

POSTSCRIPT.



Quest. It may be demanded, that having heard the excellency and usefulness of this sovereign medicine to cure heart-trouble, namely, *faith in God and in Christ*; can you tell us how we may get this faith? And what means we shall use to obtain it?

Ans. I shall endeavour, by the help of God's spirit, and Scripture-light, to direct you herein, and as briefly as I may.

DIRECTION I.

First, You must be convinced of your unbelief, of the greatness of the sin of unbelief, and of your absolute need of faith: of these three things you must be fully convinced.

1. Of your unbelief: for most people think they have faith, and that they never were without it, and therefore labour not for it. Pray earnestly therefore, that the Holy Spirit may be sent into your hearts, to work this conviction in you, for it is his proper work, *John xvi. 8*, to convince *the world of sin, because they believe not on me*, saith our Lord: this is the great sin, the damning sin of the world, their *not believing on Christ*.

Now that we may be convinced, that by nature we have no faith, let us consider these Scriptures, *Eph. ii. 1, 2, 12*, and that until we are regenerate and born again, we have no faith, is evident from *John i. 12, 13*. There, believing in Christ, and regeneration, are inseparably joined together, *Acts xv. 9*, and *xxvi. 18*, and *xx. 21*. From which Scriptures it is most evident, that such as are strangers to the heart-purifying, the heart-sanctifying work of faith, have no faith: if we have not truly repented, nor know any saving change wrought in us, and upon us, by the spirit of God; for certain, whatever we think, we have no true saving faith, it is but a fancy: of this then we must be fully convinced, and must most heartily beg the help of the spirit to convince us.

2. Of the greatness of the sin of unbelief: it binds the guilt of all other sins upon us; it is disobedience and rebellion against the great God, for he commands us to believe, *1 John iii. 21*, and by our unbelief, we *make God a liar*, *1 John v. 10*. O horrible wickedness! And,

3. We must be convinced also of our absolute need of faith; we must needs have it, or we must perish. *Without faith, it is impossible to please God*, *Heb. xi. 6*. Without it we cannot be the children of God, *John*

i. 12. *Gal.* iii. 26. Without it we can have no pardon of sin, *Acts* x. 43. *Rom.* iii. 25. *John* viii. 24. And in what a dangerous case are we, so long as we lie under the guilt of all our sins? Without faith we are not reconciled to God, nor justified, *Rom.* iii. 22, and *Rom.* vi. 1. Nor can we be sanctified, *Acts* xxvi. 18. *2 Thess.* ii. 13. No access to God but by faith, *Rom.* v. 2. *Ephes.* ii. 18. No living the life of religion, nor bearing up under affliction, nor holding out to the end without faith, *Heb.* xi. No salvation, nor eternal life, without it, *Eph.* ii. 18. *John* iii. 16, 36. *Heb.* x. 39. Of all these things we must be convinced, if ever we will have faith.

DIRECTION II.

Secondly, if we would have faith, we must diligently search the scriptures, read the gospel, attend on the reading and preaching of the gospel, *for this very end*, that we may get faith by it: I say, *for this very end*; certainly, that it should be our end in reading and in hearing the word, which was God's end in publishing of it: now, this was his end in publishing of it, *John* xx. 21. *Rom.* xvi. 25, 26. *Rom.* x. 17. *Acts* x. iii. 48. *Eph.* i. 13. This is the ordinary means appointed by God to work faith in the souls of men, as ap-

pears by Acts ii. 42. chap. iv. 4, and chap. xi. 21, and many more. There are few that read, and hear the word for this end, and therefore get no faith by it.

Now, that the word read, and heard, may be effectual to work this precious, this most necessary grace of faith in us, there are some things antecedent, some concomitant, and some consequent upon our attendance on the word, and our use of it.

First, Some things antecedent, are necessary :

1. *Preparation*: For want of this the word most times proves ineffectual. It is the empty, hungry soul that relisheth and taketh in this food, James i. 21. 1 *Pet.* ii. 1. *Matt.* xiii. 22. Usually our success is according to our preparation; as in prayer, *Psal.* x. 17. Compare 2 *Chron.* xii. 14, with 2 *Chron.* xix. 3. Make conscience then of preparation.

2. *Prayer*: Pour out your hearts to God in prayer for a blessing on the word, that you may read or hear. O! lift up a cry to God, and say, O, Lord make this word effectual to work faith in my soul, &c.

