

Lessons on Faith #1

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : November 29, 1898

Without faith it is impossible to please God. The reason for this is that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23), and of course sin cannot please God.

This is why it is that, as stated by the Spirit of Prophecy on the first page of the Review, October 18, 1898, "The knowledge of what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired."

And for this cause we shall hereafter, in this place in each number of the Review give a Scripture lesson on faith - what it is, how it comes, how to exercise it - that every reader of this paper may have this knowledge that "is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired."

Lessons on Faith #2

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : December 6, 1898

In order to be able to know what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith, it is essential to know, first of all, what is faith.

Plainly, it must be to little purpose to urge upon a person the necessity of cultivating faith, while that person has no intelligent idea of what faith is. And it is sadly true that, though the Lord has made this perfectly plain in the Scriptures, there are many church-members who do not know what faith is. They may even know what the definition of faith is, but they do not know what the thing is. They do not grasp the idea that is in the definition.

For that reason the definition will not be touched now, but rather there will be cited and studied an illustration of faith - an instance which makes it stand out so plainly that all can see the very thing itself.

Faith comes "by the word of God." To the Word, then, we must look for it.

One day a centurion came to Jesus and said to him, "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed . . . When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Matthew 8:6-10

There is what Jesus pronounces faith. When we find what that is, we have found faith. To know what that is, is to know what faith is. There can be no sort of doubt about this, for Christ is "the Author . . . of faith," and He says that that which the centurion manifested was "faith" - yes, even "great faith."

Where, then, in this is the faith? The centurion wanted a certain thing done. He wanted the Lord to do it. But when the Lord said, "I will come" and do it, the centurion checked Him, saying, "Speak the word only," and it shall be done.

Now what did the centurion expect would do the work? "The word ONLY." Upon what did he depend for the healing of his servant? Upon "the word ONLY."

Now, brother, sister, what is faith?

Lessons on Faith #3

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : December 27, 1898

Faith is the expecting the word of God to do what it says and the depending upon that word to do what it says.

As that is faith and as faith comes by the word of God, it is plain that the word of God, in order to inculcate faith, must teach that the word has in it power to accomplish what itself says.

And such is precisely the truth of the matter: the word of God does teach just this and nothing else, so that it is truly "the faithful word" - the word full of faith.

The greater part of the very first chapter of the Bible is instruction in faith. That chapter has in itself no fewer than six distinct statements that definitely inculcate faith; with the essential connective of the first verse, there are seven.

The inculcation of faith is the teaching that the word of God itself accomplishes the thing, which is spoken in that word.

Read, then, the first verse of the Bible. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." How did He create them? "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

"For he spoke, and it was." Psalm 33:6-9. Before He spoke, it was not; after He spoke, "it was." Only by speaking, it was. What caused it to be? The word only.

But darkness was upon all the face of the deep. God wished light to be there, but how could there be light when all was darkness? Again He spoke. "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light." Whence came the light? The word, which was spoken, itself produced the light. "The entrance of thy words gives light." Psalm 119:130

There was no firmament, atmosphere. God wished that there should be a firmament. How could it be produced? "God said, Let there be a firmament . . . and it was so." Another translation for "it was so" is, "And thus it came to pass." What caused the firmament to be? What caused this thus to come to pass? The word only. He spoke, and it was so. The word spoken, itself caused the thing to exist.

God next desired that there should be dry land. How could this be? Again He spoke. "God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place and let the dry land appear; and it was so."

Then there was no vegetation. Whence should this come? Again God spoke. "And God said, let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth, and it was so."

Again He spoke. "And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of heaven . . . and it was so."

Again He spoke. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature . . . and it was so."

Thus it was that "by the word of the Lord" all things were created. He spoke the word only, and it was so. The word spoken, itself produced the thing.

Thus it was in creation. And thus it was in redemption. He healed the sick; He cast out devils; He stilled the tempest; He cleansed the lepers; He raised the dead; He forgave sins - all by His word. In all this, also, "He spoke and it was."

And so He is the same yesterday and today and forever. Always He is the Creator - always He does all things by His word only - always He can do all things by His word. It is the very characteristic of the word of God that it possesses the divine power by which itself accomplishes the thing, which is spoken.

This is why it is that faith is the knowing that in the word of God there is this power, the expecting the word itself to do the thing spoken and the depending upon that word itself to do that which the word speaks.

The teaching of faith is the teaching that such is the nature of the word of God; the teaching of people to exercise faith is the teaching them to expect the word of God to do what it says and to depend upon it to do the thing which is by it spoken; the cultivating of faith is by practice to cause to grow confidence in the power of the word of God itself to do what in that word is said and dependence upon that word itself to accomplish what the word says.

