

justified only by success. If it failed, then it deserved to fail. No man has any right to use such a tone to other men, unless it is the suitable and best tone for their good; and the issue is the only test whether it was suitable and best. Paul's knowledge of human nature in his converts is staked on the success of the letter.

To put the case shortly: Paul was here engaged in his first great contest on the threshold of the country that he was winning for the Church: it was a test case: had he failed in it, he would never have conquered the Roman world. He was successful; and the back of the Judaistic propaganda was broken.

W. M. RAMSAY.

DOCTRINES OF GRACE.

VII.

GOOD WORKS.

ONE may believe that there is a unity between faith and good works, but one cannot shut his eyes to the fact that throughout Holy Scripture there is an apparent conflict. If the Psalms magnify faith in God with all the resources of their passionate poetry, the same Psalms also declare that no one can have access unto the Eternal unless he keeps the law of God with all his heart and with all his strength. The second Isaiah may represent the Messiah as the sin-bearer upon whom are laid the iniquities of us all, but Isaiah of Jerusalem beseeches his people not to put their trust in sacrifice but to wash their hands and make them clean by all godly living. In the Book of Revelation the saints wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, but at the same time none can enter through the gates into the city except those

who have kept the commandments of God. St. Paul devotes all the strength of his inspired reason to show that no man can be saved except through faith, and to hold up Abraham as a type of a believer; but St. James, his fellow apostle and of the same period, insists that a man is not saved by faith, but by works, and uses Abraham as the exemplar of such works. And the Master Himself demands from beginning to end of his public ministry that people should believe, and seems to make everything of faith; and yet it is Jesus who declares that he only who keeps His words has built his house upon a rock, and that in the day of the Great Judgment it is charity that will win the prize. One might take the Bible in his hand and show that salvation is through works, and he also might take the same Bible and show that salvation is through faith, and it is not therefore wonderful that people with a bias either to the practical or the mystical side of religion should entrench themselves in their favourite passages and build up their opposite theories of the religious life.

This is the most reasonable excuse which can be offered for that exasperating and futile, but ever-burning controversy which rages both in literature and in theology as well as in the discussions of private life between the comparative value of a correct creed and of a correct life. It will always be said with a fair amount of justice that one who observes the commandments and lives cleanly, honestly, and kindly with his fellow men must surely have the right of it, and be accepted both by God and man. This position must receive the approval of commonsense and make a strong appeal also to the average conscience because a righteous life is ever to be approved, and is indeed the only visible guarantee of goodness to our fellow men. It will also be urged by other people, more inclined to the theory of things than to the domination of facts, that if one should hold the belief of the Catholic Church regarding

God and Jesus Christ, he will surely be received into the Divine fellowship and be a person acceptable to God, and this position appeals to our respect for authority and to our historic sense. It comes to pass, therefore, that many go out of their way to belittle correct thinking in matters of religion and to speak as if our reason had no function whatever in the sphere of the Divine mystery, and the same persons will insist unto weariness upon the excellence of the practical virtues and the moral type of character. Other persons, again, will have a profound suspicion of ordinary morality, and greatly dislike its enforcement upon the conscience, and they will magnify unto the heavens the spiritual value of holding the Catholic Creed and thinking along the line of past generations. Between those opposite schools and their wordy warfare the ordinary person is often perplexed and almost driven unto despair, inclined one day to trouble himself no more about the doctrines of the Christian faith, but to occupy himself entirely with the Ten Words of Moses, and another day to give himself with all his strength to the study of the Nicene Creed and to leave life to take care of itself.

This confusion would be dispelled, and we would arrive at the truth of things, if we were more careful to understand the meaning of the terms which we use as weapons. Creed and life are tossed to and fro in their shallowest sense, and we are not at the trouble of piercing to that deeper meaning where both meet in perfect harmony. The moment that we grasp their true content, then the controversy is practically at an end, and we find that two words have been put asunder which God has joined together. Of course if one is to define creed as simply the intellectual belief of certain doctrines which have been formed in the Schools, and which are sanctioned by the authority of the Church, then it is plain that salvation upon such a condition would be a non-moral and unspiritual salvation.

