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**W**HEREFORE when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; and sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: that no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain. But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

*1. Thess. iii. 1-10.*

**A**ND Abram believed in the Lord;  
and He counted it to him for  
righteousness.

\* \* \*  
For what saith the scripture? Abraham  
believed God, and it was counted unto  
him for righteousness.

\* \* \*  
But to him that worketh not, but be-  
lieveth on him that justifieth the ungodly,  
his faith is counted for righteousness.

\* \* \*  
Cometh this blessedness then upon the  
circumcision only, or upon the uncircum-  
cision also? for we say that faith was  
reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

\* \* \*  
And therefore it was imputed to him  
for righteousness.

\* \* \*  
Even as Abraham believed God, and it  
was accounted to him for righteousness.

\* \* \*  
And the scripture was fulfilled which  
saith, Abraham believed God, and it was  
imputed unto him for righteousness: and  
he was called the Friend of God.

*Gen. xv. 6.*

*Rom. iv. 3, 5, 9, 22.*

*Gal. iii. 6.*

*James ii. 23.*

# **THE DYNAMIC OF FAITH**

# THE DYNAMIC OF FAITH

BY

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100 PRINCES STREET, EDINBURGH  
21 PATERNOSTER SQUARE, LONDON, E.C.



Printed in Great Britain by Turnbull & Spears, Edinburgh  
Bound by Anderson & Ferrier, Saint Marys, Edinburgh

## INTRODUCTION

By

*The Rev. BARCLAY F. BUXTON*

**T**HE most vitally important matter in spiritual life is Faith. All depends upon faith. All the treasures of heaven are open to faith. All power is given to him who can believe.

Therefore every Christian may well ask, What is it to believe? How can I have faith? The present author, Mr Paget Wilkes, has been used of God to bring light and power and a real salvation to many in Japan as well as at home.

May this book be the message of God to many, and bring them out into the blessing of a full salvation!

Read it prayerfully with an open mind and heart, and it will be so to you.

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## FOREWORD

**W**E are living in solemn days. Iniquity abounds. The love of many waxes cold. Many are falling away. Heeding not the word of the Lord, that false Christs and false prophets shall arise, doing signs and wonders, which shall, if possible, deceive the very elect, many church members, who see the lack of supernatural power in the churches, vainly suppose that every manifestation of the miraculous must be of God. They *do* see many such manifestations elsewhere—undoubtedly authenticated; but as they deny the existence of any such thing as an angel of light, alas! speedily deceived, they flock headlong into the Satanic institutions of Christian Science, Spiritism, and Theosophy. Truly we seem to be nearing the time when those awful words are to be fulfilled: “God shall send men a delusion that they shall believe a lie, because they received not the love of the truth.”

Lovers of truth and earnest souls see and sigh

for these things, as well as for the lukewarmness of Christians, the indifference, the worldliness and sin, the ritualism and "rutualism" which abound on every hand. They cry aloud: "Is there no remedy? Why lacks the Church of God the old-time power? Why is the fear of God no more upon the land? Why are there none among the unconverted masses that seek after God? Why is there so little power to turn men to God among His people?" These are the vital problems of our day to every true disciple of the Lord. The following chapters seek in some measure to suggest a solution, and to unfold the blessedness as well as the necessity of a conquering faith in the Name, the Word, and the Blood of Jesus.

All things are possible to him  
Who CAN in Jesu's Name BELIEVE.

I am aware that in the perusal of the following pages, some will feel that too much emphasis is laid on the operation of our own hearts in the exercise of faith; and that our greater need is to look unto the Lord Jesus Himself, being rather concerned with Him, than with our faith or our appropriation of His grace. Long ago such objections were raised, when the saintly Fletcher of Madeley was thought by some to over-emphasize our faith in Christ, as being all-important. He replied in effect aptly enough

that because the nurse finds it necessary to emphasize the actual drinking of the medicine, the patient is not thereby deceived into supposing that the cause of the cure lies in his obedience to his nurse's direction, rather than in the skill of the doctor and the efficacy of the drug. Or because we emphasize the need of actually taking food and drink at certain hours and in certain quantities, rather than be always talking of the nutritious nature of the food, no one is so foolish as to suppose that it is not the food that nourishes.

So is it with Christ. He is All in All; His salvation is perfect. But unless we believe and receive, appropriate and feed on Him by faith in our hearts, it profiteth *us* nothing. We need then, again and again, to emphasize this—the way and necessity of an appropriating Faith.

In urging distressed and convicted believers to seek and obtain from the Lord what is known to some as the "second blessing" or "a personal Pentecost," I have heard the objection: "There is no such second experience to be had; the secret of the Christian life lies only in 'Looking unto Jesus.'" To this latter statement we can but entirely agree, and yet hasten to inquire, "Do you find that you are *able* to do this very thing? *Can* you keep looking to Jesus? For this *is* Holiness. This *is* Sanctification—this

blessed ABILITY to keep looking. This ABILITY is the hardest thing this side of Eternity. To learn how to obtain this ABILITY the following pages have been penned. May God use them to His glory! Amen.

*The*

*Nature*

*of*

*Faith*

# I

## THE NATURE OF FAITH

“Have faith in God.”—St Mark 11 : 22.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.”—  
2 Cor. 13 : 5.

**I**T has become, alas! almost a commonplace in Evangelical religion, meaningless and empty, that all our spiritual blessings are received through faith. I propose, therefore, to try and unfold the fulness of the meaning of that wonderful word: “Have faith in God.” The emphasis given to it in the New Testament ought at once to make a thoughtful reader see that by it is meant far more than a thorough assent to all the truths of Scripture, or the cheap, easy-going “believism” of the present day.

Faith is a mighty living thing, producing wonderful results in the conscience, heart, will, mind, and life of the recipient. I say recipient, because faith is the gift of God. But more of that later. I propose, therefore, in this first

chapter to consider briefly seven of its aspects as presented to us in the pages of the New Testament.

I. A MYSTERY. "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."—1 Tim. 3 : 9.

Now faith is here called a mystery—a Divine mystery. And so it assuredly is! John Wesley used to speak of "the interior eye of faith being opened by the Holy Ghost," to see and appreciate spiritual realities. Only those who have experienced that still but mighty miracle can ever understand those words. It is truly a Divine mystery in the soul revealed by the Holy Ghost. What need then we have to cry to God to give us true faith in Him, to wait upon Him in the deepest humility and sense of dependence, instead of attempting, in the superiority of our supposed wisdom, to grasp and comprehend the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

"A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above." How jealous is God of this law! How unwilling is man to keep it! We love to think that by "searching" our Bibles, and commentaries, and books of reference, and thereby obtaining the clearest theological light on these things, we can "find out God." But alas! tired and disappointed, we are at last

brought by His grace to see that we can only come to know the tenderness and love of the Father through the mystery of faith, as revealed to us by the Holy Ghost.

2. A SEED. "If ye have faith as a grain of . . . seed."—Matt. 17 : 20.

Elsewhere in Scripture, the Word of God is spoken of as a seed. But here this simile is applied to faith. At times, indeed, it is almost impossible to distinguish the little seed-corn of some precious promise buried in the soil of the human heart, from the wondrous principle of faith that apprehends it, fastens upon it, and finds in it its life and sustenance. They appear almost one and the same thing. A seed—within which lies, all motionless and silent, the wonderful dynamic of life—only let it be deposited in the soil, its native element, an environment adapted to its nature, and at once the latent forces begin to stir and throb and operate.

So it is with faith. Only let that Divine thing be implanted within the soul by the Holy Ghost, and it will at once begin to cast out and bring in, to move and work in all its strange and silent power. All our desires, affections, emotions, thoughts, and imaginations will be aroused from their apathy of selfishness and their sleep of



death, and spring forth and shoot upward into the sunshine of the love of God to poor sinful humanity.

3. A PRINCIPLE. "The word . . . mixed with faith."—Heb. 4 : 2.

Here we have another discovery in the Scriptures, that faith is a principle, and not a mere attitude toward God. It is a Divine principle planted within the soul. We are speaking now, of course, of faith in its highest form.

One of the best definitions of faith outside the Word of God is given us by William Tyndale—Saint, Reformer, and Martyr—who left us, as his imperishable monument, the translation of the Scriptures in our mother tongue. He says : "Right faith is a **THING** wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, which changes us, turns us into a new nature, and begets us anew in God, and makes us sons of God as thou readest in the 1st of John, and kills the old Adam and makes us altogether new in the heart, mind, will, desire, and in all the other affections and powers of the soul—the Holy Ghost ever accompanying it and ruling the heart."

Now here faith is defined as a thing wrought in us. And so it is. It is a Divine principle, a blessed power that God gives and implants

within. Stephen, we read, was "full of faith." We cannot be full of an attitude, but we surely can be full of that Divine light and sweetness and easiness of soul that enables us to rejoice in the Lord evermore.

4. A SUBSTANCE AND A CONVICTION. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of facts not seen."—Heb. 11 : 1, literal translation.

Now it might be urged that if faith is the gift of God, we are helpless in the matter, and can only wait till God implants it within. But this is only so in appearance. Our text here teaches us that there are two degrees or forms of faith—a substance of things hoped for, and a conviction of facts not seen.

Mrs Hester Ann Rogers, with her wonderful insight into spiritual things, speaks as follows: "The witness or seal of the Spirit"—she is here referring to the fulness of faith—"is God's gift and not our act; given to all who act faith in Jesus, and the promise made through Him. But it is not given till faith is acted. If we, as penitents, had no power to act faith, how would God be just in condemning us? . . . It is after this act of faith—not before it—that God gives the witness of the Spirit." And so it surely is!

God commands us to believe, because by His grace we can. As we do so, and take sides with Him against unbelief—that arch-enemy within our hearts—He bestows upon us, and plants within us, the holy conviction of His Divine facts. The **act** of voluntary **faith** passes into the gracious **state of believing**. But one is certainly dependent on the other. We believe, and God puts the crown of assurance upon our faith. And so, using the power of faith that we have, we may yet believingly sing:—

“Inspire the living faith  
That whosoe'er receives,  
The witness in himself he hath  
And consciously believes.”

5. A WORK. “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest” (God’s rest). “This is the work of God, that ye believe . . . .”—  
Heb. 4 : 11 ; Jno. 6 : 29.

We get in these Scriptures a still further view of faith. There is an active no less than a passive believing in God. Putting away sloth and pride, we need to use the faith we have, till the substance of things hoped for, becomes a sweet assurance of facts not seen as yet. And this is hard work. It means much prayer, much searching of the Word, and much crying to God to strengthen the things that remain, fearful lest

Satan shall cheat us of our crown, and cause us to go mourning all our days.

James Caughey has said that there is a difference between faith (as commonly understood) and believing. The one is like water at rest; the other is like water in motion. Put a boat on a lake or some piece of stagnant water, and it remains motionless. Put it on a river running ten miles an hour, and, to use his quaint expression, it "just moves." And so it is with faith.

Where there is a true faith, inwrought by the Holy Ghost, there is a labour to enter in (Heb. 4 : 11), a stretching forth of the hands that brings us into a king's palace (Prov. 30 : 28), a going on unto perfection (Heb. 6 : 1), a pressing toward the mark (Phil. 3 : 14), a running so as to obtain (1 Cor. 9 : 24), a seeking the things that are above (Col. 3 : 1). This is the true work of faith. This is the holy dynamic of the soul.

St Paul prayed for the Thessalonian Christians that God would "fulfil every desire of goodness and every work of faith with power." "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." It is blessed to have holy desires, desires of goodness, "to dwell in the House of the Lord, to inquire in His Temple"

(Ps. 27 : 4); to feed on "the sincere milk of the Word" (1 Pet. 2 : 1, 2); to see the salvation of men (Rom. 10: 1, 2); to have righteousness exceeding that of the Pharisees, a real loving, living thing (Matt. 5 : 6, 20); to have Christ magnified in us, whether by life or death (Phil. 1 : 20, 23).

But if our desires are mere desires—if there is with them no work of faith, like the sluggard, we shall "desire and have nothing." Let us see that faith is at work, stretching out its hand to receive from Him who waits to fill the hand and to fulfil the work of every believing soul.

#### 6. A FIGHT. "Fight the good fight of faith."

—1 Tim. 6 : 12.

Closely akin to the work of faith is its fight. Alas! we have not merely the sluggishness of our own stupid hearts against which to contend, but an active enemy whose main work is to keep us from believing God! He knows that this is the victory that overcometh, even our faith. Was it any wonder that the Blessed Master said : "If thou **canst believe**, all things are possible to him that believeth?" Not—be it noted—if ye do, or will, or try to believe, but if ye **can**.

Yes, here is the battle! In a later chapter we shall see some of the hindrances fatal to victory.

The enemy seeks to lull us to sleep with the promise of triumph at some future time, or, by pious phrases about the rest of faith, deceive us into thinking that we shall grow into Christ's image unconsciously, without the battle of believing or any active outgoing of our hearts in aggressive acts of faith. Oh, that we would awake, and put on the whole armour of God, by faith go forth to battle, by faith lay hold of the promises of God, by faith seek to pluck the prey out of the hand of the mighty, by faith praise our God and shout defiance to the enemy in the Name of the Lord!

7. A REST. "Let us labour therefore to enter into . . . rest."—Heb. 4 : 11.

Above all, we should bear in mind that true faith is perfect rest. All the labour and all the conflict with the enemy lead to this. Now faith has been aptly described by some as "**Forsaking All, I Take Him.**" That is a good definition. How much the "all" includes, many saints never fully learn—all our sins, of course; all our righteousness, our self-complacency, our self-confidence; our own desires for fame, or wealth, or pleasure; our doubts, our fears, our unbelief, and suspicion. And then to enter into the rest of faith, to sink into the will of God, to take all

that comes and all He sends with joy—this is **rest**. When we are enabled to “consciously believe,” that all is made over to Him and accepted in “a covenant ordered in all things and sure,” that is the rest of faith.

Within the compass of these eight words, “Let us labour to enter into that rest,” the two remotest opposites appear—“labour” and “rest.” Some few forsake their righteousness; a few more forsake their sins; but, alas! what a labour it often is to forsake our doubts and fears and unbelief. How desperately “the sin that doth so easily beset us” hinders us from entering in. Many, alas, never realise or appreciate their foe! And yet, only as we do and steadfastly believe, shall we ever press into all the fulness of the blessed rest of faith, which is truly the gift of our loving Father in Heaven.

In the 95th Psalm, the Holy Ghost speaks of “My work,” “My ways,” “My wrath,” “My rest”; and laments that though Israel of old saw God’s works at Massah and Meribah—the smitten rock of Calvary (Ex. 17), and the exalted rock of Pentecost (Num. 21)—saw his works and drank of the “double stream,” alas, they never entered into God’s rest, and gave as the reason that they were ignorant of His ways.

“He made known His ways unto Moses and

His acts unto the children of Israel." Moses alone knew God's ways, the inner ways of his continual presence and power. Are we like the Israelites of old? Or have we, like Moses, learned of the ways of God and entered into the rest of faith?



*The*

*Way*

*of*

*Faith*

## II

### THE WAY OF FAITH

**W** E have considered the Nature of Faith ; let us now look at its Way. The inquiring soul, convinced that faith alone is the way of deliverance, instinctively cries out : “ How can I believe ? What is the secret of believing unto a full salvation ? It is this secret that we propose to make plain. Let us consider :—

1. ITS OBJECT. “ God raised Him (Jesus Christ) up from the dead . . . that your faith . . . might be in God.”—1 Peter 1 : 21.

In the execution of the Divine programme each Person of the Blessed Trinity is engaged, but we often find in Scripture that the Father is spoken of as the Supreme Object of our faith. It is He Who loved the world ; it is He Who spared not His own Son ; it is He Who gave “ the promise of the Father ” ; it is He Who receives the sinner and forgives the sin ; it is He

—the very God of Peace Himself—Who sanctifies us wholly !

The terrible conception of God that He is an austere and unrelenting Being, Whom the meek and lowly Jesus has propitiated and softened, though rejected by the mind of the believer, often finds a lurking-place in his heart ! But true faith revels in the loving character of God the Father, being deeply convinced that He needs not to be persuaded or coaxed to bless us ; and knows that we are not straitened in God, but only in our own wicked unbelief. God's desire to bless stands out large and glorious to the believing soul.

Faith searches the Scripture to find out all that is lovely about God, holds to it that He **IS** love, thrusts away all unworthy thoughts of Him, revels in His love, lays hold upon His power, and rejoices in his faithfulness. Yes ! God raised His Son from the dead that our faith might be in Himself !

2. ITS FOUNDATION. "The Devil . . . taketh away the **WORD** out of their hearts, lest they should believe."—Luke 8 : 12.

In this remarkable message it is clearly stated that if only Satan can take away "the implanted Word," then faith collapses. It is strange but

true that faith, when sorely pressed, at any rate, cannot rest upon generalities, however clear. True conceptions even of the power and love and work of God are not sufficient basis for faith. Faith demands the written Word—the letter no less than the spirit—on which to stand.

“Give me a promise,” cried a young man under the deepest conviction for inward holiness. He knew the truth that God was able to sanctify; he knew the depravity of his own nature, and that Christ had shed His precious blood to cleanse it; he knew that the Holy Ghost was ready to occupy and transform his earthly temple, and yet faith could find no resting-place. “Give me a promise,” he repeated.

His friend, who was kneeling by his side, silently lifting up his heart to God, repeated slowly: “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.” It was enough; victory was assured; faith could rest there. At once the seeking soul laid hold of the written promise and entered into rest. It is through the “exceeding great and precious promises” that we are blessed.

This is God’s wonderful way! The foundation of faith is the written Word of the living God. Again and again is this borne out in the Gospels. The most distressed and storm-tossed souls found

immediate peace when Jesus spoke the word which was spirit and life.

“Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,  
And looks to that alone,  
Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries, ‘It shall be done.’”