And "the knowledge of what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired."

Are you cultivating faith?

Lessons on Faith #4

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : January 3, 1899

Faith is the expecting the word of God to do what the word says and depending upon that word to do what the word says.

When this is clearly discerned, it is perfectly easy to see how it is that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Since the word of God is imbued with creative power and so is able to produce in very substance the thing which that word speaks and since faith is the expectation that the word itself will do what the word says and depending on the word only to do what that word says, it is plain enough that faith is the substance of things hoped for.

Since the word of God is in itself creative and so is able to produce and cause to appear what otherwise would never exist nor be seen, and since faith is the expecting the word of God only to do just that thing and depending upon "the word only" to do it, it is plain enough that faith is "the evidence of things not seen."

Thus it is that "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

He who exercises faith knows that the word of God is creative and that so it is able to produce the thing spoken. Therefore, he can understand that the worlds were caused to exist, by the word of God.

He who exercises faith can understand that though before the word of God was spoken, neither the things which are now seen nor the substances of which those things are composed, anywhere appeared, simply because they did not exist; yet when that word was spoken, the worlds were, simply because that word itself caused them to exist.

This is the difference between the word of God and the word of man. Man may speak, but there is no power in his words to perform the thing spoken. If the thing is to be accomplished which he has spoken, the man must do something in addition to speaking the word - he must make good his word.

Not so the word of God.

When God speaks, the thing is - simply because He has spoken. It accomplishes that which He was pleased to speak. It is not necessary that the Lord must do something in addition to the word spoken. He needs not to make His word good; it is good. He speaks "the word only," and the thing is accomplished.

And so it is written: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word

of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe" - in you that exercise faith. 1 Thessalonians 2:13

This also is how it is that it is "impossible for God to lie." It is impossible for God to lie because He cannot. It is impossible. And it is impossible, because when He speaks, the creative energy is in the word spoken, so that "the word only" causes the thing to be so.

Man may speak a word and it not be so. Thus man can lie, for to speak what is not so is to lie. And man can lie, can speak what is not so, because there is no power in his word itself to cause the thing to be. With God this is impossible; He cannot lie, for "he spoke, and it was"; He speaks, and it is so.

This is also how it is that when the word of God is spoken for a certain time, as in a prophecy for hundreds of years to come when that time actually has arrived, that word is fulfilled. And it is then fulfilled, not because, apart from the word, God does something to fulfill it, but because the word was spoken for that time, and in it is the creative energy, which causes the word at that time to produce the thing spoken.

This is how it was that if the children had not cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David," the stones would have immediately cried out; and this is how it was that when the third day had come, it was "impossible" that He should be any longer held of death.

O, the word of God is divine! In it is creative energy. It is "living and powerful." The word of God is self-fulfilling, and to trust it and depend upon it as such, that is to exercise faith. "Hast thou faith?"

Lessons on Faith #5

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : January 10, 1899

"The knowledge of what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired."

Notice: that it is the knowledge of what the Scripture means as to the "necessity of cultivating faith."

There is not much said in the Scriptures about any necessity of our having faith, while very, very much is said about our cultivating faith.

The reason of this is that to all people there is given faith to begin with, and all they need to do is to cultivate faith. Nobody can have more faith than is already given him without cultivating the faith that is already given. And there is nothing known to man that will grow so fast as faith, when it is cultivated - "faith grows exceedingly."

Faith is the expecting that the word of God itself will accomplish what that word says, and the depending upon "the word only" to accomplish what the word says. To cultivate dependence on the word of God, "the word only," itself to do what the word says is to cultivate faith.

Faith is "the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8), and that it is given to everybody is plainly stated in the Scriptures. "God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Romans 12:3. This measure of faith which "God hath dealt to every man" is the capital with which God endows and starts "every man that cometh into the world," and every man is expected to trade upon this capital - cultivate it - to the salvation of his soul.

There is no danger of ever lessening this capital when it is used; as certainly as it is used at all, it will increase. It will grow exceedingly. And as certainly as it grows, the righteousness, the peace, the joy, of the Lord, are assured to the full salvation of the soul.

Again, faith comes by the word of God. Therefore, it is written, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." Romans 10:8. Thus faith, the very word of faith, is in the mouth and in the heart of every man.

