land into our hands." They wanted no more evidence : the faith of the harlot was so in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost that it carried with it an overwhelming conviction.

The flame thus kindled in the hearts of the two took fire at once in Joshua's soul. The people were summoned : the report (if such it can be called) was passed on to the people and, like a prairie fire, it blazed a pathway through the host and carried all before it till all were convinced and assured that victory was theirs, and all they had to do was to go up and inherit the Promised Land.

Blessed as all these lessons are to our own hearts, I am anxious lest we overlook their deeper and even more important significance.

Rahab is the only Gentile admitted into the Hebrew National Gallery. She shines with a peculiar lustre even among the other brilliant gems. It is proper, therefore, that we should be reminded of heathen lands and the glorious galaxy of precious stones that they are contributing to the Master's crown.

How easy it would be to write a volume, entitled " The Jerichos of Japan," or " The Rahabs of Heathendom." Just one or two illustrations from my journal jottings must bring this chapter to a close. Here on the mission field we see the story we have been considering again and again, though the scale thereof may be insignificant enough to

all except those who have eyes to "see when good cometh," and are not deceived by the illusion of mere magnitude and numbers.

In the opening up of little unevangelised country towns in Japan, how often do we see Rahabs delivered, and God glorified, though to the unbelieving onlookers all may seem failure and disappointment. Here are a few simple vignettes.

Some four years ago a city suburb was "attacked" with a small band of evangelists. The tent was crowded each night, the attention remarkable; many professed to seek an interest in the Saviour. As weeks passed by, however, it appeared that only one had been truly converted, a young widow who eventually married one of our evangelists. Two weeks ago she passed away to her heavenly home. A few hours before she breathed her last, she said to a friend at her bedside, "You have never seen heaven! I have!" and as they bade her farewell one said, "We shall meet you in the morning," she smiled and said, "Yes, Hallelujah!"

To-day not only is there a flourishing little group of believers in that place, but it has its daughter church in a near neighbourhood.

* * * * *

A little country town that had never had the opportunity of hearing the Gospel of Christ was opened by a band of evangelists last year. The meetings were very poor, both in attendance and interest. After several days' labour one young man found Christ and, as it turned out afterwards, he was considered the model youth of the village. In talking to him the other day, I realised how deeply his heart had been prepared, like Rahab of old, to believe and be saved. To-day, less than a year later,

there is an earnest group of a dozen believers in the town.

* * * * *

We had just opened another country town of considerable size when two ladies, like the two spies of old, were sent to conserve the work. A Bible Class for school girls was in progress, when a young woman, not much older than schoolgirl age, was announced. Waiting behind after the others had left, she told her story. A few days previously she had been sentenced to death by the doctors, with not more than six months at most to live, another victim to the dread malady of tuberculosis. But a sadder tale was revealed. She was the daughter of one of the brothel keepers in the town. Sent away to Osaka, she had received a fine education both at school and college. Returning to her home (pardon the prostitution of so sweet a word), she had been seduced by one of the visitors to her father's house of shame. Her parent, unashamed at the debauchery of other people's children, was furious at reaping in his own what he had sown in others. The man in question was of some standing, and a marriage was arranged and they became husband and wife. Within a year a child was born, within another her husband was in his coffin, within a third she was condemned to follow him to the grave.

Walking down the street in utter misery, this modern Rahab heard from a friend of the tent meetings recently conducted and the presence of the two "spies," Misses S. and S., in the town. As they talked together they found themselves opposite their door. It took very little to persuade this poor unhappy soul to turn in, there to find the Bible Class in progress. It was not long before she fled for refuge to the Friend of sinners. She, like her

sister of long ago, received the word in peace. Her life, as well as her heart, was truly changed, and through its witness a Shinto priest, astonished at what he saw, turned to the Lord, left his shrine and became a colporteur of the Scriptures.

For a time the trouble in her lungs seemed to be stayed, but eventually she succumbed to the disease and was taken to heaven, another trophy of Divine Grace.

To-day, in that little town, though the two ladies have moved elsewhere, there is a self-supporting Church to testify that the God of Rahab is still the same wonder-working God to-day.

* * * * *

Two young Bible School students, in their vacation, were guided to a distant island to proclaim the glad tidings. They were provided with their single tickets to go there. Nothing more was given them. On their arrival they had not a penny-piece between them. Having secured the loan of a room open to the street of the main thoroughfare, they went round the town giving notice of the meeting. At the appointed hour not a single soul had appeared. Thereupon one of them requested the other to sit in front of him to make an audience and, at the top of his voice, proceeded to preach the Gospel. Within a few minutes some twenty-five persons, attracted by the noise, appeared and listened attentively to what he had to say: four remaining behind to enquire still further, after some hours' talk, professing to turn to the Lord. The young men were encouraged and went supperless to bed. In the morning without breakfast, their exchequer being still bare, they gave themselves to prayer. Within a short time one of the four converts appeared to learn more of the Saviour. In course

of conversation, he incidentally learned the emptiness both of their purse and stomach. He hastily provided them with a good meal.

They continued one month in the place, supported by their converts. And when the time for their return arrived a group of some twenty-five eventually escorted them to their boat, handed them their tickets, and put £5 into their hands as a thankoffering for what God had done for their souls.

Oh! that more of our friends in these homelands could lift up their eyes and see these Rahabs in the unevangelised towns and villages of beautiful Japan. Yes, hidden away in towns and hamlets are very precious jewels, one here and one there, ready to be gathered if only the opportunity of offering themselves for His crown were given them, and if only, like Rahab of old, they could hear of a God that can bring slaves out of Egypt and give them the Promised Land.

Let none of my readers be disappointed because we cannot tell them of countries Christianised, of whole communities transformed, heathen society revolutionised and multitudes thronging the churches. God's ways are not generally of that order.

When John the Baptist, in perplexity, sent his disciples to enquire why, if He were the promised Messiah, He could be content with merely healing a few blind and lame and leprous folk, the Lord sent them back to their master, "Go, shew him AGAIN what things ye have seen and heard, the blind receive their sight," etc., and then He added the solemn words, "Blessed is he who shall not be offended in Me."

Why Rahab and her household alone were saved from

the wreckage of corrupt and reprobate Jericho we leave to God's mysterious ways of grace and wisdom, and without seeking to understand, we say, "Oh, Lord, if Thou dost count me worthy, let me get on with the job of saving these chosen souls, a task that angels would covet and yet a task that Thou hast committed to our poor, feeble, bungling hands and lukewarm hearts, if only we will believe Thee our God."

CHAPTERS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN.

