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THE CHRISTIAN'S FOOTPRINTS.

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Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way.—HEBREWS xii., 13.

THIS exhortation follows another—"Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees." It requires strong knees to enable us to take firm steps and make a straight path. If one is weak-kneed, he will be jostled and turned aside by every sturdy and resolute man he meets; and therefore for a Christian to make headway through a world full of wrong-headed and perverse characters it demands the utmost vigor to step. And both these requirements—the strong knees and straight path—are preceded by another—"Wherefore seeing we are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses . . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." On the cross, Christ was the author of our faith: at His coming, He will be the finisher of our faith; and between these two lies the whole Christian race. These two facts, therefore, need to be definitely fixed in our creed and in our conviction. The carpenter takes but two points in drawing his mark, and stretching his cord between these he snaps it, and makes a line as straight as a sunbeam. Starting from the cross, where we get forgiveness of sin, we are to set our face steadfastly toward the crown, where we shall attain perfection, and thus are we to press on, hearing God saying to us, "Let thine eyes look right on,

the end it cannot reach, and I am not afraid. I look down and I am afraid. I shrink from death because I believe it to be in some measure unnatural. There is a life beyond, and death is the cutting off of life. The inferior animals replace sometimes a lost limb or covering. Oh, if we could only feel that such a replacing of life would come to us after death! How it would help us if we could find some promise of this good! We look to nature for it and we do not find it. We see no peace there. The universe cannot help us; it is only anxious to fasten our own guilt upon us. Where shall we get this peace? There is a something called agnosticism, or in plainer English, "know nothingism," that answers simply, "We do not know." As the proverb says, "They make a solitude and call it peace." If you by agnosticism mean simply that it is impossible to know anything really in this world, that is a childish idea. If a father were about to punish his child, the child might say, "Hold on, father, I am an agnostic. No one really knows what is the difference between right and wrong and as you cannot know that how can you punish me for doing anything?" Would that stop the father from inflicting the punishment? You do not look for the analysis of your mother's heart before you believe that she loves you. You remember the unbelieving disciple who exclaimed, "Unless I put my hands in His side and my finger in the print of the nails, I will not believe." Yet when the loving Saviour came to him and invited him to prove that it was He, the disciple simply said: "Lord, I believe." He did not need to touch the wounds; the spirit of love showed that it was the Master. There came a man to me since my father's death, who said: "I have a communication from the spirit of your father," and he sat down and wrote on a paper. But I knew well that, though he might imitate my father's writing, he could never imitate my father's heart as it found expression in the words.

But there are others who do not say all this. They say that there is nothing to do in this world but to fight it out as well as possible; that all the world is at war with us and we must keep up the battle as best

we may. The petition that would bring them to their knees they will not listen to, but set themselves against it. Woe to the man who sets himself against his Maker! The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The young soldier goes forth to the battle with joy, not thinking that the dreadful artillery cares nothing for his mother's love or the pride of his young strength, but goes on sweeping him down with the rest. The soul that fights against its God will be overwhelmed at the last.

Others say: "We solve the enigma by ignoring it. Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die. We take no responsibility for this life. We are here in this life, and we will not stop to think what comes next." And so they go on with their toys and sports. You remember the story of the baron who was told that his tower would not stand secure unless a child was built up in its walls. He brought the child and placed it in a recess and gave it toys to play with, and it sat there playing while the masons built up the wall imprisoning it in its hopeless dungeon. So the architects of time are building up the walls about you as you sit with your worldly toys about you, and you do not know it till it is too late. All thoughts of the future will leave you restless, unless there comes a message of peace from without. And that message is brought by Christianity.

Bible Evidence.

BY JOHN HALL, D.D., LL.D. (PRESBYTERIAN), NEW YORK.

When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.—JOHN II., 22.

It is to be kept in our thoughts that the Bible does not demand a blind assent to it. It recognizes the reason which God has given us and makes its appeal to us by appropriate evidences. There are ample evidences to reason of the divine inspiration of the Bible. If a man should present himself in a court of the United States and claim certain rights because they were in the constitution of the United States he would have to produce the

constitution. The same demand may be legitimately made in Holy Scripture, and we have the means of meeting the reasonable demand. It is to be borne in mind that the evidences of Christianity are entirely different in their character. They may be different in rival religious systems. Anyone who has looked into ancient beliefs, such as Brahminism, will be struck by contrasts. The Bible is mainly a book of history, but other books are for the most part sentimental, such as the Veda or the Zendavesta. The Scripture, on the other hand, is a book of history in an eminent degree. It has devout meditations, but the subject of them is historical. It readily invites refutation if it can be refuted. By the advance of human reason it becomes possible to upset this history if it is not history. The Old Testament has to do with one nation in an eminent degree. That nation still survives and is a living witness of this history.