How is this? Thus: When the first pair sinned in the garden, they wholly believed Satan. They gave themselves wholly to Satan. He took them completely captive. Then there was perfect agreement and peace between them and Satan. But God did not leave it so. He broke up this agreement; He spoiled this peace. And He did it by His word, saying to Satan, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed." Genesis 3:15

"It is God alone that can continually put enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent's seed. After the transgression of man, his nature became evil. Then was peace between Satan and fallen man. Had there been no interference on the part of God, men would have formed an alliance against heaven, and in the place of warfare among themselves, carried on nothing but warfare against God. There is no native enmity between fallen angels and fallen men. Both are evil and that through apostasy, and evil, wherever it exists, will always league against good. Fallen angels and fallen men join in companionship. The wise general of fallen angels calculated that if he could induce men, as he had angels, to join in rebellion, they would stand as his agents of communication with men to league in rebellion against heaven. Just as soon as one separates from God, he has no power of enmity against Satan. The enmity on earth between man and Satan is supernaturally put there. Unless the converting power of God is brought daily to bear upon the human heart, there will be no inclination to be religiously inclined, but men will choose to be the captives of Satan rather than to be free men in Jesus Christ. God will put enmity. Man cannot put it. When the will is brought into subject to the will of God, it must be through man's inclining his heart and will to be on the Lord's side." Unpublished Testimony.

This enmity against Satan, this hatred of evil, which God puts in every person by His word, causes each soul to long for deliverance, and the deliverance is found alone in Jesus Christ. Romans 7:14-25

Thus this word of God, which plants in each soul enmity against Satan, this hatred of evil that calls for deliverance which is found alone in Jesus Christ, this is the gift of faith to men. This is "the measure of faith" which God has dealt to every man. This is the "word of faith," which is in the mouth and in the heart of every person in the world.

This "is the word of faith, which we preach: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:8-10

Therefore say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven, to bring faith to us? Neither say, who shall descend into the deep, or, who shall go far off to find faith and bring it to us? For "the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach." Deuteronomy 30:11-14; Romans 10:6-8

Say that - and exercise the faith, which God has given to you, as to every other person in the world, for "understanding how to exercise faith, this is the science of the gospel."

Lessons on Faith #6

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : January 17, 1899

Faith is the depending upon the word of God only, and expecting that word only to do what the word says.

Justification by faith, then, is justification by depending upon the word of God only and expecting that word only to accomplish it.

Justification by faith is righteousness by faith, for justification is the being declared righteous.

Faith comes by the word of God. Justification by faith, then, is justification that comes by the word of God. Righteousness by faith is righteousness that comes by the word of God.

The word of God is self-fulfilling, for in creating all things, "he spoke and it was." And when He was on earth, He stilled the raging sea, cleansed the lepers, healed the sick, raised the dead, and forgave sins, all by His word: there, too, "he spoke, and it was."

Now the same One who, in creating, "spoke, and it was", the same One who said, "Let there be light, and there was light," the same One who on earth spoke "the word only," and the sick were healed, the lepers were cleansed, and the dead lived - this same One speaks the righteousness of God unto and upon all that believe.

For though all have sinned and not even come close to the righteousness of God, yet we are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth . . . to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

In creating all things in the beginning, God set forth Christ to declare the word, which should cause all things to exist. Christ did speak the word only, and all things were. And in redemption, which is creation over again, God set forth Christ to declare the word of righteousness. And when Christ speaks the word only, it is so. His word, whether in creating or in redeeming, is the same.

"The worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Once there were no worlds, nor was there any of the material which now composes the worlds. God set forth Christ to declare the word, which should produce the worlds, and the very material of which they should be composed.

"He spoke, and it was." Before He spoke, there were no worlds; after He spoke, the worlds were there. Thus the word of God spoken by Jesus Christ is able to cause that to exist which has no existence before the word is spoken, and which, except for that word, never could have existence.

In this same way precisely it is in man's life. In man's life there is no righteousness. In man there is no righteousness from which righteousness can appear in his life. But God has set forth Christ to declare righteousness unto and upon man. Christ has spoken the word only, and in the darkened void of man's life there is righteousness to everyone who will receive it. Where, before the word is received, there was neither righteousness nor anything, which could possibly produce righteousness, after the word is received; there is perfect righteousness and the very Fountain from which it springs. The word of God received by faith - that is, the word of God expected to do what that word says and depended upon to do what it says - produces righteousness in the man and in the life where there never was any before; precisely as, in the original creation, the word of God produced worlds where there never were any worlds before. He has spoken, and it is so to everyone that believeth: that is, to every one that receives. The word itself produces it.

"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1. That is so - bless the Lord! And feeding upon this blessed thing is cultivating faith.

