

FAITH.

(From Saved and Kept)

By Rev. G. A. McLaughlin.

There is perhaps no topic about which more is said than faith. There are many misty notions concerning it. We wish therefore to make it as simple as possible.

1. Faith in God for salvation comes just as faith comes in any one else. We are so constituted that we must believe when we have proper evidence. Not to do so when we have good evidence is to do violence to the laws of our being.

The apostle says, "faith cometh by hearing." When the conductor told the ladies that they could leave the train at the next station and take another, they acted upon it with implicit faith, because they believed what he said. They knew it was his business to be informed on such matters and that he could be trusted in what he said in that matter.

They did not sit down and begin to lament that they had so little faith in what he said. They did not say, "O I wish I could believe."

That is the way many professed Christians talk when asked to believe God. They say, "O I have so little faith!" In other words they do not believe what God has said. They make him a liar when he says, "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon." They say, "O I have so little faith." Who is it you have so little faith in? Is it God?

When such a person is reined up by this question, they often reply, "I have so little faith in myself." Well that is the key to the difficulty. They have really been trying to have faith in themselves and can not have much and none that will save them. They had better stop trying to make God a liar. Usually they do have more faith in themselves than in God. If they had still less in themselves they would stop insulting God and believe Him.

We believe men when they tell us facts but we doubt God when he tells us facts. We can trust a man who makes us promises but we doubt the true and faithful God when he makes promises. We can trust a bank because we believe it is good but we can not trust God. Is it then anything else than impudence to doubt God and say His credit is not good?

We read in the word of God that "without faith it is impossible to please God." The men who will be longest remembered in the world have been the men who believed God implicitly. Read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and see.

Faith is accepting what God says as true and acting accordingly. The ladies on the train accepted what the conductor said and acted accordingly. When the ten lepers came to Jesus and cried, "Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us," he said, "go show yourselves to the priests." That was what men did who believed they were cured of leprosy. This had been ordained by the law of Moses. The priest was to make an examination and pronounce on the case. When Jesus said to them, "Go show yourselves to the priests," they acted just as if they were healed, and as they went they were healed. Trust God

the same way. Repent truly of your sins. Trust God to forgive and save you and then go out and act as if you really believe it and you will find it so.

So in order to have this salvation, believe what the witnesses say who have been saved and then go and act as if you believed God.

Still farther, faith, that brings salvation, is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus styled himself the "Great Physician." If we go to him as we would to a physician and give ourselves up to obey his directions as we would a doctor's we shall receive this salvation. Now there is a difference between and believing a physician, believing in a physician and believing on a physician. For instance a new doctor comes to town. You are sick. You form a personal acquaintance with him and find him to be a fine Christian gentleman.

You become so intimate with him, as your acquaintance ripens, that you have implicit confidence in all his statements. You feel that you can rely upon his word. He tells you many things about his practice in other places and of the patients he has cured. You believe every word he says, but that does not cure you. The disease is just as deadly as before. Your belief in him does not save you, and yet it is a kind of faith.

This is the kind of faith in Jesus that does not save men. There are many who believe that Jesus was a truth teller but they are not saved notwithstanding they believe he spake as man never spake. There are others who go farther and believe that Jesus is divine and yet that faith does not save them. They read the Bible and believe every word in it and still they are lost. They believe in Jesus, in his divinity and power to save, in all that he says; but do not believe on him.

But you may go farther and believe all the doctor says and in addition you may be shown the diplomas that he has hung up in his office showing that he is a graduate of several medical colleges. He may then show you the testimonials of patients who have been saved from the most deadly forms of the same disease that you are suffering from, but all that kind of faith does not save. No matter how much faith you may have in his skill, if that is all, that faith will not save you from the disease.

If you expect that just your faith in his skill would save you it would show that your disease had affected your brain. And the disease of sin has affected some people's common sense, so that they think their faith of the head is going to save them. Such people think they are saved. What a delusion!

Some churches simply require a seeker of salvation to say that he believes that Jesus is the Son of God and be baptized. Then they tell them that they are saved. Awful delusion! If this be true then the devils were fit subjects for baptism for they confessed that Jesus was the Christ. "Thou believest there is one God," says St. James, "thou doest well. The devils believe and tremble." But they are devils still in spite of their belief.

This is not the faith that brings salvation. They are devils still. All this is believing Jesus and believing in Jesus, but

it is not believing on Jesus. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," said Paul to the jailor, "and thou shalt be saved."

It remains then to be seen what believing on Jesus means. Having your faith fully established as to the veracity and skill of the doctor, you must now go a step farther, if you expect to be cured, and that step is to submit yourself to him for treatment. You surrender yourself to him and let him take the responsibility of the cure. You take the medicine according to orders. You diet as he says. You submit to the anesthetic and the knife. You go to the health resort as he directs. You put yourself in his care and give over trying to cure yourself. This is believing on the physician.

In like manner we must believe on Jesus Christ. We must submit ourselves to treatment. We must receive him to save us and banish all other hope of salvation from any other source. Faith then is receiving Jesus as our Saviour with a determination to do his bidding. We have been trying to run the ship for many years in vain and have nearly wrecked it and now we are to receive him on board and let him run it to suit himself, while we obey his orders.

Or to return to the illustration of the physician, we now take the medicine of repentance just as he directs. We now forsake sin as he bids us in his word. We now do as he bids and trust him for salvation and go forth and act as if we believed he had saved us. This is believing on Jesus, viz., trusting him and then going forth and acting as if we believed it.

Reader, have you done likewise, honestly, determinedly? Then you have learned already more on this subject than this little book can teach you? If you have not done it why not begin at once.

THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

That the filling of the Spirit belongs to us as a covenant privilege seems to be clear from the exhortation in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which is confessedly of universal application: "Be not drunken with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." The surrendered will, the yielded body, the emptied heart, are the great requisities to his incoming. And when he has come and filled the believer, the result is a kind of passive activity, as one wrought upon and controlled rather than of one directing his own efforts. Under the influence of strong drink there is an outpouring of all that the evil spirit inspires—frivolity, profanity and riotous conduct.

'Be God-intoxicated men,' the apostle would seem to say; "let the Spirit of God control you that you shall pour yourself out in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." If such divine enthusiasm has its perils, we believe that they are less to be dreaded than that "moderatism" which makes the servants of God satisfied with the letter of scripture, if only that letter be skilfully and scientifically handled, rather than giving the supreme place to the Spirit as the inspirer and motor of all Christian service.—Rev. J. A. Gordon.

"True worth is being, not seeming."