

THE TRAVAIL OF FAITH

By: Norman Grubb

Just a light delving into modern science shows us that even every atomic particle has its field of attraction or repulsion, just as we humans have. The poet Francis Thompson wrote,

All things by immortal power,
Near or far, hiddenly,
To each other linked are,
That thou canst not stir a flower
Without troubling a star....

Paul said the same with his words, "none of us liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself."

We know well enough what our frowns, head-shakings, pessimism and generally negative attitudes do to other, as well as ourselves. How wonderful it is to be permanent inner see-ers of God, in His perfect ways, meaning everything and everybody to be at this moment just what they are. Thus "with the lift of our soul," without effort or put-onness, maybe saying nothing, but with the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, not trying to impress or change a person, we cannot but be a light of hope, raise, and faith in dark places. We do not hide the hurts of appearances, but mercy rejoices against judgment in us, and there is no hiding it; and the Spirit is secretly touching the strings of response in hearts where usually only the bass notes sound.

Spirit-attitude is only the preliminary to spirit-action. No person on earth can function without always starting from his reaction to things. This produces a negative or positive attitude toward them. Then he inwardly moves on to the moment of decision as to what he will do about it. The general thought-level, which can move in any direction, is now replaced by the decisive inner work-level. He says within himself, "I will do this, I will take

that, I will go there.” He has spoken within himself his word of faith, and from that inner process, in which general thought is replaced by specific word, he now moves on to outer deed—from thought, to word, to deed. From father-level, to Son-level, to Spirit-level.

By no other process has any single action ever taken place in all human history. It is the universal human process of self-manifestation, whether it is the taking and eating of some food from a plate, or a decision of the United States Congress! It is the process of creation in Genesis One. The Father has His universal plan of the ages. The Son, called the Word, gives the plan its particular form, “Let there be.” The Spirit moves upon the face of the waters and transforms the word into substance. Father, Son, Spirit—thought, word, deed.

The Son is called the Word because the critical moment of inner action, whether of the Three-in-one, or of man in His likeness, is the speaking of the decisive word: attitude (Father) moves into word (Son) and action (Spirit). That is why we say that a word is a person in action.

We, living and moving and having our being in God, operate by precisely the same process. And what is the heart of the process? Speaking the decisive word. Thoughts are preparatory, deeds are the products and the decisive word transmutes the thought into deeds. The word is at the center. A person in action is really his word in action.

Now move that up into the operations of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of the spirit-dimension, of which all earthly forms are visible reproductions—spirit slowed down to the point of visibility. We are the sons of God operating in the spirit kingdom, though outwardly flesh members of the three-dimensional world. How then do we operate? Precisely as we do in our three dimensional world of time-space. Not one iota of difference. We operate from the Father level of our general understanding of situations and the purpose in them, on to the Son level of the decisive moment of the spoken word concerning what is to come to pass, and unto the Spirit level of the thing done. But how can we say that? Because we as sons of God are in union with the Father, Son, and Spirit by

His grace and election; and that union means that we are so inwardly one that we act as He. We think his thoughts, we speak His word of faith, we do His deeds.

How do we think His thoughts on the Father level? The answer is that we have the mind of Christ, as the Scriptures say. We no longer look around outside us, or upward, to gather His thoughts. We understand that He is living out His perfect purposes by His body members, and therefore by me as one of them. Therefore whatever situation I am at present in is precisely the expression of His present mind for me. All I have to do is to sort out in my mind the situation in which He is now living by me, and its relation to the people with whom He has linked me; and that means settling in to see it as His perfect purpose.

But now I go further, I have taken it for granted that He has a distinct purpose to fulfill in the situation by me, His son. I must now, therefore, particularize the circumstances or the people concerned, and know what it is He purposes doing in them. What is that particular thing? I must get that clear in order to move on to the decisive word of faith. How do I get it clear? by boldly taking it for granted that He thinks His present thoughts through me. For He is working in me "to do and to do of His good pleasure," and is causing me to desire His desires. So I name that desire precisely. "Whatever things you (not He) desire...you shall have." I do not hesitate, except for whatever time it has taken to formulate my desire (and if I am part of a group together finding the mind of God, it may take a longer time to get to one mind).

Then I move straight into the son level of speaking the word of faith. I do precisely what Jesus told His disciples to do, when He commanded the fig tree to bear no more fruit (to bring the word of faith home by illustration). When, next morning, they passed the withered tree, Peter commented on it, "Master, look, the fig tree you cursed is withered away," and Jesus simply said, "Now, you have this same faith of God" (which is the correct version of the text, rather than "faith in God"). And what does that mean? Obviously seeing the situation as God sees it, and thus believing with His believing. And how does God see it? Through my eyes--just as I see it. So if it is something which appears like a mountain of difficulty to me, I take it that is how He is first causing me to see it.

Then directly, Jesus simply tells them to say to the mountain, "be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea," and in doing so, believe it is a completed fact and they will have whatever they have said. It couldn't be simpler, could it? He doesn't even say express it in prayer (as in the next verse) but just say it! There is just the added proviso that we don't doubt in our hearts. Don't allow mental soul-doubt, which we surely have, to disturb our fixed inner word of faith: "...and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith."

Having the mind of Christ by which we discern the next thing God is moving us onto, then bringing it into being as sons in action, is just that simple. It is only the grave clothes of suspicion of our old self-seeking selves which make us hesitate about saying that the thing we desire is His mind. But He has said "whatsoever things ye desire." *You* desire. Then let's be that simple. If He in us trusts our desires to be His desires, let us trust ourselves. We discarded and rejected those doubting and questioning of our motives in our vital Galatians 2:20 relationship, and we now practice holy boldness, just as John keeps saying in His union epistle: "We have confidence toward God...this we may have boldness in the day of judgment."

then, being hold in defining exactly what is the present mountain confronting us, we mane it. we speak this key word of the countdown, the pressing of the button. We SAY. We so that from our inner spirit center, simply by the authority of being sons of God. Plainly Jesus tells us to act as God by "the faith of God," by His inner believing imparted to us, by our inner union of mind and understanding and this means that, acting as He, all of His mighty resources are at our disposal. His disposal. he is operating in His present world-system by us. We say with Caleb, "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are will able to overcome it." Can we imagine anything more unbelievable to a human being, unless it has come to us by revelation? But it has, and we laugh and laugh of faith.

Speaking this word of faith-having settled what the desire is-- could not be more simple. it is the "obedience of faith." That is all the works involved. And it is a work of faith to this extent--all that

the outer appearances can pour on us at such a "speaking" moment they will pour. that is to say, we shall likely feel that full impact of the foolishness of faith. It looks absurd. it is absurd, because the suffering of faith is that nothing can ever be experienced until after we've committed ourselves to it. As we've seen, this is actually true in a minor way of the least human act of faith--like sitting on a chair--but how much more when it is these leaps into the invisible, the impossible, and the unattainable by human methods. So there is a travail of faith by the assaults on us of every emotional reaction to the absurdity and impossibility of it, and equally by every rational objection to what spirit-faith has always been--the irrational.

So in that sense, we say speaking this word is not simple. Yet it is, because it is just speaking the word! This is why something equivalent to confessing it with our mouth is a seal on it--some means by which, once we have said a thing, it is a settled matter. our affirmation to ourselves, or to others, help to settle us into it. But that's all. These are our supreme moments, when the rivers of the Spirit are flowing out of us on our spirit level. This is the faith that gives substance to things hoped for.