Lessons on Faith #7

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : January 24, 1899

"The knowledge of what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith is more important than any other knowledge that can be obtained."

Faith is the expecting the word of God to do the thing, which that word speaks, and the depending upon the word only to accomplish the thing, which that word speaks.

Abraham is the father of all them, which be of faith. The record of Abraham, then, gives instruction in faith - what it is and what it does for him who has it.

What shall we say, then, that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the faith, has found? What saith the Scripture?

When Abram was more than eighty years old and Sarai his wife was old and he had no child, God "brought him forth abroad and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."

And Abram "believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Genesis 15:5,6. Abram accepted the word of God and expected by the word what the word said. And in that he was right.

Sarai, however, did not put her expectation upon the word of God only. She resorted to a device of her own to bring forth seed. She said to him, "The Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her." Genesis 16:2

Abram, for the moment, swerved from the perfect integrity of faith. Instead of holding fast his expectation and dependence upon the word of God only, he "harkened to the voice of Sarai."

Accordingly, a child was born, but the whole matter proved to be so unsatisfactory to Sarai that she repudiated her own arrangement. And God showed His repudiation of it by totally ignoring the fact that any child had been born. He changed Abram's name to Abraham and continued to talk about making him the father of nations through the seed promised and of making his covenant with Abraham and the seed that was promised. He also changed Sarai's name to Sarah, because she should "be a mother of nations" through the promised seed.

Abraham noticed this total ignoring of the child that had been born and called the Lord's attention to it, saying, "O, that Ishmael might live before thee!"

But "God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac, and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he

beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year." Genesis 17:15-21

By all this both Abram and Sarai were taught that, in carrying out the promise, the fulfilling of the word of God, nothing would answer but dependence upon that word only. Sarai learned that her device brought only trouble and perplexity and delayed the fulfillment of the promise. Abram learned that in harkening to the voice of Sarai, he had missed the word of God, and that now he must abandon that whole scheme and turn again to the word of God only.

But now Abraham was ninety-nine years old and Sarah was eighty- nine. And, if anything, this seemed to put farther off than ever the fulfillment of the word and called for a deeper dependence upon the word of God - a greater faith than before.

It was perfectly plain that now there was no possibility of dependence upon anything whatever, but the naked word only; they were shut up absolutely to this for the accomplishment of what the word said. All works, devices, plans, and efforts of their own were excluded, and they were shut up to faith alone - shut up to the word alone and to absolute dependence upon that word only for the accomplishment of what that word said.

And now that the way was clear for "the word only" to work, that word did work, effectually, and the promised "seed" was born. And so "through faith," through helpless, total dependence upon the word only - "Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised."

And "therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable." Hebrews 11:12

And thus was fulfilled the word spoken to Abram, when God "brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. . . . So shall thy seed be."

This is a divine lesson in faith. And this is what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith. For this was imputed to Abraham for righteousness, even the righteousness of God, which is by faith.

Yet "it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." Romans 4:23-25

And all "they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." All they who, excluding - yea, repudiating - all works, plans, devices, and efforts, of their own, depend in utter helplessness upon the word of God only to accomplish what that word

says - these are they which be of faith and are blessed with faithful Abraham with the righteousness of God.

O, "understanding how to exercise faith: this is the science of the gospel"! And the science of the gospel is the science of sciences. Who would not strain every nerve to understand it?

Lessons on Faith #8

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : January 31, 1899

When Abraham and Sarah had cleared themselves of all the scheme of unbelief, which had produced Ishmael and had stood upon faith alone - dependence on the word of God alone - Isaac, the true child of the promise, was born.

In harkening to the voice of Sarai (Genesis 16:1), Abram had swerved from the line of strict integrity to the word of God, from the strictness of true faith, and now that he had returned to the word only, to true faith, he must be tested before it could be certainly said of him that his faith was counted for righteousness.

He had trusted the naked word of God as against Ishmael and had obtained Isaac, the true child of the promise of God. And now, having obtained Isaac, the question must be determined whether he would trust the naked word of God as against even Isaac himself.

Accordingly, God said to Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Abraham had received Isaac from God by trusting the word of God only. Isaac alone was the seed promised by the word of the Lord. After Isaac was born, God had confirmed the word by declaring, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." Genesis 21:12. And now came the word of God, Take thy son, thine only son Isaac, and offer him for a burnt offering.

God had declared to Abraham, Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven for multitude. "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," and now, Offer Isaac for a burnt offering!

