

The Science of Cultivating Faith

No. 2

"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."

The centurion desired that the Lord should do for him a certain thing. The Lord said, "I will *come*," and do it. The centurion said, No; "speak the word only," and it shall be done.

The centurion, then, expected "the word only" to do the work. He depended upon "the word only" for the fulfillment of his desire. And Jesus said that that is "*faith*," even "great faith."

And by all this it is perfectly plain that faith is the expectation that the word of God will *do* what that word *says*; and that it is the depending upon that word *to* do what it says.

The centurion did not expect, *himself*, to do what the *Lord said*. That would not have been faith; because it would have been to deny any power, or life, *in the word*, and would have been to depend altogether on himself.

Yet *you* have said, many and many a time, that *you* would do what the word of God says. Often you have depended on *yourself* to do what the word says, instead of depending on *that word* to do what it says. And then you wondered why you did not succeed better in the Christian life. There is no place for wonder. You did not exercise faith: it was all *yourself*, and none of God.

Yet more: the centurion did not expect even *the Lord to do* what the word *said*; that is, he did not expect the Lord to speak the word, and then, *apart from that word* and by *some other means*, himself do what the word said. Even that would not have been faith, because it would have been to ignore the word as the living and powerful thing that it is, and would have been to deny that God is able to do what he wishes, simply by his word.

Yet many and many a time *you*, having the word of God before your eyes, and earnestly desiring in yourself what that word says, have *turned away from that word*, and have asked *the Lord to do* for you, and in you, what the word says. Instead of expecting *the word* itself to do what it says, *because it is the word of God*, you expected the Lord to do, apart from the word and by some other means, what the word says.

And then you wondered and were perplexed that what you asked was not done. But there was no place for any wonder or perplexity. Your expectation was vain. Your asking was not of faith: it ignored the word of God.

You were without excuse, too, in both these ways; for, all the time, there stood your Lord's plain showing of what is faith; and you had read it many a time. You had read that the centurion said to the Lord, "*Speak* the word *only*, and my servant shall be healed." It was there plainly shown that the centurion expected "the word *only*" to do what he wished, and depended upon "the word *only*" to do it. You had read the word of Jesus that this was "great *faith*;" and that therefore he *did* "speak the word *only*," and the "servant was healed in the selfsame hour." You had also read a number of other instances showing that the Lord did everything by speaking the word only.

Would you exercise great faith? Then receive the word of God as it is in truth, *the word of God*; expect that word *only*, to do what it says; depend upon *the word only*, to do for you, and in you, what that word says.

Then, asking in faith, you will receive what you ask; and being justified by faith, you will have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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