Conclusion

CHAPTER XVI. THE VOICE FROM HELL.

CHAPTER XVII. THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN.

“ Unbelief is a sin of so deep a dye, that the devils in hell cannot commit the like. Our Saviour never prayed, wept, bled and died for devils. He never said to them, ‘ Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life.’ . . . This more than diabolical sin is reserved for thee, O careless sinner.”

—JOHN FLETCHER, Vicar of Madeley.

The VOICE of the LORD is upon the waters.

The VOICE of the LORD is powerful.

The VOICE of the LORD is full of majesty.

The VOICE of the LORD breaketh the cedars.

The VOICE of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.

The VOICE of the LORD shaketh the wilderness.

The VOICE of the LORD . . . strippeth the forests bare.

—PSALM xxix.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE VOICE FROM HELL.

"Wherefore we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."—HEB. xii. 1, 2.

IN viewing a portrait painted by some master artist, it will have been observed by us all that the eyes of the figure portrayed seem always directed at us, from whatever angle we view the picture and whichever way we turn. This effect, when realised, is almost uncanny. It seems to suggest that the celebrity immortalised by the artist is still alive and is regarding us individually with a look of surprise, reproach or affection, as the case may be.

As we have passed along the Gallery of these Hebrew saints long since departed, looked at their faces and heard their voices, and sought to learn the lesson they fain would teach us, have their eyes followed us as of men alive from the dead? Has this "so great a cloud of witnesses" spoken to our hearts? This most assuredly was the purpose of the Holy Ghost in inspiring the sacred writer. Though we have looked *at* them, they now bid us not to look *unto* them, even though they be witnesses of God's almighty power and grace, and though they be spectators of *our* running in the race that is set before us. No, no, they bid us "look *away*" (as the original has it) unto Jesus the beginner (i.e., the Moses) and the perfecter (i.e., the Melchisedec) of our faith."

To look unto Him and listen to His voice is the conclusion of the whole matter, for only in so doing can we profit by the vision we have had of these triumphs of faith.

I have entitled the first of these two concluding chapters, the "Voice from Hell"; I feel I cannot close the present volume without speaking of the dreadful correlative of the theme we have been considering together. That correlative is, of course, unbelief, the source of all the sin and sorrow and despair in the Church as well as in the world at large. It is suggested by the brief but speaking phrase that stands at the head of this chapter, "THE sin that doth so easily beset us." The margin of the Revised Version has it, "the sin that is admired of many."

Apropos of that striking designation, I remember once speaking of this theme at a series of public meetings in Wales. A man of some local importance happened to be among the audience and, as the meetings were being reported in the local paper, he wrote an indignant letter of protest, that anyone so ill-informed in spiritual matters as myself should be allowed a place on the platform. Unbelief was, he declared, a virtue, it stimulated enquiry, promoted criticism, was at the source of all progress in knowledge and scientific attainment, in other words, was a thing to be admired and encouraged by all thinking and sensible people. To call it in any sense evil, or a thing to be deprecated, only betrayed an ignorant and uneducated mentality.

I certainly did not trouble to make any answer. Had I done so I should have been tempted to enquire if he considered a mutual lack of faith and confidence between himself and his wife was a virtue to be cultivated and encouraged! The good man was, of course, entirely ignorant of the nature of faith or its correlative unbelief. I was speaking of faith in the moral sphere. His only conception of it was in the intellectual.

In the following chapter we are to consider the "voice

from heaven," the only true source of faith the heavenly dynamic. Here in the present chapter we are to consider the voice from hell ; heard first of all in the garden of Eden and sibilating down through the centuries, the words, "Hath God said?" are still the most potent and assertive authority in the soul of unregenerate man, and alas ! the most fearful enemy of the saints of God.

Unbelief is the *fons et origo* of all evil in the soul of man. In the following pages of this chapter I shall seek to draw from this bottomless fountain of evil a few samples of its deadly and cruel nature.

I. It would Destroy the Social Fabric.

As a matter of fact men do believe their fellow men. Strange as it may appear, we do trust one another in large measure and yet distrust God. Society could not, of course, exist for one day, if men did not in some large measure trust each other. The everyday life of all of us is conducted on this principle ; we exercise faith in one another, and in the words and promises of men in countless acts of daily life.

When we do not do so, we are met with endless trouble and distress. Where unbelief and distrust of our fellow men are paramount, there is misery and every evil work. We have but to think of Russia as an example. Bolshevism produced a veritable harvest of sorrow and suffering for this very reason. Nobody trusted anyone ; and everybody suspected everyone else. It does not take any vivid imagination to picture hell in such an environment as this.

Suspicion, distrust, unbelief, and absence of confidence would eventually break up the whole fabric of Society and lead to every kind of unspeakable cruelty and diabolical crime.

II. It Perverts our Judgment.

Unbelief or lack of confidence in others always suspects their motives. Behind every good action, unbelief imagines some ulterior motive. The benefactor may be perfectly ingenuous and disinterested, but unbelief suggests some hidden and selfish reason for the display of such benevolence. In such cases, when suspicion exists, the heart of the one who suspects stands revealed. He imputes evil to others because he finds it in his own heart. He judges others by the standard of his own wicked thoughts. Because he is incapable of disinterested benevolence himself, he imagines no one else is either.

“Why do these thoughts arise in your hearts?” The tragedy of it all lies in the fact that men thus suspect God. Unbelief suggests that God is incapable of pure, disinterested love. Men think God such an one as themselves. Their distorted imagination arises from the evil heart of unbelief.

Alas! I am well aware that ulterior motives in the hearts of men abound, and so give much pretext for suspicion and distrust; but that suspicion and distrust should be entertained towards a loving heavenly Father is desperate indeed; to suspect, to distrust, to doubt, to disbelieve, to be apathetic towards God reveals the fact that our heart is poisoned at the source, and that our imagination is distorted by the awful ravages of unbelief.

III. It Destroys our Love.

There can be no love where there is no confidence. We cannot love where we do not believe. Men cannot love God because they do not believe (or may I say, do not in faith appropriate the fact) that His way must be best; to do

His will must be the safest and sweetest thing on earth. Men do not believe it and so they cannot love God. Unbelief is at the root of the whole trouble. Men's hearts are saturated with this vile suspicion, this desolating fear, this unnatural distrust of God.