But, if Isaac is offered for a burnt offering, if Isaac is burned up, what will become of the promise of the blessing of all nations in him? What will become of the promise, Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven innumerable? Yet there stood the word, Offer Isaac for a burnt offering. Abraham had trusted the word of God only, as against Ishmael, but this is more than trusting the word of God as against Isaac - it is trusting the word of God as against the word of God!

And Abraham did it, hoping against hope. God had said: Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven; In Isaac shall thy seed be called. Offer Isaac for a burnt offering. Abraham did not insist that God should "harmonize these passages." It was all sufficient for him to know that the statements were all the word of God. Knowing this, he would trust that word, would follow that word, and would let the Lord "harmonize these passages," or "explain these texts," if any such thing were needed.

Said Abraham: God has said, Offer Isaac for a burnt offering. That I will do. God has said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." And, Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven for multitude. I interfered once in the promise and hindered it till I repudiated all that I had done and came back to the word only. Then, by a miracle, God gave me Isaac, the promised seed. Now He says, Offer Isaac, the promised seed, for a burnt offering. I will do it. By a miracle God gave him at the first, and by a miracle God can restore him. Yet when I shall have offered him for a burnt offering, he will be dead, and the only miracle that can then restore him is a miracle that will bring him back from the dead. But God is able to do even that, and He will do it, for His word is spoken, Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven for multitude, and In Isaac shall thy seed be called. And even the bringing back of Isaac from the dead will be to God no more than He has already done, for, as to offspring, both my body and Sarah's were as good as dead, and yet God brought forth Isaac from us. He can raise Isaac from the dead, and He will. Bless the Lord!

It was settled. He arose and took his servants and Isaac and went three days' journey "unto the place of which God had told him." And when on the third day he "saw the place afar off," "Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again to you." Genesis 22:5. Who will go? "I and the lad will go." And who will come again? "I and the lad will go . . . and come again to you." Abraham expected to have Isaac come back with him as certainly as that he went with him.

Abraham expected to offer Isaac for a burnt offering and expected then to see Isaac rise from the ashes and go back with him. For the word of God had gone forth, In Isaac shall thy seed be called, and, Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven for multitude. And Abraham would trust that word only that it could never fail. Hebrews 11:17-19

THIS IS FAITH. And thus "the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." James 2:23. But yet above this, "It was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed; if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." Romans 4:23-25

To trust the word of God only, to depend upon the word of God only, and to depend upon the word of God, even as against the word of God - this is FAITH. This is the faith, which brings the righteousness of God.

This is what it is to exercise faith. This is "what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of exercising faith. And "understanding how to exercise faith," this is the science of the gospel. And the science of the gospel is the science of sciences.

Lessons on Faith #9

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : February 7, 1899

"To him that works not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Romans 4:5

This is the only way that anybody in this world can ever become righteous. First admit that he is ungodly, and then believe that God justifies, counts righteous, the ungodly, and he is righteous with the very righteousness of God.

Everybody in the world is ungodly. "Ungodly" means "unlike God." And it is written, "All have sinned and come short of the glory [the goodness, the character] of God."

Anybody who will admit that he has come short of being like God in anything confesses that he is ungodly.

But the truth is that everybody - in everything - has come short of being like God. For "they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Romans 3:9-18

There is not one on earth who is not ungodly, and as God justifies the ungodly, this on God's part makes justification [righteousness & salvation] full, free, and sure to every soul on earth.

And all that anybody needs to do to make it all sure to himself on his own part, is to accept it - to believe that God does justify, personally and individually, him who is ungodly.

Thus, strange as it may sound to many, the only qualification, and the only preparation, for justification is for a person to acknowledge that he is ungodly.

Then, having such qualification, having made such preparation, all that is required of him to obtain justification, full, free, and sure, is to believe that God justifies him, the ungodly one.

It is easy for many to believe that they are ungodly and to acknowledge it, but for them to believe that God justifies them - that is too much.

And the sole reason why they cannot believe that God justifies them, is that they are ungodly, so ungodly.

If only they could find some good in themselves or if only they could straighten up and do better, they might have some courage to hope that God would justify them. Yes, they would justify themselves by works and then profess to believe in justification by faith!

If a man can find good in himself he does not need it from anywhere else. If he can straighten up and do better of himself - he can justify himself.

It is a contradiction in terms to say that I am so ungodly that I do not see how the Lord can justify me. For if I am not ungodly, I do not need to be made righteous - I am righteous. There is no halfway ground between godliness and ungodliness.

But when a person sees himself so ungodly as to find there no possible ground of hope for justification, it is just there that faith comes in; indeed, it is only there that faith can possibly come in.