Were people to congratulate themselves upon being in a state of grace because they hold the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and cry anathema upon those who deny it, then their faith would be a disaster to their souls, and their religion would be of none effect. And if any person should take life at its lowest reading and count godly living to be nothing else than the punctilious and ostentatious discharge of certain obvious duties, then he would be most easily satisfied in religion and would simply be a somewhat shallow type of Pharisee. Such a creed could save no man because it has no ethical force, while it might make a man hard and bitter, contemptuous and persecuting: such a life could save no man because it would have no spiritual value, while it might make a man shallow and self-righteous and egotistical and vain. This creed receives no sanction anywhere in Holy Scripture, while it is at least once dismissed with contempt—"The devils believe and tremble": this life was estimated at its proper value by Jesus Himself when He exposed the poor make-believe of the scribes and Pharisees.

The faith which is magnified in the Bible, and which is dear unto the saint, is no tepid belief, but a passionate conviction. It has really nothing to do with doctrines save in so far as they are the expression of religious experiences: it has to do from beginning to end with God revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. It is the conviction that God is our Father, and has loved us from eternity, that Christ is the Saviour of the human soul and has laid down His life for us sinners. It is the conviction that Christ is able to deliver a man from his sins and to re-create him in the image of God. But it is, above all, the surrender of a man's whole being into the hands of Christ and a loyal purpose of obedience unto Christ's commandments. It is not the faith which argues and speculates, it is the faith which repents and strives, which longs and loves. It is the

faith which places a man under the dominion of the Spirit of God and under the sign of Christ's Cross.

Faith in this sense—the passion of a man's whole nature—instead of being a mere ghost of the study, is the strongest principle in human life. Behind every brave endeavour and behind every lasting achievement lies faith; for the men who dared these things and the men who brought them to perfection have first of all been brave believers. Abraham, when he went out from his own land and made the chief departure in human history, and also Columbus, when he left the Old World in search of the New, both went out in faith. The apostles, when they established a new kingdom amid the ruins of the decadent Roman Empire, and every reformer that has broken the shackles of slavery and led men into the land of promise, alike have walked by faith. No one in his home and no one in private life ever made a sacrifice with pain to himself or ever rendered service with good to his neighbour, but was inspired and moved by faith. They that have not faith, and regard only the things which are seen, are cowards and selfish. They that behold the things which are not seen are strong and self-denying, so that the great periods of history have been periods of faith, and the ignoble periods have been periods when faith was dead.

As it is faith which gives a man vision, the believer is therefore lifted above a squalid and ignoble life, and is able to endure labour and sorrow with patience and magnanimity. It was because Moses saw Him who was invisible that he despised the material civilization of Egypt and threw in his lot with the children of Israel, and by the same faith that he endured their gainsaying and obstinacy; by faith the prophets escaped the low and ensnaring ideals of their own time and reached forward to the glory of the Messianic kingdom. Faith strengthened the apostles of Jesus, so that they were not overcome either by the glory

of Greece or by the grandeur of Rome, but were firmly persuaded that the chief kingdom on earth was righteousness, peace, and joy. Just as a man who sees noble things, and has associated with noble people, lives himself after the same fashion—a civilized man among savages, a cultured man among Philistines—so the religious man who associates with the Master regards with indifference the tawdry glitter of this world, and bears the trials of the present life with an even mind. And so faith produces the best of all works, a pure heart and a calm life.

History affords illustrations upon the largest and most convincing scale of the omnipotence of faith. If only a strong man can believe in any cause with all his mind and with all his heart, he makes converts to the cause by the hundred thousand, and will carry that cause to victory. No danger daunts faith, no argument turns aside its onslaught. The believer is a force, he is a partaker of the Divine strength, he fights along with the angels of God. Mahomet and his early followers created a religion and conquered provinces of the human race because they believed, and more than once a handful of men have changed the fortunes of an empire because they were strong in faith. Faith is the nurse of unworldly aspiration, and of splendid deeds which have redeemed the race from reproach and made its history to be an inspiration.