Common-sense, I know, clamours aloud against such a preposterous degrading of our imagination. That a God who could make so beautiful a world as ours could be a Being unworthy of our love, devotion, adoration, confidence, and delight is patent to anyone who is capable of doing any straight thinking even for five minutes; but there is a power, strong, fearful, and malignant which reigns in our hearts and so smothers all the more reasonable persuasions both of conscience and common-sense. We find no desire, no taste, no wish to love God. Unbelief has crushed and killed all these reasonable instincts of the soul.

IV. It Paralyzes our Power.

Unbelief sees in every opportunity of doing good a difficulty, just as faith sees in every difficulty an opportunity.

Its constant and insistent slogan is "Can God?" with the sneer of the devil behind it.

Unbelief suggests every time that circumstances and environment are stronger than God, and that the conditions of modern society are far too difficult for Him. It hinders every good desire, blurs every vision, dulls our zeal, cuts the sinews of all endeavour, spells Satan with a capital "S" and God with a little "g." It may be orthodox enough in theory, but in practice cripples all spiritual life.

The Israelites at Kadesh Barnea never doubted the

promised land lay just ahead of them, was a good land, flowing with milk and honey as the Lord had said, never doubted that God had promised it to them, and given it to them ; and yet unbelief slew them in the wilderness, and buried them in the sand.

Unbelief is not necessarily the same as doubt. We may have no doubts and yet be paralysed with unbelief.

Unbelief is a failure to appropriate and a paralysis of spiritual power, an atrophy of the nerves of the soul.

Unbelief makes us prayerless ; we do not believe that God can and will and does wait to bless. Even when, and where we do realise the need of prayer, unbelief with insinuating whisper suggests that God has to be coaxed or persuaded to answer ; and so we pray the prayer of unbelief and not of faith. Our prayer of desire never passes into the prayer of faith.

V. It Hinders our Helpfulness.

Someone once expostulated with the late Frank Crossley, of Manchester, because of his almost indiscriminate generosity, suggesting that he was imposed upon and the constant victim of undeserving rascals. He replied that though well aware that this was so in many cases, he did not read in his Bible that when the Lord fed the five thousand, He sent His disciples to pick out all the rogues ; " I would run the risk of being deceived by five rascals," he added, " rather than miss the opportunity of helping the sixth needy soul."

How quickly does distrust and unbelief, even though excusable in many cases, because bred of the dishonesty and wickedness everywhere abroad, dry up the milk of

human kindness and shut up our bowels of compassion. And when this evil spirit exerts its influence and exercises its sway in the face of need and genuine suffering, how heartless and cruel and cold it is. How the unbelieving one suffers from its power no less than he who looks for sympathy and confidence.

And furthermore, in quite another sense does it hinder us from helping the needy ones ; when distrust and unbelief exist in the heart of men, it becomes impossible to help them.

I may have the most disinterested motives, the most compassionate spirit, willingness and ability and determination to help, and yet unbelief and distrust of me in the heart of those I want to assist may make it absolutely impossible for me to do anything. My hands are tied, my overtures are rejected, my promises are disbelieved, and all my attempts at relieving them are treated with contempt ; and all because of distrust in the heart of the one whose need I hoped to meet. Here is the awful *rationale* of unbelief. It is thus we tie the hands of Almighty God, defeat His purposes to bless us, and make His grace and goodness of none effect.

VI. It Shrivels our Soul.

The worst has yet to be told. There is nothing that withers the heart so terribly as unbelief. It makes us cynical, bitter, hard, and censorious. Imagine the effect upon our character of being placed among a company of men and women whom we are always unable or unwilling to trust. At once we become hard and sharp, cynical and bitter. There is nothing so desolating as unbelief or distrust : it drives us back upon ourselves ; we think that

none can help us but our own heart, though it is true every time, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool."

The terrible part about it is this, that we unconsciously transfer this distrust of unworthy people to those who are trustworthy. The awful habit grows. Criticism is not only cruel but chronic.

To the end of his life Herbert Spencer bemoaned the fact that he could look upon nothing and no one without at once exercising his critical faculty. It became a positive disease; distrust of everyone and everything he saw embittered his whole outlook.

God has used every power to declare Himself worthy of our "affectionate confidence." If distrust of man, who alas! is untrustworthy and unworthy of confidence, produces such fearful havoc in our character and spirit, who can estimate the desperate effect upon our hearts when we distrust and fail to believe the God of all grace, Who has used every means in His power to show Himself a God of love!

The transference of our distrust of man to God is the most devastating and unreasonable thing in God's universe.

Oh! that we would hate it, fear it, confess it, and never rest till it has been cast out of our soul for ever.

VII. It Grieves our God.

I have left its most terrible aspect till the last. Unbelief above everything else wounds the very heart of God. It takes no philosopher to understand this. It is palpable to the man in the street.

In our own experience, is anything more distressing than to be distrusted, to be considered a liar, to be doubted and disbelieved?

It wounds our heart to the quick, especially if we have taken pains to make our ability, veracity and benevolence unimpeachable.

Have we again and again done kindnesses, again and again proved our word to be true, and again and again shown our power to fulfil our engagement and promise, and yet been turned down as an untrustworthy, unreliable charlatan? With what disappointment and despair have we turned away sick at heart, and not least, because it makes our doing good impossible; it becomes, as I have already pointed out, impossible to help people who do not believe in us, however much we may desire to do so.

It slams the door in our face, and fills our hearts with sorrowful disappointment that all our efforts to help must be in vain.

Let us apply these thoughts to our relationship with God. Cannot even our stupid hearts begin to understand His disappointment and His sorrow when He has to turn away from doing us good because we are blinded and fooled, deceived and warped by the unbelief in our souls? Is it any wonder He calls it "the evil heart of unbelief," that wicked thing that makes it impossible for Him to bless us and do us good.

Let us note that unbelief does not make Him unwilling but unable to bless.

That is the philosophy of the whole matter. The logic of unbelief is inexorable.

I *can* not (not *will* not) help the person who does not trust me. I may, in spite of his insult to my veracity, give and provide him with necessary temporal gifts through some indirect channel or roundabout method, but I cannot help him in any spiritual or moral sense unless he trusts me.

Is there any wonder that unbelief is the most desperate

of all the desperate evils in God's universe, the root of all evil?

Is it any wonder He calls it "the unclean thing" (II. Cor. vi. 17), "the sin which doth so easily beset" (Heb. xii. 1), "an evil heart" (Heb. iii. 12). A knife that separates us from God (Rom. xi. 20). A veil upon the heart hiding His glory from our vision (II. Cor. iii. 15). A beam in the eye (Luke vi. 41, 42). A barrier excluding us from the Promised Land (Heb. iii. 19). A mountain of separation (Matt. xxi. 21). A wicked, cruel, devilish thing marring, defiling God's universe, the parent of all evil. Until it is destroyed there can be no peace, no joy, no love, or power, and certainly no eternal blessedness to the sons of men.

