

LIVING BY FAITH.

"Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him." – Heb. 10:38.

Living by faith is a very different thing from living by sight. To live by sight is to act in the present, and plan for the future, according to our own knowledge, experience and judgment; while to live by faith is to study and accept God's plan for both the present and future, and to act as he directs, ignoring our own ideas of expediency whenever God's word speaks to the contrary.

It will not require very deep penetration therefore to decide to which of these two classes we belong. Every man belongs to either the one or the other, unless he be an idiot or insane. The great mass of mankind are endeavoring to walk by sight; yet they are so very short sighted that they can see but a short distance in advance, and their past experience has been so brief and varied, that it forms a poor criterion on which to base a correct judgment in devising plans for the future. Yet, lacking faith in God, it is the best they can do for themselves, and they very generally realize that all their plans must end with the present existence, as they know nothing of the future beyond the tomb.

But there is a small class who walk by faith. They are a peculiar people, separate from the world, and cannot assimilate with it. Having learned and believed God's plan, and seeing that it not only includes all the present but stretches on into eternity, and having implicit confidence in his infinite wisdom and boundless love, they simply place their hand in his, accepting of his proffered leading, and promising to follow wherever he directs, trusting that however dark or thorny the way may be, the end will be blessed and glorious. They are not promised that the pathway in the [R903 : page 5] present life shall be one of luxury and ease, that they shall have abundance of comforts, that their business plans shall all succeed, that friends will multiply,

and that their declining years, specially, shall be years of rest, after the heat and burden of the day is past.

No, these things are not promised, but it is promised that their bread and water shall be sure as long as God desires [R904 : page 5] to have them live; and having food and clothing they are to be therewith contented, and whatever temporal adversity may come, to remember through it all, that all things whether good or evil, shall, under the divine management work together for good *to them*. Having this confidence it is their privilege to be always rejoicing, trusting with childlike simplicity to their heavenly Father's love and care, and faithfully meekly and obediently following in the footsteps of our leader and head, Christ Jesus, who set us an example that we should follow in his steps.

His life was one of implicit faith in the promises of God, and his daily walk in perfect harmony with his faith – obedient even unto death. He took no thought more than was necessary for the life that he then possessed – either for the present or future of his earthly existence; and beyond that, he had nothing except what was secured to him by the promise of God.

The apostle denominates this class who now thus live by faith, *the just*. This includes Jesus their Lord and head, the just one, and all those now justified by faith in his blood and following in his footsteps. These justified ones are *just*, having received the favor of justification through Christ, and in grateful and cheerful obedience submitted themselves to God. Blessed "little flock" follow on, through evil report and good report, through present tribulation and trial and conflicts within and without; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom; blessed virgin church "the King hath greatly desired thy beauty" and thou shalt be his bride and joint-heir, if thou wilt prove thy love for him by cheerful endurance unto the end.

But if any of this class draw back the Lord will have no pleasure in them. To draw back from this high privilege into which we have

come by faith, is to go back to the world and to live after the course of this world, to take the world's standpoint of observation and to reject the Lord's leading. The drawing back is not generally done suddenly but gradually. It begins with discontent, and the discontent soon finds expression in complaint; and complaint soon develops into open opposition, which grows more and more fixed and obstinate. Paul declares the end of such apostacy when in the next verse he remarks hopefully, "But we are not of them who draw back unto destruction, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Let each of the dear consecrated company beware of taking the first steps backward; and if you realize that you have already done so, wake up to a sense of your danger and recover yourself at once from the snare of the adversary. Your only safety dear ones is in keeping your eye of faith fixed on the mark of the prize of your high calling and forgetting the things behind. If you keep looking back at the sacrifices already made you will only see the things behind, and the things before – unseen except by the eye of faith – will cease to attract you, and very soon you will be caught in the snare of the prince of this world. Besides the malady of *discontent* is contagious and may spread to some other members of the household of faith, and so many be defiled. Thus you would be a stumbling block and adversary of the body of Christ rather than an aid and upbuilder of it. "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation."

– MRS. C. T. R.

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