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“worship”). A growth in knowledge of the uniformity—nay, unity—of the world has, indeed, in all cases led people to suppose a superhuman unity behind these gods and goddesses; but in the absence of the true revelation this has (as already stated) generally been conceived as impersonal, and therefore unable to be an object of the feelings now under consideration. And, indeed, these instincts can never be fully satisfied, while the intellect regards their objects as being many, and therefore limited, and inferior to any other being. But Christian philosophy has shown that personality and infinity, personality and absolute-ness, are not contradictory terms, but rather mutually complementary. Hence, there is every reason to believe in a Supreme Person, the entirely worthy object of our adoration, trust, love, etc.—instincts which would otherwise be destined to be for ever unsatisfied.

Of the four reasons now given for believing God to be personal, each one may perhaps seem weak to some minds, but the accumulation of the four seems irrefragably to point to a personal God as the simplest solution of the problem.

It is hardly necessary to add that this dogma is very far from being a merely academic one. Religion cannot be worthy of the name unless it rests on this belief; and, on the other hand, the intellectual acceptance of it is vain, unless it be followed by true devotion of heart and life to the one personal God.



Messages from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

BY THE BISHOP OF DURHAM.

VIII.—HEBREWS XI. (*a*).

THE eleventh chapter of the Hebrews is a pre-eminent Scripture. With the fullest recognition of the Divine greatness of the whole Bible, never forgetting that “every Scripture hath in it the Spirit of God” (2 Tim. iii. 16), we are yet aware as we read that some volumes in the inspired Library

are more pregnant than others, some structures in the sacred city of the Bible more impressive than others, more rich in interest, more responsive to repeated visits. Such a Scripture among books is this Epistle, and such a Scripture among chapters is that on which we enter now.

It is impressive by the majestic singleness of its theme; faith, from first to last, is its matter and its burthen. Further, it is one long appeal to the heart by its method; almost from the exordium to quite the close it deals with its theme, not by abstract reasoning, nor even by citation of inspired utterances only. It works out its message by a display, in long and living procession, of inspired human experiences. It is to an extraordinary degree human, dealing all along with names as familiar to us as any in any history can be; with characters which are perfectly individual; with lives lived in the face of difficulty, danger, trial, sorrow, as concrete as possible; with deaths met and overcome under conditions of mystery, suspense, trial to courage and to trust, which for all time the heart of man can apprehend in their solemnity. Meanwhile, as a matter of diction and eloquence, the chapter carries in it that peculiar charm which comes always with a stately enumeration. It has often been remarked that there is a spell in the mere recitation of names by a master of verse:

“Lancelot, and Pelleas, and Pellenore.”

Or take that great scene in “Marmion,” where the spectral summons is pealed from Edinburgh Cross:

“Then thunder’d forth a roll of names;
The first was thine, unhappy James!
Then all thy nobles came;
Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Argyle,
Ross, Bothwell, Forbes, Lennox, Lyle,
Each chief of birth and fame.”

And the consummate prose of this our chapter moves us with the like rhythmical power upon the spirit, while from Abel and Enoch onwards we hear recited, name by name, the ancestors of the undying family of faith. No wonder that the chapter should

have inspired to utterances formed in its own style the Christian eloquence of later days, as in that noble closing passage of Julius Hare's "Victory of Faith," where he carries on the record through the apostolic age, and the early persecutions, and the times of the Fathers, to Wilfrid and Bernard, the Waldenses, Wicliff, Luther, Latimer, down to Oberlin and Simeon, "and Howard, and Neff, and Henry Martyn."

So we approach the chapter, familiar as it is (and it is so familiar because it is so great), with a peculiar and reverent expectation. We look forward to another visit to this great gallery of "the portraits of the family of God" with a pleasure as natural as it is reverent and believing. True to our plan in this series of "Messages," however, we shall not attempt to comment upon it in the least degree fully or in detail. Our aim will be rather to collect and focus together some main elements of its teaching, particularly in regard of their applicability to our own days.

The first question suggested as we read is, What is the connexion of the chapter? Why does the writer spend all this wealth of example and application upon the one word "faith"?

The reason is not far to seek for. The tenth chapter closes with that word, or rather with that truth: "My righteous man shall live by faith"; "We are of them that have faith, unto the saving of the soul." And this close is only the issue of a strain of previous teachings, going far back towards the opening of the Epistle. "The evil heart of unbelief"—of "unfaith," if the word may be used—is the theme of warning in iii. 12: "They could not enter in because of unbelief" (iii. 19). "The word of hearing did not profit them," because of their lack of faith (iv. 2). It is "we who have believed" who "enter into God's rest" (iv. 3). Looking to our great High-Priest and His finished work, we are to "draw near with a true heart, in fulness of faith" (x. 22), for the all-sufficient reason that such trust meets and appropriates eternal truth: "He is faithful that promised" (x. 23).

These explicit occasional *mentions* of faith are, however, as

we might expect, only a part of the phenomenon of the great place which *the idea* of faith holds in the Epistle. When we come to reflect upon it, the precise position of the Hebrew Christians who are first in view was that of men seriously, even tremendously, tempted to walk by sight, not by faith. The Gospel called them to venture their all, for time and eternity, upon an invisible Person, an invisible order, a mediation carried on above the skies, a presentation of sacrifice made in a temple infinitely other than that of Mount Moriah, and upon a kingdom which, as to all outward appearance, belonged to a future quite isolated from the present. On the other hand, so they were told by their friends, and so it was perfectly natural to them to think, the vast visible institutions of the Law were the very truth of God for their salvation, and those institutions appealed to them through every sense. Why should they forsake a creed which unquestionably connected itself with Divine action and revelation in the past, and which presented itself actually to them under the embodiment of a widespread but coherent nation, all sons of Abraham and Israel, and of a glorious "city of solemnities," and of a temple which was itself a wonder of the world, and of which every detail was "according to a pattern" of Divine purpose, and in which all the worship, all the ritual, done at the altars and within the veil, was great with the majesty of Divine prescription? There the pious Israelite could behold one vast sacramental symbol of JEHOVAH'S life, glory, and faithfulness. And the living priesthood that ministered there, in all its courses and orders, was one large, accessible organ of personal witness to the blessings assured to the faithful "child of the Law."