We have briefly considered some of the evil results of unbelief and the havoc it works in the heart and character of man. But the question still remains, what is it? Why does it exist in the human soul? Why can neither conscience, common-sense nor any effort of the will remove it? Is it a mere way of thinking, an attitude of mind that can be abandoned if we so determine?

The Word of God speaks of it as a state, an evil heart of unbelief, a spiritual entity, a poison in the soul, a twisted, warped and depraved nature, another name for the carnal mind which is enmity against God.

Before closing, there is another fact that needs special emphasis. Unbelief, at least in the case of a true Christian (I am not here speaking of it in the unregenerate), does not necessarily lie in the *will*. It is not so much that we are unbelieving, as that in us, who are believers, there is "an evil heart of unbelief." It is as St. Paul declares, "not I, but sin that dwelleth in me." It is not that I am

not running the heavenly race, but it is that I am so easily hindered with this besetting sin. It is this depravity poisoning my mind, memory, affections, desires and imaginations, and which, though no longer in my will and conscience, is something that brings my will into captivity and my conscience into distress.

We have to take sides with God and our own regenerate nature against it, recognising that it is abnormal, an intrusion, a parasite, a disease of the soul that should not and need not be there. When we see and understand this we are half way to victory.

As we pass out of the Hebrew National Gallery, every face that we have seen, every voice that we have heard, bids us "take heed lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief": "not to be high minded, but fear lest through unbelief we too may be cut off": "to cast out first the beam that is in our own eye": "to lay aside the sin that doth so easily beset us": "to turn unto the Lord that the veil may be taken away": "to say unto this mountain, be thou cast into the sea": to "touch not the unclean thing," and so to "look away unto Jesus, the beginner and perfecter of our faith."

Oh! to keep looking unto Him. If the voices of these spectators of the race could be heard, I fancy they would speak as one, now with the glorified throng, spake to his flock, "I charge you before the Lord Jesus, Who giveth life and more abundant life, I entreat you by all the actings of faith, the stretchings of hope, the flames of love you have ever felt, sink to greater depths of self-abasing repentance, rise to greater heights of Christ-exalting joy. And let Him "Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," carry on and fulfil in you the work of faith with power: with that power whereby He

subdueth all things unto Himself. Be steadfast in hope, immovable in patience and love, always abounding in the outward and inward labours of love, and receive the end of your faith, the salvation of souls."

Enclosed within the pages of my Bible, I keep two letters to remind me on the one hand of the devastating, desolating power of unbelief in a human life, and on the other of the glorious power of a triumphant faith. The former reads as follows, and alas ! speaks for itself :—

" Dear Friend of past years,—

" If you will look at the signature at end of this letter, it may recall to mind possibly a correspondence that took place many years ago, between yourself and a soul, whom you vainly tried to lead into the Light and Peace that you yourself were then possessing and enjoying ! Well, it was certainly not your fault that I am now well past middle life, and with energy and desire and interest long since dead, to-day look back upon a long, wasted, empty record, and find myself a useless, objectless, unhappy old woman.

" My privileges and opportunities have been many, but I have not embraced them. God has been very good, and blessed me with many temporal gifts. I have still a name to live, and doubtless by some am reckoned to be a Christian, but possibly only God knows how *utterly* void one really is of true life and power and rest and satisfaction. You see, I have neither the one thing nor the other. I have never really cared for the things of this world, but neither do I possess the things of God, so I am poor indeed.

" I am too fixed and old to alter now. One can only reap what one has sown. I have made my life an utterly incapable, useless one, and such it must remain. Then why do I write to you ? I don't want you to see me or write to me, but perhaps there lurks within me the thought, that you are a believer in Prayer

and are acquainted through personal knowledge with a God of Almighty Power, and Love (?) and unless He is distinctly saying to you, as to one of old—' Pray not for this soul '—perhaps you could find an occasional moment to plead even at this eleventh hour—for one who has gone very far astray, and who prays not for herself, but who knows, no matter what others may think, what an *utter* failure and mess she has made of her life."

The second was written under most moving circumstances. The writer, brought up in a beautiful English home in an environment of affluence and luxury, was converted as a girl from a very worldly life. Hearing God's call, like Abraham of old, she came to a foreign land, and here, in Japan, lived a life of deep devotion and almost Spartan simplicity. Her last years of service were spent in a large heathen town, with no European resident within a radius of many miles.

The letter was written a day or two after the doctor had diagnosed her trouble as cancer. Like a bolt from the blue, she was told that six weeks at most were all that remained to her of life. Among the many letters she wrote to her friends, the following was penned to a Japanese (now a professor of philosophy in one of the Universities) whom she had led to Christ. It too speaks for itself eloquently enough of the faith that never failed as she faced the " last great enemy " :—

" My dear Brother,—

" I do thank you very much for your beautiful message to me by telegram, and also for that lovely letter so full of comfort and help which I received yesterday. May God grant that all may be as you say, and that the circle of blessing may widen and

increase and keep going on. Yes, and if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. I am so glad to be a little stone.

“What a sweet thought God gave you to send me, dear brother. My feet are already ascending the heavenly ladder. Oh! how glorious to even think of soon seeing the King in His beauty.

“Oh! how I do with all earnestness beseech you to lay aside every weight, put on one side, cast away anything and everything that would hinder you running the heavenly race God has set before you, and then, when life is over, how glad you will be. And then, ‘lay aside the sin that doth so easily beset you,’ that is UNBELIEF, the most dreadful of all sins, that leads to all sorts of other dreadful sins: keep looking to Jesus. You remember that Peter only walked on the water as long as his eyes were on Jesus. As soon as he took them off Jesus he began to sink.

“Then when you are discouraged because of the way, just consider Him, and you will not grow weary and faint in your mind, when you remember how much more He endured than ever we are called upon to endure. I send you Heb. xii. 1-6.

“I must say good-bye though I could write on and on to you. . . . I am full of joy and peace all the time. Everyone is amazed, but it is all God’s goodness.

“If the devil would offer you the whole world, or any other grand gift, or high position, do not I beseech you, do not miss heaven. God bless and keep and comfort and help you and be to you all you need.

“With warm Christian love and Rom. xv. 13, and assuring you that ‘underneath are the everlasting arms’: and so I have rest, sweet rest, peace, sweet peace, joy, glad joy, all the time.”

Your true friend.

