

put to shame the unrulèd spirit of the Christian. Such fine displays of temper, of fortitude and bravery, of natural affection, of contempt for wealth, of love of truth and fair play does one see in men who would not relish being called Christian, that we shrink from being brought into competition with them. This, however, is the calling of the follower of Christ. The righteousness He demands is a righteousness with more of principle in it, and therefore with more of constancy and completeness than any natural virtue.

But also to those who show us these splendid specimens of natural goodness, our Lord speaks, and He tells them that they must not be satisfied with it. The virtue of natural disposition is not enough. There must be a principle in virtue which applies to the whole of man and to the whole of life; which creates virtues where before there were none, which touches human nature at its root and radically purifies and ennobles it.

MARCUS DODS.

THE FAITH OF GOD.

Ἐχετε πίστιν Θεοῦ (Mark xi. 22). Πίστει νοοῦμεν καθηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι Θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὰ βλεπόμενα γεγονέναι (Hebrews xi. 3).

THERE is some difficulty in connecting the second of these passages with its context, if it means, as it is usually understood to mean, that we realise by an exercise of our faith that God made the world. Before considering whether this is the correct rendering of the passage, let us look back to the prophet whom the writer to the Hebrews has just quoted at the close of the preceding chapter. The burden of Habakkuk was: "How long shall I cry unto Thee, and Thou wilt not hear?" (i. 2). He was feeling impatient, like other reformers, "for some great cure," which would work immediately and obviously; he was tempted to marvel that God could look on at evil and hold His peace (i. 13); but on taking a wider outlook upon God's way of working in this world, the prophet found that "The vision is yet for the appointed time, and it hasteth towards the end and shall not lie:

though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not delay" (ii. 3). Then he sees that "the just shall live by his faith" (4); the righteous man whose mind is attuned to the mind of God, or, as Paul would say, *ὁ δικαίωθεις ἐκ πίστεως*, can afford to wait patiently, because he is fully confident that, "though it tarry, it will surely come." God moves *ohne hast, ohne rast*. So the writer to the Hebrews says: "Ye have need of patience, that having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise." "For yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come and shall not tarry. But my righteous one shall live by faith" (x. 36-38). The man who would save the world, and the man who would save his soul, alike need patient faith, faith that makes the future as real as the present and things spiritual as clear and certain as things material (xi. 1). The Elders had witness borne to them that they lived in such faith as this (xi. 2). From verse 4 (after the apparent interruption of verse 3) to the end of the chapter a long list of the elders is given, who witnessed to this principle of faith, who were ready to forego the pleasures of the present and the material for the higher pleasures of the future and the spiritual. To this "so great a cloud of witnesses" the writer adds, "Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross" (xii. 2).

The harmony of the whole passage is complete, if verse 3 of chap. xi. is rendered, as it is quite admissible to render it, "We perceive that by faith have the ages been fashioned by the word of God so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear." God realised His own ideal. God set the first great example of faith, when at the beginning His spirit brooded upon the dark, waste and void space, and out of these three things, Darkness, Disorder and Barrenness, which are not "things which do appear," He created Light, Order, and Fruitfulness—How? by thinking of them. "God thought about me, and so I grew." But He did not create a *κοσμὸς*, a fully equipped and perfected universe at one stroke; rather He pieced together (*κατήρτισεν*) in His mind successive products of evolution through long ages, seeing the end from the beginning, but not hurrying to that end; choosing rather to endure the cross, the agony of the world's long travail, for the sake of the liberty of the glory, which at last His whole creation should share with Him (Rom. viii. 19-22).