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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

was inaugurated within the Church at the close of the eighteenth century (again by private enterprise) to deal, not this time with the Empire, but with "the uttermost part of the earth." And the C.M.S. stands to-day, after 108 years, for the greatest missionary movement that has yet been seen, gathering round itself loyal members of this now awakening Church of England, who believe intensely in the old Gospel, who believe in the Holy Ghost, and who find in the call to preach the Gospel to every creature the true mission of the Holy Catholic Church. We look in vain back to medieval times for any work in the Empire and beyond the Empire, such as these herein recorded; and we do not hesitate to assert that, in these daughter and sister Churches, whose Bishops and clergy and lay members are coming, representatively, to be our guests in this year of our Lord, 1908, we receive those whose genesis and nurture and growth can directly, and indirectly, be surely traced to this historic cradle of what we can now intelligently call the Anglican Communion. What all this means of opportunity and responsibility for us we must consider in another paper.



Messages from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

BY THE BISHOP OF DURHAM.

IX.—HEBREWS XI. (b).

WE considered last month the account of faith with which the apostolic writer opens this great recital of faith's "life, work, and triumph" in holy human lives. His words, as we found, lend themselves to some variety of explanation in detail: *ὑπόστασις* alone may be interpreted in at least three ways. But I do not think that this need disturb us as to the essential meaning of the description. Each and all the renderings leave us with the thought that faith has a power in it to make the hoped-for act upon us as if it were attained, and the invisible as if it were before our eyes.

We may pause so far further over this description here as to point out that it is precisely this—a description, not a definition. To quote Heb. xi. 1 as a good definition of faith is to mistake its import altogether. I have often recalled, in speech or writing, a story told me forty years ago by an Oxford friend when we were masters together at a public school. He had attended a Greek Testament lecture at college a few years before, and the lecturer one day asked the class for a definition of faith. Some one quoted Heb. xi. 1, and the lecturer's answer was, "You could not have given a worse definition." My old friend, a Broad Churchman, but a most reverent one withal, referred to this as an instance of painful flippancy. It may have been so. But I am prepared to think that the lecturer may not have meant it so at all: He may only have expressed rather crudely his view (the right view, to my mind) that we have here not a definition of faith at all, but a description of faith as an operative force, a statement of what faith looks like when it is at work, which is a very different matter.

What is a definition? A precise and exclusive account of the essentials of a thing, such that it will fit no other thing. A description may be something altogether different from this. It may so handle the object that the terms are not exclusive at all, but are equally applicable to something else; as here, for example, where the phraseology would equally well describe imagination in its more vivid forms—a thing as different as possible from faith. To be quite practical, we have here, if we read this first verse in the light of the whole subsequent development of the chapter, a description of faith at work, of the potency and victories of faith, rather than a definition of faith in its distinctive essence. A true parallel to this passage is the familiar sentence, "Knowledge is power." Those words do not define knowledge, obviously; to do that would demand a totally different phrase, such as "sure apprehension of fact," or the like. What the words do is to give us one great resultant of knowledge; to tell us that the possession and use of it endows the man who knows with a force and efficiency which he would

lack without it. Few words are more elastic and adaptable than the verb substantive. “*Is*” can denote a wide variety of ideas, from that of personal identity, as when I see that yonder distant figure *is* my brother ; to that of equivalence, as when a stamped and signed piece of thin paper called a bank-note *is* five pounds of gold ; or to that of mere representation, as when another piece of paper, or a sheet of canvas, duly lined and coloured by the artist to show the semblance of a human face, *is* the King, or *is* the Prime Minister, or *is* my father ; or to that of result and effect, as when we say that knowledge *is* power, or that seeing *is* believing.¹

Here we have precisely that last application of the verb-substantive, only in an exact and most noble antithesis. “Seeing is believing,” says the familiar proverb. “Believing is seeing,” says the Divine word here. That is to say, when the human soul so relies upon God that His word is absolute and sufficient for its certainties, its faith has in it the potency of sight. It is as sure of the promised blessing as if it were a present possession. It is as ready to act upon “the things not seen as yet,” the laws and powers and hopes beyond the veil, as if all was in open view to the eyes of the body.

The whole course of the chapter, when it comes down to particulars and persons, bears this out. From first to last the message carried to us by the lives and actions of the faithful is this, that they took their Lord at His word, simply as His word, and in the power of that reliance found themselves able to act as if the unseen were seen and the hoped-for were present. “*The elders*” (ver. 1) are in view from the first—that is to say, the pre-Christian saints, who were in *that* sense distinctively men who proved the power of faith, that they all lived and died before the visible fulfilment of the great promise of salvation. To them, to be sure, or rather to many of them, not to all, merciful helps were granted. The unseen and the hoped-for

¹ It is obvious that these elementary reflections have everything to do with the need of caution in explaining the sacred words, “This *is* My body which is given for you.”

was sometimes, not always, made more tangible to them by the grant of some sign and token, some portent or miracle, by the way. But the careful Bible-reader knows how very little such things are represented in the holy histories as being the "daily bread" of the life of the old believers. Even in the lives where they occur most often they come at long and difficult intervals, and in some lives not at all, or hardly at all. And assuredly we gather here that, to the mind of the apostolic writer, no experience of miracles, no permission even to hold direct colloquy with the Eternal, ever made up for that immeasurable "aid to faith" which we enjoy who know the Incarnation as fact, and walk on an earth which has seen the God-man traverse it, and die upon it, and rise again.