3. ITS PRICE. “Buy of Me gold tried in the fire.”—Rev. 3 : 18.

Faith is the gift of God. Peter speaks of our “having obtained . . . precious faith.” This is especially true of that fulness of faith, or Divine assurance, which is the immediate work of the Holy Ghost. Now here it is called “gold tried in the fire.” Peter speaks of it thus also, when he tells us that the trial of our faith is much more precious than gold tried in the fire. This can be none other than the “faith of the Son of God,” which was tried in the awful crucible of Calvary ; and yet it is this that the Lord Himself bids us procure from Him. Is not this the only coin that is current in Heaven? No tears, no self-sacrifice or self-denial *unmixed* with faith are of any avail there. “I could write it twenty times over,” said William Bramwell, “that strong faith and continual prayer are productive of every result.”

But how can we, who are “poor and blind and

naked," purchase such a gift, buy such wealth, that we shall for ever be alike "rich in faith" and "rich in good works"? Is there no price? The wording of the passage precludes such a thought. He says: "BUY of Me." Yes! There is a price, but it has been paid—the price of His most precious blood. Faith, then—"gold tried in the fire"—is the purchase of His blood. This wonderful ability to believe God, this power to receive and rejoice in Him without any fear or distrust or doubt, has been procured for us by His mighty Sacrifice!

Oh that we would understand the sin of unbelief! Oh that we would make haste to believe—yea, come quickly and buy that which is more precious than gold!

4. ITS CREATOR. "Full of faith and of the Holy Ghost."—Acts 6 : 5.

Faith in God is not natural to fallen man. On the contrary his tendency is to distrust Him utterly. The main work of the Holy Ghost is therefore to restore man to a restful, happy, quiet, loving confidence in the God, against Whom he has rebelled. This is of all things most difficult. This amazing miracle can only be done through Divine power. To quote William Tyndale again: "Right faith is a thing wrought in us

by the Holy Ghost . . . the Holy Ghost ever accompanying it and ruling the heart." What an encouragement this should be to us.

Every spark of humble confidence in God, every flash of heavenly illumination, that makes it plain that He loves me—even me, every conscious assurance that I do believe, and every victory over tormenting fear and unbelief, all these are not the results of my own effort, but the proof that the Spirit of the living God hath not left me alone, but is still at work in this poor, feeble, selfish, straitened heart. These are but the beginnings of His ways with thee, dear soul! Continue to rely on the Blessed Comforter within thee, till the meridian light of faith has put all the darkness of thine unbelief to flight for ever!

5. ITS SPHERE. "With the heart man **BELIEVETH.**"—Rom. 10 : 10.

Let there be no mistake here! The sphere in which faith operates is the heart. We need to be careful, and we do well to examine ourselves continually as to whether we are in **THE faith.** Or are we only amusing our minds with the spiritual notions of justifying and sanctifying faith? Now the heart can never trust God until it has come to an end of all righteousness,

strength, and satisfaction in itself. Not until all our peace and joy and hope, our righteousness, our strength of will and purpose have been "slain by the law," shall we ever fully believe in Jesus. It is a blessed day when we thus die, and are shut up to faith in Him, Who not only "justifieth the ungodly," but "quickeneth the dead" (Rom. 4 : 5, 17).

Just as the heart of the unsaved will cry out : "My sins! my sins! what must I do to be saved?" so will the saint, till he is all renewed and made "perfect in love," exclaim : "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" It is the heart that feels the burden of guilt; it is the heart that feels the burden of "indwelling" sin and the load of anxious care; and it is the heart that can alone believe unto a full salvation.

6. ITS AUTHOR AND FINISHER. "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith."—Heb. 12 : 2.

The object of our faith is God; its sphere is the heart of man; it is inwrought by the Holy Ghost; it is made possible by the shedding of the precious blood; its foundation is the promise of the Lord; but its Author is Christ. It is He Who calms our fears; it is He Who



whispers: "Peace, be still." As we gaze upon the dying Lamb of God, the poison of our doubt and fear and unbelief dies down, and out of our tired, feverish hearts. But He waits to do an uttermost work, to strengthen and complete and perfect our confidence in Him.

Lying lowly at His feet, waiting on Him, expecting from Him, using all the faith that we have, we shall know and feel His sudden coming to His temple with plenitude of grace, enough to scatter all the remains of unbelief and the carnal mind. And none but Christ availeth anything! Out of Him we must ever find God a consuming fire! Out of him is darkness, despair, and death. Let us then, every day, every hour, every moment, "close in with Christ," as Fletcher of Madeley expressed it.

7. ITS TIME. "While it is said, To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."—Heb. 3 : 15.

We need the greatest care on this point. We may so easily err in one extreme or the other. Most assuredly it is true that to faith "now is the accepted time," while unbelief always says "to-morrow." And yet, on the other hand, just as the sinner cannot believe unto salvation until he has truly repented of his sins and turned to

God, so, too, the saint, until he has been convicted of his inward sin and the remains of his unbelief and carnal mind, can never truly believe unto sanctifying grace.

But when we have said this we would hasten to add that, as soon as the soul has felt and known the plague of its own heart and has begun to seek with all its desire, then assuredly the time for faith is *now*. The words of John Fletcher on this most deeply important of all themes are well-nigh inspired. He says:—

“Fight the good fight of faith. Break through all temptations, dejections, wandering, worldly thoughts, all unprofitable companions, and the backwardness of an unbelieving heart and carnal mind. Struggle, I say, till you touch Jesus and feel healing, comforting virtue proceeding from Him; and when you know clearly the way to Him, repeat the touch till you find that He lives in you by the powerful operation of His Holy Spirit. . . .

“You must also remember that it is your privilege to go to Him by such a faith **now** and every succeeding moment; and that you are to bring to Him nothing but a careless, distracted, tossed, hardened heart, just such an one as you have **now**. Here lies the grand mistake of many poor, miserable but precious

souls ; they are afraid to believe lest it should be presumption, because they have not yet comfort, peace, joy, love, etc., not considering that this is to expect the fruit before the tree is planted. Beware, then, of expecting any grace previous to believing."

When the anointed Lord preached His first sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth, we read that the people all wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. Wherein above all things lay the grace? Was it not that He said: "THIS DAY is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears"? For many decades these words had been read and heard, but on this memorable day came the fulfilment.

Christ's message was: "To-day"—here and now; there is no need to wait; the Saviour is at hand to-day; at this very moment all that was foretold of Him is to be fulfilled. When General Booth was once asked the secret of his life, he replied: "I can give it in three letters, **N-o-w**." He believed that the Holy Ghost said "To-day." He decided **now**; he acted **now**; He sought God **now**; and above all he believed **now**.

"It shall be **NOW**, Lord from my heart I say it,  
No longer will I wait ;  
No longer will I slight Thy love and patience,  
So wonderfully great.

It shall be **NOW**, that I will yield unto Thee  
The last unyielded thing ;  
Here I renounce my right to His dominion,  
And now I crown Thee King.

It shall be **NOW**, and Thou wilt gladly take me  
In spite of all my sin ;  
**NOW** that Thou wilt unto Thyself receive me,  
And cleanse my heart within."

This, then, is the way of faith. How mighty is its foundation, its guarantee, its Author and Sustainer! And yet none too mighty. Satan has so poisoned and debilitated our stupid, senseless hearts, that without such Divine and mighty aid we should stumble and fall and be lost for ever in the blackness of our unbelief. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

*The*

*Progress*

*of*

*Faith*

### III

#### THE PROGRESS OF FAITH

**W**E have already considered the Nature and Way of Faith in God. Our present chapter will deal with what our old Puritan forefathers called its "outgoings." How easily our hearts are deceived, and settle down into a slothful state, because we do not fully understand how much an active faith is able to do for the soul!

I. IT COMES BY HEARING. "Faith cometh by hearing."—Rom. 10 : 17.

If a true and living faith is absolutely essential to the life, health, and progress of the redeemed, we may well ask, first and foremost—How can faith spring up within the heart? It is not enough to know that it is the gift of God. Now the Word of God gives to this inquiry the most emphatic answer: "Faith cometh by hearing"—hearing, not indeed the utterance of eloquent and learned divines, nor even the voices of spiritual

men proclaiming spiritual truth, but by hearing the Voice of God. And this hearing cometh "by the Word of God."

The Lord longs and waits to speak to us through His Word. There is the greatest difference between His Word and His Voice! The latter is the former clothed and illuminated by His Spirit? How quickly faith appears when we hear that Voice, when the Holy Ghost speaks the **living word** through the **written letter**. Let us, then, take heed that we wait upon Him in humble expectancy over the pages of the Word, till in our quieted souls the Holy Ghost can speak; and at once a living faith shall arise and work its wonders within!

2. IT IS CLEAR AND DEFINITE. "What wilt thou that I should do? . . . Lord, that I might receive my sight. . . . Thy faith hath made thee whole."—Mark 10: 51-52.

True faith is never vague. It can never be satisfied with generalities. The Lord requires of us to know and say and confess just what we want.

Is it salvation we need? True faith at once cries out, "What must I do to be saved?" Is it cleansing of the heart from all "the sin that dwelleth within!" At once it pleads: "Create

in me a clean heart"; "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." Does the Lord say to us: "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" Faith makes answer: "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Is God saying to us: "Ask what I shall do for thee?" True faith unhesitatingly replies: "Let a double portion of Thy Spirit rest upon me."

Where there is true faith, there the soul is clear and definite and simple in its asking and believing. It cannot be content with "a blessing." When the Holy Ghost convinces us of our sins, faith finds the Saviour. Does He convict us of our sin, then faith seeks Jesus as the Sanctifier. Faith knows exactly what plea to make! How is it with us? Are we simple and straightforward, humbly and believingly definite in what we need and in what we ask for?

3. IT WORKS BY LOVE. "Faith which worketh by love."—Gal. 5 : 6.

There is a faith that works by fear, restraining the soul by fear of death, judgment to come, and the fearful consequences of sin! This is not amiss in its place; but the faith that avails is the faith that works by love. No wonder it has power to break and melt the heart, because it is rooted and grounded in the love of God.



No wonder it prevails with God, because it has a tender, fearless confidence in His sweet compassion and grace. It lays hold of His pardoning, sanctifying, and communicating love.

True faith in the love of God is not merely a clear acceptance of the truth, that He loves me and gave Himself for me, but a deep and sweet *persuasion* thereof. The one is merely the working of our own mind, the other the inworking of the Holy Ghost! A deep persuasion within the soul, illuminating, purifying, invigorating, inflaming the heart with light, love, zeal, and a solemn realization of the things of eternity—this is the faith “once delivered to the saints,” the “faith which worketh by love.”

And if this is so, it is also true that faith's object is love; it is hither that faith leads us. Faith is love's handmaid; her duty is to minister it to us, and so to bring down the blessing into our souls, that we shall go out in love to all, both saint and sinner, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, yea, to all the sons of men. There is nought higher in religion than this!

Love is the wedding garment; and faith fits it to our shoulders. Love is the fire of heaven; and faith fetches it to the altar of human hearts. Bless God for such a salvation! Faith works by love. They act and react together! Faith

brings love into our souls ; and love stirs up our hearts to ever believe for greater things.

4. IT STIRS UP THE GIFT OF GOD WITHIN THE SOUL. "The unfeigned faith that is in thee. . . . Wherefore stir into flame the gift of God that is in thee."—2 Tim. 1 : 5, 6, R.V. margin.

It is only as this inwrought confidence is within the soul, that we can stir up into an active, vigorous flame this warm and glowing grace, that God has given us. "The gift of God . . . is love, power, and a sound mind." And it is faith that stirs up the heavenly gift. "I stepped down into the midst of the crowd," said John Wesley, "with a heart full of love, eyes full of tears, a mouth full of argument." Faith was ever the handmaid of his soul, to supply him with holy reasons and Divine arguments, as to why God should bless him. Unbelief has a thousand reasons, why God can't or won't or doesn't bless me. But faith is full of reasons, why He does and shall and can bless even me!

The gift of God is not the spirit of fear. Faith and fear are as widely asunder as the poles ; and as the great adversary without and the carnal mind within, (until destroyed) both unite to press this awful spirit upon us, faith recognises

the enemy, resists it, scatters its unbelief and distrust, and stirs into a flame the sweet spirit of love and power and a sound mind. Hallelujah! But without faith we cannot do it. Emotion, sentiment, reason, and logic all fail us here. Only a Divine and inwrought faith availeth anything to stir up into a flame the loving Spirit of our God!

And how important is this! What need to increase and abound in heavenly love. Holiness is not a mere negative thing, a mere non-committal of wrong; nay, rather it is the positive expulsive power of a new affection—love within a pure heart always expanding, abounding, increasing, growing unto perfection.

Faith is needed to stir up this gift and cause us to increase and abound more and more. If we fail here, we shall surely grow cold, surely fail, and surely die. In Romans chapters 14 and 15, St Paul deals with our forbearing with the weaknesses of others, and bearing their burdens, and concludes with the prayer that the God of hope shall cause us to abound in hope toward the weak and difficult ones. The secret is given us in the words, "filled with all peace and joy in believing."

Yes, the believing that brings us peace and joy, brings also an abundance of hope for others

who are weak and needy. It is faith that stirs up our hearts to be full of hope with regard to others. When we have seen what peace and joy in believing have done for us, how they have transformed even our lives, we surely have hope for the most hopeless.

5. IT BRINGS THE WITNESS. "Therein" (by faith) "the elders had witness borne to them."—Heb. 11:2, R.V.

There is nothing more important in the life of the soul than the "inward witness."

As John Wesley's father, the Rector of Epworth, lay dying, he cried: "The inward witness, John, the inward witness is the proof of Christianity."

William Carvosso, the saintly Cornish farmer, said: "This blessed witness of the Spirit, both in justification and sanctification, is what I see the necessity of more than ever. For my own part, I do not see what progress professors of religion can make without this. Did I say religion? Can they be deemed possessors of true religion at all, till they so believe as to have the witness in themselves?"

Lady Maxwell, writing about the same time, says: "From day to day I am made to taste of that perfect love which casts out fear. . . . I

most sensibly find it is only by a momentary faith in the blood of Jesus that I am kept from sin, and that my soul is more or less vigorous as I live by faith. I have never known so much of the nature of simple faith, and its unspeakable value, as since I have tasted of the pure love of God . . . He has enabled me strongly to act faith in Jesus for sanctification, even in the absence of all comfort ; this has diffused a heaven of sweetness through my soul, and brought with it the powerful witness of purity. . . . At times my evidence for sanctification is as strong as a cable fixed to an immovable rock, and as clear as the sun shining at noonday." It is faith that brings this witness. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself"—not "he that hath the witness in himself believeth !"

This is God's will for us ; it is our privilege ; it is the the good pleasure of the Holy Ghost to thus bear witness to the believing soul. The saints of old had it. Abel received the witness that he was righteous ; he had it, too, that his gifts were accepted. Enoch had the inward witness that he pleased God. The elders had it also, Abraham, and David, and the prophets ! And shall not we, who live in a brighter day ? Yes, we shall, if we will only steadfastly believe and diligently seek His Face.

6. IT PLEASURES GOD. "Enoch . . . had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him."  
—Heb. 11 : 5, 6.

The things that God tells us in His Word, as requirements for pleasing Him, are few and surprisingly easy. First and foremost is **Faith**. Of all the wonderful things written about faith, this is the sweetest and most comforting: It pleases God!

And the philosophy of this is not difficult to understand. For is it not rational to think that no duty done, no self-sacrifice, no self-denial, and no heroism performed could be well pleasing to our loving Father, unless springing from an affectionate confidence in Him? This, of all things, must be the sweetest to One Who loves us so tenderly, and Whose heart is so full of compassion.

It pleases God, when every bit of fear and suspicion and distrust, conscious and unconscious, is banished from our breast. It pleases Him, when every time we give Him the benefit of the doubt, and make ourselves, our circumstances, appearances, and all things, if necessary, liars, and God for ever true. Faith does that, and even though all appearances are utterly contrary, faith

holds to it that God is utterly true and utterly able, utterly faithful and utterly loving. With such sacrifices God is well pleased!

No wonder Brother Lawrence breaks forth in eloquent eulogy: "Oh, Faith! Faith!! marvelous virtue, which illumines the spirit of man, and leads him to the knowledge of his Creator. O virtue altogether lovely, so little known and still less practised; yet which, when once known, is full of unspeakable blessing."

7. IT WILL GROW EXCEEDINGLY. "Your faith groweth exceedingly."—2 Thess. 1:3.

It is not here growth in grace, but growth of faith. Paul, in his first letter to the Thessalonian Church, had written that he longed to perfect that which was lacking in their faith. Timothy had journeyed there to find out if they were believing believers! Paul wanted to know of their believing! Was it satisfactory? Yes, it was, but he longed for it to be a perfect confidence in Jesus Christ. It lacked something—perhaps definiteness, perhaps aggressiveness. He longed for it to be a humble, holy, persistent, affectionate state of heart—deeper, more happy, more restful, more praiseful, and, above all, more determined than hitherto.

Read again 1 Thess. 1:2-10. Paul says: "I

sent Timothy again . . . to establish and comfort you concerning **your faith**. . . . I sent to know **your faith**. . . . Timothy came from you and brought us good tidings of **your faith**. . . . Therefore we were comforted by **your faith** . . . night and day praying that we should see your face and perfect that which was lacking in **your faith**."

In effect St Paul says to Timothy: "Go and find out for me if these Thessalonian Christians are believing believers or unbelieving believers. I do not want to know whether they are loving one another, testifying, working, giving, rejoicing, etc. I want to know if they are actively believing; if they are, of course they will be working, rejoicing, giving, testifying and loving one another."

