

THE GREATER WORKS.

By Rev. W. Edmund Smith

We read recently, a great article on "The Need of Achieving Faith," by an eminent preacher, that stirred our soul and made us feel more than ever our own limitations and inefficiency. Faith is not merely a receptive, submissive, subjective, passive attitude of the soul, as some mystical writers declare; it is an active, dynamic, militant, aggressive power that dominates the whole personality of the individual, making him a conqueror. It overcomes the world. It subdues kingdoms and works righteousness. It is mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Faith in the heart of David, and not the stone in the sling, was responsible for the death of Goliath. Faith flattened out the walls of Jericho. Jesus said by implication it was more powerful than any physical energy modern science has discovered. Put a grain of dynamite or lyddite under a mountain and set it off and what will become of the mountain? It will still be there. But Jesus said, faith as a grain of mustard seed would not only shake a mountain but cast it into the sea.

In the light of all the Bible says about triumphant and achieving faith there is little wonder that when you and I felt a real faith in God through Jesus Christ, spring up in our hearts, making us conscious of reconciliation with him, giving us the spirit of adoption whereby we cried, "Abba Father," that we immediately felt that we were in contact with a power that would work wonders. Our experience was so real and marvelous that we thought all we shall have to do will be tell others the story, and they will immediately accept our testimony and seek the same experience for themselves, as they would respond to our testimony of the discovery of gold. But alas! Our testimony while making an impression on some, and causing them to express the desire "that we hold out," by the majority was treated with indifference; they still pursued their worldly pleasures and seemed little impressed with the declaration of our new found joy. Instead of scooping in converts as with a net, we had to be content to use, as it were, a hook and line, and our heart was made glad if after losing off several, we finally landed a good one. We said one soul won for God pays for all the effort, and we will keep trying.

In considering the power of faith in the living God, we are led to ask in what realm does its highest and greatest achievement lie. Does it always ultimate in the achieving of spectacular results of in the development of genuine Christian character? Which is the better; to take a city socially, politically, athletically, commercially, militarily, or to rule one's own spirit? The ancient writer in the time of low spiritual ideals gave the answer, and Jesus himself was the embodiment of the same ideal. He seemed to breathe out his last amid the clouds and tempest of a most dismal failure, but in his soul was the triumphant faith that cried: "It is finished."

As we study history up to date we must be convinced that the achieving of spectacular things and the creating of popular

religious movements, is no evidence of a real faith wrought in the heart by the power of God. This is proven by the wonderful success that has attended the ministry and teaching of false prophets and leaders. They are almost too numerous to mention; a few will suffice. Buddah and Zoroaster, Mohammed and Joseph Smith, Mrs. Sarah Baker Eddy, J. Alexander Dowie and Aime Semple McPherson. We have here a strange mixture of leaders all of whom achieved a remarkable success in the following they secured. But the moral and spiritual results of their propaganda clearly proves to us that they were not dominated by the faith, the works by love and purifies the heart. Wonderful faith every one of these leaders possessed, but for the most part it was faith in their own ability to bluff and deceive the carnal man who wants to be deceived, and in the matter of spiritual things will more gladly take a "gold brick" than the real thing. The success of false leaders and teachers only proves conclusively the deceitfulness of the human heart; that error will run a mile and make many converts while truth is getting on its boots; that the person of strong will and personality, of smooth speech and graceful approach can begin and carry on a great movement that overshadows for a time the real work of God. Faithful preachers of a full salvation who have seen small results attending their ministry, have witnessed preachers come to their community professing to speak with "tongues" and having power almost to raise the dead; the people have run to them. For a time there was a great excitement and what seemed to be a great spiritual upheaval. But the man of God held steady. In a few months the whole thing was high and dry. Those who had been jibbering and jabbering in tongues and doing all manner of physical stunts were silent and mum. Often they are back in worse sins than they had ever known or are living in sin and covering up the same with a profession of spiritual power.

These things have not happened in a corner. Such teachers are never straight on the "Sin question," and that is the reason they are always so popular. Preachers in great denominations have opened their doors gladly to some who have taught the Pentecostal Blessing "that did not touch the old man" and the "Carnal mind." And the teacher who today magnifies the "Gifts of the Spirit" instead of the "Grace of the Spirit" can draw the crowd and get the money, for the people like the spectacular. They do not especially want to be saved from all sin. While holding revival services for a Methodist brother in New York State, some years ago, he brought me a copy of a religious magazine called "The Bridal Call," that was full of the most wonderful reports of revivals, spiritual baptisms and physical healings. I read it, and the pastor said, "Is it not wonderful? Now some may charge me with jealousy because I was getting only a small crowd to hear me, and the papers were taking little or no notice of my meeting. We were seeing very meagre results. But I replied: "It is too much in the air. It is only a washout. It looks fine on paper but doesn't appeal to me in the least." I then wrote to a great

Methodist pastor in the city where the great revival was held, and he answered fully confirming my opinion. Today the writer of that fine report and author of that magazine, the leader of that great movement that has built the finest auditorium in a great Western city, stands humiliated and unmasked before the public that had gone wild over her wonderful faith.

Jesus certainly taught that "to be," is far better than "to do." That "many will say in that day, Lord have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name, cast out devils, and then shall I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye cursed." Men have been known to have what seemed to be wonderful revivals attending their ministry, and at the same time have been rolling in the deepest sensuality. They would say that they were sinful in the flesh but holy in the spirit. After all, the greatest achievement of faith is holy, loving, Christ-like character, and the wife and mother who, in the midst of household duties, that involve the care of a half-dozen troublesome children, keeps sweet, patient and triumphant, has often far more real spiritual power than the preacher who sways a great audience and get really mad at a little disturbance in the meeting. So-called achieving faith may be only a sort of physical power that belongs to a strong personality and is used for more or less selfish ends. We saw a man sweep a district, having revivals everywhere he went, carrying off a load of money, followed by most wonderful write-ups in the holiness papers, yet that same brother will never come back to that district again. Once was enough. He could get the biggest crowds and see the most spectacular demonstrations of anyone I had ever seen. But those who studied him the most closely declared it to be more physical than spiritual; yet he was strong for doing the greatest things so-called.

Don't for a moment think that I am urging that the person of real faith will see no results that will encourage their hearts all the time. They will launch out in patient and holy endeavor. But they have learned not to be caught by the spectacular and the popular movements that fail to deal with the sin of the human heart. But all the time they think more of being what God would have them be, than of becoming a great leader or rising to a high office. "Let him that will be the greatest among you be as he that serveth."

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER

(Continued from Page Four)

cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Not only must His guests be found watching and doing the Lord's work, but they must also be purified from all sin, made spotless by the blood of the Lamb and ready to meet the Bridegroom and sit down to the marriage supper; and then the promise is given that we shall reign with Christ a thousand years and there enjoy His presence forever and ever.—

L. B. W. in Good Tidings.