

FAITH COMETH

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What Faith is Not

THE MOST STUBBORN OBSTACLE to truth is not ignorance but lies. To the innocent and unlearned, the word falls on clean, receptive soil, unhindered by preconceived ideas. But to seasoned believers, who will make up the greater part of readers of this book, the pure seed of truth set forth herein must try to find a lodging in soil that is already chock full of thorns and weeds that have been accumulated through false teaching about the subject of faith through the years. Therefore, it is of necessity that the first things we say must be negative. All the false ideas of faith must be cast down or they will be constantly rearing themselves up in the reader's mind, taking exception to revealed truth. We are going to consider, one by one, those things which we generally call faith, and demonstrate that they are manifestly not Bible faith. It will become apparent as we go along that some of these things are directly against faith, and some are the exact opposite. Faith is not a state of mind. Faith does involve an intellectual state. The mind is involved. But an opinion or a conviction about something is not faith. As James pointed out "the demons believe and tremble." Have they faith? Are they justified by their believing? Of course not, although their "believing" is of a higher quality than that of the converts of modern day evangelism: At least they tremble, well argued that love is greater than faith and that Christ is the most important person of the Bible, but the sinner has access to neither except by faith (Romans 5:1-5). Faith is not an accessory to Christianity: It is the very quality.

Four times the Bible declares the just shall live by faith (Hab. 2:4, Rom. 1:17, Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:38). We are not justified by a "profession of faith" as modern evangelism asserts, but by a walk of faith. Faith in God is the whole life of the believer in Jesus Christ, not something he picks up on option. It is impossible to please God without it (Heb. 11:6). All his devotions, prayers, sacrifices, tears, penances, and services mean nothing until a man believes God; and the value of his work can be measured in exact proportion to how much faith in God is involved in it. "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John 6:29). Do you desire to know what work it is that God wants you to do? Then this is it. Believe Him. Nothing else matters until you do and when you do, you will find yourself in a work of faith. If the religious work in which you are engaged can function without the super-natural hand of God, then it requires no faith on your part and is worthless in God's sight. The Christian life begins, continues and consummates in faith. Nothing less pleases Him; and you are capable of nothing greater.

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a phenomenon exceedingly rare today. But faith is more than a frame of mind about something. It is something You do that can be seen. Otherwise, why did James ask that he might see it? (James 2:18).

Not only does a state of mind fail to constitute faith, but sometimes faith is exercised when knowledge or the intelligence contributes seemingly little. When King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden image and commanded everyone to fall down and worship it at the sound of prescribed music, Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego, refused to do so. The king then promised to throw them into a burning fiery furnace. ". . .and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands." The king challenges the faith of the three men. Notice they were not able to say that they were of opinion that God would deliver them but that God was able (Daniel 3:17). "But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." That is a confession of faith. It is made in view of the second commandment.

"Thou shall not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt now bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them:" (Deut. 5:8-9). Their act of obedience was in view of what God had said although they could not say what He would do. You do not have to know the outcome to act in faith. This brings up the second false idea of faith.

Faith is not assurance. These are two different words with completely different meanings. Many people have false assurance yet no faith. Have you ever felt perfect assurance that something was going to turn out a certain way, and then see it turn out exactly opposite? Have you ever been sure about something, and then discover you were wrong? Even so, I fear many people have assurance of salvation

that have no faith and will surely be surprised to wake up in hell. This comes, to a great degree, from false teaching about faith and from reversing the order of faith and assurance. Many precious saints live a life of faith and

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never have any abiding assurance. I do not think this is desirable or necessary, nevertheless, it is far more safe than living a deceived life under a false assurance in which there has never been real Bible faith. John Bunyan, a mighty saint of God, whose classic writings have blessed millions, never had a consistent assurance. Yet, his life demonstrates a paragon of Bible faith and his fruits are those of a man of God.