In our closing chapter we shall consider the path of escape and the way that God hath appointed for our

deliverance, that as we look unto Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, so we may listen to the voice of Him that speaketh from heaven, and in so doing may discover that He is able to entirely remove even this deep-seated and desperate dynamic of hell from the souls of His redeemed people.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN.

"Ye are not come unto the voice of words . . . but ye are come . . . to the Blood . . . that SPEAKETH. See that ye refuse not Him that SPEAKETH from heaven."—HEB. xii. 18, 19, 22, 24, 25.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews closes as it began, with a speaking God !

The great commission to the Apostle Paul at his conversion was that he should KNOW God's will, SEE that Just One, HEAR a voice from His mouth, and BE His witness. To know, and see, and hear, and be, this is the sum of all true and godly living (Acts xxii. 14, 15).

We have learned something of God's most wonderful *will* for us in our study of Faith's heroes ; we saw in the preceding chapter the need of *seeing* Him Who is invisible, a looking unto the beginner and perfecter of our faith, and now ere we go out into the world again to *be* His witness we are taken again into the audience chamber of the Most High to *hear* a voice from His mouth. This is the conclusion of the whole matter, to hear the voice of God speaking to us in His Son. Again the opening cadences of our epistle fall upon our ears. "God hath spoken unto us by His Son. . . . We ought therefore to give the more earnest heed . . . and fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest any should come short of it . . . for if the word spoken by angels received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation spoken to us by the Lord."

In the closing chapter of our Epistle we are reminded of the voice from Sinai, "the voice of words," the voice from Calvary, the "blood that speaketh better things,"

and above all, "the voice of Him that speaketh from heaven."

Surely the lesson which the heroes of faith have instilled into our hearts, has been this, not only an obedient response to the voice of God, but an immortal testimony to us that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by His word spoken to our souls.

Each separate portrait specially selected by the Holy Ghost has presented to us a separate aspect of Life's dynamic. The faith of each of these early saints (at least as emphasised by the writer to the Hebrews) has been occupied with a different attribute of God's character, or perhaps I should say, a different object in His divine economy, thus teaching us the all important lesson, that in all the various circumstances and difficulties of life, faith in God is to be the one and only dynamic of all action and in every experience.

Abel's faith was occupied with the righteousness of God, its justice and its mercy.

Enoch's affectionate confidence in God was inspired by His abundant willingness to reward the diligent seeker.

Noah's faith was rooted and grounded in the holy fear of the coming storm of Divine wrath.

The faith that made *Abraham* satisfied to live all his life long in a tent, was inspired by a vision of the Eternal City, whose builder and maker is God.

Sarah's faith was centred and focussed on God's unchanging faithfulness.

The second portrait of *Abraham* reveals to us his faith in God's Almighty resurrection power.

Believing *Isaac* was assured of the unchanging counsels of eternity.

The faith of his son *Jacob* made his dying bed a throne

of grace to his grandchildren and an antechamber of heaven to himself.

Joseph's faith, which inspired the whole Hebrew race with a sense of their destiny, was a faith in God's promised heritage.

Moses' faith that enabled him to suffer with his countrymen unto their salvation, was a faith in God's people.

The faith that instituted the *Passover* Feast and Ritual, has taught us for all time the meaning and power of the sacred and solemn mystery, the barrier of Blood.

While the *Passing through* the waters of death has revealed that second mystery, the barrier of the holy Cloud, even the presence and protection of God the Holy Ghost.

The faith that brought *Jericho's* battlements tumbling to the ground, bids us remember that it is by patience as well as by faith that the greatest victories are gained.

While the last and, in some respects, the most remarkable of all, the faith of *Rahab* the heathen harlot, full, intelligent, courageous, patient, unwavering faith in a God she had never known, should encourage the worst and vilest of sinners to believe unto an uttermost salvation both of themselves and their households.

All these wondrous triumphs of faith have not only brought the glow of holy inspiration to our soul, but they also remind us of the same thing, a speaking God. And to us there is a clearer, louder, deeper, sweeter, more wonder working voice than they ever heard; for God has spoken to us in His Son.

The closing message of the Hebrew Epistle, however, is careful to emphasise that it is a voice from heaven. It is to this that we are directed, even to Christ, the Mediator

of the New Covenant, speaking from the skies. Blessed as were His words of instruction, warning, consolation, and grace upon earth, His voice from heaven is fraught with a message more wonderful and of greater power. Herein lies the secret of a living, mighty, saving, sanctifying faith. The Holy Ghost in urging us to listen to this heavenly voice, draws a striking and vivid contrast between the old and the new, between Sinai and Calvary, between the voice of words and the voice of life, between the entourage of the law and the environment of grace.

Before declaring what the message from heaven is, and what its voice proclaims, He emphasises with intense earnestness the only spot on earth where that voice is audible.

I. The Voice of Words.

"Ye are not come . . . to the voice of words . . . which they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more."—HEB. xii. 18, 19.

No, we are not come thither to Sinai. That is certainly not our objective; nor is it the place where in calmness of soul we can hear the voice that speaks from heaven; but we have come that way, we have passed by Mt. Sinai. We most certainly have heard the thunder of the mount. There at Sinai His voice shook the earth and all that was earthly in us; as with Isaiah when he heard the cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory, the foundations of the threshold were moved at the voice of Him that cried," so too has it been with all the saints of God. All of us who have heard the voice of blood and the voice of our blessed Mediator speaking from heaven, have *first* heard "the voice of words" on Sinai's hill, shaking to their very foundations all our

self righteousness and pride of heart : so "fearful was the appearance" that, like Moses, we have cried, "I exceedingly fear and quake." The more vivid and arresting this experience has been, the more blessed and consoling has been the voice of His most precious blood and the voice of Him Who is our advocate before the Father's face.

Has all that is earthly in us been shaken? Have we heard the thunders of Sinai? Has the law, broken ten thousand times, reiterated its powerlessness to help as well as its determination to avenge? Then are we ready to hear those other voices which bring pardon, purity, and heaven to our souls?

II. The Voice of Blood.

"But ye are come . . . to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh."—
HEB. xii. 22-24.

There is no more blessed word in the New Testament than this. It is deeply important to observe its exact phrasing, "Ye ARE come." There is no invitation, no command, no entreaty here. We are not bidden to come, we are told that we are there. It is a statement of fact. "We," if we are true believers and children of God, "ARE come," whether we realise it or not; whether we have any conscious consolation from it or not, the fact remains, "we ARE there." The way has been opened, the place prepared. Redemption on Calvary is the great accomplished fact of history. "Redemption ground," as it has been called, is the place appointed for us to stand and listen to the heavenly "wireless."