It ought, therefore, surely to be evident that if faith on the ordinary level of life is capable of splendid achievement, there can be no limit to her fruitfulness in the sphere of the Christian religion. Faith here is devotion, not to an imperfect man or to a doubtful cause, but to the Son of God, "Immortal Love," to Him who is the perfect ideal of the human soul, who is also the spring and fulness of spiritual life. When one believes with all his soul in Jesus, what sacrifices may not be accomplished! what services may he not render! what mercy will be in his soul! what charity

will be visible in his life! His will be no mere deeds of ordinary morality—such poor efforts can be accomplished without faith; his will be the rich and delicate fruit of the Spirit—the lessons which can only be learned at the feet of Jesus Christ. A new principle of life in his soul will appear in acts of which, in their spirituality and in their graciousness, morality never dreams and which have only been revealed and made possible by the life of Jesus Himself. Through the soul grafted into the stock of Christ the very sap of the Divine Spirit will flow, and the flowers will be after the fashion of the Gospels in their heavenly colour and richness. Without the faith of Christ these works had not been possible, and the works and faith are related together as the tree and the fruit. They are good works because they are the fruit of faith, and faith has been vindicated by the works which it has produced.

It may, of course, be urged that many good works have been produced without the principle of faith, and that it is not just to condemn the works which have not sprung from faith; and certainly the advocate of faith should be very careful, in his zeal for faith, that he do no despite to morality. It ought to be freely granted that many persons who are, at least, not consciously in the communion of Jesus' spirit, and not a few who are absolute unbelievers, have led lives of elevation and nobility. These lonely and cheerless lives, whereon the sun has shined so coldly and yet which have produced pure Alpine flowers, are a rebuke unto persons who have lived in perpetual warmth, and whose souls ought to have abounded in flower and fruit. No one ought ever to plead for faith apart from works, nor ought he at any time to belittle the fruits of morality. The strength of faith is ever to be tested by the abundance of works, and he who produces no works has no faith. If there be such a thing, as dead works—works, that is to

say, without beauty and without fragrance—there is such a thing as dead faith, faith without force and without love.

While, however, the possibility of certain works apart from faith must be allowed, it must also be insisted that the quality of works without faith can never be compared with the quality of the works which spring from faith. This is really not a matter of theology but of human experience, and it turns upon the character of a man's work. Work is not to be measured by time and by quantity, by its appearance and its effect; it is ever to be estimated by its spirit. It is not the drawing and the colouring which constitute the fascination of a picture, it is the mind of the artist. It is not the form and show of a deed which constitutes its excellence, it is the intention of the doer. What a man is passes into his work, and the principle of faith, which, as we were saying, is fellowship with Jesus Christ, tinges all the works which are done by the man's Christ-nature, and lends unto them some of the beauty of the Lord's own life. Every day we have regard to the spirit of work, distinguishing between good works which live and bad works which are already dead. The present bestowed upon one by a person who does not love him, and has only given for selfish purposes, is a poor thing, which earns no gratitude and is thrown aside with dislike. The gift offered unto one by his child, who has denied himself in order to obtain it and bestows it for affection's sake, is precious beyond silver and gold, and is treasured with vigilant care. It matters nothing that the former offering was costly and shapely, or that the latter was of little value and uncomely to the eye; each is really a symbol—one for a strange and cold heart, the other for tender and humble affection. We therefore conclude in the affairs of life that there are two kinds of works, living and dead, and that the difference is the spirit which planned and performed them.