Perhaps the greatest of all delusions, whereby the devil deceives us, is that we shall grow holy and humble and like Jesus by some unconscious process of development. Never was error more flagrant than this! "I see," says an old writer "that faith and hope must replenish and support my joys. . . . By the aid of these important graces the soul is ever filled with heavenly fragrance; and a fire is brought from above which devours all the stubble of indwelling sin and every plant, root, and branch which my Father



hath not planted. Hereby my soul shall be purified in all its powers and faculties, even as gold is purified in the furnace."

The growth of faith is the secret of going on into perfection, running that we may obtain, and pressing forward so as to win the prize. May we so feed on God's Word, and meditate on all the glories of our Redeemer, that it shall be said of us that our faith "groweth exceedingly"!

*The*

*Hindrances*

*of*

*Faith*

## IV

### THE HINDRANCES OF FAITH

**I**N the preceding chapters we have seen something of the Nature, Way, and Progress of Faith. How simple it appears only to believe ; yet the saint who sets himself to this very thing is conscious of the fight required before he can win through into victory.

In the present chapter, I propose to investigate some of the hindrances to believing God. Why is it that, when we recognise that faith is the victory, that all things come through believing, that it is the source and root of all blessing to the soul, we succeed so little in the pathway of simple faith? William Carvosso said: "Were the 'mystery of faith' better known, the improvement among God's people would be more rapid. Many are defective, not in their sincerity, but in their faith."

Let there be no mistake in this matter. Faith can neither be received nor exercised until

certain hindrances are dealt with. We cannot go to a poor sinner, in the careless hey-day of his sins, and tell him to believe in the Lord Jesus for salvation. He needs to be awakened, convicted, and above all to repent **towards God**, ere he can exercise saving faith in Christ. So, then, we shall now consider these hindrances to faith.

1. AN IMPURE CONSCIENCE. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."  
—1 Tim. 3 : 9.

Now a pure conscience is the home of faith. There she abides. Let conscience be defiled, and faith disappears. Herein lies the secret of many failures. "Therefore, if . . . thy brother hath ought against thee . . . first be reconciled . . . then come and offer thy gift." We often wonder why so few, though anxious and earnest, are able to believe unto salvation or unto the fulness of blessing!

The reason may not be far to seek. Does it not lie here? There is some unconfessed sin, some unforgiven wrong, some unpaid debt, some unrequited love, some unrestored money, some uncorrected wrong in the days that are gone. Yes, it happened long ago, and we may have successfully concealed it from others, and supplied ourselves with many plausible reasons why

we need not deal with things of such long standing; but the fire of conscience still smoulders, and often we are reminded of our sin.

Try as we will, we shall never exercise saving or sanctifying faith in Jesus till the wrong has been righted, the sin confessed to man, if need be, as well as to God, and the whole blotted out for ever through the precious blood of Jesus. "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck."—1 Tim. 1 : 19.

A Japanese lady, a sincere Christian, came to me in trouble, that she could not believe the promises of God, and receive the Spirit by faith. Her countenance was unusually sad. Her heart was very hungry. I did all I could, to lead her into the way of faith, but in vain.

After some considerable conversation I discovered that she had a grievance, real or imaginary, against the pastor of a neighbouring church. She was unwilling to forgive him, unless he came and confessed his wrong. I asked her how she had been forgiven by the Lord, whether He had waited till she had repented and humbled her heart before dying in her stead? She replied: "No, indeed! He died for me while I was yet weak, yet a sinner, yet an enemy!" I bade her forgive, even as she had been forgiven.

She prayed with eyes full of tears ; I followed ; and we both asked the Lord to strengthen her heart unto obedience ; she promised to go forthwith, confess her wrong, and obtain forgiveness. The following morning she called again ; I found that she needed no instruction in the way of faith ; her heart had escaped from the snare, and she was able to believe. The Comforter came in gracious fulness to her soul, and she rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

2. PRIDE. "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?"—  
Jno. 5 : 44.

Here lies another fruitful cause of unbelief. Many a professor, teacher, minister, or Christian worker, convicted of inward sin and the need of inward holiness, will not, alas, take the position of a humble seeker for purity of heart. They declare that they would lose the confidence of their flock if they publicly owned their need in other than vague and general terms. They seek not the honour that cometh from God, but desire to stand well in the eyes of men ! There is not a real and complete surrender to the Lord Jesus.

There may not appear to be much connection between faith and this humble and sincere atti-

tude of soul. But there is ; and faith is utterly unable to stretch forth her hands, either to lay hold of the promise or receive the blessing, until the soul is determined at all costs to be wholly the Lord's ; but as soon as the surrender is complete it can fully and easily believe !

“Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.” There can be no true and conscious believing until this is done. What need we have to search our hearts, and, finding all that is evil, drag it out into the light and confess it unto Him. Tell Him all ! Beware of unintentional lying to God. We so often tell the Lord what is untrue ! We say we would follow Him ; that we desire to be holy and whole-hearted ; and that we are seeking God, when in reality, if we knew our own hearts, we should confess that we were after happiness and not holiness, that we wanted peace and joy and power, and not God Himself.

But there can be no progress in Divine things, no believing unto realization, till we tell Him all the truth. He waits for that. Caroline Fry, the author of “Christ our Example,” affords a striking illustration of this. Possessed of wealth, position, and beauty, she was a gay woman of the world, until, when still quite young, she grew utterly tired of life. Urged by an unconverted friend

to seek consolation in religion, she set herself to this task. Being of a shrewd and keen intelligence, and illumined by the Spirit of God, she discovered that in all her seeking she had no true desire for the Lord Himself; she then told God the truth; she confessed her true state, and was stripped of all her supposed righteousness. This is how she prayed:

“O God, if thou art a God, I do not love Thee; I do not seek Thee; I do not believe there is any happiness in Thee; but I am miserable as I am; give me what I do not seek, do not want. If Thou canst, make me happy; I am tired of this world; if there is anything better, give it me.”

God answered her prayer in one moment. She was immediately saved. Oh, that we would give up telling God, what appear to us as the good desires and aspirations of our hearts, and begin to tell Him without fear the bad and unmanageable things within. How soon should we be freed! Tell Him all; His throne is yet the Throne of Grace; He is still the kind and loving Shepherd; still the Friend of sinners, not yet the Judge. To-day is still the day of grace. Let pride be gone; let us humble ourselves under His mighty hand, and so shall we be able to believe unto a full salvation.



3. THE ADVERSARY. "When the tempter came to Him, he said, If . . ."—Matt. 4 : 3.

But faith has a foe still greater—our great adversary, the devil—and the suggestions of these plausible "ifs" are the most strategic of his attacks. He scares and frightens with his "buts"; he casts down and perplexes with his "ifs." Consecration, service, and prayer may all pass unchallenged, but let a saint begin to believe God, strong in faith, giving glory unto Him, and Satan will come upon him like a roaring lion. "If you let God have His way with you, you will find His yoke heavy, and your way will be hard." "If you had believed and entered into rest, the results should be more wonderful than you now experience." "If the blood of Jesus has cleansed your heart from all sin, you surely ought to feel such and such rhapsodies."

How penetrating are these weapons, how searching their point! It is only as we hold fast our confidence, that we shall ever be able to go on "from faith to faith," and be victors in the conflict.

Abraham (Gen. 15), longing to obtain assurance as to the inheritance of God's strange promises, besought Jehovah to show him His way. How, when so old, could he be the father of many

nations? Led forth from his tent, he is bidden first to behold the stars, and wonder at God's creative power; and then, offering a sacrifice, to wait. The victims were killed, the sacrifice offered, the blood poured forth. But as he waited for the witness there came down birds of prey to snatch away the sacrifice. A horror of great darkness followed; but he stood firm and drove away the birds.

So it is with us. As in faith we plead and offer the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, the devil comes to taunt and move us from our purpose. We need to wait in faith and drive back the emissaries of the adversary, till the light and fire of the Spirit of God come to testify to our hearts that our prayer is heard, our offering accepted, and the promised blessing ours.

4. OUR FRIENDS. "Abraham hearkened to the voice of Sarah."—Gen. 16:2.

There are other hindrances besides the great enemy of souls and the pride of our own heart. Our friends and companions, alas, often tempt us to cast away our confidence and backslide from the way of faith! Abraham had believed God, had received the witness of the Spirit and the fulness of joy that come through believing; he had endured; he had continued in faith, encouraging

himself in God, looking hard at the promises and laughing at impossibilities.

But the time of fulfilment was long, and at length, though not casting away his confidence that God would give him the desire of his heart, he did not adhere to the simple way of faith ; he corrupted it, and that through the advice of the nearest and dearest. What a desperate sorrow and trouble did his failure bring to him and the world. From Ishmael sprang the awful Moslem scourge? It was the voice of Sarah instead of the voice of God! But the Lord comes to us continually, as He did to Abraham, saying: "Walk before **ME** and be thou perfect"—yes, perfect in thy faith, thy confidence, and patient continuance in His ways.

5. OUR FAILURES. "Simon, Simon . . . I have prayed for thee, that thy *faith* fail not."—  
Luke 22 : 31, 32.

Judas failed, and his faith was lost for ever. Peter failed, but his faith held on, and so he was saved. There is no peril more acute to the soul than the despair that follows failure! That is the moment of the closest and most searching attacks from the enemy. The Lord Jesus knew it well, and foresaw the awful struggle within the breast of Peter *after the denial*. He prayed that amidst

the agony of remorse, the bitterness of self-condemnation, the flaming accusations of the enemy, his faith in the unchangeable love of God might hold him to his Lord. And so it was!

Nothing discourages us so much as failure; the remembrance of it is grievous unto us indeed. And yet there may be much of self-righteousness and humiliated pride in it all. Where this is not so, there need never be cessation of faith. Let our failures only make us more determined than ever to believe God, until we prove all the fulness of His grace.

A young man once came to me full of discouragement and regret that his life of attempted service for God had been a failure. He was much cast down; he had no faith; he had cast away all his confidence, if he ever had any to cast away. I urged him again and again to tell it all to the Lord Jesus, to come as he was without any fear; to hide nothing; to make no excuses; to disclose all his heart; to whisper all his failures into the Saviour's ear. He went away scarce crediting me or my exhortation.

Not many days had passed, ere I got a rejoicing letter from him; he had found it true; he did as I bade him, and soon had abundance of peace and joy in believing. Oh, let us run the ploughshare through our heart again and again, if need be, and

leave it to the sunlight to kill the worms! A humble, believing, honest confession before the Friend of sinners is the heavenly ploughshare. Yes, I would repeat it a thousand times, let failure drive us to a humble confession and patient believing. Again and again have I found it true in my ministry. Those simple words: "Tell it all to Him," have brought life and deliverance to many.

6. OUR ENVIRONMENT. See Num. 13 : 31 ;  
14 : 2.

We are painfully dependent on our environment; the soul is keenly sensitive to the faith or lack of it in the Church. How much easier it is to believe God when we are with believing believers; but let a saint come into a listless, non-expectant, unbelieving company, and at once the fight becomes harder.

The twelve spies had brought back a good account of the land, but ten of them began to talk unbelief. It was in their heart and it came out. Like a fire it ran through the crowd; unbelief always does! At once the people were cast down and turned back from the way of faith.

Oh, how we need to watch against these evil currents and this foul, pestilential atmosphere

that poisons the soul! Let us make up our minds that the air is full of unbelief. It is everywhere; while true faith is rare indeed. And yet locating our enemy and diagnosing the disease is half-way to victory. Without doing that, it is hardly any wonder that unprepared hearts fail and falter in the fight.

In our environment there is no more deadly influence at work than slothfulness in spiritual things—slowness in seeking God, and love of ease that lulls us to sleep with a promise of victory at some future time. “The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing.” Says John Wesley in this connection:—

“How are we to wait for this change (*i.e.*, entire sanctification of the heart)? Not in careless indifference or indolent inactivity, but in vigorous obedience, in zealous keeping of all the commandments, in watchfulness and prayerfulness, in denying ourselves and taking up the cross daily, in earnest prayer and confession, and in close attendance on all the ordinances of God. And if any one dream of attaining it in any other way (yea, or of keeping it when it is attained), he deceiveth his own soul.

“It is true that we receive it by **simple faith**, but God does not and will not give that faith, unless we seek it with all diligence in the way

which He has ordained. This consideration should satisfy those who inquire why so few receive the blessing. Inquire how many are seeking it this way, and you have a sufficient answer."

7. THE EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF. "Take heed, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief."—Heb. 3 : 12.

I have left the greatest hindrance till the last. The others are the mere outposts: this is the very citadel and stronghold of the enemy. Faith, which is the gift of God, is not a mere attitude of the heart toward God, but a Divine principle implanted within the soul. In exactly the same way unbelief is no mere attitude toward our Heavenly Father; it is an evil principle.

Now the Apostle, in writing to the Hebrew Christians, does not say: "Take heed lest any of you be unbelieving"; but rather: "Lest there **be in** any of you an evil heart of unbelief." Yes, in you who are believers, and in whom faith as a grain of mustard seed has been planted, lest in you, alongside of this Divine grace, there should lurk this evil heart!

There are two things about this great inward enemy that we must carefully observe. In the

first place, it is something, of which the heart is utterly unconscious, until revealed and exposed by the Holy Ghost. The most searching analysis of the human heart, unaided by the Divine Spirit, will never discover it. A careful attention to our ways may show us our pride, vanity, self-love, covetousness, jealousy, and many another evil; but never can we see unbelief as awful sin—a power, a principle, a poison—the unclean thing—the sin that dwelleth within—the sin that doth so easily beset—until the Holy Ghost Himself discovers it to the humbled and astonished soul.

Secondly, we should notice that this evil within is deeper than our wills. So many of God's dear children, looking only at their wills, and knowing that they are steadfastly determined to follow God, are indeed puzzled to find out where the trouble lies. They want to believe God fully; their wills and desires and thoughts are all Godward; but alas, they discover that though they **would** do good, they do it not, and the evil they would not, that they do. Though the self, the will, the ego, has truly been crucified, buried, and risen with Christ, yet there is failure, within and without.

But as we cry and wait upon God, there will surely come the time when the Holy Ghost re-



veals to the soul, as by a mighty illumination, that "it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Blessed be God! When the soul discovers this, that the evil heart of unbelief—the sin within—is not himself but something within him bringing him into captivity, he is half-way to victory.

Here then, is the great hindrance to believing God, and until "this mountain" is "cast into the sea" of God's unfathomable love, faith has hard work indeed. But the remedy is at hand. The Lord has told us that if we have faith as a grain of mustard seed—faith in the precious blood of Christ, the fountain that was opened for all sin and uncleanness—then before our Zerubbabel "this mountain" shall become a plain. Yes, there is more power in the seed than in the mountain! . Hallelujah!

Many an earnest soul brings all his sins and failures to the Lord, except the evil heart of unbelief. He attempts to deal with this himself, and in his own strength. Alas, futile task! If unbelief is sin, the sin that doth so easily beset us, what need we have to bring it to Christ!

"Come **with** thy sin,  
Come **with** thy sin,  
Jesus will cleanse thee,  
Come **WITH** thy sin."

Bring it in confession ; use the little faith thou hast, and cast it into the fountain of His precious blood. Get at it again and again, if necessary, and leave no way untried, till it is banished for ever from thy breast.

*The*

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## V

### THE LACK OF FAITH

**W**E have seen that the greatest hindrance to faith was the inward principle of unbelief, implanted by our great enemy, the devil. We shall do well to consider the awful results and workings of this inward evil.

1. IT PRODUCES FEAR. "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?"—Mark 4 : 40.

We might have expected the Lord Jesus to say: "How is it that ye have no **courage**?" But no! He says: "How is it that ye have no **faith**?" He strikes at the root of the trouble—unbelief. Fear, truly, hath torment; it is one of the most effective and fiery of the enemy's weapons. The slavish fear of God, fear of death, fear of man, fear of suffering, are all the fruit of unbelief within the heart. Perfect love alone

can cast it out, and faith alone can bring in perfect love !

It is of no avail to struggle with inward fear. We are powerless to deal with it. The root and source of it all must be removed. We must seek by faith to encourage ourselves in God, look steadily unto the Lord Jesus until our hearts are flooded with the fulness of the love of God, before which our fears and doubts, which are the fruit of unbelief, shall for ever flee away.

2. IT CAUSES REASONINGS. "O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves?"—Matt. 16 : 8.

There are few evils more destructive to simple faith and to "peace and joy in believing" than the **reasonings** of the carnal mind. These arise very often, though not altogether, from the evil heart of unbelief. The Lord does not say: "O ye of little sense, why do ye reason among yourselves?" No, it was not lack of sense, but lack of faith, that caused the trouble! Reasoning arises through unbelief no less than from the outward temptations of the devil. Says John Fletcher of Madeley, in this connection: "You must shut the eye of carnal reason and stop the ear to the reasonings of the serpent, which, were you to listen to him, would be endless, and would

soon draw you out of the simple way of faith, by which we are both justified and sanctified."

The Lord Jesus most definitely attributes these unspiritual reasonings to unbelief. The fact is that the soul which is not yet delivered and cleansed from the remains of unbelief and the carnal mind naturally fears, and as naturally reasons, seeking to trust any subterfuge and every source of visible reliance rather than throw itself wholly on God in the simplicity of faith. Oh that we would beware of the reasonings of unbelief!

3. IT DEFEATS THE PURPOSE OF GOD. "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."—Matt. 13 : 58. "He could there do no mighty work. . . . And He marvelled because of their unbelief."—Mark 6 : 5, 6.

For some real reason God's **works of grace** are very largely, if not altogether, conditional on the faith of His children. "God does nothing," said John Wesley, "except in answer to believing prayer." This is a mystery that we may not altogether understand ; but at any rate it makes God near to us, makes Him so lovingly interested in the sons of men, that He seeks to be humbly and believingly invited. He loves to be recognised

and sought. Can anything be more disappointing to Love than that she should give her blessings and favours unsought, unrecognised, and unacknowledged?