It is to be borne in mind that this Bible is composed of two distinct portions. The Old Testament concerns itself with the Jews. The New Testament is widely separated in a thousand ways from the Old, but how closely are they connected in another sense. In the Pentateuch there are over four hundred references to the New and without any possibility of collusion. The evidences that are strong and fitting in one generation are not so in another. That is to say the human mind is constantly changing. Remember when examining this what revelation was intended to do. Men say, "I do not feel this argument because I do not understand it." But there are men who do understand it and are faithful in their adherence to Christianity. You do not understand geology, yet you do not reject it. You do not know chemistry, but Faraday stood at the head of chemists and he was one of the devoutest and humblest of consistent Christians. You cannot master astronomy. Very well. Newton did, and not only was he a Christian but also an exponent of the Word. There are hundreds of thousands who do not know the argument for Christianity and yet are firm believers in Christianity.

The Bible is greatly occupied with history. The study of history is a great force. I think on this continent we have underrated it. Principles never work themselves up with a limited aid. History gives us the life of the generation that has gone before us. Deal wisely with the history of the Bible. Get it into your memories. It is the history of God's dealings with a nation not only religiously but also socially, one may say politically. If you want to see how principles are brought to bear on our nation this history is admirably fitted for your study. There are biographers who make themselves a part of their subjects, but the Bible writers are not betrayed into a prejudice.

How frequently misunderstandings arise in families and in circles of friends. Well, the best form of Christianity is found in dealing with these matters. Take the case of Joseph as an example. I would urge upon young men to make themselves familiar with every detail in his life. How many would command success if they were imitators of that historic personage. Young men, study the career of Daniel and try to act upon the principles which animated him. Fill your mind with the doctrines of the Bible. I know there is a prejudice in the minds of many against doctrines. It is because they have had their minds filled with other and abstruse doctrines. He would be a very foolish man who would look with contempt upon mechanics because others have written and talked nonsense about perpetual motion; and so of Christianity, he would be a foolish man who would look upon it with contempt because trifles have been magnified into great principles. Store your memories ever with the language of Holy Scripture. It is a good thing to have devotional verses—historical verses—that impress principles and doctrines upon our memories. For the most part we think in words. It has been questioned whether we do so. They are helps to memory. Thoughts and words, so to speak, run together, and one is an aid to the other.

Form your views and convictions upon the Word. There are very few criticisms

made to me regarding men that do not take this shape, "He is able, he is smart; or he is eloquent, or he is industrious," or whatever may be, "but he lacks judgment." That is the most frequent criticism I encounter, but it does not mean "he lacks judgments," for it very often happens that those who are deficient in "judgment" do not lack "judgments." They have judgments about all things, they are ready to give an opinion about all things in creation, but that is not judgment. One of the best helps any man can have to form a just judgment is to be familiar with God's Word. Let the Bible form your judgment with regard to men. What is success, failure, real goodness, real badness, what is it to be a benefactor or a curse to one's race? Get your judgment in relation to these questions from the Bible.

The Marah of Life.

BY REV. A. G. BROWN, EAST LONDON.

They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. And when they came to Marah they could not drink of the waters of Marah, etc.—EXODUS xv., 22-25.

What a sudden change in the history of the Israelites we have in this short chapter. In the first verse we have a song to the tune of the timbrel; three days pass, then what a contrast. In the first verse Moses sung, in the twenty-second Moses cried; the people sung, and then murmured, having had a little bit of wilderness experience—and it is this little bit of wilderness life which will try a man. It is so with the young convert. The wilderness brings out what is within. It discovers, too, God's goodness and our unworthiness. The Israelites had a bitter disappointment, and it had embittered them.

I. Let us note, first, Earth's bitterness. We must expect bitter pools in a bitter world, for sin is declared to be as gall and wormwood; the world can never be any better, so long as sin remains. Sin has embittered both life and us! The Lord showed the Israelites by the pool of Marah what they were in themselves. I think many of us make our own Marahs; putting the bitterness in our life, thus

embittering ourselves. This is true in social life, and also in Church matters; many of our Marahs are our own construction. But all God's saints will find Marahs in the wilderness; will find one in his own experience; one draught of such will set the teeth on edge; so with the world, it will always be a Marah to the Christian. In domestic life is often found a Marah when the son turns out an Abalom, and the Christian worker will sometimes find a Marah, as in the case of Moses, in bitter disappointment. What are we to do with these Marahs?

II. Note Heaven's remedy! Moses cried unto the Lord—the people murmured, but Moses cried, and the Lord showed him a tree. To the praying man the Lord reveals the remedy, God forestalls the future; the tree had been growing for years. So God always prepares a deliverance for us in times of trouble; it may be a book or a friend. God uses instrumentality, as seen in the experience of Hezekiah, Elijah and others. God does not always take away the Marah, but drops an ingredient into it to sweeten its bitterness; as in Paul's life the thorn in the flesh was not removed, but God dropped His grace into his Marah, which led him to exclaim, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." Let the Cross soak in thy Marah, then tears will have no bitterness. Do as Moses did, cry unto the Lord, and He will show thee a tree growing on the hill Calvary which will put sweetness into all the Marahs of life!

The Sacred Side to Life.

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But it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light.—ZECH. xiv., 7.

The ideal life, the true life is the Christian. It gives prominence to all those principles and enjoyments which make this world attractive, and render life worth living. Death is altogether unnatural; it is accidental and not dependent on causes lying in the nature of life itself. The real life is the life that is brought to us by Christianity, restoring the natural