"We are come to the blood of sprinkling that SPEAKETH." Alas! how many who theologically believe in what they speak of as the finished work of Christ, never still their hearts to listen to what that finished sacrifice

declares. How often have we sought to hear some heavenly whisper, some voice of power from on high, inspiring our hearts to believe God, spoken by the Ascended Saviour and the ever present Spirit? Alas! we have listened and waited in vain. Heaven seems to us a sealed and silent place. We have turned away in sadness and despair.

The cause is not far to seek; we have not sought first to hear the voice of blood, that speaketh here on earth. If the message of His blood is not reaching our ears, how shall we hear the accents of His voice from heaven?

Yes, we heard it once long ago. It brought rest to our conscience: thereby we had peace with God; but alas! we have come to regard it as a thing of the past; important *then*, when we were in despair because of our sins, but not of much account to-day. We talk sometimes glibly I fear of Christ's "finished work," but have we finished with its glorious and blessed power? In the Epistle to the Hebrews much is said of the "blood of Christ."

Its sprinkling upon the lintel and doorpost (xi. 29) speaks to us of redemption (1. Pet. i. 18, 19), of forgiveness (Col. i. 20), of propitiation (Rom. iii. 25).

The blood upon the conscience (ix. 14) speaks of cleansing from dead works to serve the living God.

The blood upon the people (ix. 19; Ex. xxiv. 5-8) reminds us of our utter inability to keep God's covenant, unless we are dead indeed unto sin.

The blood upon the book (ix. 19) speaks of the death of the testator, thus making it plain that the covenant, a documentary deed between two living parties, has now become a will, wherein all the possessions of the deceased pass unconditionally to the legatee.

The blood upon the tabernacle and its furnishings (ix. 21-23) speaks to us of the way into the heavens

unhindered by all the defiling accusations of the prince of the power of the air.

Oh! this sacred and solemn barrier of blood through which no avenging angel can pass, and no fierce, vindictive railing of the enemy can penetrate!

The question I would press upon my reader to consider and answer before God is simply this, am I at this moment consciously, experimentally, rejoicingly, tremblingly, and yet believingly standing on Redemption ground?

I do not ask whether this is my orthodox belief, but rather does the voice of blood cause itself to be heard in my heart to-day, at this very hour? Am I standing on this sacred spot? Am I expecting to hear the voice from heaven because, and only because I am standing here; because and only because the blood of sprinkling is speaking to my innermost soul better things than the blood of martyrdom? If not, then I may cease to wonder why voices from heaven seldom reach my soul.

Saints, modern as well as ancient, shall give their testimony.

Frances Ridley Havergal, in telling us of the great work of sanctification in her soul, speaks thus of the precious blood and the manner in which it spoke to her heart:—

“Have we not been limiting 1. John i. 7 by practically making it refer only to the remission of sins that are past, instead of taking the grand simplicity of ‘cleanseth us from *all* sin.’ All is all; and as we may trust Him to cleanse from the stain of past sins, so we may trust Him to cleanse from all present defilement. . . . One of the intensest moments of my life, was when I saw the force of that word ‘cleanseth.’ The utterly unexpected and altogether unimagined sense of its fulfilment to me on simply believing it in

its fulness, was just indescribable. I expected nothing like it short of heaven."

Another shall corroborate her story. Reginald Radcliffe, that great saint and evangelist of last century, writes thus :—

" I feel as if I had been bitten and stung by Satan, and that his venomous tongue had saturated every inmost recess of my soul with his poisonous essence of gall. Nothing but the miraculous, almighty, purifying, cleansing, living and life-giving blood of Jesus, can cleanse me. I am satanically infused. Nothing but Jesus dipping me in His blood can cleanse. Thanks though! Yea, let the caverns of hell hear me shout as devils fly in impotence. His blood is a million times too strong for them! What safety! What a tower! The waves may as well give over beating against it!"

III. The Voice from Heaven.

Blessed indeed as the voice of His sprinkled blood has been to our hearts, it is but a preparation for the hearing of the voice of the living, ascended and glorified Christ. " I counsel thee to buy (yes, with the price of My most precious blood) gold . . . white raiment . . . and eyesalve." This voice of counsel from Calvary is followed by the voice of His even better promises, the voice of the Risen Lord, " I will come in and sup "; and yet again of the Ascended Lord, " I will grant to sit with Me on My throne."

The voice that speaks from heaven is the voice of the " Mediator of the New Covenant," " the author and perfecter of our faith," Jesus Himself, our risen, ascended, glorified, and coming Lord of glory.

We do well indeed to take heed, lest we remain satisfied with the voice of blood speaking here on earth, and fail to catch the voice that speaketh from heaven. For herein lies the secret of a victorious faith, that dynamic of life which can only spring up in our hearts, inspire, strengthen, and enable us to follow in the steps of these ancient heroes, as we hear, and receive, and take heed to the speaking of the Christ Who is alive for evermore. This is the conclusion of the whole matter.

The Epistle to the Hebrews has spoken to us of many wonderful things, but here at its close we get a cryptic epitome of its message. That epitome runs as follows :—

“ See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven : Whose voice then shook the earth : but now He hath promised saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear ” (Heb. xii. 25-28).

This then is the voice from heaven. It first tells us of REMOVAL, it secondly speaks to us of RECEIVING a Kingdom, and bids those of us who are thus made kings to become SERVANTS.

First, IT TELLS US OF A REMOVAL.

The passage as it appears in the Prophet Haggai, can only refer to that great and final removal of the heavens

and the earth that now are at His appearing ; but as quoted here, in the Hebrew letter it can have no such significance : it is applied by the Holy Ghost to the individual believer in his life here and now upon earth. The " voice of words " on Sinai's hill has shaken within us all that is carnal, all our self-confidence, self-righteousness, all our self-importance and self-complacency, till we feared and trembled before a Holy God ; but now the blessed voice from heaven tells us of their removal. It is this removal, ~~the~~ taking away that is absolutely essential to a life of faith. It is one of the great words of Scripture, " I will take away." It is no mere suppression, or counteraction, of an ever present, ever abiding force of evil within us that God promises, but a removal and taking away of all these things that hinder us from exercising a victorious, triumphant faith in the Son of God.

1. " *The Lord hath TAKEN AWAY thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy* " (Zeph. iii. 15).

" There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (R.V.)

" Neither do I condemn thee : go and sin no more."