For faith is dependence on the word of God only. So long as there is any dependence on himself, so long as there is any conceivable ground of hope for any dependence upon anything in or about himself, there can be no faith, so long there is no place for faith, since faith is dependence on "the word only."

But when every conceivable ground of hope of any dependence on anything in or about himself is gone and is acknowledged to be gone; when everything that can be seen is against any hope of justification, then it is that, throwing himself on the promise of God, upon the word only, hoping against hope, faith enters and by faith he finds justification full and free, all ungodly though he be.

For forever it stands written, "To him that works not but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ." "Whom God hath set forth . . . to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past."

This is what it is to exercise faith. Are you exercising faith? For "understanding how to exercise faith: this is the science of the gospel."

Lessons on Faith #10

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : February 14, 1899

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
Romans 5:1

Since faith is the depending upon the word of God only, for what that word says, being justified by faith is simply being accounted righteous by depending upon the word only.

The word is the word of God; dependence upon the word only is dependence upon God only, in the word. Justification by faith, then, is justification - being accounted righteous by dependence upon God only, and upon him only because he has promised.

We are all altogether sinners - sinful and ungodly and therefore, all subject to the judgment of God. Romans 3:9-19. Yet for all of us there is escape from the judgment of God. But the only way of escape from the judgment of God is to trust in God.

When David had sinned in numbering the people and so had incurred the exemplary judgment of God, the Lord gave him his choice as to whether there should be seven years' famine or he should flee three months before his enemies or there should be three days' pestilence. But David would not choose at all. He deferred it all to the Lord, for Him to choose, saying, "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great." 2 Samuel 24:11-14

When depending upon God alone, in His word, for righteousness, we have peace with God, because thus we really obtain righteousness and "the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." Isaiah 32:17

When depending upon God alone in His word, for righteousness we have peace through our Lord Jesus Christ, because "He is our peace, who hath made both" God and man "one," "having abolished in his flesh the enmity" "for to make in himself of twain - of God and man - "one new man, so making peace." Ephesians 2:14,15

Further: when depending upon God alone, in His word, for righteousness, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, because God has "made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself . . . whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable in his sight: IF ye continue in the faith" - if you continue to depend only upon God alone is His word. Colossians 1:20-23

When He has made the way so plain, the justification so complete, and the peace so sure to all, and asks all people only to receive it all by simply accepting it from him and depending upon him for it, why should not every soul on earth be thus justified and have the peace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ?

This is "what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of exercising faith." Are you exercising faith? Are you justified by faith? Have you righteousness by faith? Have you peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?

"Have faith in God." Mark 11:22

Lessons on Faith #11

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : February 21, 1899

Faith is complete dependence upon the word of God only for the accomplishment of what that word says.

So, where there is no word of God, there cannot be any faith.

This is shown also in the truth that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17. Since faith thus comes indeed by the very word of God itself, it is perfectly plain that where there is no word of God, there can be no faith.

This is beautifully illustrated by an instance in the life of David, because David had it in his heart to build a house unto the Lord, the Lord spoke to him by the prophet Nathan, saying, "The Lord tells thee that he will make thee an house. . . . And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever."

Then David prayed and said, "Now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant and concerning his house, establish it forever and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified forever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel, and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.

"For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

"And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant; therefore, now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue forever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed forever."
2 Samuel 7:11-29

His prayer was altogether of faith, because it was altogether of the word of God: the word of God was the cause of it; the word of God was the basis of it; and the word of God was all the hope of David that the prayer would ever be answered.

He asked according to the will of God, because the will of God was expressed in the word of God. Having asked according to the plainly stated will of God, David knew that his prayer was heard. And knowing that his prayer was heard, David knew that he had the petition, which he desired of him. 1 John 5:14. Therefore he said, so let it be. And therefore also the answer to that prayer was, and is, and forevermore shall be, sure unto David.

And this was written for our learning: that we might know how to pray in faith and how in prayer to cultivate faith. Therefore, Go and do thou likewise. Because "the

knowledge of what the Scripture means when urging upon us the necessity of cultivating faith is more essential than any other knowledge that can be acquired."

Lessons on Faith #12

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : February 28, 1899

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Therefore the word of God is the only means of faith. Therefore, where there is no word of God there cannot be any faith.

And where the word of God is, faith is entire dependence upon that word for the accomplishment of what that word says.

From all this, which is the truth, it is perfectly plain that in order for anyone to ask in faith, he must first of all be sure that he has the word of God for what he asks.

Having the word of God for what he asks, he, like David, can find it in his heart to pray with perfect confidence, which is only in perfect faith.

He who thus prays knows that he is asking according to the will of God, for he knows that he has the plain word of God for it.