Assurance comes through continued faith and a progressive revelation of the goodness of God and His design (in grace toward us. We gain hope through faith and, continuing in faith, are assured. (Heb. 6:11, II Pet. 1:5-10) You need not consider yourself faithless if you lack assurance and are yet obedient. If, however, you have assurance in disobedience, you have good reason to believe that assurance is false.

Let me give one illustration. God has determined to set His people free from their Egyptian bondage. He has demonstrated His power in a number of miracles and plagues upon Egypt, but Pharaoh has stubbornly refused to

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nothing to worry or be concerned about. Here is the second man. The prospect of all the firstborn in Egypt dying strikes fear to his heart. He is alarmed, and sets about to diligently obey all that God has said to do. Even after slaying the lamb and applying the blood, he has DO assurance about the safety of his child. All night long he is uneasy, constantly checking to see if his son is safe. When God came through Egypt that night, what was he looking for? He was not looking to see if the people were frightened or comfortable. He was looking for blood. And when He saw

the blood, He saw faith. Faith is not a frame of mind, a conviction or assurance: It is something you do, in view of who God is and what He has said. The walk of faith is the walk and behavior of a people whose hearts are set on obedience to God. They do not necessarily have assurance about the outcome of their obedience, but they are sure that they cannot bear the consequences of disobedience.

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later someone is going to "feel led" to buy him a riding lawn mower to get God off the hook. After all he has believed God for it and if he doesn't now get it, he will become disillusioned about God. Someone will have to do something to save God's face and the preacher's faith. Preachers of this sort of faith will defend it by saying that people must declare their faith, that is, they must tell exactly what they are believing God for. Then they will cite biblical examples of such. There are many: Gen. 22:5, 8— Abraham said, I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again unto you. "God will provide himself a lamb." Ex. 14:23—"The Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever." II Kings 5:10—"Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee and thou shalt be clean." We have no argument with the prophetic declarations that come as a direct revelation of God's purpose. But note this carefully. In every instance the thing declared is totally beyond the ability of the hearer's human means to perform. It had to be a supernatural work of God. None hearing the prophesy could fulfill it. It had to be God. Now were these declarations made to prove that the person had faith? Most certainly not! The prophets would have shuddered at the thought. They were made to prove God was faithful. Often simple Christians, in their anxiety and strong desire to prove they have faith, declare something that they have not

seen with spiritual vision. Then they have to stretch and strain circumstances to make it appear that what they said was a declaration of faith. All of this sort of bondage is saddled upon Christians through an erroneous teaching about faith

I arrived at a city in Louisiana for a series of meetings on Sunday morning a few years ago. The pastor greeted me with a big smile and a confident declaration that we were going to have revival that week. "We are believing God for revival this week," he declared. During the announcement time he not only talked about the revival we were going to have but the "200 we are going to have in Sunday School

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next Sunday." Then he asked everyone who was believing God for revival that week and 200 in Sunday School next Sunday to raise their hands. Of course, every person dutifully raised his hand. Who wants to be accused of unbelief? When it came time for me to speak I simply observed that one of two things was true. The first possibility being that we would see revival that week and 200 in Sunday School the next Sunday or the second possibility would surely be true. Namely: Everyone present including the preacher had lied. If they were truly believing God with Bible faith and assurance, then what they were , believing would happen. Otherwise, they were not believing

and were simply lying when they said they were. I do not doubt they were trying to believe, but that has no more substance than downright unbelief.

Carnal desire is not faith. Faith is being preached as something which you use to get things from God. It is a gimmick which, when rightly used, will produce for you oodles of this world's goods. After all, did not God put all the good things here for His people? Does He not intend for

us to have the best of everything? Why should God's people let the devil's crowd get all the goodies? One prominent evangelist even went to far as to say recently, that if you are a Christian and poor, it is a pretty good indication that you are not right with God. Paul has some strong words about such men in I Timothy 6:5 — ". . .men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." Do they not know that Satan is declared to be the prince of this world, and that it was he, not God, who offered it all to the Saviour asserting that it was within his power to give it to whom we consider that the apostle is at this time addressing himself to slaves (I Tim. 6:1) we are more convinced he was dealing with just such a perversion of truth as we are now considering. It seems that some of these proud and ignorant men were leading these slaves to believe that they had not true faith in God, otherwise they would not be in such impoverished circumstances. Such unwholesome teachings come from envious, covetous, worldly men.