How blessedly natural, then, that God should ask our trustful, affectionate recognition, as He lavishes all the riches of His providence and grace upon us. Oh, how we need to be awake to His love and power, to wait lovingly in eager expectation for His miraculous and gracious workings! God is good; expect then to see it. God is love; rejoice, therefore, continually in Him. God is Almighty; be surprised, then, at nothing that He can do. God is faithful; count upon Him, reckon on the certain fulfilment of His promises. Unbelief within the heart is alone responsible for the apparent silence and inactivity of our wonder-working God.

4. IT PUTS A VEIL UPON OUR HEART. "The veil is upon their heart."—2 Cor. 3 : 15.

The soul, like the body, has various senses, whereby it apprehends spiritual realities. The Word of God speaks of seeing, hearing, feeling, and tasting. The writer to the Hebrews gives as his definition of the "perfect" man one whose senses are sharpened to discern good and evil. Now unbelief—the evil principle within—puts a

veil upon the heart and dulls the spiritual sense. We cannot feel or see or hear or taste the things of eternity and God ; or, to change the metaphor, there is a paralysis in our power of appropriating deep spiritual blessings for ourselves.

Let us here remember that unbelief, which is the cause of the trouble, is not synonymous with doubt. We may have no doubt, and yet be full of unbelief, that awful inability to appropriate. Doubt is a positive thing ; unbelief is a negative evil. We may sit still, as it were, with empty hands (*i.e.*, a heart free from doubt), waiting for some blessing to reach us ; but we shall wait in vain. We need to be up and laying hold of the precious promises. The lack of this appropriating grace is unbelief. This is the veil upon the heart. It is a real thing, a real evil—the work of the devil.

Now it is as we turn to the Lord that this veil is taken away. Our senses become sensitive to spiritual things and influences. We do **taste** and see that the Lord is good ; we do **hear** His Voice out of the burning bush of His Word ; we do, with a heart made pure by faith, **see** God in nature, in Providence, in the ordinances, in His people, and in His Word ; we do **feel** His loving Presence with us ; His garments do **smell** of myrrh, aloes, and cassia. The veil is



gone and we are enabled to believe fully in Jesus.

5. IT ROBBS US OF POWER. "Why could not we cast him out? . . . Because of your unbelief."—Matt. 17: 19, 20.

Unbelief does not only rob us of spiritual joy, and act as a veil upon our hearts, obscuring the heavenly vision and dulling the heavenly sounds, but it robs us of power with God and man. We have no power to deal with the lame and halt and blind. In the early Pentecostal days, Peter was able to say to the poor cripple: "Look on us . . . such as I have I give thee" (Acts 3: 4-6). What was it that he had? Not some stock of power or holiness most assuredly (verse 12). No, he tells us that it was faith in the Name that he possessed (verse 16), and it was faith in the Name that he was able to communicate to the cripple, and faith in the Name that produced the perfect soundness in the presence of all the people.

Unbelief robs us of this most priceless thing—faith in the Name of the Lord Jesus. We don't expect God to do impossibilities. We try and struggle, and preach and pray, and even suffer; but the evil remains, the revival tarries, sinners are not getting awakened and converted, and God is

not glorified. Oh, that we may detect our subtle foe, and never rest till it is cast out for ever.

6. IT CAUSES US TO DEPART FROM GOD. “. . . an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”—Heb. 3 : 12.

How few people ever deem it strange that it is the nature of men and women, who are absolutely dependent upon their Creator every moment for their very life and existence, to turn from Him, never to inquire after Him, and to hate even to think of Him! Now for this extraordinary state of things there must be some cause. It is this. The devil has planted a poison within the very nature of man, the best name for which seems to be “unbelief.”

This, I know, conveys very little meaning to most people ; but the essence of this moral and spiritual poison is that it causes men to depart from God. It has other results, as we have seen, but the most terrible of all is that it makes us instinctively turn away all the time from our loving Heavenly Father. But we are considering it as it affects the Lord's own children.

God's purpose is that in every detail of our life we should turn to Him, and walk and talk with Him in every little path of duty and pleasure.

Alas, how easy it is for us, His children, who gladly recognise Him in the main tenor of life, to bring all the larger and more important matters for His direction, and allow Him to control the greater issues, but in little things to depart from the living God and lean to our own understanding! This comes from the remains of unbelief within, that "slowness of heart" to believe that the living God is also a loving Father Who cares for us in all the details of our life.

On all sides there are backsliders, those in whom love has grown cold, men who once ran well, but who now move on no more! Some are given over to the delusions of Christian Science. They find it easy to believe that lie of the devil, *viz.*, that everything which is more than natural is necessarily of God. Others are lost in the vortex of worldliness and materialism; others are cast down and full of despair. In each case there is a departing from the living God—His power, His love, His faith, and His grace. He is to them no longer a Living One in their midst and waiting to bless. He seems far away. The cause is that unrecognised, unacknowledged and unsuspected thing—the "evil heart of unbelief." Oh, to detect it, confess it, and cast it out and keep it out for ever!

7. IT BRINGS CONDEMNATION. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed. . . ."—John 3 : 18.

Is it any wonder that the sin which works such deadly consequences in the hearts and lives of men should bring condemnation? God does not condemn us for being evil in our natures, blind in our hearts, and dead in trespasses and sins; but "this is the condemnation, that . . . men loved darkness rather than light."

When He has provided the remedy full and free, when He has revealed it to be the remedy provided in perfect love—a remedy of power, a certain remedy, a remedy full of blessing to ourselves and others—and above all, provided, procured, and executed by a Triune God "Whose nature and Whose Name is Love," and when we on our part refuse to ask that we may receive, or seek that we may find, when we hold on still in unbelief to our own ways, when we still listen to the tempter as he whispers: "Hath God said?" and above all when we close our eyes to the efficacy of Love's mighty sacrifice on Calvary, and when, in sloth and pride, we willingly sink deeper down into the dungeon of our wicked unbelief, is it strange, or is there any wonder, that condemnation, black, dark, despairing con-

demnation, settles alike upon our hearts and spirits, till we are unable to be blessed?

Oh, that we would cry : " Lord, I believe ; help Thou mine unbelief," and never rest till all the remains of unbelief and the carnal mind are destroyed for ever by the precious blood of our most blessed Redeemer ! Amen !

*The*

*Exercise*

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## VI

### THE EXERCISE OF FAITH

**W**E come now to consider our attitude to this greatest of all mysteries—faith in the soul of man.

1. We are to RECEIVE IT. “For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” “To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”—Eph. 2 : 8 ; 2 Peter 1 : 1.

In both these passages we learn that faith is the gift of God; we are to “obtain it.” The faith that we thus receive is, as we have seen in a previous paper, the full assurance of faith given to those who act faith in the naked promise of Jehovah—the reward that He gives to those who diligently seek Him. Indeed, many call it by another name—the witness of the Spirit.

The Word of God speaks of **joy**, but also of "joy unspeakable and full of glory"; it tells us of **peace**, but also of "peace that passeth all understanding"; it reveals to us **love**, but also "love that passeth knowledge"; it talks of **hope**, but also of "the full assurance of hope"; and so too of **faith**, and "the full assurance of faith." It is this we are to receive as God's special gift, and for this we need to wait continually upon Him, expecting and believing and looking for this "precious faith" which enables us to believe consciously.

2. We are to **HOLD IT FAST**. "Holding faith, and a good conscience."—1 Tim. 1 : 19.

The Word of God continually speaks of faith as though it were a spiritual entity. And so here. The hard hand of the enemy is ever stretched forth to rob us of our confidence in God. We need to recognise this, to hold it fast, and to watch lest the foe shall take from us this priceless gift—the ability to believe utterly in Christ. It is an awful thing to let it slip, to let it run out as from a leaking vessel; to neglect to stir up the gift that is within us; to fall short of the promised rest; to so run as though there were nothing to obtain; to so fight as though we were uncertain what or how we were fighting. To hold fast then, as a



priceless treasure, the simple loving confidence in Jesus which the Holy Ghost has implanted, is our safety and our joy.

3. We are to USE IT. "Have faith in God."—  
Mark 11 : 22.

"Act faith," as our forefathers used to say. "Keep up your repeated acts of faith," said William Bramwell. I take this to mean, that our faith should be active. There is no peril more fatal to the soul than to suppose that spiritual blessing will of itself come to us, and that all we have to do is to wait for the moving of the waters. The Holy Ghost would ever stir us up to press on into deeper depths of communion. We have not merely to hold fast that which we have, but actively to exercise faith in all the saving and sanctifying power of Jesus.

"If the devil puts up a stone wall in front of us," as an old Methodist has said, "we are to believe right through it," whether the blessing we are seeking is the sanctification of our own soul, or the salvation of sinners whom the Lord has laid upon our hearts, or the solutions of some difficulty that needs to be overcome. "To receive by faith alone—this is the difficulty. We can scarcely persuade the people that God will do it." We need then to experience an active faith in

our loving God—to cry out again and again: “I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me;” to constrain Him, saying: “Abide with us;” to say: “Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.” Exercise, in mind and thought and acts of life, faith in God that every plant that He hath not planted shall be rooted up, and the fruitless fig tree shall be withered.

4. We are to PREACH IT. “Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”—Jude 3.

The preaching of faith may be called the test of true preaching. It is easy to preach repentance, and even repentance toward God; it is not difficult to exhort to entire consecration; but the ultimate test of all Scriptural preaching is the ability to declare, unfold, and enforce the simplicity of the way of faith. Without this, preaching will be vain, and there never was a day in which the so-called ways of God, other than the real way of faith, were being more plentifully and disastrously declared than now.

We would emphasise this truth: instead of proclaiming “repentance towards God and faith to our Lord Jesus Christ,” on all sides we find men preaching mere repentance and so-called “decision for Christ.” Between these two there

is a great chasm, and still greater difference. The former humbles men and exalts the Saviour ; the other glorifies the so-called dignity of human nature, and detracts from the love of God. For God's love is manifested in this, that it is toward the sinful and rebellious ; yes, " herein is love."

Moreover, if man is not a lover of sin and a rebel against God, he needs no reconciliation, no atonement and no regeneration ; but if he is, then only a coming to Christ, as a poor lost sinner, and a receiving by faith His pardon and His grace, will meet his need. It is faith **in** Him and not decision **for** Him that we need, and He demands. We believe with affectionate confidence in His blessed decision to receive us unto Himself, glad enough to forget our own decision, willingness, and determination to follow in His steps.

Such was the heart of the Psalmist when in faith he cried, "create for me (R.V. margin) a clean heart. . . . Then shall I teach transgressors Thy way . . ." Yes, the blessed way of faith in the Lord Jesus, which no man can preach unless and until he has known it for himself.

The way to preach faith is to preach in faith. "I believe in God, I believe in my message, I believe in myself," said a famous evangelist when he got up to speak. He believed in himself as

God's chosen messenger for that particular meeting ; if he did not, he had no right to speak at all. He spake with authority because he believed he had a Divine Master, a Divine message, a Divine commission ! And yet of course this is not all.

In the second place we need to have our souls so filled with the sweetness and simplicity of the way of faith ourselves that our word shall be in the demonstration of the Holy Ghost. So shall we declare the way of faith with effective results. How many are treading the wearisome treadmill of repentance and consecration, earnest endeavour and devoted zeal, but, alas ! know not the true way of faith that sets them free from the sin and doubt and fear and distrust and suspicion, and all the misery and mental solicitude that this means to the unenlightened heart !

5. We are to FOLLOW AFTER IT. "Whose faith follow."—Heb. 13 : 7. "Follow after . . . faith."—1 Timothy 6 : 11.

Though we have obtained this priceless gift we need to follow on. It is this progress that, alas ! is so sadly lacking in the lives of God's children. There are many things that will help us as we aim at following on, but one of the most helpful is to listen to the voices of those, who being dead

yet speak—to consider the faith of those who have gone before.

The 11th chapter of Hebrews was penned for this very purpose. And, in addition to these heroes of faith given to us in the inspired page, the lives of modern saints may be an unspeakable blessing to our souls. The greatest blessings that I have received have been through the perusal of the biographies of such saints as Fletcher of Madeley, William Carvosso, Mrs H. A. Rogers, and William Bramwell. Perhaps no man has been more distinguished for continual progress in the way of faith than the last-named. His biographer says: "He put all his powers on full stretch, to 'increase with the increase of God,' and enjoy as much as he could of heaven upon earth. . . . His faith was strong, and kept in constant exercise. He believed all the promises of God, and laboured by incessant prayer to realise them. . . ."

Let us then follow after faith by considering Christ in such as these. Their fulness of joy, their prevailing prayer, their triumph of evangelism, their power to lead others into this land of promise, were all the results of faith in God. Oh that we might follow after faith, looking continually unto its Author and Finisher, the Lord Jesus Christ!

6. We are to PRAY IN IT. "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them."—Mark 11 : 24, R.V.

Prayer in faith is not faith in prayer. "The prayer of faith shall save"; or, as the Japanese version has it: "The prayer that proceedeth forth from faith." There is a great difference between the prayer of desire and the prayer of faith, and though earnest desire is a true element of prayer, yet the prayer of desire itself will produce nothing. It is not until the prayer of desire passes into the prayer of faith that we shall obtain what we seek. "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing!" is a solemn warning indeed.

It is moreover a solemn fact of experience that if the prayer of desire does not pass into the prayer of faith, the very desire to pray slowly but surely ebbs away. Prayer is a blessed stimulus to faith. Solitary prayer and united prayer with real believing and expectant souls tend to create an atmosphere of faith within. Alas, how many of our prayer-meetings are destitute of that holy expectancy of faith! And so nothing is accomplished, nothing done!

It is as we wait upon God, using the little faith we have, that He will enable us to renew our strength; we shall gradually mount up on the wings of faith as eagles, and find, not only all the world and its vanity, but also all inward doubt, and fear, and darkness, and uncertainty, beneath our feet.

7. We are to BUILD UP OURSELVES ON IT.

“Building up yourselves on your most holy faith.”—Jude 20.

“Building up yourselves on your most holy faith” (Jude 20). The foundation of everything has to be faith in God—our singing, and praying, and preaching, our worship, our service, our daily work, and every detail of life,—the faith that continually dares to believe that God accepts all we offer. As we consciously put all on the altar, we believe that God accepts, and receives, and seals. It is this faith that brought the joy and assurance of his favour.

This is the faith that God acknowledges and to which He responds; and it is the faith that we daily need, as we seek to present the sacrifice of praise and worship to God. To live, believing that He sees, and hears, and accepts, and is pleased with these our sacrifices, brings Heaven below. If every little thing, every little act of

service is consciously offered, and by faith consciously recognised as accepted by God, we shall assuredly live in Heaven, and all we do that is thus built on our most holy faith will abide for ever.

How often the foundation of our life in many details is self-complacency, selfish zeal, the consciousness of success, or the desire for a name—how often these corrupting elements are mixed with what we do, and pray, and preach, and suffer! But when purifying faith, the “affectionate confidence” in our God that everything we do is accepted by Him, is uppermost in our spiritual experience and the foundation of our building, it shall all abide the fire that is to test every man’s work of what sort it is.

There is a dangerous mysticism abroad in the present day. Now mysticism has much that is blessed and profitable to our souls but it also has much that is dangerous. To put its danger in a nutshell, mysticism gives very little place to faith as we understand it. The mystic expects to receive blessing, not by faith, but by so-called waiting for revelations and experiences. This is both dangerous and unscriptural.

It is true that St Paul, as “one born out of due time,” being the type of the Jewish people, who are to be born in a day at the revelation



of Christ Jesus from heaven, was not brought to Christ through faith ; though he was of course saved by grace, and not by works, yet he was converted to God by direct revelation. Christ himself was manifested to him on the way to Damascus. And yet this very man was afterwards the great apostle of faith.

Indeed I think it would not be too much to say that, if we eliminated St Paul's Epistles, it would be difficult to find a **clear** statement of justification by faith in the other portions of the New Testament Scriptures. He was above all things the apostle of faith ; his Gospel was the Gospel of salvation through faith. Enough has been said in the foregoing pages to show that, by faith, an easy-going "believism" is not meant, and also that faith in the written promise, in the shed blood, and in a living Christ, does not exclude or dispense with an eager, expectant and yet patient waiting before God.

We must take heed that we do build all upon faith, that we receive by faith, and live by faith, and walk by faith, and pray in faith ; for this and this alone is God's way for our souls, and it is this that brings us peace and joy, and with these the reality and fulness of God's salvation.

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## VII

### THE WORK (INWARD) OF FAITH

**I**N the first chapter, in which we dealt with the Nature of faith, we saw that one of its most important aspects was its twofold character. To quote once again that remarkable woman, Mrs Hester Ann Rogers: "I believe the Scriptures mention two degrees of faith—the first, that which embraces and relies on promises because made by a faithful God, Who is able and willing to save; and secondly, the full assurance of faith, or the witness of the Spirit. The latter I believe to be the immediate gift of God, but promised and always given in consequence of the former."

Now, in speaking of the work of faith we mean it in both these degrees—the "**act** of faith" that rests in the naked promise and brings the soul into the varied experience of which we shall speak; and secondly, the "**state** of faith" that keeps it in the enjoyment of the grace thus received.

Furthermore, we may note that the sevenfold work of faith, which is our subject now, will rather concern the inward operation in the soul, and not the work it may accomplish in God's service such as is described in Heb. 11. We limit therefore our consideration to the inward results of a living faith.

John Wesley, after thirteen years of rigid and earnest ritualism, when he first met the saintly Moravian, Peter Böhler, and was just beginning to emerge into the light of true salvation, said: "Böhler amazed me more and more by the account he gave of the fruits of faith—the love, holiness, and happiness that he affirmed to attend it." And it is of these that we will speak.

1. IT JUSTIFIES THE SOUL. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God . . . we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand."—Rom. 5 : 1-2.