Therefore he knows that God hears him, and knowing that God hears him, he knows that he has the thing for which he has asked, because the sole basis of his hope for it is the word which has spoken it, and which is the sole basis of his asking.

The Lord tells us thus to pray, and thus he has made provision for the steady, strong, and continuous growth of faith.

Many people pray but do not know whether it is the will of the Lord that they should have what they pray for and so do not know whether they can certainly claim it; and not knowing whether they can claim it, they are all at sea as to whether their prayers are answered or not.

The Lord does not want anybody to move uncertainly. Therefore, He has given His word, which thoroughly furnishes every one unto all good works and by which are given all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

Anyone who seeks in the word of God for the specific things which God has provided and then bows upon that specific word for that thing, is asking according to the plainly expressed will of God, and knows that his prayer is heard and that he has the thing for which he prayed.

So doing, the prayers will be always certain, the life will be filled with the direct gifts of God, and the faith will be sure and strong and will be ever increasing in strength.

Many pray the prayer of the disciples, "Lord, increase our faith." This is well. Yet along with this, it must never be forgotten that faith comes only by the word of God. Therefore, an increase in you of the Word of God will bring a corresponding increase in your faith. And the only way that there can be in you an increase of the word of God is

by your harkening to that word, praying to the Lord for the thing which that word says, depending wholly upon that word for that thing and thanking him that you have received it. Then and thus that word is received by you and lives in you.

Thus while we can pray, "Lord, increase our faith," at the same time we must remember that we are to build up ourselves on our most holy faith. Jude 20

This is how to exercise faith. Faith can be exercised only on the word of God, for where there is no word of God; there cannot be any faith.

And "understanding how to exercise faith, this is the science of the gospel."

Lessons on Faith #13

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : March 7, 1899

"The just shall live by faith." Who are the just? - They are only those who are of faith, because men are justified only by faith.

For though we all "have sinned and come short of the glory of God," yet we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

For "to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that works not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Those who are of faith are the just in the earth.

Now faith is entire dependence on the word of God, that that word shall accomplish what that word says. "It shall accomplish that which I please." Isaiah 55:11

To be justified by faith, then, is to be justified by entire dependence upon the word of God. The just are those who are of the word of God. This is how men become just.

Men must not only become just by faith - by dependence upon the word of God - but being just, we must live by faith. The just man lives in precisely the same way and by the same thing that he becomes just.

We become just by faith; faith is entire dependence on the word of God. We, being just, must live by precisely the same thing by which we become just; that is, by entire dependence upon the word of God.

Jesus said: Man shall live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In saying this, He was simply saying, "Man shall live by faith."

There is no other way to live than by faith, which is simply living by the word of God. Without faith - without the word of God: men only die.

Indeed, without the word of God everything only dies, for in the beginning everything came by the word of God. The word of God is the origin and life of everything, for, "He spoke, and it was."

All things animate and inanimate - sun, moon, and stars, animals and men - all are entirely dependent upon the word of God for existence. Only in the case of men God has bestowed upon them the wondrous gift of choice as to whether they will do so or not. This gift opens the door to faith. And when a man does choose to live by the word of God, which is the only means of life, faith - entire dependence upon the word of God - is the means by which he lays hold on the means of life.

So: "the just shall live by faith," and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." "The just must live by the word of God, and whatsoever is not of the word of God is sin."

"We cannot have a healthy Christian experience, we cannot obey the gospel unto salvation until the science of faith is better understood and until more faith is exercised."

"Hast thou faith?" Have the faith of God. Here are they that keep "the faith of Jesus."

Lessons on Faith #14

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : March 14, 1899

The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. Romans 1:17

Faith is complete dependence upon the word of God, expecting that word to do what the word itself says.

Is there, then, righteousness spoken by the word of God, so that people can depend completely upon that word, that the word shall accomplish what the word says?

There is. Indeed, that is the very object of the gift of Christ. For him "God set forth . . . to demonstrate his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Romans 3:25

Seeing then that God hath set forth Christ expressly to demonstrate, to speak, the righteousness of God, it is certain that the word of God has been spoken, upon which there can be complete dependence, expecting that word to do what that word says. In other words, there is righteousness that can be received by faith.

Wherein is this word spoken? It is spoken in the word "forgiveness." "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins"; "there is forgiveness with thee."

What is the meaning of the word forgive? The word "forgive" is composed of "for" and "give," which otherwise is 'to give for'. For the Lord to forgive sin is to give for sin. But what does the Lord give for sin? He demonstrates "his righteousness for the remission of sins."