Eternal praise be to Him Who hath justified us before His face, through the removal of all our guilt and sin. " When He (the Holy Ghost) is come He will convict the world of . . . judgment . . . because the prince of this world hath been judged." (R.V.)

2. " *Thine iniquity is TAKEN AWAY and thy sin expiated* " (Isa. vi. 7, A.V. marg.).

When Isaiah, in agony of spirit at the sight of the Holy Service of angel and archangel before the throne, cried out, " Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of

unclean lips," the seraphim, touching his lips with a live coal from off the altar and saying, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips," reminded him that this trouble was far deeper than his lips, in the conscience and in the nature. "Thy sin is expiated," he cries, thy guilt is no more imputed to thee, yea, and "thine iniquity," the sin of thy nature, that dread and awful thing that makes thy lips unclean, "is TAKEN AWAY." Yes, the iniquity in which we were "shapen" (Psa. li. 5). The iniquity which is not imputed to us (Psa. xxxii. 2). The iniquity which was laid upon Him (Isa. liii. 6). Yes, that iniquity is TAKEN AWAY.

3. "*Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and stood before the angel, and he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, TAKE AWAY the filthy garments from him*" (Zech. iii. 3, 4).

The lips of the prophet were unclean, but here is a more fearful sight, the *priest* of the Lord standing in His presence, not in the "garments of beauty" as ordained, but in the filthy rags of self-confidence and pride. Silent he stands: not a word escapes his lips. The great adversary is at hand with all his malign and awful invective. But with him stands our Advocate with the Father, not only to say to the accuser of the brethren, "The Lord rebuke thee," but to command that the filthy garments be TAKEN AWAY, and then to add to the broken penitent these words, "Behold I *have* caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment," garments made white in the blood of the Lamb, "garments of praise," "garments of humility," garments of holiness and love.

4. "*I will TAKE AWAY the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh*" (Ezek. xxxvi. 26).

Can ought be worse than that which makes the *prophet's* lips hypocritical, censorious and unclean? Can

ought be more unsightly than the garments of pride and Pharisaism on the praying *priest* whose appointed habiliments are humility and praise as he stands to minister before the Lord? Yes! A *King* who once walked with God, but who now, with hands stained with blood and heart full of adultery, has no eyes to weep, no bowels to feel for those whom he has so fearfully outraged and slain. His heart is of stone, hard and cold and dead. Have we known nothing of this? Is it not true that the sadness of the Man of Sorrows is but little to us? the miseries of a creation groaning under the cruelties of him that was a murderer from the beginning, have they not passed unheeded before our eyes, and the lamentations of the multitudes in hell have they not fallen on deaf ears? Truly our heart has been a heart of stone.

This heart of stone the Lord promises to TAKE AWAY. This is His voice from heaven. In the "once more" of the prophetic message, is signified the REMOVAL of this thing revealed on Sinai by the "voice of words," and pardoned on Mt. Calvary by the "voice of blood."

5. "*Their minds were blinded, for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away . . . nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be TAKEN AWAY*" (II. COR. iii. 14-16).

What can there be more dreadful than what we have seen in prophet, priest and king, lips unclean, filthy garments and a heart of stone? Can there be ought worse than these? Yes, verily! The sin of unbelief. I have written of it more fully in the preceding chapter and so need not here enlarge. Fletcher of Madeley says of it, "Unbelief is a sin of so deep a dye that the devils in hell cannot commit the like. Our Saviour never prayed, wept, bled, and died for devils. He never said to them, 'Ye will not come

to Me that ye might have life.' . . . This more than diabolical sin is reserved for thee, careless sinner." Here in our text it is likened to a veil and refers to the darkness and gloom that has rested on the Jewish people for nearly two millennia, causing them, yea! and us to commit every conceivable transgression against the Divine Majesty and His unutterable grace. But, thanks be to God, when "the heart shall turn to the Lord," even this shall be TAKEN AWAY.

6. "*I was left alone and saw this great vision, and there REMAINED NO STRENGTH in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption and I retained no strength*" (Dan. x. 8).

There remains yet one more thing to be removed ere we can RECEIVE a kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost in our hearts. Prophet, priest, king, and people have declared unto us that not only does there dwell within them no good thing, but that an evil heart of unbelief, a heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, a heart clothed with filthy garments and a heart of stone, is all that they can find within them as inherited from the first Adam.

Here we read of a Prince, him who was head of all the princes of Babylon, him who faced the lion's den and the monarch's wrath, who feared, neither the world nor death nor the devil, but God alone. At the sight of the Christ in glory he falls as dead. All power and might and strength is TAKEN AWAY, that at His word he may receive strength from above and power from on high, a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Every true Christian knows and acknowledges that he is a weak and feeble person. How often do we hear the

expression thereof in prayer, as though it were a virtue and a mark of humility. In fact, it is regarded almost as the zenith of holy living and quite enough to excuse us before God, from the possession of any more positive experience.

But with some, thank God! there is more. Not only do they know and acknowledge their weakness: they *feel* it deeply and feel it till it becomes a pain, an agony. How many have testified to this experience ere they have been endued with power from on high. It is then that with St. Paul they pass into the third experience, and cry, "*With joy I glory in my weakness* that the power of Christ may make a tabernacle over me."

The removal of our own strength, the taking away of our own power by the Holy Ghost wherein we can positively glory and do it with joy, is a vastly different thing from that self-complacent, semi-despairing acknowledgment of weakness which we consider quite sufficient to excuse us before God from being "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

Have we heard the Lord of glory thus speaking to us from heaven the blessed word "once more"? Has He touched our eyes a second time and made us look up unto Jesus the finisher as well as the author of our faith? If we could retrace our steps and listen again to the voices of these saints of old, every one of them would tell us of the "removal of shaken things" in their life before they were able to do the mighty works of faith, which we have been considering.

Secondly, THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN BIDS US RECEIVE A KINGDOM.

Thank God the "removal" of the shaken things is only a preparation for "receiving a kingdom which cannot be

shaken," for it is our Father's "good pleasure to give us the kingdom," a "kingdom which is within us," a "kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The *Crucified* Saviour bids us come unto Him and buy with the price of His blood which He Himself provided, "gold . . . white raiment . . . and eyesalve": faith, love and hope: pardon, purity and heaven.

The *Risen* Saviour, standing at the door, promises to come in and sup with us as He did with His frightened followers when He rose from the dead long ago.

But the *Ascended* Christ bids us come up and sit with Him on His throne, even as He is set down with His Father on His throne, the throne of Christ our great Melchisedec, the throne of intercession, the throne of glory, that we may be with Him where He is and beholding His glory be changed into the same image from glory to glory.

