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Chapter XXXI

FAITH IV. — Helps to Faith

Comrades and Friends, -- Now although, as I said in my last Message, Faith in God is one of the simplest things in the world, many people find it very difficult to believe.

To help those who are troubled in this direction, I want to offer a few counsels, which are largely suggested by my own experience.

1. The first recommendation I make to those this troubled, is to offer themselves up without reserve to do the whole will of God, so far as that will has been made known to them.

Strive after a spirit of wholehearted confidence, and do not allow any suspicions or doubts about His goodness to dwell in your hearts.

2. Get to know all you can about the character, ability, and works of God, especially those which are likely to influence your own life, interests, and doings.

The more you know about God, and the principles which govern His dealings with men, the better you will be able to trust Him. The reason why many people find it so difficult to confide in God is because they know so little about Him. How often you will hear people say, 'When I first met a certain individual I thought him proud, and hard, and harsh in his character and conduct; but when I came to know him personal, and saw him benevolent in his dealings with those about him, I felt that I could leave my highest interests, nay, my life itself, in his hands without a misgiving or a fear.'

Just so with God, to know Him is not only to admire Him, but to trust Him.

3. In order to exercise faith for the blessings purchased by Jesus Christ, and promised by God in His book, you must discover as far as possible what they are.



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The reason why some soldiers do not exercise faith for the bestowment of God's blessing is because they live in ignorance of the fact that God has promised to bestow them. They do not know of their existence or their value, or much less of God's willingness to bestow them, or of the conditions upon which their bestowment is made to depend. How then can they believe?

4. In believing for the bestowal of blessing on yourselves or on others, always be careful to perform the conditions on which the bestowment of these blessings is made to depend.

For instance, the Salvationist who is striving to believe that God will use him in the efforts of his everyday life, will find it difficult, if not impossible, to do so, unless he is himself doing all he can to gain the end he desires. If he wants God to give him a situation, or to heal his sick child, or to do something else for him of that kind, he must have the consciousness that he is helping himself, as far as he has the ability and the opportunity, according to the Divine arrangements. Faith is useless without the accompanying works. God requires both faith and works.

The Salvationist who is striving for the gift of a clean heart must exercise faith; he must help his faith by putting away everything that he knows to be good. He must fulfil the Scriptural command to 'sanctify himself.'

The Salvationists who are believing for the outpouring of the Spirit upon their neighborhood, with all its blessed consequences, will use such influence and force as they already possess, or can become possessed of, for the acquisition of such a result. Otherwise, how is it possible for God to answer their faith, and bring about the end they are working for? This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he said – 'I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.' In other words, works must go hand in hand with faith.

I say sometimes that faith and works should travel side by side, step answering to step, like the legs of men walking. First faith, and then works; and then faith again, and then works again – until you can scarcely distinguish which is the one, and which is the other. Whereas, if you confine yourselves to faith alone, or to works alone, you will make but little progress; nay, you will be likely soon to come to the ground.

The truth is well illustrated by a story I sometimes tell. Two coloured men were one day discussing this subject, as they walked down a country lane. Said one to the other:



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'Well, Moses, I believe in doin' all I can myself to work out my own Salvation.'

'Ah, Brudder,' replied the other, 'I believe in quietly lying down on de promises, and leaving de dear Lord to do all de work Hissself.'

Just at the moment a mad bull came raging and tearing down the lane, making straight for the negroes. Quick as thought, they both leaped over the hedge, out of the reach of the savage beast, and left it pawning and roaring in the lane.

'I say, Sambo,' said the man who had been advocating working out his own Salvation, 'you didn't lie down quiet very long on de promise dat der time, did you, eh?'

The cooperation of man with God – up to the level of man's ability – is a condition of the cooperation of God with man. Therefore, if you want God to work with you in answer to your faith, you must do your best to work with God.

5. Read in your Bibles of the wonderful things God has done for His people in the ages gone by.

Think of Enoch and Noah, of Gideon and Daniel; and of the wonderful works of these and others. Remember the valiant things God wrought by the Apostles and martyrs, and a host of other saviours of men. Then remember His assurance that He is nor respecter of persons, and cry out, 'O my God, why should I not be a man – or a woman – of faith!'

6. Make good use of the faith you already possess.

This is the surest method I know of for obtaining more of the precious gift.

'For he that hath,' said Jesus – that is, that uses what he has – 'to him shall be given; and he that hath not' – that is, who neglects the use of what faith he possesses – 'from him shall be taken away that which he hath.'

7. Cry continually to God for an increase of the Spirit of Faith.



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He will answer. He answered this same prayer for Peter, and make him one of the mightiest believers that ever lived. He will answer you!

Your affectionate General,

William Booth.