

CHAPTER 74

THE FAITH OF MOSES

(~~8128~~ HEBREWS 11:28)

There is more about Moses than any other individual in this 11th chapter of Hebrews. No less than five definite acts of his faith are there recorded. The reason for this is not far to seek. He was the law-giver, and the boast of the Jews of Christ's day was, "We are Moses' disciples" (~~8128~~ John 9:28). They were seeking acceptance with God on the ground of their own doings. They supposed that their outward conformity to the ordinances of Moses would secure the approbation of Heaven, and therefore,

"They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (~~8108~~ Romans 10:3).

It was under this influence that these converted Hebrews had been brought up, and therefore did the Holy Spirit press upon them the fact that it was *by faith*, and not by a legal spirit, their renowned ancestor had lived and acted.

The particular act of Moses' faith which we are now to consider was one which would be singularly pertinent to the Spirit's design here: it manifested his trust in the Lamb and testified to the value which he placed upon the sprinkled blood. Instituting and observing the feast of the passover, the leader of the Israelites set an example that could not be ignored without fatal consequences. It completely repudiated the awful error of thinking to escape from the wrath of God in consequence of any performances on the part of the creature. It effectively shuts up the sinner to Christ as his *only* hope. Let it be duly considered that the "passover" was the *first* ordinance given to Israel.

How striking it is to see the law-giver himself preaching, by those acts of his recorded in our text,

“By *grace* are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (~~4008~~ Ephesians 2:8, 9).

How great is the ignorance, then, which supposes that salvation by grace is peculiar to this Christian dispensation — as though God has several ways of redeeming sinners. No, my reader, from the beginning to the end of human history every fallen descendant of Adam which enters Heaven will owe it to sovereign grace, flowing to him through the appointed channel of faith, entirely irrespective of all his works, religious or irreligious, before he first trusts in Christ. Abel was saved thus: ~~58104~~ Hebrews 11:4. Noah “found grace in the eyes of the Lord: ~~4008~~ Genesis 6:8. Abraham “believed God, and it was counted unto him for (“unto”) righteousness”: ~~4808~~ Romans 4:3. And the children of Israel were delivered from the Angel of Death because they were sheltered beneath the blood of the lamb.

That which is now before our consideration formed an appropriate and blessed climax to the actings of Moses’ faith recorded here in Hebrews 11: all the others led up to one. His *refusing* to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, his *choosing* rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, his *esteeming* the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, and his *forsaking* of Egypt would all have been in vain spiritually, that is, so far as his salvation was concerned, unless those had been followed by *faith in the lamb* and the efficacy of *its blood*. Turning away from the world is not sufficient: there must also be a turning unto God. The forsaking of sin is not enough: there must also be the laying hold of Christ. *This* is what is typically in view in our present text.

It is highly important that the closest attention be paid to *the order of truth* set forth in ~~58124~~ Hebrews 11:24-28. If this be done, the defectiveness of much modern “evangelism” will at once be apparent. The keeping of the passover and the sprinkling of the blood *is not the first thing* recorded of Moses! No man can rightly value the blood of Christ while his heart is still wrapped up in the world, and to invite and exhort him to put his trust in the same, is being guilty of casting pearls before swine. No man can savingly believe in Christ while he is determined to “enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” *Repentance precedes faith* (~~40015~~ Mark 1:15; ~~40021~~ Acts 20:21): and repentance is a sorrowing over sin, a hatred of sin, and a turning from sin; and where there is no genuine repentance, there can be no

“remission of sins”: ~~41004~~ Mark 1:4. Let every preacher who reads this article carefully weigh *all* that is here recorded of Moses, and faithfully instruct his congregation that the different exercises of heart recorded in ~~8124~~ Hebrews 11:24-27 *must* precede that which is stated in verse 28.

It is really deplorable that such elementary aspects of Truth as we have just pointed out above need to be stressed at this late date. Yet such is the tragic case. Laodicean Christendom is boasting of its riches, and knows not that it is poor and wretched and naked. Part of those “riches” which she boasts so loudly of today, is the “great increase of light” which it is supposed that the study of prophetic” and “dispensational” truth has brought to us. Yet not only is that a subtle device of Satan’s coming as “an angel of *light*” (~~4114~~ 2 Corinthians 11:14), to *darken* men’s understandings, and make them believe that his lies are “wonderful discoveries” and openings up of the Scriptures, but the present generation *has far less* real Light than Christendom enjoyed a century ago. By which we mean, there is far less faithful and fearless preaching of those things which make for practical godliness and holy living. But that is not the worst: Scriptural evangelism has well-nigh disappeared from the earth.

