

*a community called ...*

The Copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy of reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

**By using this material, you are consenting to abide by this copyright policy. Any duplication, reproduction, or modification of this material without express written consent from Asbury Theological Seminary and/or the original publisher is prohibited.**

© Asbury Theological Seminary 2011

1190.

# THE LOGIC OF FAITH.

BY

JACOB TODD, D.D.



HUNT & EATON,  
150 Fifth Ave., New York.

CRANSTON & STOWE,  
190 W. Fourth St., Cincinnati, O.



THE  
LOGIC OF FAITH.

---

**D**URING a ministry of over twenty years I have found more vagueness and error of opinion concerning the proper object of faith than upon any other question in experimental religion. I have, moreover, discovered that these erroneous and misty notions in the minds of the people have their origin in a single passage of Scripture, namely: "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." A great many people suppose the Master here

to teach that, when they pray for any blessing, they are all the while to endeavor to believe that they do experience the thing for which they are asking. When they kneel as penitents and pray for pardon, they understand that they must turn faith within, and try to believe that they feel the change of heart for which they are pleading. The passage reads : " Believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," and so they conclude that in order to obtain a change of heart they must first believe that they already have it.

Must we, then, believe a falsehood in order to be saved? Does the Saviour mean to teach, in this passage, that when we pray we must believe that we are in possession of the blessings which we desire in order to come into their possession? Something must be believed. But what?

Two objects of faith are every-where presented in Scripture, and are implied in this passage, namely : God's promise and God's veracity.

All things which are for our good have been made the subjects of Divine promise. Inspired lips have assured us that "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." But, like many an earthly parent, our heavenly Father suspends many blessings which he has in waiting for his children upon the condition of their asking for them: "Ask, and it shall be given you." "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it," is Christ's broad promise to his followers.

Now, when we ask any thing in prayer, the first object of faith is the fact that God has promised it. We must first rest in an unwavering belief that our petition is bounded on all sides by Divine promise and environed in the Divine will.

But, having settled the fact that we are asking only what God's word has promised, the next object of faith is God's veracity. He has promised—will he be true to his word? There must be no faltering here. Doubt must suggest no "may be" or "perhaps" in the case. Faith must grapple as with hooks

of steel upon the truth that all God's promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus.

And now comes the third object of faith—the one expressed in the passage under consideration, namely, That our prayer is answered. There is logic in faith as well as in reason. Believe, as premises, that God has promised the thing for which you ask, and that he is true to his word, and you are forced to the conclusion that he does grant your prayer. Belief in the promise and veracity of God are two lenses in the telescope of faith. Make them perfectly clear and properly adjust them, and you cannot look steadily through them without seeing your request fulfilled. But, dazzled by the light which comes streaming through them, faith often closes its eyes and hesitates or refuses to look the truth squarely in the face that its prayer has prevailed, and that its petition is granted. Now, Jesus, in the passage under consideration, places faith in focus and bids the praying soul look through it to God. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall

have them." You believe that God has promised them. You believe that God is faithful to his word. He has said, "Ask, and ye shall receive." You have asked—now believe that ye receive—believe that, true to his promise, he this moment grants your prayer. Ah! but you say, "I don't feel any change of heart." Never mind. Feeling is not the object of faith, but the result and fruit of it. The assurance of faith must precede the realization of experience. You must first believe that you have received salvation as a grant from God before you can realize it as a personal experience; but believe that you receive it as a gift on the part of God, and you shall have it as a possession of the soul.

Let me illustrate: Here is a youth who has not yet attained his majority. He is far away from home, and one day he receives a letter and a package by mail. He opens the letter and reads that his father is dead and that he has bequeathed to him the old homestead. He next breaks the package, and there finds a certified copy of his father's will.

There is no mistake about it. It bears the seal of the court, and is properly signed and attested. As the letter informed him, the whole of his father's landed estate is bequeathed to him. Now he does not come into actual possession of the property until he reaches twenty-one years of age; but he receives it as an inheritance now—the title vests in him from the present moment. The transfer is complete in law now, though the transfer in fact will not take place until several years hence. Does he believe that he receives that property before he actually gets it? Let him be convinced that the will conveys it to him, and that it will certainly be executed, and he regards himself that moment as the owner of the whole estate, and from that time forward will esteem himself and will be esteemed by others as a landed proprietor and a man of fortune. Well, far away from his Father's house the sinner receives God's message and his father's will. It grants to him more than houses and lands upon the condition of his asking for them in faith. Now,



when he has complied with the condition, must he wait until he comes into actual possession of them before he claims them as his? Why, the moment he calls upon God, believing in his promise and veracity, he becomes an heir of God, and the wealth of the everlasting Father is his. The inheritance belongs to the heir, and all that God's will has promised is now transferred to him in right. Let him believe that he receives it this moment as his inheritance, and he shall have it by and by as his possession.

Take another example. There is a culprit who has been tried and convicted of murder, and has been sentenced to death. Behind iron bars he rattles his chains and awaits the day of his execution. As a last resort, he sends a petition to the governor of the State, invoking the executive pardon. A few days thereafter the keeper of the prison hands him an envelope through the bars of his cell. He opens it, and reads that the governor has freely pardoned him, and set him at full liberty. The signature is unmistakably genuine.

and the document bears the great seal of the State. Does he believe that he is a free man? Why, his cell is both barred and bolted, his manacles are still on, and he is still clothed in the prison garb. Can he feel free while yet he is a prisoner in chains? Go ask him, and you shall find that he dates his freedom from the moment he received the pardon. Prison dress and chains and bars rest lightly on his soul. He asked pardon and freedom. He believes that he has received them and he shall have them. He does not look at himself and say, "Why I see no change. If I am pardoned these manacles ought to be off and these doors ought to be open." He rivets his gaze upon the governor's pardon, and says, exultantly: "I have received it; I am, therefore, free in law, and soon shall be in fact."

Every sinner occupies that prisoner's cell. We have all been condemned by the law and sentenced to die. The angel of the Gospel came and whispered to us that "there was forgiveness with God that he might be feared,"

and so we sent our petition to God for pardon. In due time the answer comes, and thus it reads: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Now, reader, don't say: "Why, here are the scarlet and crimson stains yet! I don't feel the change that I expected. I am not yet entirely released from my bondage." Fix the eye of your faith upon God's pardon, bearing the seal of the cross stamped in the blood of the Lamb. Believe that you have received salvation, and you shall have it. Accept it by faith, and you shall have it in fact.

## THE REALIZING LIGHT OF FAITH.

Author of faith, eternal Word,  
Whose Spirit breathes the active flame,  
Faith, like its finisher and Lord,  
To-day as yesterday the same;

To thee our humble hearts aspire,  
And ask the gift unspeakable;  
Increase in us the kindled fire,  
In us the work of faith fulfill.

To him that in thy name believes,  
Eternal life with thee is given;  
Into himself he all receives,  
Pardon, and holiness, and heaven.

The things unknown to feeble sense,  
Unseen by reason's glimmering ray,  
With strong, commanding evidence,  
Their heavenly origin display.

Faith lends its realizing light;  
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly;  
The Invisible appears in sight,  
And God is seen by mortal eye.

—*Charles Wesley.*