There is perhaps nothing more deadly, in the matter of our justification before God, than to mistake a correct and orthodox notion and doctrinal understanding for the living faith of the heart. We may well pause and examine ourselves, whether we are in the faith or not—the faith that gives access into the grace wherein we stand?

Or are we merely relying on the grace without having any real access into it or any true enjoyment of it?

Says William Law in this connection: "The head can as easily amuse itself with a living and justifying faith in the blood of Jesus, as with any other notion; and the heart, which you suppose to be a place of security, as being the seat of self-love, is more deceitful than the head." These are searching words indeed! Assuredly the faith that justifies is not a cold doctrinal thing, but that warm and loving confidence of the heart that feels its burden and makes a full surrender to the One from Whom it has so "deeply revolted" (Isa. 31:6).

There is no sweeter picture of justifying faith to be found in the Scriptures than in Luke 7. Faith in silent weeping penitence is beautiful indeed! Oblivious alike of the dainties of the table, the splendour of the house, the scorn of the guests, yea, and even of her own unworthiness and sin in some degree, here is one lost in wonder, love, and praise at the grace of her Lord and Saviour. The faith that brought the woman there was sweeter far to the compassionate Christ than all the courteous condescension of His host and the bounty of his table. Yes! perhaps the greatest work that faith can do is to bring the

guilty, fearful, selfish soul to the feet of its reconciling Redeemer.

In these days, when salvation by character is so blatantly proclaimed from many pulpits, we need to emphasise this word. Character deep and true can only be based on forgiveness. "He that is forgiven much loveth much." And what is love, when analysed, but humility towards ourselves, gratitude towards God, sympathy towards our brother, yea, to all. Blessed trinity of grace! He that is forgiven by grace is ever humble, is ever grateful and ever sympathetic to others who need forgiveness as much as himself. Oh, that we would live and move and have our very being in this blessed sphere of forgiveness!

We are "forgiven men." Away then with pride! Away with self-complacency! Away for ever with selfishness and contempt of others! We are "forgiven men." Faith believes it, sees it, feels it, appropriates it, and bows us in the dust at our Redeemer's feet, with a continual sound of praise on our lips. Bless God! His way is best; and we would not have it otherwise. There was a time when we desired to be saved by our own efforts, but not now. The pathway of forgiveness has been so sweet and tender. Glory to His Holy Name! Amen.

2. IT SANCTIFIES THE HEART. "Purifying their hearts by faith." "Sanctified by faith that is in Me."—Acts 15:9; 26:18.

We have not long been brought out of Egypt, and set free from its bondage, and felt the stirrings of a new life and love in God, before our confidence is mixed with fear, our assurance with doubt, our faith with unbelief; and a whole host of inward foes, that we had supposed were slain, reappear. We are out of Egypt, but we are in the wilderness! Murmuring, doubt, lust, covetousness, and worst of all, wicked unbelief assure us only too well that we are not as yet come into the land of our full inheritance.

"Until you are renewed," says William Law, "in the spirit of your mind, your virtues are only as it were taught practices grafted upon a corrupt bottom. Everything that you do will be a mixture of good and evil; your humility will help you to pride; your charity to others will give nourishment to your self-love; and as your prayers increase, so will the opinion of your own sanctity; because till the heart is purified to the bottom, and has felt the axe at the root of the evil, (which cannot be done by outward instruction), everything, that proceeds from it, partakes of its impurity and corruption."

But the remedy is at hand. The blood of Christ, the Word of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, are sufficient to deal with the most inveterate of our foes. On our side is faith, first as an **act** resting on the naked promises of Jehovah, and next as a gracious **state**—the gift of God, the witness of the Spirit, inwrought by the “very God of peace” Himself.

We cannot then discover, either in the Word of God or in the experiences of the brightest saints, any other remedy that will effectually purify the heart from indwelling sin than faith in the precious blood of Jesus. Before it—“faith, mighty faith,” persistent and unwavering—the stoutest, strongest inward enemy shall be put to flight and destroyed for ever! Hallelujah! “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”

Oh, let us emphasise it again—faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. There is no other way, for the blood of Christ which has been shed, to be made efficacious to the soul, except by faith. Only so can we feed on His flesh and drink His blood. John Smith, that mighty man of power, in the early days of last century, said: “Never have I felt more urgently my need of the blood of Christ than now, **and never have I been able to make more use of it.**”



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Blessed words! Do we know this secret of feeding by faith on the death of Christ, and consciously believing, so that we do find our hearts "sprinkled from an evil conscience," *i.e.*, a consciousness of evil—a positive experience of inward purity of heart? Do we know how to make use of the blood of Christ, not once merely at our conversion or occasionally, but here and now, always, constantly and consciously.

Another saint of a later day, Mr Reginald Radcliffe, once wrote home to his wife as follows: "I feel as if my soul had been bitten and stung by Satan, and that his venomous tongue had saturated every inmost recess of my soul with his poisonous essence of gall. Nothing but the miraculous cleansing, living, and life-giving blood of Jesus can cleanse me. I am Satanically infused. Nothing but the Lord Jesus dipping me in His blood can cleanse me. Thanks though! Yea! let the caverns of hell hear me shout as devils fly in impotence. His blood is a million times too strong for them. What safety! What a tower! The waves had as well give over beating it."

Is this the language of all our hearts? Can we too sing:

"A heart by blood made clean  
In every wish and thought,  
A heart that by God's power has been  
Into subjection brought.

To walk, to weep, to sing  
Within the light of heaven :  
This is the blessing, Saviour King,  
That thou to me hast given !”

Praise God if we can! And let us say it again, at the risk of being wearisome, that faith is the instrument in purifying our hearts. God does it; the blood of Christ does it; the Holy Ghost does it; but in the last analysis it is the hand of faith that appropriates the gift. “Who are these,” cried John, “in white robes, and whence came they?” “These are they,” replied the elder, “who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

Yes, the precious cleansing stream was not their own suffering in the great tribulation, but the blood of the Lamb. God gave the fountain; Christ brought it down from Heaven to earth; the Holy Ghost stands at our side, ever ready to help us; but we, like those saints themselves, have to appropriate and apply, believe and receive, and stretch forth the hand of faith, and so cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Amen.

3. IT PRODUCES A REAL UNION WITH CHRIST.

“I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me :  
and the life that I now live in the flesh I  
live by the faith of the Son of God.”—  
Gal. 2 : 20.

At no stage in our Christian experience can we dispense with faith. Even the soul that is justified and the heart that is purified do not *unconsciously* grow into union with Christ Jesus. Many, it is true, who have been justified by faith, are struggling in vain to realise and experience a practical union with the Lord, without ever seeking to know the entire purification of the heart through the precious blood. But, on the other hand, there is the danger of regarding the justification of the soul and the purification of the heart by faith as finalities. This is, of course, full of danger. It takes the eye off Christ and Him alone. But true faith sees that these are but the preparation for a practical union with the Lord Himself.

There is much talk about the unconscious progress in the Divine life by growth. But the Apostle tells us that the life he now lives, he lives not by growth, but by faith—the faith of the Son of God—the very same faith as that by which He walked in fellowship with His Father, a faith

inwrought by the Holy Ghost. Now, a heart that is "believing, true, and clean" will go on to identify its desires and plans and purposes and will with those of its living Lord. And this will be by faith—a conscious acting of faith in the promises of God, whereby alone we can inherit the Divine nature, and whereby, as we have seen, we can cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Only thus shall we receive that Divine and inward assurance

"Which whosoe'er receives  
The witness in himself he hath,  
And consciously believes."

"I could write it twenty times over," said William Bramwell, "that strong faith and continual prayer are productive of every result."

#### 4. IT BRINGS VICTORY OVER THE WORLD.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—I John 5 : 4.

There is still more that faith in God will do for us. Justifying, purifying, uniting us to the Saviour, it ensures for us victory over the glamour of the world. How does faith work in this matter? Perhaps a simple illustration from childhood will best explain. Two of the most exciting amusements in our Christmas holidays were the Christmas tree and the old-fashioned

bran-pie. The former impressed us as being indescribably splendid, with its candles and its decorations of gold and silver tinsel, its beads and its baubles. The latter was at first a very uninteresting affair. I often think of these in connection with the lesson of faith.

The world, with its glitter and gaiety, its literature and art and fashion, is bewitching the souls of multitudes; on the other hand, Christ and His Word, having no beauty that we should desire Him, without form or comeliness, are despised and rejected of men. How can faith help us here? How can she wean our hearts from the glitter and folly of sin and the world? She can dip her hand into the Word of the living God and draw out from its treasures things new and old. She can extract from what appears to the worldling nothing but the dullest and most uninteresting of commonplaces, the sweetest and most precious experiences, which make the world and its follies appear as the tinsel on last year's Christmas tree. That is victory over the world.

But there is another victory yet. Alas, the world does not only bewitch and ensnare, it terrifies. When once the soul has escaped from the snare of the fowler, seen the vanity of the world, and fled to Him who is the only refuge of the needy, the world begins to frighten and

persecute. But the Lord says: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Faith lays hold of the victory already won, dares to believe, and so conquers in His name. Hallelujah! Oh, let us bring our worldliness, our love of it, and fear of it to Him, confess it, sorrow over it in His presence, and then believe Him to the uttermost.

5. IT QUENCHES THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED. "Taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked—Eph. 6 : 16.

When a man sets himself to believe God, the devil will use all his powers to hinder and frustrate. Consecration, prayer, and service even will pass unchallenged, but let a man begin to believe God and lay hold of His promises by faith, and the adversary will mightily attack.

Mrs Rogers writes in this connection: "You say: 'I cannot believe till these doubts are cleared up.' Here is another device of Satan: your doubts cannot be removed till you do believe. Faith only is able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Only believe, and you shall be saved from all your doubts. Meridian evidence shall put them all to flight. Cast your soul, your unbelief, your inbred sin, your all into the fountain of His blood, the depths of His love."

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The enemy's fiery darts are not the temptations that come from the world and the flesh. They are chiefly fear and suspicion and unbelief. These are fiery indeed to the cleansed and anointed soul. They are full of the very fire of hell. Faith in God and His love, and in the power of the precious blood, is the only shield that shall quench these fiery missiles. But faith is sufficient. Hallelujah!

6. IT BRINGS JOY UNSPEAKABLE. “. . . Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”—1 Peter 1 : 8.

Fulness of joy is the Christian's strength. Nothing is so convincing, convicting, and converting as holy joy! “Rejoice, evermore,” “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice,” “Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation”—these and many other Scriptures enjoin and promise fulness of joy to the Christian. How can our disappointed, tired hearts be in a fervour of rejoicing evermore when failure, sin, and sorrow abound? The secret is here: “Whom BELIEVING ye rejoice,” “peace and joy in believing.” But it has to be real believing, an active, conscious thing, no limp and listless “supposing that He is in the company.” If we “suppose that He is the gardener,” instead of

“knowing Him (by faith) to be the Lord,” how can we rejoice?

I was once much encouraged by the command: “Rejoice in the Lord.” It had always seemed to me that joy ought to be a spontaneous thing, that needed no command. But St Paul knew well enough that true joy comes by believing, and not in the first instance by spontaneous emotion. Hence he urges us to stir up the gift of God that is in us by the exercise of faith. There is no joy that is permanent and abiding save that which comes from believing!

O Lord, increase our faith in Thee and in Thy precious blood! Fill us continually with loving confidence in Thee! Without it we can have no true joy or abiding peace. Cast out and eradicate for ever all unbelief and wicked distrust and suspicion of Thyself. Amen.

7. IT ENSURES THE FINAL SALVATION OF THE SOUL. “. . . the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”—I Peter 1:9.

We would emphasise here that it is not the doctrine of final perseverance that ensures the final salvation of the soul, but a living faith in Christ. We fear that very many are resting in a doctrine and not in the Lord Himself. This is



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one of the subtlest snares of the enemy. We have continual need of examining ourselves as to whether we are in the faith that saves the soul. The hard hand of the enemy is ever stretched out to rob us of our prize! We are all the time in an enemy's country. This world is no friend to grace!

The only thing that will give us a pentecostal and triumphant death-bed will be "the mystery of faith in a pure conscience"—a living, glowing faith in Christ Himself and His finished work! Oh may our faith "grow exceedingly!" May we go on from faith to faith, till we that have believed do enter into our final and perfected rest, and faith is lost in sight of the glory that shall be revealed!

*The*

*Work*

*(Outward)*

*of*

*Faith*

## VIII

### THE WORK (OUTWARD) OF FAITH

**N**OW faith is not content with a work within the soul—saving, cleansing, strengthening, rejoicing the heart. It goes out to others. It stirs up the mind, will, and affections to labour for the lost. It achieves mighty triumphs; does great things; secures wonderful results; causes God to move and work in answer to prayer.

We need above all things to beware of that religion which nurses itself, and spends its time in seeking new and strange experiences, or talks of giving all its time to prayer and intercession. The men who have been mightiest in prayer and intercession have been mightiest in work and service — Luther, Knox, Brainerd, Bramwell, Wesley, George Müller, Hudson Taylor, and many others.

True faith, then, will stir up our hearts to labour for men, and though every believer will speak of himself as nought, recognise that God

is the Doer, and say like the servant in the parable ; “ It is not I, or my working, Lord, it is **Thy** Pound that hath gained Five Pounds ” ; yet God replies : “ Well done, good and faithful servant, **thou** hast been faithful.”

I. PREACHING CHRIST THROUGH FAITH. “ By faith, Noah being warned of God . . . moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.”—Heb. 11 : 7.

It is blessed to know that we ourselves are saved by faith, but many, alas! stand still at that, and are satisfied with this meagre experience ; meagre, I say, for surely we are saved to serve. It is our business to bring others to Christ, and this will only be through faith. When the four friends brought the palsied man to the Lord, He seeing **their** faith said unto the man, “ Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.”

Noah, by faith, was warned of God ; by faith he prepared an ark for the saving of his house. Bless God, we have no need to prepare an ark ; we have but to proclaim a prepared salvation and a ready Christ, and then persuade and “ compel them to come in.” This we can only do as **faith in a present Saviour**, and a coming judgment, moves our hearts to feel, our tongues to speak, and all we have to labour for the salvation of men.

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Do we believe in a wrath to come, that men love sin, and are rebels against a holy God? Do we believe with feeling and conviction that Christ is ready and willing and able and waiting to save? Such a faith will constrain us to seek the souls of men. Are we warned of God through faith, or are we waiting for some special call, or wave of emotion, or vision of angels? Surely not! God has spoken; His Word is plain; our duty is to believe His warning; men are perishing; there **is** a wrath to come; Judgment **is** certain. Faith hears it, ponders over it, believes it, and thrusts us out to proclaim the message.

I know of a Japanese whose hands were stained with human blood. As the law in Japan does not allow of capital punishment for any under 20 years of age, he was sentenced to 25 years' penal servitude. After attempting to escape, and so getting another 10 years added to his term of imprisonment, he was converted to God some 9 years later. Wonderfully blessed of God, he committed the whole New Testament to memory during the remaining 16 years of his imprisonment—the additional 10 years were subsequently remitted. But, better still, his heart was burdened for the lost estate of his fellow-prisoners. The mighty power of faith in God—His judgments, His mercies, and His promises—stirred his heart

to labour for the lost. Before his discharge from prison, many had found peace with God, and some 200 were reading their Bibles and seeking the Saviour.

2. OBEDIENCE THROUGH FAITH. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out . . . went out not knowing whither he went."—Heb. 11:8.

Called to go out; to launch out into the deep; to take a new step in life; to leave all; to move forward into the unknown; to burn the bridges behind him; to sever all connection with all he held dear, whether of place or people! How can he do it?

Such is God's purpose for us too, to go into new service; to push out and on. Alas, how often we stand still and idle, never expecting to be thrust out into new places of victory and trial. How can we respond when God does call? Only as faith in us "looks for a city whose builder and maker is God"; "seeks a better country"; looks at "things to come"; and "has respect unto the recompense of reward"; aims at "a better resurrection"; and looks steadily unto "Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith."

The heart of the Christian rejoices as he reads

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of God's victories in foreign lands—the revivals in Korea, Uganda, China, Manchuria, and other parts of the earth, and delights in the names of Gilmour, Morrison, Brainerd, Livingstone, Paton, Hudson Taylor, Judson, and many another mighty leader, who, like Abraham, "went forth not knowing whither he went," saw the call and the promise of God, and went in the power of faith.

God will choose us if we choose Him. Shall we say: "May I go?" not: "Must I go?" Look at the need; look at the harvest. Don't call it plough-land, or field for sowing. Christ calls it **harvest**. He told His disciples to pray God that He would send forth labourers—not to plough or sow—but to the **harvest**. Does your eye of faith see so far? Do you believe that it can be harvest? Is faith working in your heart this very moment? Don't say you are waiting for a call. Let faith stretch out her hand to God, and when He says "Who will go for Us?" say, "Here am I, send me." Look on the fields; believe Him when He tells you they are "white already unto harvest." Don't expect to go forth sowing or ploughing, but expect to reap.

Believe God! Faith will move His hand and heart and ear. Be insistent, be urgent! Be

bold in your believing! Oh, in your little way and sphere, be an Abraham, a father of many! Why not? Oh, why not? He encourages you to believe. It was faith that worked in Abraham's heart, making the promise vivid and clear; shutting his eyes to the near and the present; illuminating the unseen and the future; and revealing to him the joy and the glory of trusting and obeying his God.