The “Gospel” which is being preached today is only calculated to deceive souls and bolster them up in a false hope. To make men believe that God loves them, while they are under His wrath (see ~~4136~~ John 3:36), is worse than a physician telling a diabetic subject that he may safely eat all he wishes. To withhold the preaching of *the Law* — its Divine authority, its inexorable demands, its spirituality (in requiring *inward* conformity to it: ~~4162~~ Matthew 5:22, 28), its awful curse — is to omit that which alone conveys a true knowledge of sin: see ~~4180~~ Romans 3:20, 7:7. To cry “Believe, believe,” and say nothing about *repentance*, is to falsify the terms of salvation: ~~4247~~ Luke 24:47; ~~4473~~ Acts 17:30. To invite sinners to receive Christ as their “Savior” *before* they surrender to Him as their Lord, is to present a *false* “way of salvation.” To bid the lost “come to Christ” without telling them they must first “forsake the world,” is to fill the “churches” with unconverted souls. To tell sinners they may find rest unto their souls *without* taking Christ’s YOKE upon them, is to give the lie unto the Master’s own teaching: ~~41129~~ Matthew 11:29.

We offer no apology for this seeming digression from our present subject. Once again we would point out that it is our earnest desire in this series of articles to write something more than a “commentary” on Hebrews, or give

a bare “exposition” of its text: rather do we seek (as the Holy Spirit is pleased to enable) to address ourselves directly to the hearts of our readers, and press upon them *the personal and present* application of each verse to their own souls. In all probability a large proportion of the readers of this magazine are *deceived* souls, and we do not want to have to answer for their blood in the Day to come. Many of them have been lulled to sleep by the chloroforming “evangelism” of the day. Therefore we earnestly beg each one who scans these paragraphs to seriously and solemnly ask, Is there anything in my own heart’s history which answers to that which is said of Moses in ^{<S1124>}Hebrews 11:24-27? If there is not, if you are not “*crucified to the world*” (^{<R164>}Galatians 6:14), then Satan is fatally deluding you if you imagine that you are under the blood of Christ.

Suffer us then, dear reader, to continue addressing you directly, for a moment longer. We do not ask, first, Are you “resting on the finished work of Christ?” There are thousands who imagine they are so doing, who have never been converted. No, rather would we inquire, Have you *made your peace with God*? We are well aware *that* expression is ridiculed and denounced by a certain class who pose as being ultra-spiritual and exceptionally well-taught in the Scriptures, but they only betray their ignorance of the Word: see ^{<2376>}Isaiah 27:5, ^{<2143>}Luke 14:32. By asking whether you have “made your peace with God,” we mean, Have you ceased fighting against Him, and have you yielded to His demands? Have you thrown down the weapons of your rebellion, and expressed an honest desire and determination to be in subjection to Him? Have you realized that living to please yourself and have your own way, is a species of defiance, and have you truly surrendered yourself unto His claims?

“Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the firstborn, should touch them” (verse 28).

Let it be pointed out again that *this* was the point unto which all the previous actings of Moses’ faith led. While it is true that no sinner can “keep the Passover” or find protection under “the sprinkling of blood,” while his heart still loves the world, and is filled with its idols, nevertheless, his separation from and relinquishing of all which is opposed to God, obtains not salvation for him. The blotting out of sins does not become ours until the atonement of Christ is received into our hearts by faith. Thus, by taking ^{<S1124>}Hebrews 11:24-28 *as a whole*, we see how both the righteousness and the grace of God were honored and magnified.

Our present verse looks back to and gives an abridgement of that which is recorded in Exodus 12. It tells us of a further fruit of a supernatural faith. At first sight it may appear unto many that *this* particular work of faith is far less remarkable than some of those which have engaged our attention in previous articles. Yet when it be duly considered, when all the attendant circumstances are properly weighed, it will be seen that the conduct of Moses on this occasion was as much opposed to human reason and carnal wisdom, and issued from a Divine work of grace in his heart, as did Abraham's leaving of Chaldea for an unknown country, his offering up of Isaac, or Joseph's "making mention of the departing of the children of Israel." We quote now from another who has brought out this point most forcibly and helpfully.

"The institution of the Passover was an act of faith, similar to that of Noah's preparation of the ark (verse 7). To realize what this faith must have been, we have to go back to 'that night,' and note the special circumstances, which can alone explain the meaning of the words 'by faith.' God's judgments had been poured out on Egypt and its king, and its people. A crisis had arrived, for, after nine plagues had been sent, Pharaoh and the Egyptians still remained obdurate. Indeed, Moses had been threatened with death if he ever came into Pharaoh's presence again (~~Exod~~ Exodus 10:28, 29). On the other hand, the Hebrews were in more evil case than ever; and Moses, who was to have delivered them, had not made good his promises.

