

## THE SUPREMACY OF FAITH.

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Among the qualifications for achievement in the divine life of man faith is the prime factor. It is superlatively essential. It is supreme, not in itself as it has no continuing character or existence, but as a means to an end, not obtainable in any other way. Here we find the footprints of all of God's heroes from Abel down to the last dusty and footsore son of Adam that shall stagger into the kingdom of grace.

The nature and function of faith, to many who call themselves believers, seems to have no definite import. It is frequently confounded with mere credulity. But they differ by celestial diameters. Faith plants her feet upon the granite; credulity is satisfied with the fog for a foundation. Faith calls into exercise all the higher faculties of man's nature. Credulity looks not for evidence of the character of what it is to receive, but is the blind robin opening its mouth to every thing presented no matter by whom.

Scriptural faith has its groundwork in the eternal nature of things as they are revealed in the Word of God. Its medium of operation is the unsearchable riches of Christ—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Its objective point is, conformity to the image of the Son.

It is supreme because it is ordained as the medium through which the New Covenant operates on the nature of man, thus conferring its benefits on "Whosoever will." The crux in the case is the attitude of man. "God's hand is not shortened, neither is his ear heavy." As the apostle said to the Corinthians, "Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels."

Faith is not "cant;" "Cant" is cold cinders, but faith is, or rather produces a flaming fire which many waters cannot quench.

Mere subscription to a creed, no matter how orthodox, may have no more vital relation to the soul than repeating a formula for bread-making has to the nourishing of the body. It is the proper ingredients that the formula in either case represents, that count. "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye have no life in you." This is a great mystery, but it is a fact that through faith we are made partakers of the divine nature.

Moody has said, "Man is born with his back toward God. So no matter what his accidental environment, his refinement, or culture, it has no tendency to make him God-like. "Educate men without religion (true religion, of course)," said Wellington, "and you make them clever devils."

Faith implies a proper environment wherein there is a possibility of the soul exercising its true functions. Hence we read, "The Word (that is the life-giving, soul-purifying, nourishing Word) is nigh thee," also, "Behold I stand at the door and knock." He has put the message in a thousand forms, as: "Ho, every one that thirsteth;" "Whosoever will . . ."; "Look unto me all ye ends of the earth;" "Come now let us reason together;" "O, Ephraim, how can I give thee up;" "It

shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved, etc.

The exercise of faith is no tread-mill performance, no priestly manipulation of symbols before the altar of the Lord, teaching that he is the divinely ordained custodian of the treasures of grace. But on the other hand all here have equal privileges. The only barriers are those that are self-imposed. He says today as He did so many times in the past, "According to thy faith be it unto thee." Luther called justification by faith, "the heel that shall bruise the serpent's head."

Although the prime function of faith is to enable men to partake of that grace which saves from sin, yet the Bible abounds with examples in the mere incidental affairs of life which show clearly its intensive character which is not easily understood by the "white-livered" ones. Much of what we often call conservatism, a better appellation would be death.

It surmounts all secondary influences. This is very well illustrated in the case of the Syrophenician woman.

It often seems very presumptuous to those not in touch with its source of power. When the stripling, David, presented himself as a candidate to measure arms with the kaiser of Gath, Saul said, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." Faith is never a drone, but is the bee that gathers the nectar from the garden of the Lord. It opens the channels through which divine energies course through man's nature.

It is not a dreamer but a doer. Its functions do not end with conventions for the purposes of discussing important questions, but it says, like Caleb, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."

So important is it that it is written, "But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."—Wesleyan Methodist.

## DENY YOURSELF.

Seemin' to me Paul made short work of self. He gave self notice to quit, an' gave up his freehold to the blessed Lord. And I mean to follow his example, and to say to my own self, 'Dan'l, I won't have you for a tenant any longer; you're more trouble to me than all the world besides. You're so hard to please, an' so uncertain that if you happen to be all right today, there's no knowing what you'll be like tomorrow. I shall turn you out, neck and crop, with all your goods and chattels.'

"That's what I mean for my own self, friends. My heart cries out, 'My Lord, come in an' live in this house, not like a great visitor for me to entertain, an' ask a favor of now an' then; but come in an' be the Master and I'll be the servant, an' all I am shall wait upon Thee.' That's what I want for myself; an' then when anybody knocks at the door an' says, 'Dan'l Quorm lives here, does he?' I should dearly love to say, 'Dan'l's gone away, and he's dead an' buried, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

Paul gives us a good many cuts across from the low level to the high. There's one in Rom. 12:1, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a livin' sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' Now seemin' to me, that's plain enough for anybody. Here's the house, a three-storied house, consistin' o' body, soul and spirit. You go on month after month, an' year after year sayin' what you would like to do and what you mean to do. I've heard scores o' sermons about this text, an' heard it talked about hundreds of times, and I've heard folks say in their prayers they desired to do it. But hearin' about it, and talkin' about it, and prayin' about it like that, isn't a morsel of good. Here take the key, an' go right away and give it up to the Lord once for all, and have done with it. We go dilly-dallyin' about it year after year, till the old walls fall in and there's nothin' left but a heap o' rubbish. 'Present your bodies,' says Paul. Go in before the Lord and say, 'Here I am, Lord, take me altogether, thine, and thine forever more.' Give Him the house, an' let us just sweep the rooms an' keep it so nice as ever we can for Him. The Lord help us, every one.'—Daniel Quorm.

## NOT TOO BUSY TO PRAY.

A touching little incident happened the other day in one of Philadelphia's business streets, and it caused even those who scoff at religion to show respect. A blind negro, with a singularly expressive face, had a cornet, upon which he played with great feeling some of the best known church hymns. "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Rock of Ages," "Lead Kindly Light," followed each other with much approval from the audience of passers-by who had stopped.

"How Firm a Foundation, ye Saints of the Lord," seemed to conclude the program, but before its last notes sounded a dignified-looking white clergyman, with silver hair and a gentle smile, stepped to the musician's side and whispered a word or two. He then turned to the surrounding listeners.

"Friends," the clergyman said, "we have paused in our busy walks to listen to music that brings to each of us a message from God. Surely His Spirit is with us, though it be on the open street. I am going to offer just a word of prayer that all may profit from the holy thought that music has brought to us." And the clergyman bared his head reverently, as did the other men standing there, and offered a prayer, simple and earnest.

Then, shaking hands cordially with the musician, the old clergyman was observed to slip a bill into his hands as he started away rapidly, evidently desiring to avoid hearing the comment his unusual act of benevolence had produced. The negro, too, strayed away without passing his hat for any further collection.

"Well, I am not much for churches," remarked a well-dressed man to his companion, according to the Philadelphia Record, "but if I thought that preacher had a church in Philadelphia I would go from one to another to find him. He makes me feel like when I was a little boy and my mother used to kneel down beside my bed and pray for me."—Selected.