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Chapter XXX

FAITH III. — 'What Must I Believe?'

Comrades and Friends, — I hope you have been able to remember something of what I said last Sunday about Faith, and that you have derived some profit from it. I wish to return to the subject, and in doing so shall quote the same text. You will remember Jesus Christ was the Speaker, and He used the simple but striking words: 'Have faith in God.'

Now, this morning I want to describe the chief experimental beliefs at which all Salvationists should aim, and which constitute what might be styled 'The Salvationist's Target of Faith.' I say the Salvationist's; but you will see I mean that it should belong equally, in my estimation, to every out-and-out saint and servant of the Living God.

I might entitle them the 'Rights of Faith,' seeing that they comprise the beliefs that every Salvationist has a right to regard as being true of his own experience. In spite of his feelings or his failures or his backslidings, he may take them to his heart, and claim as his own the blessings of which they tell, and that right away.

Well, here is my Target, and the first of its seven propositions is as follows:

1. Every Salvationist has a right to believe, here and now, that God has forgiven every sin of his past life.

Whatever there may be in his experience that seems to contradict this fact, he ought not to allow himself to question it for a moment. He has a right to say in his heart: 'My Heavenly Father loves me, and it fully set upon effecting my present and eternal Salvation; and He will bring it off, if I will let Him.'

Do you believe that, my Comrades? Have you got that faith in you innermost souls? If not, you can have it just now. That is almost the first step in the faith which Jesus Christ, in my text, invites you to possess.



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2. Every true Salvationist has a right to believe, here and now, that God has forgiven every sin of his past life.

I do not mean merely that the Salvationist desires to do this, or that God desires to do it for him, but that it is already accomplished.

If you are true Salvationists, you have renounced your sins, consecrated yourselves to the service of God, and received Jesus Christ as your Saviour; and you are living today in the spirit of that surrender. In this case you have a right to believe that every sin you have ever committed is forgive, and the record washed away in the Blood of the Lamb. Hallelujah!

Although those sins have been many in number, dark in character, ruinous in their influence, and hellish in their consequences, you have a right to believe that God has blotted them out of the Book of His remembrance. They are gone – to be remembered against you no more for ever.

You can point to the time and the place when you were conscious that this all-important transaction occurred, when He made you a member of His family, and a Soldier of the Cross. But I do ask whether this is your experience today. If not, you have the right to believe it before you go any further; so let it be done right away.

3. If the Spirit bears witness in your hearts, that you have renounced every evil way, and given yourselves up to the service of God, you have a right to believe that He will furnish you with all the help required to master every temptation that may come to you in the future.

Whether these temptations come from your own appetites, from the pleasures of the world, or from the Devil, you can rely on God supplying you with power to overcome them.

Your battle-cry may be 'Victory! Victory! Through the Blood of the Lamb!' Do you believe this?

4. Every Salvationist who is honestly seeking the blessing of a clean heart, and willing to do his duty to God and man, has a right to believe that the Blood of Jesus Christ does here and now cleanse him from all sin.



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And supposing that doubts should arise, and devils contradict the fact of his having received this blessing, if he is still consciously in this attitude of consecration, he has the right to believe that the Holy Spirit does actually, at this very time, make and keep him clean.

5. If you are consecrated to the task of helping Jesus Christ to save sinner, and extending His Kingdom, you have a right to believe that He is co-operating with you by His Holy Spirit in everything you do.

What could teach this truth more plainly than His words: 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?' and again, when He says: 'When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.'

That is where you are now, Comrades, if you are true Salvationists. You have asked for the Holy Spirit, and have therefore the right to believe your Father has responded by bestowing upon you the Gift asked for. You must not doubt this, but 'have faith in God.' Say to yourselves, 'I possess the Spirit; He lives and works with me, and will in one form or another make me a conqueror.' Never mind your feelings; it is your privilege; live not by feelings, but by faith.

6. If you are true Salvationists, you love God. You have therefore, according to His own Word, an incontestable right to believe that He loves you, and will make all the circumstances of your life promote your true benefit.

You have a right to believe that your losses and your gains, your sorrows and your joys, your sickness and your health, your bereavements – nay, all things that fall to your lot – will be considered as His servants, and made to work together for your good, both here and hereafter. Do you believe that?

7. You can and must, and, if true to your Lord, you will believe that He will keep you faithful until death, support you in the last hour on earth, and finally land you on the Eternal Shore.

For he who bids you 'have faith in God,' has also said, 'It is My Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.'

Your affectionate General, William Booth.