3. BLESSING OTHERS BY FAITH. "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff."—Heb. 11:21.

When a man draws near to the article of death, he is generally concerned with his passing through the Valley, but not so Jacob. We read that he worshipped leaning on the top of his staff. Faith had brought him to that place. None can worship truly, unless they are satisfied and at rest. Jacob was there, and being there, found his heart "at leisure from itself" to think of others. But faith led him further still. It showed him that it was wonderfully possible to bring down blessing upon others through the prayer of faith. He did not merely pray; he **believed** for others, and opened the windows of heaven for them; he blessed them. This is



our business too, but it needs **careful attention to the voice of God.**

I have a friend who not long ago came to me in some trouble. For months he had, so he told me, the weightiest burden of prayer for others. Morning by morning he would rise at four o'clock, and in the greatest agony of feeling plead with God for the salvation of men. This had suddenly left him. He was in no sense out of communion with God ; he was still earnest and whole-hearted, but he no longer had the burden he once knew. I bade him not to be discouraged, and suggested that God was leading him in different paths. I gave him some personal experience of my own.

I have found very often that God, in leading me out in prayer for others, has spoken very gently to my heart. Had I been inattentive to His voice or waited for some special upheaval, or looked for a display of spiritual pyrotechnics, or sought for "a coat of many colours," I should have failed the Lord, and achieved nothing. As it is, I have found again and again that, when He has quietly laid some soul on my heart, and I have quietly responded by the prayer of faith, He has first given me the assurance, and then answered my petition ; the blessing has been given and souls have been set at liberty.

How often from the pages of Scripture do we find God's mightiest acts arising from small events and trifling causes! A little oil and meal provide food for the widow and the prophet; a little captive child brings life and healing to the leader of a host; a lad unarmed, save with a sling and a stone, brings salvation to his country; a little pot of oil brings relief to another in bankruptcy and distress. Abundance of rain descends through a cloud no larger than a man's hand; four lepers save a city; God Incarnate comes as a little Babe; a star heralds the birth of the Son of God; five loaves and two fishes feed a multitude; the King's entry to His capital is on a colt the foal of an ass.

Faith sees these things, lays hold of God's promises, and so accomplishes mighty things. If we would bring blessing upon others, it must be through a faith such as this. That spiritual instinct, an inwrought faith, working in the one who, worshipping, waits on God, will enable him to bring down blessing upon the souls of men. Wonderful power! Wonderful privilege! Wonderful folly that we are so slow to exercise this gracious ministry!

4. FINANCING THROUGH FAITH. "By faith Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."  
—Heb. 11 : 26.

Men of the world understand nothing of the language of Canaan ; spiritual religion is to them all moonshine ; but they *do* comprehend the almighty dollar. Now true faith teaches us two lessons with regard to money.

In the first place, it counts the riches of Egypt of but little value. Moses, we here read, held in his grasp position, pleasure, and gold, those three great baubles for which the worldling lives and dies. He possessed them ; they were his, but he held them of no account, and deliberately put them aside. Faith takes no account of such things, for she has other treasures in view. Every spiritual Christian acts so. Says John Wesley in this connection :—

"The case stands with us at present thus : I fear wherever riches have increased—exceeding few are the exceptions—the essence of religion, the mind that was in Christ, has decreased in the same proportion. I do not see how it is possible in the nature of things for any revival of true religion to continue long, for religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality,

and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches. How then is it possible that the religion of the heart, though it flourishes like a green bay-tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionately increase in pride, anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away.

“Is there no way to prevent this—this constant decline of pure religion? We ought not to forbid people to be diligent and frugal; we must exhort all Christians to gain all they can and to save all they can; *i.e.* in effect, to grow rich. What way, then I ask again, can we take that our money may not sink us to the nethermost hell? There is one way, and there is no other under heaven. If those who **gain** all they can, and **save** all they can, will likewise **give** all they can, then the more they gain, the more they will grow in grace, and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven.”

But faith teaches us another lesson, for, though we are delivered from the love of gold, we yet have to use and handle it as good stewards of

God. In finance, therefore, faith will often lead us out to do mighty things. The autobiography of George Müller abounds in such instances. The history of the China Inland and other Missions tells us the same tale—The God who fed Elijah by the ravens and the brook is just the same to-day. Few things make the Lord more real to us than, when in faith we can trust Him to supply us with the needed resources. One man sarcastically remarked that when a man begins to live a life of *faith*, he soon gets to living by *hope*, and ends by living on *charity*. This may be a clever epigram, but, thanks be to God, it is egregiously untrue.

In Japan I knew of one recently brought to Christ; he was a poor miner, overworked and underpaid. Ill-instructed in the things of God, he yet sought the Lord in his trouble, though sorely tempted to go back into the ways of sin which appeared to pay him better than the paths of righteousness. God graciously spoke to his heart through Matt. 6 : 25, 26. This single word wrought faith within. He believed, waited, and expected in peace of heart.

Not many days had passed—days of severe want—when his wife was called to see a friend. She donned the one and only tidy garment she had, left to her some years before by a dying

relative in the far-off island of Formosa. She only wore it on state occasions. On her way it rained heavily; and she was soon wet through. When she reached her destination the collar of her best gown had lost all its stiffening and had collapsed. Sitting down to unstitch the offending piece, she discovered that three \$5.00 Bills of old Formosan currency had been used as stiffening for the collar.

She could scarce believe her eyes, while her husband told her they were of no value. This proved incorrect, and they were soon rejoicing in what was to them the large sum of \$15.00; and, what gave them greater joy still, in the fact that God had fulfilled His promise, answered their prayer of faith, and been mindful of His own. In gratitude they gave handsomely back to God of what they had received. Who will say that Elijah's God is not just the same to-day! Years before they needed the money, God had prepared it for them.

Another instance comes to mind. I was once much impressed during prayer to send the sum of, I think, £3, 4s. 6d. (I forget the actual amount of odd pence) from Japan to a man in England of whose work I had read, but whom I had never met, and to whom I had never sent anything heretofore. The oddness of the amount was so

strange that I wrote a covering letter asking if he was in need of that particular amount. In the course of a few weeks, I received a reply gratefully acknowledging my gift, and saying that some three or four months previously they were sorely in need of £40 which had to be paid by a certain date. As the day drew near, they received in answer to prayer a cheque for nearly that amount. It came from abroad ; but after it had been cashed, owing to the loss on exchange, it was still further reduced, and they were therefore short of the needed sum by exactly the amount of my gift, which the next mail brought to them with my letter !

Some years ago on my way to the hills for rest and change, I drew from my bank the sum of £15—all that I then had, together with another £10 which a lady had asked me to draw from her account at the same bank—£25 in all. On my way, my pocket was picked, and I lost the whole amount. Several weeks had to elapse before our remittance was due, and I had but a few shillings in my pocket. My wife and I were very kindly invited to spend our holidays as guests with the lady whose £10 had disappeared with my money. So God temporarily provided.

We left the matter in His hands in prayer, but failed to recover the stolen money ; about five

weeks later I received a letter from a friend who said that he was much impressed of the Lord to send me a cheque for £25, "for my own personal needs, and not for the work." As far as I could gather, the Lord was putting it into the heart of His servant 10,000 miles away to supply my need at the very time that the devil was putting it into the heart of his servant to pick my pocket.

Such experiences make God very real to our hearts, and bring glory to His covenant-keeping Name. The man of God who is filled with faith takes no account of wealth, for he has been delivered from its love, but in the handling of it, whether he be rich or poor, he will learn something of the romance of trusting his Heavenly Father.

5. CONSECRATION THROUGH FAITH. "By faith Abraham . . . offered up Isaac."—Heb. 11:17.

This is one of the greatest works that faith can do. We read that Christ offered Himself to God "through the Eternal Spirit"—not in His own strength, but through faith in dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Mrs. Phoebe Palmer, in recounting her experience of seeking and finding an uttermost



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salvation, tells how she was enabled to lay all upon the altar, and then dare to believe that whatever touched the altar was holy. The struggle was not easy. Things she had given to God in name only, she was now enabled to surrender in reality. As the peace of God flooded her heart, the Holy Ghost seemed to say, Is not this full salvation? Was it not through Me that you were enabled to offer all? Could you have done it in your own strength? She at once realised that it was through the Eternal Spirit that she was able even to offer all.

Now to effect this, the Holy Ghost strengthens the heart to believe, as did Abraham of old. To believe—that is to surrender to Eternal Love, to certain Faithfulness, and Omnipotent Power. This is easy! This is sure! This is safe! The Holy Ghost strengthens us in the inner man, so that Christ **dwells in our hearts by faith.**

Thirteen years ago, in a Japanese city far removed from trains and traffic, a very little company of Japanese, after a series of solemn meetings, sought God far into the night. They sought with tears and earnest entreaties. As the night was passing into dawn, the Holy Spirit came upon them, consuming the sacrifice, as they dared to believe that all was offered and accepted. Faith did the work; they believed in the precious

blood, the Mighty God, and Him that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. The Lord came suddenly to His temple in answer to believing prayer. The sacrifice was acceptable and accepted because offered in faith on the altar. From that day forward has God given them a hundredfold, made them winners of souls, and crowned their ministry with joy, even as He did to Abraham of old.

6. WAITING FOR CHRIST'S APPEARING BY FAITH. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death."—Heb. 11 : 5.

These are remarkable words; what follows explains them in some measure, though not altogether. He walked with God by faith, and by faith he so pleased God that he was counted worthy of being translated, so that he should not see death. No subject occupies the heart of the earnest believer in these days more seriously than the coming again of the Lord Jesus. Most of His children realise that the day draweth nigh, when His people shall be caught up to be for ever with the Lord.

Has faith aught to do with it? I think it has. We are not told much of Enoch, except that his preaching was on this wondrous theme, the coming to earth again of the Lord with ten thousands of His saints. There must have

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been wonderful light in those early days. This was the theme nearest his heart, and in his walking with God, he learned of "the glorious appearing" of the Lord Jesus. Here in the Hebrew Epistle we read that it was on account of his faith that he was translated.

I know one who was much troubled on this matter. He wondered with fear whether at the Lord's appearing he should be accounted worthy to be taken up, and so stand before the Son of Man. As he brought the matter before the Lord in prayer, and waited before Him, again and again came the words, "Believe in Me"; "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me"; "Woman, believe Me"; and "Only believe." As he still further waited upon the Lord to know how these words could in any sense answer his difficulty, the Spirit seemed to reply, "Is not the Lord Jesus more eager to take thee to Himself than thou art to go? Be not so concerned with thy worthiness or unworthiness, as with His desire to make and keep and to find thee ready. Oh, believe in Him, and His desire for thee. Let this blessed faith both purify and comfort thee. 'Fear not, only believe.'" At once the burden lifted and he was able to rejoice in believing.

Yes, it is this faith in Christ that lifts us up

to walk with Him in happy obedience. By faith we walk with Him; by faith we please Him; and so through faith that worketh in us all the needed preparation for His appearing, shall we be translated to be for ever with the Lord.

7. ENDURANCE THROUGH FAITH. "By faith Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."—Heb. 11 : 25.

Ability to suffer is perhaps the highest point in Christian experience. In Heb. 11 : 33-38 we find the progress of the soul described in four triplets, all in an ascending scale.

*Triplet I* speaks of the subduing of the kingdom of our heart, working righteousness, and obtaining the promised blessings by faith. Verse 33.

*Triplet II* speaks of defensive warfare, overcoming the devil, our great enemy, by faith. Verses 33-34.

*Triplet III* speaks of offensive warfare, getting strong, waxing valiant in fight, putting to flight the armies of aliens—yea, being more than conquerors, by faith. Verse 34.

*Triplet IV* speaks of victory in suffering for His Name, by faith. Verses 35-38.

A vivid transparent assurance in our soul

enables us to bear suffering for His sake. May it be ours ; may all we do and suffer, be through the power of faith in Jesu's Name, Jesu's Blood, and Jesus Himself, the living mighty Saviour. It is this faith that God honours, counts it as righteousness, and in response thereto sends the power, the joy, and the love into our hearts which will enable us to endure suffering for His dear sake. St Paul, in writing to Timothy, speaks thus : "I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee . . . wherefore, stir up the gift of God which is in thee . . . power and love and discipline . . . and be a partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel." The sequence of thought is very plain. In order to partake boldly of suffering for Christ's sake, Timothy had to stir up the gift of love, power, and a sound mind, which he possessed. **Faith** alone could do this. Yes, Timothy, like the Old Testament heroes, learned to endure suffering through the power of faith.

These are some of the mighty works of faith. May the Holy Ghost strengthen us too in the inner man to believe God unto an uttermost salvation, and so do wonders in His name!

*The*

*Results*

*of*

*Faith*

## IX

### THE RESULTS OF FAITH

**T**HE results of believing in Jesus are so wonderful that we devote another chapter to this gracious theme at the risk of repeating what has been already said. To unfold them we will consider together seven of the great promises made by the Lord to those who will believe in Him:—

- I. "HE THAT **BELIEVETH** IN ME SHALL NOT ABIDE IN DARKNESS."—St John 12 : 46.

How many souls are to-day in utter darkness! They know not whither they are going! There is no light ahead; all is dark. They are in darkness as to their own present need and danger. Still more desperate is their case, because, in the words of the Lord Jesus, "they love darkness rather than light." They do not want to know their true situation; they love to be in ignorance of their true state; like the

ostrich they hide their heads in the sands of worldliness and folly, or are deceived with self-satisfaction and complacency.

He that believeth in the Lord Jesus shall not abide in darkness; He that **believeth**, not he that determineth, willeth or struggleth. No! No! Blessed words, he that without fear or doubt will in simplicity cast himself on the Saviour, shall know all about his own desperate case, know it not in fearfulness or condemnation, not in terror of the condemnation of God, but in self-abasement, and in the "mystic joys of penitence." Bless God for such a salvation!

Have we such a faith? Does our believing do this for us? If not, why not? God's promises stand true; there is no mistake there; the fault lies with our kind of believing.

I well remember a young man who came into our Mission-hall at Kobe some years since. He had never heard of God; the name of Jesus to him was unknown. In curiosity he wandered in, looked around for five minutes, and, bored to death with what he heard even in that short time, turned on his heel, and went his way. Behind the platform stretched a red banner inscribed in white Japanese lettering the words: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and **I will give you rest.**" As he read



them he thought: "What folly!" but the words remained.

A year passed by and found him in the greatest trouble; everything had gone wrong; and in utter darkness and despair he determined to take his life. Purchasing a bottle of poison, he climbed a range of hills running at the back of the city, and dipping down into the valley on the other side, he was preparing to take a leap into eternity, when, like a flash, the words he had seen a year since: "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest," entered the Egyptian darkness of his despairing heart.

He threw away the bottle, and, hastening home, came to the hall-keeper on the following day. There he learned the way of faith in Christ; that very day he abandoned his decision to take his life and instead determined to die unto sin. All the darkness disappeared before the light of life. That was some years ago; and when I visited him a few weeks since, though now sorely stricken with tuberculosis, I found him praising God and pressing hard along the way to Zion, looking forward to a glorious immortality when his sun shall no more go down for ever.

2. "HE THAT BELIEVETH ON ME, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE."—John 11 : 25.

How often have we seen this blessed promise abundantly fulfilled in heathen lands—dead souls instantly brought to life by faith in the Lord Jesus. The death of sin is deeper than its darkness, though perhaps not more terrible; for if there is ignorance of danger and no sense of need, there can be no desire for salvation. But the death of sin! Oh, to realise its meaning!

Often have I looked in imagination at two bodies, one living and strong, the other a corpse. I fancy I saw them lying in the rays of the summer sun. The one feels the thrill of its heat and comfort; the other feels nothing; the sun has the same power towards both; its rays of warmth touch both alike, but with what a difference. Cold and dead, the corpse makes no response, and feels nothing more than the stones on which it lies. What a picture is this of the living and the dead!

On the regenerate and the unregenerate alike falls the warmth of God's love; for "He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil," as well as to the good. The regenerate soul, alive and strong, feels it and rejoices in it with thankfulness and

praise. But the unregenerate is unresponsive, unfeeling, and unthankful. He is dead! No cord within responds to the music of God's love! No interest beams in his eye; no smile plays upon the countenance of him who is dead in trespasses and sins when he hears of the love of God in Christ.

But **faith in the Lord Jesus alters it all.** Has our faith done this for us? Have we this kind of believing? Bless God if we have, for so we can rejoice evermore!

Perhaps in heathen lands the wonder of seeing dead souls spring to life through faith in Christ is more wonderful than in any so-called Christian country. Some—not a few—find it hard to be convinced that one who has never considered the thinkability of a personal God, who knows nothing of the Christian faith, who has never even heard of the name of Christ, whose mind is in utter darkness, can possibly pass from death into life in a moment, and that with only one or two hours of instruction in Divine things.

But I have seen it again and again—men and women who had known nothing of revealed religion, yet, being in heart prepared through sin, suffering, sorrow, care, or bereavement—I have seen, I say, such **born from above** in a moment of time within two short hours of

hearing the Word of Life. Such to-day are among the best and strongest workers for God. Some of these blessed cases stand out in my mind as gracious memorials of the Lord's goodness and wisdom in declaring that "he that believeth on Him, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

3. "HE THAT BELIEVETH ON ME SHALL NEVER THIRST."—St John 6 : 35.

There is light and life through faith in the Lord Jesus, but there is more. There is a believing in Christ, which will bring perfect satisfaction! We need never thirst for pleasure or fame, or popularity, or ease or praise, or money or things of the world! Never thirst! Blessed experience! And all this through believing in Christ! Is our faith like that? Does believing do this for us? If not, why not? Is His promise untrue? Is He untrue? Verily nay!

The fault lies elsewhere. Surely it is we who have missed the meaning of that wonderful word "faith in Christ." The verb is in the present tense—he that is believing—a **present up-to-date experience**, a living, active out-going of our heart in faith towards the Lord Jesus. Where this is, there thirst exists no more. Hallelujah! "He that drinketh (keeps drinking)

of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst." Why is it that when God has given the spring of living waters within, so many of us are thirsty still? Is it not, that we will not drink, will not keep on believing? Of what avail is it that we have a spring within, if we do not drink thereof, constantly, and consciously in faith.