Are we, therefore, unreasonable in holding that in the religious life works also fall into two classes, with a different value before God and even before man? Was it the same thing that a Pharisee should tithe his mint and his anise and his cummin, and that a poor widow should throw two mites into the treasury? Did not the honest heart of the people distinguish between the two? and is not God greater than our hearts and knoweth all things? Was it the same thing that Simon the Pharisee asked Jesus to a feast for custom's sake, if not for meaner reasons, and that Matthew the publican also asked Him to a feast for love's sake and in the gratitude of his soul? Is it the same thing that a man should obey the demands of the moral law for the sake of his reputation, and the opinion of his neighbour, and the comfort of his life, and the obtaining of glory, and that he should keep the same law, not in the letter but in the spirit, with an overflowing measure of obedience because it is the law of his Heavenly Father and the commandment of his Saviour? Is there anything less attractive and less effectual for high ends than cold and calculated morality? Is there anything more winsome and inspiring than self-forgetful and self-sacrificing devotion?

When Christianity makes works to be dependent upon faith and its constant outcome, our religion not only delivers its disciples from the tyranny of legal bondage, but also affords the most certain guarantee of high living. If the Christian seems to leave Moses and the Ten Words, it is to find the Ten Words deepened and spiritualized in the Sermon on the Mount, and to discover in Jesus not only a Lawgiver, but also an Exemplar. If the motive of fear be relaxed and disappear, then the Christian is not left without a salutary stimulus, for love takes the place of fear, and he obeys because he loves, till perfect love casts out fear. If for the moment he suffers no longer the scourge of an angry conscience, he is strengthened inwardly into obedience by

the Spirit of his Lord. Good works are no longer now a task and a performance—they are a devotion and a fruit. He is not a servant fulfilling his appointed tale of work, he is a child doing his father's will in his father's house. Good works in all their forms are now the expression of his gratitude, and the harvest of his believing soul.

By this doctrine of faith and good works two persons are condemned, and the first is the man who professes to afford works, but confesses that he has no faith. Upon the whole he is apt to be high and lifted up, congratulating himself upon his strength and upon his independence, who has been able to do all these things without Jesus Christ. The measure of his moral success is in reality the reflection upon his unbelief. He has been careful to pay all the debts which he owed to trifling creditors; he ignores and refuses to pay his debts to his chief Creditor, who is God. He gives himself some trouble to show respect to his fellow men according to the claims which they have upon him of honour or of charity; but one Man he selects for rejection and indignity, and that is the Man who laid down His life upon the cross that he might be saved. He takes credit to himself because no good cause has ever appealed in vain to him, and no high ideal has ever been unadmired by his soul, and yet it is this very man who passes by the invitation of God's kingdom, and will have none of the cross of Christ. What value in character shall we assign to the soul which admires all spiritual beauty except the beauty of Christ, which gives welcome to all love except the perfect love of God, which is ready to do every good work except the chief work of all, and that is faith in Christ?

The other person condemned by this doctrine is he who professes to believe, and who knows that he is not doing the works. Could there be any more ghastly irony than a human being declaring his faith in God and refusing

to keep His laws; calling himself by the name of Christ, and denying Christ's cross; accepting his fellow men as his brethren in Christ, and not doing them even a stranger's service? How can he have learned to call God Father, whom he has never seen, when he does not treat his fellow man as a brother, whom he has seen? How can his sins have been forgiven of God—sins which were as scarlet and red like crimson—when he will not forgive his neighbour the trifling transgressions of human life? how can he be partaker of the Divine grace, whose poverty-stricken soul is not bearing the scanty fruits of common morality? Can it be in the reason of things that an ungrateful, unloving, dishonest and unrighteous person is saved? And when we ask the question, it answers itself: Without works there is no faith; and this man is walking in a vain show, and feeding his soul with wind. His exposure in some moral crisis of life, when, forsaken of the grace which he has abused, he falls into gross sin, or when, in the light of eternity, his refuges of lies and coverings of hypocrisy will be burned up, is going to be one of the most awful acts of Divine judgment.

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APOCALYPTIC SKETCHES.

VIII.

THE SCARLET WOMAN AND HER FATE.

REV. XVII., XVIII.

WE were told that in the seven vials "is finished the wrath of God" (xv. 1). What then have we here? Clearly not anything apart from the vials, but something involved in them, as indeed is made quite evident by the fact that the invitation to behold is from one of the seven angels of the vials. His function is to call attention to one great result