"It was at such a moment that Moses *heard* from God what he was to do. To sight and to sense it must have seemed most inadequate, and quite unlikely to accomplish the desired result. Why should this last plague be expected to accomplish what the nine had failed to do, with all their cumulative terrors? Why should the mere sprinkling of the blood have such a remarkable effect? And if they were indeed to leave Egypt 'that same night' why should the people be burdened with all those minute ceremonial observances at the very moment when they ought to be making preparation for their departure!

"Nothing but *faith* could be of any avail here. Everything was opposed to human understanding, and human reasoning. With all the consciousness of ill-success upon him, nothing but unfeigned

faith in the living God, and what he had heard from Him, could have enabled Moses to go to the people and rehearse all the intricacies of the Paschal observances, and tell them to exercise the greatest care in the selection of a lamb on the tenth day of the month, to be slain on the fourteenth day, and eaten with (to them) an unmeaning ceremonial.

“It called for no ordinary confidence in what Moses had *heard* from God to enable him to go to his brethren who, in their deep distress, must have been ill-disposed to listen; for, hitherto, his efforts had only increased the hatred of their oppressors and their own miseries as bondmen. It would, to human sight, be a difficult if not impossible task to persuade the people, and convince them of the absolute necessity of complying with all the minute details of the observance of the Paschal ordinance. But this is just where *faith* came in. This was just the field on which it could obtain its greatest victory. Hence we read that ‘by faith’ every difficulty was overcome; the Feast was observed, and the Exodus accomplished. All was based on ‘the hearing of faith.’ The words of Jehovah produced the faith, and were at once the cause and effect of all the blessings” (E.W.B.).

It should be evident, then, from what has been pointed out above that the actions of Moses recorded in Exodus 11 and 12 proceeded from no mere natural faith, but were the supernatural fruit issuing from a supernatural root. His conduct must have exposed him unto the ridicule of the Egyptians, but with implicit confidence in the wisdom, distinguishing mercy, and faithfulness of Jehovah, he acted. See here, again, how inseparable are faith and obedience: the very “faith” of Moses which is mentioned in our present text, *consisted in* an implicit compliance with all the regulations specified by the Lord. He observed the passover in his own person, and he ordered the people to do likewise, though it involved their procuring many thousands of lambs. He observed the passover in fullest assurance that thereby all the firstborn of the Hebrews would be delivered. Though all Israel kept the passover, it was by Moses that God delivered the institution of it.

The passover was one of the most solemn institutions of the O.T., and one of the most eminent types of Christ.

- “1. It was a lamb that was the matter of his ordinance (^{<0218>}Exodus 12:3). And in allusion hereunto, as also to other sacrifices that were instituted afterwards, Christ is called ‘The Lamb of God’ (^{<0029>}John 1:29).
2. This lamb was to be taken out from the flock of the sheep (verse 5). So was the Lord Christ to be taken out of the flock of the church of mankind, in His participation of our nature, that He might be a meet sacrifice for us (^{<0024>}Hebrews 2:14-17).
3. This lamb being taken from the flock was to be shut up separate from it (^{<0216>}Exodus 12:6). So although the Lord Christ was taken from amongst men, yet He was separate from sinners (^{<0026>}Hebrews 7:26), that is, absolutely free from all that contagion of sin which others are infected withal.
4. This lamb was to be without blemish (^{<0215>}Exodus 12:5), which is applied unto the Lord Christ: ‘a Lamb without blemish and without spot’ (^{<0019>}1 Peter 1:19).
5. This lamb was to be slain, and was slain accordingly (verse 6). So was Christ slain for us; a Lamb, in the efficacy of His death, slain, from the foundation of the world (^{<0138>}Revelation 13:8).
6. This lamb was so slain, as that it was a sacrifice (verse 27); it was the sacrifice of the Lord’s passover. And Christ our passover was sacrificed for us (^{<0007>}1 Corinthians 5:7).
7. The lamb being slain, was to be roasted (verses 8, 9), which signified the fiery wrath that Christ was to undergo for our deliverance.
8. That ‘not a bone of him shall be broken’ (verse 46), was expressly to declare the manner of the death of Christ (^{<0033>}John 19:33-36).
9. The eating of him, which was also enjoined, and that wholly and entirely (verses 8, 9), was to instruct the church in the spiritual food of the flesh and blood of Christ, in the communication of the fruits of His mediation unto us by faith” (John Owen).