I shall not soon forget one in Japan who came to me, hungering and thirsting for a fuller life in God. She had been saved a year previously. How easy it was to show her the way of faith; we knelt in prayer; she prayed; I followed and scarce had uttered a dozen words before she burst out: "Lord Jesus! Lord Jesus! What love! what wondrous love! Have I ever known Thee till now?" Her face was bathed in tears of joy; she found, and that in a minute, the secret of never thirsting more. This was some three or four years ago, and she still finds it is enough; she believes; she receives; she drinks and she rejoices in Christ all the day.

4. "THUS SPAKE HE OF THE SPIRIT WHOM HE THAT **BELIEVETH** IN HIM SHOULD RECEIVE."—St John 7 : 39.

Or we might alter the words: "He that believeth in Me shall receive the Holy Ghost."

This is a wonderful promise. The Holy Ghost through whom we have been awakened, and born again, will come and make His abode within ; we are the temples of the Holy Ghost ; He makes His home and His sanctuary with us.

St Paul tells us that Christ was made a curse for us, that we might receive not only the blessing of Abraham (*i.e.*, justification), but the promise of the Spirit by faith—not by suffering or toiling ; not by revelation or ecstasy ; not by logic or understanding, but by believing. Christ suffered for us ; He bled ; He died ; He was made sin for us ; yes, all that, but more than that ! Wonder of wonders ! He was made a curse for us ! Christ a cursed thing for me ! (can I take it in !) that I might receive by faith the blessed Comforter. Can I doubt when a price so tremendous was paid ? Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief.

Some three or four years ago a Japanese Christian lady came to me in great distress of heart. She was conscious of her failure and need ; she longed for a fuller, larger life. We bowed before God together ; I found her a prepared soul, truly willing to follow her Lord with all her heart. I pointed her to those wonderful words in Gal. 2 : 20. She saw in a moment that Christ had paid all the price ; that

He had been made a curse for her. She saw the mystery of faith, and, leaping into the dark, she found her feet upon a rock. The promise was true; and the promised Comforter came for ever to abide.

She was soon rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and ere long found that God was able to use even her to the salvation of the lost. Before leaving Japan a few weeks ago, we talked together of her revolutionised life, and the wondrous change that the Holy Ghost had brought to her heart through the three past memorable years.

5. "HE THAT **BELIEVETH** ON ME, OUT OF HIS BELLY SHALL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER."—St John 7 : 38.

Every regenerate one yearns with inexpressible desire to be useful to God. This is one of the early instincts implanted in a redeemed soul. Light, life, satisfaction, the indwelling presence of God, are wonders indeed; but we long to go out to others. Now this promise just meets our needs. He that is believing, *i. e.*, **keeps on believing**, keeps it up actively, consciously, and expectantly, does find that from his heart there flow streams of living water; rivulets, it may be at the beginning, but, as they run,

broadening into rivers—a stream of joy, a stream of sympathy, a stream of hope and expectancy, a stream of testimony and power, a stream of prayer—yes, who shall count or limit them, if we will but believe?

I call to mind one in Japan to whom this was very real. Passing a small country town, some eight or ten years ago, where the Gospel had never been proclaimed, I laid siege there for a week. I preached on the first night from the story of the Prodigal Son. The following day a girl of about nineteen years came to see me with her old aunt, a member of the Greek Catholic Church, the only so-called Christian in the place. The child, however, had hardly heard even the rudiments of Christianity, but she was affected by her sense of need, and as we talked together, she was soon deeply moved while I unfolded the wonders of John 3:16. She then and there, like Lydia of old, opened her heart, believed, and was saved of the Lord.

Scarcely a week had elapsed before, very early one morning, her old father came to see me, just as I was leaving for home, and begged me to show him the way "to get the joy" his daughter had got. Nothing that I had said during the week had reached his heart, but the streams of Living Water had so begun to flow from the heart



of his child, that he was made thirsty, and longed to drink of that same fountain of water. Bless God! He got it that very morning, and is still praising and pressing Zionward. He is only one of many who since then have stooped down and drunk of the Water of Life flowing from the heart of that Japanese girl. She is still leading souls to Christ. Oh, for more of this believing in the Lord Jesus!

6. "HE THAT BELIEVETH ON ME THE WORKS THAT I DO SHALL HE DO ALSO."—St John 14 : 12.

What wondrous things can faith in the Lord Jesus do! How short we fall; how ashamed and humbled we ought to feel for our lack of power! It is blessed to have a constant sense of the love of Christ, to have God's indwelling presence and streams unconsciously flowing through and from our hearts, all through believing in the Lord Jesus. But there is even a greater promise to us. Oh, that we could rise to it, and claim our heritage in God!

The Lord has said, that if we learn aright the secrets of believing, we shall be able to do what He has done—works of love, works of healing, works of turning men from darkness to light—works of moving God's hand in answer to prayer,

works of sacrifice. We have seen this in the mission-field. Some few stand out in my mind, who, as the friends of God, were able to do works by thus believing in Him. One I know more intimately perhaps than anyone else. Weak in body, and given up by the doctors nearly eighteen years ago, when suffering from hemorrhage of the lungs, he has so learned the secret of believing in Christ, that for many years now he has been well and strong and prepared for every good work.

In a theological college, poisoned with the stupid vapourings of German theology, he one day saw and heard and felt the presence of God in one of God's honoured servants. His eyes were opened; the barrenness and futility of his so-called theological training were unveiled. A great hunger sprung up into his heart for the knowledge of the true and living Christ. He left the "cemetery," as he afterwards called it, and hastened away into the country, where through the ministry of the one who had awakened him, he found the secret of believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Since then he has turned many to righteousness, has seen not a few healed in body, and has beheld in answer to the prayer of faith many pressing into **life more abundant**.

7. "HE THAT BELIEVETH ON ME SHALL NEVER DIE."—St John 11 : 26

Strange and wonderful words ; but proved true in myriads of cases ! As the believing soul draws near to the gates of the dark valley, all the gloom and terror and darkness have fled ; the sting has gone, and, as with Stephen of old, so-called death has been but the falling to sleep of a little child. In the mission-field it is our greatest joy to see these wonderful words fulfilled. Murderers who have received their death-sentence have gone to the scaffold with a smile of triumph on their lips. Wesley tells of incredible scenes of joy that he witnessed in the cells of the condemned ; and God is just the same to-day.

Not long since I visited the dying bed of a little Japanese girl. She had only been saved three months ; she was suffering from that greatest of all scourges in Japan, tuberculosis. Worn almost to a shadow, she was racked with pain every few minutes, but in the intervals she would look up and say : "Ureshii ! Ureshii !" "Oh, what joy ! What joy !" The doctor, an unsaved man, looked on and wondered ; the neighbours came in to see her die ; and the Christians gathered to watch the passing of the

little saint. She found it was all true that he that believeth on the Lord Jesus shall never die. There was no death for her, but a liberation from her frail tenement of clay, an escape from the prison-house, and an entrance into an eternity of joy! Hallelujah!

Who has read the account of the death of John Wesley with dry eyes? Yea, or the exodus of thousands of other saints resting on the Eternal Word of the Lord Jesus, that "he that believeth in ME shall never die."

Oh! how good is God to provide such a way, to make it possible for all, if we will but humble our pride, seek Him with all our hearts and wait upon Him as one that watcheth for the morning. Shall we not put away our sloth? Shall we not examine ourselves whether we be in the faith—the faith once delivered to the saints? Very much we may know and have experienced, but shall we not determine to go on to a victorious, triumphant believing in Christ, and so inherit, and enjoy, and perform all that is possible here below to sinners saved by grace?

*The*

*Increase*

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## X

### THE INCREASE OF FAITH

**A**S we begin to realise the need of believing God and the feebleness of our faith, we instinctively cry out : " Lord, increase our faith " ; and we earnestly inquire : How can I abound in this blessed grace ? How can I grow " strong in faith, giving glory to God " ? Whither shall I turn to learn my lesson ? And what are the means that God would use to train me in His school ?

" I was never in the court so much as at present," said William Bramwell. " Continual prayer, redeeming the time, little bed and much labour bring continual rest. To be cleansed from all sin is much, but God in great mercy is filling my soul with love." Do we not long for such an experience as this—this increase of faith and power through believing ? We may well consider the ways whereby we may obtain and increase more and more.

1. PRAISE. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me, and prepareth a way that I may show him the salvation of God."—Psalm 50 : 23, R.V. margin.

Perhaps foremost of all as an aid to the increase of faith is praise and thanksgiving. Let us give thanks unto the Lord always, even praise unto our God. To do this we must constantly let our memory run wild in the garden of His grace. We need to stir up our pure minds by way of remembrance, and linger over the days that are gone. Things which have the distance of time and place between us and them, and which at the time of their happening seemed but coincidences, are now seen to be blessed providences, luminous with His love, demanding praise from all that is within us.

My faith has been strengthened again and again, as I remember my own conversion, effected entirely by believing prayer. At the time I in no sense appreciated the miracle of it, but the perspective of time has often enabled me to wonder and praise. Glory be to God! Yes, our souls thrive amain when we begin to praise. Thanksgiving is like a refreshing shower that causes faith to blossom as the rose. There is a remarkable incident in the Life of Carvosso,

which illustrates the power of praise to awaken faith. His biographer writes as follows :—

“ We heard of a blacksmith being very ill, and were desired to call and see him. Although pressed for time, on our way back to the boat, we sought out this poor man, and found him stretched on a sort of crib in a little hut, in the last stage of consumption. His wife having gone out, he was left quite alone, and seemed surprised to see so many strangers enter his mean habitation. But your dear father soon engrossed all his attention.

“ Walking up to his bedside, he said to him : ‘ Well, my friend, we are come to inquire how you are.’ ‘ I am very bad, sir,’ said the poor man. ‘ How long have you been ill?’ ‘ I have been lying here these ten weeks.’ ‘ Indeed, but we are come more particularly to inquire how your mind is.’ ‘ Very bad, sir.’ ‘ Indeed, what is the matter then?’ ‘ O sir, I am such a great sinner.’ ‘ Well, what did Jesus die for?’ ‘ For sinners, sir; but I am—.’ ‘ Stop now; answer my questions. You say Jesus Christ died to save sinners: did He not die to save you?’ ‘ Yes, sir.’ ‘ Well now, if He died to save you, should you not praise Him?’ ‘ Yes, sir; but—.’ ‘ Now stay, my friend; just answer my question. You admit that Christ died for you; then, I ask,



should you not praise Him?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Come then, my brother, lift up your voice and praise Him. Glory be to God! Glory be to God! Come, my dear brother, join with me to praise the Lord.'

"The poor, heavy-laden sinner seemed astonished at the request; but being repeatedly urged, he at length consented to open his lips to use words of praise. Our dear friend encouraged him. And though at first he seemed to utter words of praise, not from the lively sense of gratitude, but rather in conformity to the wishes of his kind and venerable instructor; yet being hereby insensibly brought off from himself to look to his crucified Redeemer, the power quickly descended into his soul in such a manner that he shouted with all the energy of a strong man: 'Glory! Glory! Glory! Praise the Lord!' Till, being exhausted, he fell back on his pillow, and for the moment I feared what would be the consequences of his extraordinary exertions.

"But I was presently relieved by his again raising himself in his bed, and shouting as he had done before; when our dear father called on me to pray. I prayed, and, as you may suppose, with no common feeling. Our friend and the blacksmith kept shouting aloud for joy of heart, and the rest of the company were on their knees

praising God. Meanwhile the wife returned, and several other persons had come in, attracted by the noise. So that, altogether, such an extraordinary scene was exhibited as I never before witnessed."

Yes, praise be to God, it is even so. Thanksgiving prepareth a way that He may show us His salvation. Hallelujah!

2. CONFESSION. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long . . . I acknowledged my sin . . . and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."—Psalm 32 : 3, 5.

If we are desirous of making progress in Divine things, we cannot emphasise too strongly the need of the most earnest and humble confession to the Lord. But in this we must take heed lest we make a mistake; for many a time in making confession to God, we have drawn near to Him as to an angry Judge, instead of a Friend and a Saviour. Confession is not hard or difficult if we remember and appreciate the tenderness and grace of the One Who waits for us to tell Him all. With this caution, then, let us hasten to pour our hearts before Him, as we feel our utter unprofitableness. Oh, let us say again and again that we are all unprofitable servants.

Yes, when we have done all that we have been commanded to do ; when we have loved God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves, we are yet utterly unprofitable. How much more when we have failed thus to do ! Let us confess before Him our complacency and self-satisfaction, that we have failed to enter into the fulness of His salvation, and not even attempted to do the mighty things, which He promised that believers should do through faith in Him. Away with that formal and professional confession which abounds in our churches and chapels ! God demands the real thing, offered sincerely and humbly in the secret chamber, mixed with a faith which believes not only that the confession is accepted, but that it does ensure victory and renewal, and a different state of things.

It was with *tears* that the afflicted parent said : " Help Thou mine unbelief," for unbelief is not, as many suppose, a mere hindrance to progress in Divine things—it is SIN, the most awful sin, the root of all other sins. Can we suppose that we should be content for our wife or husband to say continually : " I want to trust you, but I can't." And yet we so often and easily look into God's face and say : " I want to trust Thee wholly, but I can't." How hideous it sounds ! We need then to confess continually our slowness

of heart to believe, in penitence and prayer, if we intend to be strong in faith giving glory to God.

Some years ago I met an earnest servant of the Lord labouring in the mission-field. Whole-hearted though she was, she had a singular prejudice against the truth of "holiness by faith in Jesus," and was evidently, when I met her, quite prepared to criticise both the life and testimony of those who professed the experience of a clean heart. After a few weeks' acquaintance she became much disturbed over the question, and, though reserved by nature, and a woman of but few words, she called on me with inquiries, not as to my theological views, but to hear my own experience.

I do not know whether anything I said met her need; but a day or two later I found her under the deepest conviction for inward holiness. This surprised me a little, seeing that she was outwardly blameless in character, and devoted in service. On inquiring, she said with the utmost brokenness of spirit: "Oh, I have so dishonoured the blood of Jesus! Oh, my awful unbelief! I have limited the power of the precious blood."

When I asked for a fuller explanation, she said that all the time till now she had limited the atoning sacrifice to the pardon of her sins. For her there was no such thing as any moral

cleansing in the blood of Christ. Cleansing was only a judicial thing; a taking away of the guilt of her transgression.

I have rarely seen conviction of sin so deep in any. It was no mere change of views, no mere conviction of theological error. It was rather a penetrating and pungent conviction of having dishonoured the very blood of the Son of God. There came with it the most humbling and penitent confession of her unbelief, and with it not many days later a blessed entrance into that which hitherto she had held of no account.

“Holiness by faith in Jesus,  
Not by effort of our own.”

Let us too see to it that we search our hearts and continually, in humblest confession of our own unworthiness, and our failure through slowness of heart to appropriate all that remains to be possessed, bow down before the Lord our Maker.

3. PRAYER.—“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.”—Isa. 40 : 31.

Important as praise and confession are in the strengthening and increasing of our faith, Prayer is even more so. There is no substitute for this. We may of course pray or say prayers without having any living faith, but we cannot really

believe without it finding expression in earnest prayer.

Colonel Brengle, of the Salvation Army, in his book, "Helps to Holiness," says that if, when dying, he were asked to give one final word of exhortation to the whole Church of Christ, it would be: "Wait on God." Yes, at His feet all difficulties disappear. There can be no real increase of faith without this—a constant, quiet waiting before the Lord to strengthen our hearts, open our eyes, and unstop our ears; this makes it possible for us to rise on eagles' wings above the fogs and mists of fear and unbelief; run and not be weary; walk and not faint in the daily drudgery of life. This will mean conflict. Prayer is ever such.

Realising this, some of us have, in consequence, drifted into that fatal habit of thinking that God needs to be persuaded or coaxed to bless us—as though He were not a thousand times more willing to bless, than we to be blessed. It is written of that mighty man of God at the beginning of last century, John Smith, that "he was displeased when persons prayed, as if God were unwilling to bless; or when they spoke of unbelief as a mere infirmity. 'It is an abomination,' he said, 'when men talk as if they were more willing to bless than God . . .

there is no impediment on God's part ; He has given us His Son.' By thus firmly asserting the willingness of God to save against all temptations of unbelief, he urged and encouraged himself to plead with God for sinners. 'It is by justifying God,' said he, 'that I sting and stimulate myself to contend. The necessity of wrestling arises not from the unwillingness of God but from ourselves or Satan. God is the same.'

"And thus his resolute purpose to justify God, and to believe at all events that there is no hindrance on His part since He has given His Son, was to him like cutting off retreat ; it left him no alternative but to wrestle and prevail. This was the principle which he would never suffer himself or others to call in question. But in following it out, in still tenaciously hanging upon it, and pleading it in spite of every impediment or all that Satan could oppose, or unbelief suggest, this was the conflict which we saw in him ; this was that agony to believe, which I have heard him describe as so severe, that it has been, as if soul and body were ready to part asunder."

I remember one incident that illustrates the power of prayer to create a living faith. In the part of Japan where I was labouring some fifteen or sixteen years ago, there was a drunken,

dissolute fisherman, rough and uneducated. He struggled in vain with his sins in general and the drink in particular. Passing the door of a little mission-room one cold winter's night, he heard the words: "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." He had never heard a syllable of the Christian faith before, and had no knowledge of a living, personal God. He was much impressed, however, with the simple words that caught his ear. The next day he sought the preacher's home, and at once became an earnest seeker for salvation. He was able to break off many of his sins, but the drink still fettered him.

