

True Faith ?

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 this, 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 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.

“For by the Word of the LORD were the heavens made (Let there BE . . .), and all the hosts thereof by the breath (Spirit) of His mouth . . . for He spake, and it was done; yea, He commanded, and it stood fast !”

Psalm 33:6-9

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 !”

And the Lord Jesus say that that is faith.

HERE was a Roman, by Israel despised and shunned as a heathen and held to be hated of God, who had spent his life among heathen influences, with no Bible advantages, yet who had discovered that when the Lord speaks, in that Word itself there is power (John 6:63) to do what the Word says, and who depended on that Word to do what it said.

And there were the people of Israel, who all their lives had been in daily connection with the Word of the Lord, who prided themselves on being “the people of the Book,” and boasted of their knowledge of the Word of God; and yet had not learned that in the Word there is power to accomplish what the Word says.

ref: John 14:10-11*

ALL this lack on the part of Israel prevailed, too, when that very Word in which they boasted said to them plainly, and showed over and over, that such is alone the character of the Word of God; and that Word was read in their synagogues every Sabbath day.

That Word had all their lives said plainly to them: “As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud (blossom), that it may give seed to the sower (Luke 8:11), and bread to the eater (John 6:27-35); **so shall My Word be** that goeth forth out of My mouth; It shall not return unto Me void, but It shall accomplish that which I please, and It (He) shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it !”

Isaiah 55:9-11

NATURE itself held constantly before them the instruction that the earth of itself could produce nothing; that it was the moisture of rain and snow, from heaven, the made it bring forth and bud, and produce fruit.

And the Lord said, “So shall My Word be.” As the earth of itself can do nothing, so you of yourself can do nothing. And as the moisture of rain and snow from heaven makes the earth bring forth, and bud, and produce fruit, **so shall My Word** make you bring forth the fruit of righteousness to the glory of God. “My Word, . . . IT shall accomplish that which I please !”

MANY and a time had Israel read this Scripture. And year in and year out they had read the Word of God, and had said: I will do what the Word says; I will accomplish that which pleases Him.
*ref: Exodus 19:8 and Ezekiel 36:36**

And that they might be the more certain that they should do exactly what the Word said, that Word was separated into parts, and each part drawn out into many fine-spun distinctions. Then they set about diligently to do, carefully and particularly, themselves, each specification of the Word, as thus set forth.

TRUE, nowhere in all this did they find any peace, much less any joy. **With all their doing, they never found the things done**. Always they found themselves far short of having done what the Word said,—so far short, too, that it was the despairing cry of Israel that “if but one person could only for one day keep the whole law, and not offend in one point,—nay, if but one person could but keep that one point of the law which affected the due observance of the Sabbath,—then the troubles of Israel would be ended, and the Messiah at last would come.”

Yet still they slaved on in the treadmill round of their own fruitless doings,—all of works, and none of faith; all of themselves, and none of God; all of their own doing, which was not really doing at all, and none of the Word itself doing, which is the only real doing of the Word of God.

HOW refreshing it was to the spirit of Jesus, in the midst of this desert waste of Israel, **to meet a man,**

whoever he might be, who had found the Word of God indeed; who knew that when the Word was spoken, that Word itself would accomplish the thing spoken; and who would depend upon “the Word only.” **This was faith.** This opened the life to the power of God. And as the consequence, there was accomplished in the life that which pleased God.

“My Word, . . . IT [not you] shall accomplish that which I please.” “**The Word of God . . . effectually worketh also in you that believe.**” I Thessalonians 2:13. To depend upon It to work in you that which is well pleasing in His sight—this is faith. To cultivate this dependence upon the Word is to cultivate faith.

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