When the Lord forgives sin, He gives His righteousness for the sin. And since the only righteousness that the Lord has is His own, it follows that the only righteousness that God gives for sin is the righteousness of God.

This righteousness of God is a free gift. "Even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men resulting in justification of life." Romans 5:18

Every soul who ever asks God for forgiveness of sin, asks God to give him His righteousness for sin. Every soul who asks God for forgiveness asks it solely upon the word of God, which speaks forgiveness. And faith is entire dependence upon the word for what the word speaks. Thus righteousness is altogether of faith.

"Every one that asks receives." You have asked the Lord many a time to forgive your sins; that is, you have asked him to give for your sin. But when you ask the Lord to give for your sin, in that you ask him to give the only thing that He does or can give for sin, which is righteousness. That is what it is to ask forgiveness of the Lord.

And He does forgive - He does give for - your sins when you ask Him. He says He does, and He does. "He is faithful" - that is, He will never fail - "and just to forgive us our sins." And the only thing He gives for sins is His righteousness.

Why not thank Him for the righteousness that He freely gives for your sins?

Do you not see that righteousness by faith is just as plain and simple as the asking God for forgiveness of sin? Indeed, it is just that. [So, the forgiveness of sin is righteousness by faith. It is sin being replaced with the Righteousness of God - the basis of a new life, which grows more and more into perfection of character.]

To believe that righteousness is given for your sin, when you ask forgiveness, and thankfully receive that righteousness as the gift of God - this is what it is to exercise faith.

Yet how true it is that "we suffer much trouble and grief because of our unbelief and of our ignorance of how to exercise faith."

"Hast thou faith?" Have the faith of God. "Here are they that keep . . . the faith of Jesus."

Lessons on Faith #15

Alonzo T. Jones : Review and Herald : March 28, 1899

"In Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith which works by love." Galatians 5:6

With those who were in mind when this scripture was originally written, circumcision was everything, and it was everything simply because of what it represented.

What circumcision represented to those people were works and works only. It was the greatest of all works - greater than creation itself - because, as the rabbis put it, "So great is circumcision, that but for it the Holy One, blessed be He, would not have created the world." "It is as great as all the other commandments," "equivalent to all the commandments of the law." - Farrar's "Life of Paul," chapter 22, par. 5, note; chapter 35, para 4, note.

Yet this, which to them was so great, the Lord sweeps away, as with a blast, in the words, "Circumcision is nothing," and in Christ Jesus, circumcision avails nothing. And, in view of what circumcision meant to them, this was simply to say that works are nothing and in Christ Jesus works avail nothing.

Then to all the others who, in view of this, might be inclined to boast in their lack of works and thus excuse sin, the word is given with equal force: "And uncircumcision is nothing." "In Jesus Christ neither . . . uncircumcision avails anything," which, in its connection, was simply to say that the absence of works is nothing and in Christ Jesus the absence of works avails nothing.

So then works are nothing and the absence of works is nothing. In Christ Jesus neither works nor the lack of works avails anything.

This word of the Lord, therefore, utterly and forever excludes both classes from all merit and from all ground of merit in themselves or in anything they ever did or did not do.

And this is all as true today as ever. Today, whether persons are out of Christ or in Christ, neither works nor no works avail anything. For it is written: "Are you in Christ? Not if you do not acknowledge yourselves erring, helpless, condemned sinners . . . Your birth, your reputation, your wealth, your talents, your virtues, your piety, your philanthropy, or anything else in you or connected with you, will not form a bond of union between your soul and Christ." - Testimony for the Church, No. 31, pages 44, 45.

What then? Is everybody left in utter emptiness? No, no! Thank the Lord there is something which avails for all and avails forever. Though it be everlasting truth that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything;" yet "the only things that counts is faith working through love." It is a "FAITH WHICH WORKS."

Notice that it is not faith and works that avail; it is "faith WHICH works." It is faith which itself is able to work and does work - it is this and this alone that avails for anybody anywhere at any time.

Faith is only of God and working; it works only the works of God. Thus he who, in Christ Jesus, has the "faith which works," has that which avails to show God manifest in the flesh, working the works of God. And thus "this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

And so, while you are in Christ, "if there is any good in you, it is wholly attributable to the mercy of the compassionate Saviour . . . Your connection with the church, the manner in which your brethren regard you, will be of no avail unless you believe in Christ. It is not enough to believe about Him; you must believe in Him. You must rely wholly upon His saving grace." - Id., pages 44, 45.

"Hast thou faith?" Have the faith of God. "Here are they that keep . . . the faith of Jesus."