

The Science of Cultivating Faith

No. 4

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 itself 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*." Ps. 33:6-9. *Before* he spoke, it was *not*: *after* he spoke, "it *was*." Only by the 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." Ps. 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 to-day, and forever. Always he is the Creator. And always he does all things *by his word* only. And always he *can* do all things by his word; Because it is the very characteristic of the word of *God*, that it is possessed of 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 practise 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?

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