These "elders" were men called to live, in an eminent and most trying degree, not by sight, but by faith, by sheer reliance upon a Promiser. And therefore their living witness to the capacity of faith to make the unseen seen and the hoped-for present is the more precious to us. We, with the Christ of God manifested to us, displayed in history, experienced in the heart—what are not we to find the power of faith to be in our lives, having this supreme seal upon faith, the promise fulfilled, the Image of the Invisible God made one with our nature and dwelling in our hearts?

One partial exception, and only one, to this great ruling lesson of the chapter is to be noted; it occurs in the second verse. There "by faith we perceive that the worlds," the æons, the dispensations and evolutions of created being, "have been framed," perfected, adjusted to one another, "by the Word of God, so that not from things which appear has that which is seen originated." These words appear to be inserted where they stand in order, so to speak, to carry the sequence of the references to the Old Testament down from its very first page. The work of faith has exercise in face of the mysterious narrative of Creation, and in this one instance the exercise is quoted as for us now quite as much as for "the elders." They like us, we like them, get our guarantee as to the facts of the

primal past, not by sight, but by faith, by taking God at His word. He, in His revelation, tells us that "in the beginning"—the beginning of whatever existence is other than eternal—"God created": things finite, things visible, came into original being not as evolved from previous similar material, but as of His will.

But when that noble and pregnant side-word has been said, the argument settles itself at once upon the recorded examples of the potency of faith as "the elders" exercised it. We see man after man enabled to treat the invisible as visible, the promised as present, by reliant rest upon the Word of God, however conveyed. Somehow, to Abel it was divinely said that the sacrificed "firstling" was the acceptable offering, and, antecedent to any possible experience, he offered it. Somehow, to Enoch it was made known that the Eternal, as invisible to him as to us, cared for man's worshipping company, and he addressed himself through his age-long life to "walk with God." Noah was apprised, for the first time in man's known history, of an approaching cataclysm and of the way of escape; the promise, which came to him wrapped in the cloud of an awful warning, was long delayed, but he acted upon it in the steady energy of faith. Abraham was "called," we know not precisely how, but in some way which tested his reliance on things "not seen as yet," and he set out on that wonderful life of a hundred years of faith. He renounced the settled habits and old civilization of Chaldea for the new life of a Syrian nomad, "settling permanently in a tent" (*ἐν σκηναῖς κατοικήσας*), he and his son and his grandson after him, all in view of an invisible future made visible by the trusted promise, a future culminating at last to his "eye of faith," so here we are solemnly assured, in the city of the saints, in the Canaan of the heavens. The same reliance on the sheer word of promise nerved him to the awful ordeal of the all-but immolation of his son. And that son in his turn, against all appearances, and rather bowing to the Word than embracing it, blessed *his* least-loved son above his dearest; and that son in his turn, and his son in his turn, carried the process on, treating

the greatness of Ephraim and the deliverance from Egypt as things seen and present, because God had so spoken. The parents of Moses, and then Moses himself in his strange life of disappointments and wonders, deal likewise with the future, the unseen, the seemingly impossible, on the warrant of a promise. Figures as little heroic in natural character as Sarah, as little noble in life as Rahab, take place in the long procession, as those who treat the invisible as visible by faith. And so do the thronging "elders" of ver. 32—a group singularly diverse in everything but this victory over the seen and present by faith in a promise. And so do the unnamed confessors and martyrs of the closing paragraph, the heartbroken, the tortured, the wanderers of the dens and caves, who all alike, amidst ten thousand differences of condition and of character, "obtained a good report through faith"; and all won through faith that victory, so great when we reflect upon it, that they died "not having received the promise." They trusted *to the very end*. When they fell in their shadowy path of pilgrimage, "the promise," the promised Christ, had not yet come. Nevertheless, they treated the hope of Him as fact, and they won their victory by faith.

And now they are parts and members of the "great cloud" who watch us in our turn—us, with things unseen and hoped-for still in front, but with JESUS at our side.



A Layman's Thoughts on Old Testament Criticism.

By P. J. HEAWOOD, M.A.

I.

SOME time ago a friend lent me Professor G. A. Smith's "Lectures on Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament." As a layman interested in Theology, whose University work lies in other directions, I wanted a general reasoned statement of the "critical" position which did not