

# Faith

J. G. Bellett.

Article 45 of 47 **Short Meditations**

(Cavenagh, 1866.)

We speak so much of "faith" in connection with Christian truth, that it is well to inquire a little carefully, what Scripture tells us of it, that we may be somewhat better acquainted with that about which we speak so often and so familiarly.

The early part of the Epistle to the Romans is the leading Scripture on this great subject — or at least, on the subject of "faith" as first *awakened in the sinner*. The life of faith in a saint, as is well known among us, is illustrated in Hebrews 11.

At the very opening of this Epistle, we learn, that it is "the obedience" of faith which is now sought by God in the Gospel. And when we think of it for a little, we shall be able to see, that the obedience which faith renders is the highest, and must be the most acceptable, form which obedience can take. (See Rom. 1: 5.)

If we rendered obedience to God as a Lawgiver, we should honour His authority — but when we render obedience to Him revealing Himself in the grace and salvation of the Gospel, we honour *Himself*.

Thus, though it is grace that is dealing with us, the response which it gets yields the Blessed One richer glory than He could have received on any other principle. He is honoured as a Saviour by our faith; He would have been as a *Lawgiver* by our conformity with every jot and tittle in the Statutes.

"To the obedience of faith among all nations," (Rom. 1: 5), and then it is added, "for His name" — intimating how His glory is concerned in this — as I have said — the brightest, dearest, most welcome honour His name could receive, it receives from the faith of a sinner.

Then further as to faith, we learn what it possesses itself of. And here we learn, that if God by faith get from us His brightest glory, we by faith get the highest dignity a creature is capable of — that is — "the righteousness of God." No dignity can a creature stand in more marvellous than this. And yet, thus it is with those who have the faith of the Gospel.

And in connection with this, we learn still further what that object is which faith apprehends and lays hold on, thus to obtain Divine righteousness. It is "Jesus," and "His blood" as we read in Rom. 3: 22, "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." (See also verses 25, 26.)

Under the eye of faith, God has set forth "a propitiation," a Mercy-Seat. Faith in the blood of Christ apprehends that. It sees God just and yet a Justifier. It is to stand within the holiest, and see the, Mercy-Seat there. That mystic throne seated itself on the Law. The Law or the Testimony was in the Ark, and the Throne where the Glory dwelt rested on the. Ark. Thus, the Law sustained it. And surely so. It would not be God's throne if judgment and righteousness were not maintained there. But blood is there as well as the Law. The blood that has rent the vail, satisfied all that the throne could have demanded of a sinner, is there also. The death of the Lord Jesus has accomplished reconciliation, in the way of maintaining righteousness while answering for sin — and thus, the faith that looks upward sees "a mercy-seat," and thus possesses itself of Divine righteousness.

Faith thus lays hold on its object, and possesses itself of this personal dignity.

What are its properties, its virtues, the ends and results it works, is then told us.

"It excludes boasting."

It addresses itself alike to all, to the Gentile world at large, as to the Jew. God in grace, God apprehended by faith, obeyed by faith, is the God of the one as of the other.

It establishes law — because it receives nothing but on the ground of what Christ has done to magnify the law and make it honourable.

It deals with grace.

It sets the blessed God in action, and keeps the creature as a receiver.

It gives all the glory to God.

These are the fine properties and results of faith, as shown us in Rom. 3, 4.

And after this, this Epistle goes on to detail to us the various features of that blessed condition in which we stand by faith.

And here I might notice, that faith is shown us to be an *individual, personal* thing. "It is the power of God unto salvation," says the Apostle of the Gospel, "to *every one* that believeth" — "the just [singular number] shall live by faith." (Rom. 1: 16, 17) And *each*, in his own individual personality, stands by faith thus blessedly circumstanced.

1. It gives full, present peace with God, though we are sinners.
2. it gives access to a state of grace or favour.
3. It sets us in the sure and certain hope of glory.
4. It renders a reason why we should glory in tribulation.
5. It introduces us to perfect love in God.
6. It gives us an interest in Christ's present life, as in His accomplished death.
7. It reveals God Himself as a spring of joy to us.

No wonder indeed that Scripture makes so much of faith, since such as these are its ways of working, its virtues, its properties, the ends it reaches, and the things it secures. *Such a religion must be Divine*. It is the secret, and the principle of immediate, personal confidence in Christ, refusing the props of human or carnal religiousness.