Our Young People

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THE C. E. TOPIC—December 6.

What the Heroes of the Faith Teach Us.

Heb. 11: 1-40.

BY AMOS R. WELLS.

(For the Y. P. Column).

In a striking sermon, Dr. Conwell illustrates very clearly the difference between faith and hope. His boy came to him one night and asked for fifty cents. The boy had hope, but he had no faith, for he did not know whether his father had fifty cents or not. Mr. Conwell was then poor, and had not the money, but promised to give it as soon as his salary was paid. Saturday night the boy came and said, "Now I want that fifty cents." His hope was changed to faith, for his father had the money and had given his word.

Faith is the substance, the sureness, of things that are not seen, events that have not yet happened. If it is not reasonable that they should happen, still more if it is impossible, we may have a hope regarding them, but we can have no faith. Faith as a mustard-seed can remove a mountain; but there can be no faith on the subject, only a hazy hope, if it is clearly outside of God's design that the mountain should be removed. Such a prayer, inspired by hope, but not by faith, was the frequent petition of a former member of Dr. Conwell's church, that the Lord would make him eighty years old in one day!

Of all the heroes named in the glorious catalogue of Hebrews, eleven were men of hope, but they were more, they were men of faith. Their hope was built upon a reasonable certainty. God's own voice spoke to some of them, commanding and promising, and they had faith because they trusted God. To others of them God gave manifest tokens in their lives that he was with them and that their safety was his care.

The virtue of their faith was not in themselves, but in their God. An atheist, on his death-bed, was very unhappy and frightened. Another atheist said to him, "Don't be afraid. Hold on, man; hold on to the last!" The dying man said, "That's what I want to do; but tell me what to hold on to!" These heroes of faith knew whom to hold on to.

Mr. Moody used to tell how, when he was a boy, he held up a burning-glass, even in winter, to the warm rays of the sun, and kindled a fire thus, even in the snow. "Faith," he said, "is the glass that brings the fire of God out of heaven." The strength is not in the burning glass, but in the sun.

To be a man of faith, and to enjoy the great blessings promised to faith, only three things are needed: to know God, to go to him with desires that are accordant with his will, and to trust him in all events. The principle is portrayed in a wise poem by Miss Havergal, who drew her inspiration from the experience of Moses, one of the heroes of faith we are studying about:

He who hath led will lead
All through the wilderness;
He who hath fed will feed;
He who hath blessed will bless;
He who hath heard the cry
Will never close his ear;
He who hath marked thy faintest sigh
Will not forget thy tear;
He loveth always, faileth never,
So rest on him to-day, forever.

* * *

QUALITY THE MEASURE OF VALUE.

H. E. Y.

(For the Y. P. Column).

There has always been a proneness on the human mind to place importance upon numbers and bulk rather than upon quality and character. The city teeming with its millions, the army with its crowded ranks, the throne with its flushed treasury, the church with its full membership roll, the young people's society with all its departments of work filled and overflowing, the Sunday-school with large attendance; these have been looked upon as positive signs of success, and so closely have we sought for them that the value of quality has been almost forgotten.

We have said, that if only our church can increase its membership, what a revival we would have; and in order to bring about such a result, we have reached a condition in which the gospel is made sweeter and easier than it was made by the Master himself. We have looked around us in our young people's societies, and, seeing the smallness of the numbers, have said that no great work can be done here, numbers are everything, quality is nothing.

But if we turn aside to learn a true lesson, we must see that God is everywhere impressing upon us the truth that the real measure of worth and importance is not to be found in quantity, but in quality. Take, for instance, the mineral realm, and here we are taught that precious ores and gems are valuable in proportion to their scarcity. Gravel and slate are trampled beneath our feet; diamonds and gold nuggets cost money. In the vegetable kingdom it is the rarest plants and flowers which are the most highly prized. In these realms quality counts for more than quantity. In animal life the same illustration is given to us. Mice multiply more rapidly than horses; mosquitoes are much more plentiful than nightingales; but for that reason no one has a doubt about relative value. And what is true here is true also among men.

The importance of a nation is not to be measured by numbers, else we might be in doubt as to which was to be given first place, China or Britain. But no, there are considerations of much more importance than numbers. See how the Almighty impressed this truth when he went forth to redeem his people. To whom did he speak when he would show forth the wonders of salvation? Was it to a great nation? Was it to the crowd? The masses? No, to none of these, but to a solitary man, and from Abraham down to God's latest servant quality has been made to count for more than quantity. Even in the redemption of the world this is so.

How beautifully this is shown forth in the life of our Saviour. "Herein is my Father glorified," he said, "that ye bear much fruit;" not that ye convert your class, not that ye double the number of the apostolic band, but that ye bring forth in your life the fruits of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace." Then as though to demonstrate that quality is more important than quantity, we see the Master preaching a sermon to one woman, taking one young man home with him, calling one man from the tree branch, talking with one man through the silent hours of the night. We say sometimes: "Where can we get men." But the Master says: "Where can I get a man?" We say: "How can we reach the crowd?" But Christ says: "How can I reach this soul and make it faithful, make it godly?" To the mind of Christ quantity bears no comparison to quality, as a measure of value.

For all of us there is here an impressive lesson. If quality were only placed before quantity, what a wonderful revival would come to our churches and to all the agencies of their work? Then Christians would not be contented until in all things they sought God's glory. Then every Christian Endeavorer would become an open channel through which God's spirit might flow, until we were filled with all the fullness of God. The kingdom of heaven cries out today, not so much for increased numbers as for increased Christian lives; not for men, but for a man; a godly man, a faithful man, a man filled with the Holy Spirit. Quality is more than quantity. And if any of us are sent of God to a field where the harvest is not plentiful, we must see that to work that ground faithfully is of as great worth in God's sight as though we were out in the vast harvest fields. Quality is more than quantity; and it may be that within the range of our influence there is some one who is to do a work, the result of which will be to shake the world in righteousness. Therefore that one soul redeem; that one soul build up in righteousness; that one soul train in Christian service. Quality alone is the true measure of value.

* * *

HE KNEW ONE THING.

The late Rev. Robert W. Dale, D.D., of Birmingham, England, perhaps the strongest, sanest and most intellectual force in the pulpit of the English-speaking world during the last generation, told me an incident which illustrates the point which I wish to make. In some meetings of the Salvation Army in Birmingham one of the worst men in that city was converted. He was a leader among characters of the baser sort, a human brute. But the change in the man was evident to all. He was a new creature. One day some of his former associates began to make fun of him, and such a conversation as the following ensued:

"You say you are a Christian—who was the father of Jesus Christ?"
"I don't know."
"Who was his mother?"
"I don't know."
"Where did he live?"
"I don't know."
"How old was he when he died?"
"I don't know."
"How did he die?"
"I don't know."
"Well you are a pretty Christian; you don't know who was the father of Jesus, or who was his mother, or where he lived, or when he died, or how he died—what do you know?" Then the

IT SCARES PEOPLE

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