By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.” Two things are here noted separately, the lamb and its blood. In type they spoke, distinctively, of the person and work of Christ, for it was *the person* of Christ which gave

value to His work — His Divine person being the “altar” which “sanctified” the offering of His humanity (^{<413>}Matthew 23:19). This is ever the *order* of Scripture: “Behold (1) the Lamb of God, which (2) taketh away the sin of the world” (^{<402>}John 1:29); “I determined not to know anything among you save (1) Jesus Christ and (2) Him crucified” (^{<402>}1 Corinthians 2:2); “in the midst of the elders stood (1) a Lamb (2) as it had been slain” (^{<406>}Revelation 5:6). Here is the Analogy of Faith for the preacher to follow today: It is not the blood which is first to be proclaimed to the sinner, but the wondrous and glorious God-man Mediator who shed His blood for His people.

The Hebrews, equally with the Egyptians, were exposed unto the Divine vengeance, when the Angel of Death went forth on his dread work that memorable night, for “*all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” And naught but their placing the substitutionary death of an innocent victim between their guilty selves and an holy God, could protect from the judgment announced against them. Trusting in their descent from Abraham would avail them not. Appeal to their good works and religious performances would have sufficed not. They might have spent the entire night in fasting and prayer, in penitently confessing their sins and crying unto God for mercy, but none of those exercises would have stood them in any good stead. “When I *see the blood*, I will pass over you” (^{<4213>}Exodus 12:13) made known the all-essential requirement. So it is now; nothing but *the blood of Christ* can cleanse from sin and deliver from the death-penalty of God’s broken law.

“Through faith” or better “By faith,” for the Greek here is the same as in the previous verse. “He kept the passover,” that is, both instituted and observed it, as the Redeemer did His own “supper.” “And the sprinkling of blood”: this emphasizes an important-distinction. “Without *shedding* of blood is no remission” (^{<3022>}Hebrews 9:22), and without *sprinkling* of blood (cf. ^{<4002>}1 Peter 1:2) the virtues of Christ’s atonement are not brought unto the soul. The “sprinkling” of the blood has reference to *the application* to one’s own self. The shedding of Christ’s blood is the *ground* on which atonement was made for the sins of His people; the sprinkling of it is the *means* of reaping benefit thereby. The sprinkling of the blood on the door of the house in ^{<4213>}Exodus 12:13 was both a sign to the Destroyer that He should not enter, and an assurance to the household that they were safe.

It is by a spiritual “sprinkling” or applying of Christ’s blood that all the benefit thereof redounds to us. It corresponds to the laying of a plaster on a sore, to the drinking of a wholesome potion, to the eating of food, to the putting on of a garment: the *benefit* of all these ariseth from a *fit application* of them. The blood of Christ is “sprinkled” on the soul in two ways.

First, by the Spirit of God (^{<4661>}1 Corinthians 6:11), who inwardly persuades the soul of a *right* that *it* hath to Christ and to all that He did and suffered for our redemption.

Second, by faith (^{<4450>}Acts 15:9), for faith is the hand of the soul which *receives* all spiritual benefits. Faith moves the regenerated soul to rest upon Christ for a personal benefit of His obedience unto death. On this ground the apostle exhorts,

“Let us draw near with a true heart in a full assurance of faith, having our hearts *sprinkled from an evil (guilty) conscience*” (^{<5802>}Hebrews 10:22).

“Lest He that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.” Primarily, the Destroyer was the Lord Himself (^{<0222>}Exodus 12:12, 23); secondarily, and instrumentally, the reference is to an angel: compare ^{<0246>}2 Samuel 24:16, ^{<2195>}2 Kings 19:35. Whoever is not “sprinkled” with the blood of Christ is exposed to the anger of God. But so secure are those who are under the same, that the Destroyer shall not so much as “touch” them — He shall do them *no harm*: cf. ^{<6158>}1 John 5:18. God proportioned His judgment upon Egypt according to their sin: Pharaoh had ordered his people to cast every son born unto the Hebrews into the river (^{<0122>}Exodus 1:22), and now *their* firstborn were to be slain. Thus God manifested the equity of His proceedings against them.

“Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, *that shall he also reap*” (^{<4807>}Galatians 6:7).

Our verse as a whole teaches Christians that there must be *the exercise of faith* in order to a right use of the means and institutions which God has appointed: whether in reading the Word, in prayer, in baptism, or the Lord’s supper: “*without faith it is impossible to please Him.*” It also shows us that real faith will not use that for which it has no Divine warrant. An active obedience unto the authority of Christ in His commands is exactly required in all that we do in Divine worship. Well suited to the case of the

Hebrews was the example of Moses: to exercise faith in the Lamb and persevere in the duties which God has appointed. No matter how unreasonable it might seem to carnal wisdom, no matter what inconvenience and persecution it might entail, trust in and obedience to the Lord was their duty and blessedness.