The purpose of receiving such a kingdom, we are told, is that we may *serve* our God acceptably with godly fear. Is it strange that kings should serve? Verily nay! He Who is King of kings and Lord of lords took upon Him the form of a servant, and by serving He reigns for ever in the hearts of men.

The saints of old, at whose portraits we have been gazing, were made kings and priests unto God. Their lives were lives of service, their deeds were deeds of sacrifice and devotion.

Even at the risk of lengthening this chapter, I would pass on the story of one who listened to the voice from heaven, and proving the significance of the word, "Once more," received a kingdom wherein he has served his Master, with reverence and godly fear. A young man fresh from one of our leading universities, with excellent

prospects, as the world counts such things, my friend was an earnest Christian.

When I first met him he had been brought into close contact with a more experienced servant of the Lord, a man of very ordinary ability, of no natural winsomeness either of manner or disposition ; but he saw in him the life of God more abundant. To him he was a burning bush, just an ordinary lowly bush in the desert places of life, and yet aflame with divine life and power : and he turned aside to see and know the secret of so strange a sight. So it was that he came to me with eager and thoughtful queries.

Perhaps a somewhat detailed narrative of how I sought to help him may be a help to some of my readers, and so I venture to trespass on their patience.

He was deeply impressed, he said, with the fact that the one whose life he had been closely observing, was in possession of something that he had not. I assured him to begin with, that if he was wholly the Lord's, this was not the case. No saint however eminent, I told him, had any stock of holiness or power or goodness in himself. All was in the Lord Jesus ; but I made haste to add, that if there was the difference between them, that he supposed, the one whose life had so impressed him, had *lost something that he had not yet got rid of*. We were travelling in a railway carriage at the time, looking out upon the beautiful scenery of Derbyshire. I observed that, had the window-pane through which we were looking been of opaque or frosted glass (however beautiful the pattern of the pane might be), though admitting light into our compartment, it would have completely obliterated the view ; and pressed home the parable. Some Christians gifted and talented as they are, have not yet lost this opaqueness.

Others very ordinary in mental calibre, physical appearance and worldly status, are transparent souls through whom continually the Lord Jesus and His grace are apparent and visible to all.

I assured him his own need was just there. He was impressed and enquired further what this opaqueness of soul might be. We turned together to Ezek. xxxvi. 25 sq. He was deeply convicted as I pointed out to him the "filthiness of flesh and spirit"; the "idols," objects of beauty, to the unsanctified soul, and yet in God's sight as hideous as the former; and above all a "stony heart" of UNBELIEF incapable of feeling, unimpressionable to the finger prints of God the Holy Ghost, and utterly unable to believe to the uttermost. As we talked together of these things, and he realised in clearer and more penetrating fashion his need of an inward deliverance, he cried out, "When then shall I do?" I turned again to the prophet's message and pointed out that God had promised to REMOVE this trinity of evil Himself, that His promise was "I will," "I will," reiterated again and again; and that the only condition to be fulfilled on our part was expressed in the words, "I will yet for this be enquired of to do it for them." In explanation of this enquiry, we turned together to Hebrews xi. 6. I endeavoured to unfold it somewhat as set forth in a preceding chapter, and urged him at once to get alone with God and seek His favour as therein directed. (1) To come exactly as he was, neither better nor worse, obedient to the call of God. (2) To dare to believe that GOD IS accepting him and fulfilling the promises as found in Ezekiel, here and now. In other words, I urged him to do what that almost inspired couplet bids:—

" Before Thy Cross my all I cast,
AND DARE TO LEAVE IT THERE."

He then interrupted, "Is that all I have to do?" With all the earnestness at my command I said, "No." The third and further step was to "diligently seek" God's face, and to listen to "the voice from heaven," not asking for the work to be done, but believing that it is done already; or in other words, to "seek in faith," standing on "redemption ground," taking heed to the "blood that speaks," realising that "we *are* come" hither and expecting God to give the witness of His Spirit, because and only because we are standing on that sacred spot. I said, "You *must* believe He is abundantly WILLING, just as He is abundantly ABLE and abundantly FAITHFUL. This will inspire you to seek until you experimentally enter into what you BELIEVE HE HAS DONE in your soul!" We separated at the end of our journey. Ten days later I received a letter overflowing with praise and thanksgiving for what God had wrought. That very night after he had left me, he did as I bade him. He dared to COME and, what is far more difficult, he dared to BELIEVE; and then for ten days he believingly and expectantly sought God's face. On the tenth day he found. He heard the voice from heaven. The Holy Ghost came flooding his soul with peace and joy in believing, setting him free, revealing the Lord Jesus in a newer and more wonderful fashion than he had deemed possible in this life.

God did indeed "remove" the things He had shaken. There was a real and blessed "taking away," so that then and there he was able to receive a kingdom that could not be moved, even righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

For many years he has walked with God. Giving up all worldly prospects, like Moses of old, he counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of

Egypt: he has been labouring faithfully in the Mission Field, seeing many souls seeking and finding the Saviour, and bringing not a few into the land that floweth with milk and honey.

And now as we close and lay aside this volume, let us ask ourselves, have we heard the voice of the Spirit, that heavenly telephone speaking to our hearts bidding us listen for corroboration of the message to the Divine gramophone, the record of the written voice, God's eternal Word?

As like St. Augustine of old we hear the voice, *Tolle et lege*, do let us "take and read." Its instructions, exhortations, warnings, and its promises all declare the same blessed message: "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the FAITH." "Without FAITH it is impossible to please God." "Ye are saved by FAITH"; "purifying our hearts by FAITH"; "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by FAITH"; "We walk by FAITH and not by sight"; "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our FAITH"; "Only BELIEVE"; "Thy FAITH hath saved thee"; "Thy FAITH hath made thee whole"; "Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of UNBELIEF"; "O woman, great is thy FAITH"; "He seeing their FAITH said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee"; "Blessed is he that hath not seen and yet hath BELIEVED"; "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest BELIEVE thou shouldst see the glory of God."

These and many, many more such heavenly echoes reach our hearts telling us once more that "all heaven is free plunder to faith," and urging us ever onward to forget the things that are behind, so that in this our day, the

only day we shall ever have of trusting our God, and proving His faithfulness, love and power by faith, we may not miss the glory to be revealed, not disappoint Him Who seeks for us to satisfy His heart by our affectionate confidence in His wise and loving will. Thus shall we be able to say with St. Paul, " I have fought a good fight and finished my course, I have kept the FAITH." Hallelujah, and again Hallelujah !