3. Earnest desire and expectation of meeting God in the word, and of his blessing in it: If we expect nothing from it, no wonder if we receive nothing. There is a *fauness*

of blessing in the gospel, *Rom. xv. 29.* We should bring hungry and thirsty souls after God, the living God, as *Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2, 3,* and *lxxxiv. 2.* *God filleth the hungry with good things,* *Luke i. 53.*

Secondly, Some things are concomitant : as,

1. We must read and hear it *as the word of God, and not as the word of man,* *1 Thess. ii. 13.* *Acts x. 33,* and we must acknowledge God's authority in it.

2. Receive it with meekness, opening our hearts to it, and giving it the most tender entertainment, *James i. 21.*

3. With love, readiness of mind, and gladness of heart, *2 Thess. ii. 10.*

4. With faith, giving credit to it, believing it to be the word of God, *Heb. iv. 2.*

5. We must be careful to remember it : see what great stress is laid upon our remembering, *1 Cor. xv. 2.* Our salvation lies upon it, *Psal. cxix. 11.* Love the word, for love is the act of memory.

6. Prayer must be added again for a blessing.

Thirdly, Some things must be done afterward also. As,

1. *Meditation* upon what you have heard and read ; for want of this usually all is lost. I am persuaded, this is one great reason

why most profit so little by the word, because they make no conscience of meditation; they hear and read, but never think more on it afterwards: so preaching, hearing, reading, and all lost; and souls, and heaven, and all lost. For God's sake then, whose word you read and hear, and for your own soul's sake, if you are not willing they should perish for want of faith, make conscience of meditation on the word, *Psal.* i. 2, and *cxix.* 97. If ever you would get good by the word, mediate upon it.

2. *Application of it*: take it home to yourselves, *Job* v. 27. *Let it sink down into your hearts*, saith Christ: It must be an ingrafted word, you must receive it into your hearts, and not into your heads only, *2 Cor.* iv. 6, your hearts must be joined to it, and mixed with it.

3. *Practice*: Yielding up ourselves to the government of it, making it the standard and rule of our whole conversation. *We must be doers of the word, and not hearers only, lest we deceive our own souls, James* i. 22. *Matt.* vii. 22, 24. And in observing these scripture-rules here laid down, in the careful and conscientious use of God's word after this manner, you may not doubt but the spirit of God will work with the word of God, to make it effectual to work this most precious grace of

faith in us, whereby to believe in God and in Christ, to the consolation and eternal salvation of our souls: but if we neglect the means God hath ordained to get faith, and for want of it, die in our sins, and perish eternally, our destruction will be of ourselves.

DIRECTION III.

Thirdly, Would we have faith, let us engage our whole souls in the deep and serious consideration of the infinite, unspeakable, unconceivable love of God the Father in this, the highest and fullest demonstration of it, in giving his son, his only begotten son, to be a sin-offering, a sacrifice, a ransom for poor sinners, and that for this very end and purpose, that we poor sinners might believe in him, and by believing might not perish, but have eternal life, I pray read and ponder upon the following texts, and let your most serious thoughts fix on them, and meditate on them, *Isa.* liii. throughout, *John* iii. 16, 17. *Rom.* iii. 25, and v. 8, 10. *Prov.* viii. 30. *Col.* i. 12, 13. *2 Cor.* v. 19, 20, 21. *Rom.* viii. 3, 32, with many others, which for brevity sake I cannot transcribe: If we can but believe this wonderful love of God the Father, in giving his dear son to be a *Surety, a sin-offering, to lay all our iniquities*

on him; that he was pleased to bruise him, and put him to grief for us: and consider and meditate upon the height and depth, the breadth and length, of this immense, incomprehensible love of God, in giving his son, and that on purpose, that we might believe in him, and by believing might have eternal life; I say, it will greatly help us to believe in his son, to accept of this his unspeakable gift, and to receive him as he is offered to us in the gospel.