It demands an effort—and it well deserves an effort—to realize in some measure what the trial must have been for the sensitive mind of many a Jewish convert to look thus from the Gospel to the Law as both showed themselves to him then. Even now the earnest and religious Jew, invited to accept the faith of Jesus, has his tremendous difficulties of thought, as we well know, although for so many ages Jerusalem has

been "trodden down," and the priesthood and sacrifices have become very ancient history. But when our Epistle was written it was far otherwise. True, the great ruin of the old order was very near at hand, but not to the common eye and mind. It may be—for all things are possible—that the Papal system may be near its period; but certainly there is little look of it to the traveller who visits Rome and contemplates St. Peter's and the Vatican. As little did the end of the Mosaic age present itself as likely, judging by externals, to the pilgrim to Jerusalem then, when, for example, the innumerable hosts of Passover-keepers filled the whole environs of the city, and moved incessantly through the vast courts around the sacred space where the great altar sent up its smoke morning and evening, and where the wonderful House stood intact—"a mountain of snow pinnacled with gold."

Think of the contrast between such historic invitations to "walk by sight" towards the bosom of Abraham, and the call to "come out and be separate" in some Christian upper-room, devoid of every semblance of decorative art and dignified proportion, only to listen to the Word, to pray and praise in the name of the Crucified, and to eat and drink at the simple Eucharist, the Thanksgiving for—the Master's awful death!

Recollecting these facts of the position, it is no wonder that the writer emphasizes the greatness and glory of faith, and that now he devotes this whole noble and extended chapter to illustrate that glory.

We come thus to the opening words of the passage, and listen to him as he takes the word "faith" up, and sets it apart to look afresh at its significance and to describe its potency, before he proceeds, with the tact and skill of sympathy, to illustrate his account of it from the history so deeply sacred to the tried Hebrew Christian's heart.

"Now, faith is the assurance of things hoped for; the proving of things not seen." So the revisers translate the first verse. They place in their margin, as an alternative, a rendering which makes faith to be "the giving substance to things hoped

for, the test of things not seen." I presume to think that the margin is preferable as a representation of the first clause in the Greek, and the text as a representation of the second. So I would render (with the one further variation, in view of the Greek, that I dispense with the definite article): "Now, faith is a giving of substance to things hoped for, a demonstration of things not seen." And we may paraphrase this rendering somewhat thus: "It is that by which the hoped-for becomes to us as if visible and tangible, and by which the unseen is taken and treated as proven in its verity."¹

In the light of what we have recalled regarding the position of the first readers of the words, we have only to render them thus to see their perfect appropriateness, their adjustment to an "exceeding need." The Gospel led its disciple supremely and ultimately always towards the hoped-for and the unseen. True, it had a reference of untold value and power to the seen and present. There was then, as there is in our day, nothing like the Gospel to transfigure character on the spot, here and now, and thus to transfigure the scene and the persons around the man, before his eyes, within reach of his hands, in the whole intercourse of his life, by giving them all a new and wonderful, but most practical, importance through the Lord's relation to them and to him. But it does this always and inevitably in the power and in the light of facts which are out of sight now, and of prospects essentially bound up with "the life of the world to come." The most diligent and sensible worker in Christian philanthropy, *if he is fully Christian* in his idea and action, does what he does so well for the relief of the oppressed or for the civilization of the degraded, because at the heart of his useful life he spiritually knows "Him that is invisible," and is animated

¹ The editor has pointed out to me that in the recently discovered papyri, which, even though a relatively small part of them only has yet been read, have thrown such deeply interesting light on the character and vocabulary of Greek as used by the New Testament writers, the word *ἰπόσταισις* is found with the meaning of "title-deeds." On the hypothesis of such a meaning here (we can only speak with reserve), we may paraphrase: "Faith enables us to treat things hoped for as a property of which we hold the deeds."

by the thought that he works for beings capable, after this life's discipline, of "enjoying Him fully for ever." He labours for man—man on earth—because he loves God in heaven, and because he believes that God made man and redeemed man for an immortality to which time is only the short (though all-important) avenue. In the calmest and most normal Christian periods, accordingly, for the least perilous and heroic forms of faithful Christian service, it is vital to remember that attitude and action of the soul which we call faith. For it is essential both to the victories and the utilities of the Christian life, just so far as that life touches always at its living spring "things hoped for," "things not seen." And at a time like that of the first readers of the Epistle every such necessity was enhanced indefinitely, both by the perils and threatenings which they had to face, and by the majestic illusion to which they were continually exposed—the illusion under which the order of the Law, because it was Divine in origin and magnificent in its visible embodiment, looked as if it must be the permanent, the final, phase of sacred truth and life on earth.

But here we must close for this month. In our next number, please God, we will consider at once the account of faith here given and some main points in the illustration of it by the examples recited in the chapter.



The Clergy and Social Reform.

BY THE REV. W. EDWARD CHADWICK, D.D., B.Sc.

AT the present time the position of clergy in regard to what is termed the Social Movement is one of extreme delicacy. The movement has developed with such rapidity that it is difficult to form an adequate conception either of its present position or of its actual strength. And this difficulty is exaggerated by the treatment of the partisan press. For example, immediately after the last municipal elections, we had in one