Some weeks later I was visiting the out-station where he was living; I sent for him, and found that, though he believed in God and Christ, and had a clear understanding of the Cross, had repented and forsaken his sins, he was not yet born again. He had no saving faith; he was still a drunkard. I inquired fully into his circumstances and state, and finally asked him: "*Have you ever prayed; have you ever confessed your sins to the Lord, and cried for mercy?*" He said: "No, that is a thing I cannot do; I have often tried but always in vain; *I have never prayed to God.*"

I showed him plainly that this he must do—humble his proud heart, pour out his soul in confession and entreaty. *He must pray.* We



bowed together, and for the first time in his life he opened his lips in prayer. In a moment he was set free. Faith sprang up in his heart; he was enabled to believe in the Lord Jesus. From that moment, too, all taste for the drink vanished, and he became a new man in Christ Jesus. Since then, after receiving an education and training at a Bible-school, he has been engaged in leading souls to the Saviour, a successful evangelist!

Says William Bramwell: "Faith makes God and glory that to me which is promised. I strive for more, and without daily pleading I should sink and die. Prayer is more than ever necessary. Here I live and only in this." Yes, if we would increase in faith, we must above all things be ever at the Mercy-seat.

4. MEDITATION. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."—Rom. 10:17.

The question often arises, how can we wait upon God with profit to our souls? A vague, empty silence in His presence avails us little or nothing. To wait upon the Lord, providing food for faith, we need to meditate much on His Word. Prayer that is not based on God's promises is likely to be very ineffective. In His Word we see the promised blessings, the

promised power, and the possibilities of a holy life. In the Word we see the willingness of our God, and His faithfulness to His Word. There too we read of the devil, that great adversary of our faith, as well as of those heroes, who through faith accomplished and suffered great things for God. Our hearts are moved with fear and hope, and faith and love—those four great motive powers of the soul—when we read and meditate on the sacred page.

I well remember a young Hebrew (now, thank God! an earnest Christian, and a worker in the Lord's vineyard) who was much prejudiced against the New Testament, and in fact the whole Bible. He got entangled in the meshes of Theosophy; but after frequent visits to our home, he became both convicted of sin and convinced of the truth of the Gospel. Though intellectually assured of its reality, he had no saving faith, till one day he was strangely impressed at the exposure of Theosophy through certain passages in the New Testament, and could scarce believe his ears, as I read them from the Word. He at once determined to read for himself.

Before many weeks had passed, he found faith springing up in his heart. It was on the last day of the annual Passover Week that he sur-

rendered to God, and accepted Christ as his Messiah and Redeemer. The Word of God did its work. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Oh, let us give ourselves to this blessed Book, and, as we bow in praise, confession, and prayer over its sacred pages, we shall find living, loving, rejoicing faith springing up like a fountain within our souls.

5. EXERCISE. "Unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath."—Matt. 25 : 29.

Praise is lovely. Confession is meet, right, and our bounden duty. Prayer is our very breath. Meditation is indispensable if we would "abound more and more" in living faith. And yet these may avail us little, if we do not exercise and use that which we have. In one sense the prayer: "Lord, increase our faith" is hardly a right one. The Lord had been speaking to His disciples of perfect love, bidding them always forgive, however much provoked and sinned against. Realising how impossible was the task, they knew that the one and only secret of obtaining so heavenly a love was in believing aright, and so they cried: "Lord, increase," not our love, but "our Faith."

Their idea seems to have been that, as they possessed a certain amount, they only needed an increase of their supply, just as a man in possession of a certain number of coins might ask for a few more. The Lord in effect made answer : Faith increaseth not so. Faith like a seed, however small, containing the principle of life within, will grow of itself, if we will but let it, make use of it, exercise it, and apply it to our souls. The barren, fruitless tree of a loveless, unforgiving spirit can thereby be rooted up.

Again and again the Lord spake the word in faith. There was no praying to His Father for the power, nothing but the word of command, and it was done. So with the Apostles ; Peter spake the word only and the lame man was healed. There was no prayer either for or with him. It was as the Master said : " If ye shall **say** unto the sycamine tree. . . ."

Very often, then, instead of crying unto God : " Increase our faith," we need to look to it that we use what we have, and it shall be given unto us. As we **act** rather than **feel** forgiveness to those who have wronged us, we shall prove that faith *does* cast out the evil, fruitless thing from our hearts. It is true that there are many difficulties. When Zacchæus started out to see the Lord, his way and vision were closed by the

thronging crowds. When the woman with the issue of blood determined to find and touch the Saviour, she too was held up by the people. When the four brought their palsied friend to Christ, every avenue of approach was blocked. But, exercising the faith they had, they pressed on, kept right on believing, and so got the victory, and with it the "Well done" of their Lord.

Oh, that all God's people would be like the daughters of Zelophehad (Num. 27)! There was no law of inheritance, but orphans as they were, they pressed their claim, and urged their need, and . . . **prevailed!** God was well pleased with their faith, and not only gave them an inheritance, but made a law in Israel that unmarried daughters should have their right evermore of inheriting a possession among their brethren.

6. TESTIMONY.—"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."—Rom.

10 : 10.

For the strengthening and deepening of faith in God there is yet another important duty. I mean a bold and unflinching testimony to what our heart believes and to what God has done for us.

Not long ago one came to see me in the deepest conviction of sin. He wept much, scarce able to believe that God could pardon so great a sinner. As we knelt together in prayer, he poured out his heart in confession. I showed him the promises, and bade him rest thereon. He trusted in Christ for salvation and peace, but his soul was never set at perfect liberty, nor did he taste of the joy of salvation, until he had boldly testified to all his old friends of what he had found. As soon as he did, there came an immediate deliverance; he was set free, and so continues to this day, testifying everywhere of God's goodness and grace in saving the chief of sinners.

As with salvation, so too with the deeper experience of holiness into which the Holy Ghost leads us. Mrs Hester Ann Rogers relates the following account of the Rev. John Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley, who, in John Wesley's judgment, was perhaps the saintliest man since the days of the Apostle John. She says:—

“That dear man of God, Mr Fletcher, came with Miss Bosanquet, now Mrs F., to meet the select society. . . . He then said: ‘My dear brethren and sisters, God is here; I feel Him in this place. But I would hide my face in the dust because I have been ashamed to declare what He has done for me. For many years I

have grieved the Spirit . . . but He has restored my soul. Last Wednesday evening He spoke to me by these words: "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." I obeyed the voice of God, and now obey it and tell you all to the praise of His love, I am freed from sin. I received this blessing four or five times before, but I lost it by not observing the order of God, Who hath told us that "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." But the enemy offered his bait under various colours to keep me from a public declaration of what the Lord hath wrought.

"When I first received this grace, Satan bade me wait awhile till I saw more of the fruit. I resolved to do so, but I soon began to doubt of the witness which before I had felt in my heart, and was in little time sensible that I had lost both. A second time after receiving this salvation (with shame I confess it) I was kept from being a witness for my Lord by the suggestion, Thou art a public character; the eyes of all are upon thee, etc., etc. I held my peace, and again forfeited the gift of God. At another time I was prevailed upon to hide by reasoning: How few of the children of God will receive thy

testimony. . . . Alas! I soon found again: "He that hideth his Lord's talent and improveth it not, from that unprofitable servant shall be taken away even that he hath."

"Now, my brethren, you see my folly; I have confessed it in your presence, and now I resolve before you all to confess my Master. I will confess Him to all the world. And I declare unto you in the presence of God, the Holy Trinity, I am now "dead indeed unto sin"; and remember all this is through Jesus Christ our Lord. He is my Prophet, Priest, and King, my Indwelling Holiness, my All in all."

Let us also, like the sainted Fletcher, in all humility and boldness, tell to the praise of His glory what He hath wrought in us by His Spirit in answer to our faith. So shall our faith "grow exceedingly," and we shall increase in the knowledge of God our Saviour.

7. SERVICE. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."—James 2 : 7.

Finally, if ever our faith Godward is to increase and abound, there must be an out-going of our hearts and service manward. Oh, for a cross-bearing spirit in the Church of Christ to-day! Oh, that the Lord's children would feel it were better to die, than not to see sinners saved and



God glorified ! Alas ! alas ! we are far from such an experience ! The vast majority of truly converted people make no attempt to seek the lost. Why wonder, then, that the revival tarries, and faith in the heart is so dull and lethargic ?

In the Parable of the Talents, the mistake of the slothful servant lay in not recognising that the exchanger was at his very door, waiting to undertake and ensure a profit on his deposit. In other words it was an ignorant unbelief. So it is to-day with the Christian. He will not recognise the Holy Ghost at his side waiting to work with and for him. Here is his folly, here his sin, here his unbelief ! Oh, let us press on and out to service for men, relying on the Holy Ghost to bring conviction and salvation to their hearts. Say not : " It can't be done." It **can**. " All things are possible to him that believeth." If only we will prepare our attack with the artillery of believing prayer, the defences of the enemy shall be broken down, and we shall find it possible to seize the position, and take prisoners captive to Jesus Christ.

The present war teaches us wonderful lessons in spiritual conflict. If infantry advance before the artillery has done its work, there is nothing but disaster. So it is with soul-winning. How many, without believing prayer, have sought to

lead their friends to Christ, only to court failure.

Press on! Seek the lost; give your heart and service to the salvation of men, friends, relations, acquaintances, and strangers. Be determined! Say as Livingstone did: "I refuse to be disappointed; I will only praise." Cry to God for more love to souls. Believe that it can be done, and that sinners can be turned Zionward through **you**. So shall your faith go hand in hand with holy living.

These, then, are the ways of the increase of faith:—Grateful Praise and Humble Confession; Constant Prayer and Meditation in the Word; Exercise, Testimony, and Service. Along these, then, let us hasten until,

"Our hallowed heart be filled with love;  
Our spotless life be praise."

## *Conclusion*

## XI

### CONCLUSION

“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.”—Heb. 11 : 6.

**A**S we have considered this deepest of the mysteries of the human heart—the way of faith—I fancy that someone may yet say : “But tell me how I can so exercise true faith in Christ that I may receive from Him its crown and fulness, the Spirit’s seal, or that full assurance of faith which makes life a continual victory, and which is the privilege of every believer in the Living God.”

Possibly a simple unfolding of the above passage may make it plain to every honest seeker.

In the first place, are we entirely convinced that “without faith it is impossible to please God?”

We may have zeal and knowledge, self-denial

and consecration, orthodoxy and all manner of gifts ; yet, if we have not **faith**, we can never be well-pleasing to our Father in heaven. Without this "affectionate confidence in God" all that we do and suffer and attempt is marred by unbelief, doubt, fear, and suspicion, which is a perpetual grief to His loving heart, an unending sorrow to the Son of God, and a cruel wounding of the love and tenderness of the Holy Ghost. Till we see and realise this, we shall make no progress in the Divine Life, and never press through into Victory.

This conviction, then, shall be our starting-point.

**"He that cometh to God."** Let us linger awhile over these wonderful words. Perhaps no word was more frequently on the lips of our Blessed Master than this word: "Come." If "All have sinned" is the A, and "Behold the Lamb of God" is the B, then most certainly "Come unto Me" is the C of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus.

It is not "he that is brought, or dragged, or driven Godward." Ah, no, surely there is a needs-be in these words: "He that cometh"—drawn and constrained by the love of God in Christ. "No man can come to Me except the Father . . . draw him."

Are you tired and weary of pleasure, of sin, of

self, and even of life itself? Then listen! "**Come** unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden."

Are you longing for something that will slake for ever your thirsty soul, and give you a deep and abiding satisfaction? Listen yet again. "If any man thirst, let him **come** unto Me and drink."

Or Zacchæus-like, are you only interested, hardly yet in earnest, except to look and see—half-awakened, hardly daring to think that such as you are called to a higher life? There is a message for you. "Make haste and **come** down, for to-day I must abide at thy house."

Have you been so taken up with your successful service for God that your chief pleasure is to talk about your doings and teachings? He says to you: "**Come** ye yourselves apart and rest awhile."

Have we a holy ambition, as we behold the Lord walking on the waves of this troubled and sinful world, untouched, and unharmed, and victorious over all? Do we say: "If it be Thou, bid me come? Lord if Thou couldst so walk, then with Thee I can and ought to walk even as Thou dost." He says to such: "**Come.**" Oh, for a holy ambition thus to walk with God in the difficult places of life!

Surely this gracious word is the very marrow of the Gospel: "**Come**, for all things are now ready." Let it not be said of us: "Ye will not **Come** to Me that ye might have life." Are we there? Are we deeply convinced that this is God's message to our souls?

And yet there is more in this simple word.

In our desire for blessing, how easy it is for us to miss the way. We get our eyes on the blessing and miss God. It is as though a Prince made a banquet and invited his guests, who, accepting the invitation, never awaited the appearance of their royal host, but fell at once upon the viands, caring nothing whether he appeared or not, so long as they enjoyed their feast. Easy it is to go to conventions, prayer-meetings, sermons, and Bible-readings—to listen to well-known preachers—to go even to our Bibles and books of devotion—to places of prayer and sacrament—and yet never come to God.

Coming to God, then, implies more than bringing our need and sin, more than a seeking for deliverance from our unpleasant and uncomfortable sins, such as temper and jealousy and fear. Coming to God implies that we bring ourselves to be His entirely and eternally. "My son, give Me thy heart." "Go . . .

sell . . . give . . . come . . . take . . . follow Me," was the charge to the young man who only wanted something **for himself**, and had no intention of being anything **for God**. It is only our original depravity that makes such a command appear severe, and puts the colour of pain upon so wonderful an exhibition of Divine condescension. And in our coming to God, it is this that hinders. Here it is that we shrink and fail and falter.

But, even so, God has made the way plain and easy. He has provided a remedy for all the fear and unwillingness to draw near. Because our hearts are so depraved as to fear an absolute surrender, the death of Christ avails to destroy this depravity here and now. The Lord has given us the secret in those wonderful words: "He that hath learned of the Father cometh to ME." This is an infallible test of whether we are taught of God or not. Blessed test!

Do we instinctively flee to Christ in the consciousness of sin and sorrow and need, and above all, in the conviction of that inward depravity which makes us shrink from a complete surrender? Or do we tend to keep away till we are a little better, a little purer, a little more earnest, or till that inward fear has died away? Then, alas! we have not yet "been taught of God." The



source of our wisdom and learning has been carnal after all.

For the first lesson that God teaches us is just this: apart from Christ we are only full of folly and pride, darkness and despair; but he that is taught of God "**Cometh to Christ.**" **Cometh to Christ**—what blessed words! What grace! What glory! What a Gospel! Hallelujah!

Are we there? Is that our condition at the present moment? Is this the attitude of our hearts? If so, then we may well praise Him, for we have been taught of God. None but God can ever teach a human heart such a lesson as this. This is the first step in the life of faith—coming to God in Christ, joyless, peaceless, loveless, emotionless, hard and dark and cold, we have at last found out the secret, we have come to God in Christ just as we are.

"**Must believe that He is.**" And now the battle begins. God says: "**Must believe.**" This is the inexorable law of the spiritual kingdom. It cannot be broken. How often do God's people misunderstand those words. "If we believe not, He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself." They speak as though God will bless us whether we believe or not. The meaning of the passage is the exact opposite; unless we believe, God cannot bless us. He cannot deny

Himself. He cannot abrogate His spiritual laws. We must believe, or God has nothing for us.

**“Must believe that He IS.”** For the proper understanding of these words we need to turn back to Exodus iii. Here God, in seeking to save the Israelites from bondage, gives the revelation of Himself as the great **“I AM,”** the ever-present, unchangeable, ever-working God. We must believe that God is hearing, is answering, is receiving, is pardoning, is cleansing, is filling, is baptising with the Holy Ghost, just now. Not a God of to-morrow but of to-day. For **“now** is the accepted time, **now** is the day of salvation.” **“The Holy Ghost saith, To-day.”** **“This day** shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.” **“This day** I must abide at thy house.” **“This day** are these things fulfilled in your ears . . . and they bore witness to the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth.” **“Prove Me NOW** herewith.”

**“Look for it”** (entire sanctification), says Mr Wesley, **“every day, every hour, every moment.** Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it now, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done first before you are sanctified. You think, I must first be or

do thus or thus. Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it as you are; and if as you are, then expect it NOW. . . . Expect it by faith. Expect it as you are. Expect it **NOW.**"

There is no real faith till we take our stand here. God IS at this very moment, in spite of all appearances and emotions and reasonings to the contrary, doing the work in me, provided that I have really come to Him. He moves not! He changes not! He **IS** the unchangeable God. Then, if I have come to Him in the Bible way, just as I am, self-desperate, and self-surrendered, in all my need and sorrow and sin—I myself to be for ever His—I must believe that He **IS**. This is the way of faith delivered to the saints. Here I must stand, and resist all the fiery darts of Satan, and the suggestions of an evil heart of unbelief.

**"And that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."** Do you say: "And yet many have done this and still have failed?" If so, the secret lies here. They have rested in an easy-going "believism," and have not diligently sought for that gracious reward which the Lord has promised to those who earnestly seek. Have we been persuaded that without faith it is impossible to please our loving Father? Have we

come to Him in all our need and sin and despair? Have we taken our stand upon the immutable promise of Jehovah and, self-desperate, believed? Then only one step more remains — to wait diligently upon Him and seek His face; for though the vision tarry, He has promised that it shall come.

Wait—wait expectantly, of course, but wait, believing that He **has given** and **has performed**, even though we see it not yet; wait for the reward, the threefold conscious witness that (1) He has accepted us for ever, that (2) the “blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin,” and that (3) Christ liveth in us. That is all the reward the saint desires. This is heaven below, and this is promised to all who will diligently seek the Lord in faith. “I could write it twenty times over,” said William Bramwell (and so I may write it thrice), “that strong faith and continual prayer are productive of every result.”

“Never lose sight,” said Horatius Bonar, “of this great truth, that the **evil thing** within you, which is the root of all bitterness to the soul, is **distrust** of God.”

“When I stand in unbelief,” said John Fletcher of Madeley, “I am like a drop of muddy water dried up in the sun of temptation; but when I do believe, and close in with Christ, I am like

that same drop of water lost in a boundless, bottomless ocean of Light, Life, Liberty, Power, and Love.”

“ Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God ? ”

“ If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that **BELIEVETH.** ”