

FAITH
II. – The Object of Faith

Comrades and Friends, — In my last Message I called your attention to the all-important subject of Faith, and I am sure I need no excuse for returning to the topic this morning. My text was, 'Have faith in God.'

You will remember that on that occasion I tried to show you what a simple thing faith is. I hope you understood that Jesus Christ asked neither more nor less than that we should have the same simple confidence in God and His Word that we place in each other in matters of everyday life.

Now, today, I remark that –

I. – The object of true, overcoming faith is God himself.

Genuine faith will rest on no creature, no feeling, no resolution; on nothing short of the Living God. It will be seen therefore that –

1. This faith is more than faith in man, or the will of man.

The confidence that moves the mountains of misery and vice; that raises to life the dead in trespasses and sins; that makes us the masters of passion and pride, and empowers us to walk in the way of holiness, is faith in God alone. Faith in any other being will be useless. No human power could help us. To trust in the flesh is to fail utterly. In fact, the Bible distinctly says, 'Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.'

It is true you will have to take your part in working out your own Salvation of those around you, up to the level of your ability, as men and women. You could not expect God to do His share of the work on any other terms.



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Still, after all that is said or done, the faith that is needed is the simple taking of God at His word, and the unquestioning reliance of the heart on Him.

The summing up of the whole question, then, is the desirability of, and the necessity for, the faith that rests in God, and rejoices in His loving, active cooperation. He is the Author of every good and perfect work. Therefore, have faith in God.

2. The faith you require signifies more than confidence in the means to be employed.

The methods you may adopt, and the instruments you may employ, may be good, but without God they are of no service. Indeed, instead of these things leading people to rely on God, alas! They often lead them away to trusting in themselves.

Do not many people fail at this point? They think they are exercising a belief in their Heavenly Father's care, when all the time they are simply trusting to the provision they have made for their own security.

You will have heard, perhaps, of the woman, who, when the captain during a storm at sea called upon the passengers to trust in God for their deliverance, as he could do no more for their preservation, exclaimed, 'Goodness gracious! Has it come to that!'

This woman had, no doubt, been fancying throughout the voyage that she trusted to her Heavenly Father for protection; but now, when faced with the fact that only the power and pity of Jehovah stood between her and destruction, she voiced her real distrust of Him in the despairing cry, 'Goodness gracious! Has it come to that!'

The same mistake is made by many people – and too often, I fear, with fatal consequences – with respect to the means employed for effecting their salvation.

Instead of trusting in God they rely on their Bibles, their prayers, their ceremonies or some other religious forms. Such people convert means that may be good in themselves into a positive curse by putting them in the place of God.



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Now I want to ask you: Are not Salvationists in danger of a similar evil? Does not their faith for congregations, and money, and souls, and other successes often rest in their Officers, or their buildings? Do they not trust in their Officers, or their buildings? Do they not trust in their singing, or their praying, or something else that they do themselves, or get done for them by others, rather than in the direct work of the Holy Spirit, and the active cooperation of God?

When weary with the anxieties of life, saddened by its sorrows, cast down by its temptations, and disappointed in their efforts to accomplish the Salvation of the people, do they not too often look for comfort and for deliverance to human agents? DO they not thereby reveal the melancholy fact that their confidence is in man rather than in their God?

I do not say that it is so with you, my Comrades, at this Corps. But I am afraid that with many Soldiers the faith for Salvation they do exercise is largely in man and in human means rather than in the Living God.

Yet, my Comrades, we are the people who proclaim on the housetops that Salvation is of the lord. We say that it is God who saves; that it is God who keeps; and that according to the measure of our faith in Him will be the measure of our success. Let us strive, therefore, more earnestly than ever to look direct to God, to rely on God; or, in other words, to have faith in God.

You must go on, my Comrades, using means to promote your own temporal and eternal welfare and the welfare of those around you. It is not only right and desirable to do this, but absolutely necessary, if you are to attain the end you have in view.

God has arranged to save men for time and eternity by the use of means; and you cannot put the people right on earth, or land them in the Celestial City, without suing the proper means. So go on providing means, and make them as practical and effective as you possibly can.

If you erect buildings, or arrange Meetings, or plan special Services, let all your arranging and performances be as near perfection as you can get them. But when you have done all, you must simply lay them as offerings at Jehovah's feet. You must trust for success, not to their suitability, nor to any efforts put forth, but to the direct blessing of the Living God.



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Such was the faith of Enoch and Abraham, of Moses, of David, of Paul, of the Martyrs; and such has been the faith of all the mighty men of God who have followed them.

They laid their plans, they framed their laws, they commanded their people, they fought their battles, they laid down their lives; but in all, and through all, their courage, strength, and victory came from their unflinching faith in the Living God.

These mighty warriors were sustained, and enabled to endure by seeing Him who is invisible to human eyes. Their faith rose above the things of earth and sense; and so, even when deserted by every other friend, and deprived of every other support, they were supported and they conquered by their faith in God.

Believe, my Comrades, believe! Let each one of you have the same faith in God, and you shall have the same victory.

Your affectionate general,
William Booth.