Moreover, let us also consider of, and deeply meditate upon the transcendent love of the son of God himself; who though he were the delight of his Father, and lay in the bosom of his Father, even then his delights were with the sons of men,* then was his heart full of love to poor sinners; and his love brought him down from heaven to assume human nature, and to take upon him all the sins of his people, to bear them on his soul and body, in the garden, there sweating great drops of blood, and on the cross there pouring out his heart-blood, made a curse, enduring the full measure of the wrath of God due for sin, and became the ransom of souls, *Phil.* ii. 6, 7, 8. *Luke* xxii. 44. *Gal.* ii. 20. He loved, us, and

* *Prov.* viii. 30, 31.

gave himself for us : *Loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, Rev. i. 6. 1 Pet. i. 18. ii. 24. Gal. iii. 13. Tit. ii. 14.*

But while I am writing these things, I cannot but conceive an indignation against myself, and heartily wish I were filled with shame, sorrow and grief of spirit, that having read and heard so often of the surpassing love of God the Father, in giving his son ; and so often of the unspeakable love of Jesus, and to be no more affected with it, no more sensible of it ; to have my affections no more stirred and moved, no more quickened and warmed : alas, my dead heart, my adamantine heart ! Lord, sprinkle it with that blood ; Lord, shed abroad that love of thine upon my heart abundantly by the Holy Ghost ; Lord Jesus, manifest thy love to me, that I may love thee. I am ashamed and pained for want of love to God, to Jesus : O ! that I could believe thy love to my soul, then I could not chuse but love thee. Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. The consideration of this love of God, and of Christ, is a means to work faith ; try it, I pray you, and you will find it so.

DIRECTION. IV.

Fourthly, Improve and act the historical faith you have, on the doctrines, promises,

and threatenings in the gospel, which you profess you do believe. Act the faith you have on the doctrines of the gospel, the promises of rest for your souls, pardon for your sins, life and righteousness, grace and glory made to those that believe in Christ, and to none else.* Believe and think what heaven is, that state of infinite blessedness, in the seeing and enjoying the blessed God to all eternity: † believe what eternal life is, eternal glory; and believe also what hell is, separation from God; *Go, ye cursed into everlasting fire*; lakes of fire and brimstone, everlasting death, the wrath of God, damnation; and see you profess that believe all this; then believe also and consider it well, that neither is heaven's infinite happiness to be attained, nor hell's unspeakable misery to be avoided, but only by believing the Lord Jesus Christ, *John iii. 16, 17. viii. 24.*

DIRECTION V.

Fifthly, Would you have faith? Then seek it diligently; pray, O pray for it as for your lives, cry mightily to God for it; pour out your hearts to God in prayer for it; pray continually for faith, pray without ceasing, be importunate with God for it; go all day and night panting and breathing after it. ○

* *John vi. 37. vii. 37. Matt. xi. 28, 29. † 2 Thess. 9, 10.*

that God would give me faith ! Go to Jesus also for it ; cry to him, for he is the Author as well as the Object of it, *Heb. xii. 1, 2.* It is the gift of God ; O pray for it.

DIRECTION VI.

Lastly, Consider seriously, and often, how wonderful willing God is that you should believe in Christ, as you have heard ; and how much he is displeased with those that will not believe in him ; and how dreadfully he hath threatened them, as *Rev. xxi. 8.* Also consider how exceeding willing Jesus Christ himself is, that poor sinners should come to him, and believe in him: how sweetly he calls them, how freely he offers himself, and all he is, to them, be they never so bad, never so vile and wicked : *Ho ! every one that thirsteth, Isa. lv. 1.* They that have no worthiness in them, nothing but sin and misery.* O ! set your hearts to the consideration of the incomparable, unparalleled love of Jesus, in dying that cursed death of the cross for sinners : consider and meditate, hold your hearts to it, until your hearts be affected with his love, his love that passeth the love of women, love passing under-

* John vi, 37. chap. vii. 37. Rev. iii. 18. chap. xxi. 11.

standing; and consider how well he deserves, and how much he challengeth your love! Consider once again, what a most lovely person Jesus is, who is altogether lovely, the *brightness of his Father's glory*, in whom dwells all fulness,* and in whom is all power in heaven and earth,† and labour to affect your hearts with his most admirable excellencies, and then come unto him weary and heavy laden with your sins, willing to part with them all: give up your whole selves to him, give him your whole hearts, and take him for head and husband, for your only Lord and Saviour; enter actually into covenant with him, to become his, and his alone, and his for ever.

Thus work out your salvation and consolation, by believing in Jesus, in blessed, all-sufficient Jesus, trusting to him, and betrusting all with him, and the Lord will work in you *both to will and to do*, *Phil. ii. 12, 13*. Use these means in the strength of the Lord, and doubt not, but in the use of them, you shall obtain this precious faith; which having, and acting, you shall find it to be your heart's ease in all your heart-trouble.

PRAISE BE TO GOD ALONE.

* Heb. i. 3.

† Matt. xxviii. 18.