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whomsoever he would? Jesus did not dispute the devil's claim to do so. He only declared his intention to serve the Lord God without the enticement of carnal motivation. Recently, I met a man whose pastor I had been a number of years ago. In the course of inquiry about his family I asked him about his son. "He's a Buddhist," he said. "A Buddhist," I exclaimed. "How did that happen?" This is the story he told me. While in Japan, he met and became involved with a Japanese girl and ultimately married her. She became pregnant and gave birth to twin boys who having birth defects lived a short while and died. He was out of work and in impoverished circumstances. All this time he was trying to resolve the religious conflict with his wife by trying to get her to become a Christian. Finally, she made him a proposition. "Pray to Buddha 30 days," she I asked him, "and if Buddha doesn't deliver us in that time,

then I will become a Christian. He did. On the 29th day he got a call from a large firm with a fabulous job offer. He became a Buddhist. "Why do you want to serve that false god," his father asked him. "Why should I serve Jesus," he replied? "He never gave me anything but poverty, two deformed babies that died, and a hard time. Buddha has given me a good job, lots of money, two fine healthy children. I travel all over the world and live like I please. Why shouldn't I serve Buddha?"

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that you are not guilty of the very thing of which Satan accused Job. "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast not thou made an hedge about him and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the works of his hands and his substance is increased in the land (Job 1:9-10). Satan was wrong in the case of Job. Is he WI'OIlg' in your case? Are you delighted with God, or the things you get from God?

Carnal ambition is not faith. This is simply another variety of the idolatry described above. An example is given in Ezekiel 14:1-4. "Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me. And the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore, speak unto them and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet: I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols."

In the Old Testament, when men sought the Lord they often would "inquire of the Lord" at the mouth of one of His prophets. Today, of course, men of evangelical Chris-

tianity pray directly by the access that is given us in Christ Jesus. Now Ezekiel, the prophet, is being faced with men who are "inquiring of the Lord." God says they have idols in their heart. Imaginations of men's mind are nothing but "images" which their hearts fondly dwell upon. And while outwardly they say that they are seeking the Lord, the image of what they really seek is in their minds and hearts. A person conceives of an objective or goal in his mind. He sets his heart on attaining it. He, in his imaginations, can see himself as having obtained it, and that image in his mind becomes an idol which he worships and will do anything to get. In the business world it may be financial success. In the political world it may be political power, an office gained. But, in the religious world, it is religious

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success. A preacher sets a goal for himself to pastor a certain size congregation. An evangelist has a goal for a certain number of converts, a certain financial bracket. A writer sets out to make a name for himself in the publishing world. A Christian sets his heart on obtaining a certain spiritual gift.

Although all this is undertaken with repeated pious utterances such as, "for the glory of God," "for souls," "for the good of the church," the real driving power behind the thing is the image in the mind of having obtained the desired success. Success, thus, replaces God as the central figure in the man's heart. Satan now has an idol behind which he can work.

God says, "I, the Lord, will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;" The Lord will let a man have his idols, he will let him obtain his goals, his success, his so-called gifts and leave him in his deception.

"I the Lord will answer him by my self"(Vs. 7). "And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and

a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people" (Vs. 8).

Delight thyself in the Lord and He will give thee the desires of thine heart, is a precious promise; but modern preachers have misused it. Those whose delight it is to faithfully obey the Lord do find Him graciously supplying their needs and desires; but their faith is not turned in the direction of their desires but toward the Lord. Prosperity and success is indicative of nothing. They certainly do not testify of faith.

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"faith" aspect of the students. Let us examine what they were saying. "We are believing God, but God isn't meeting our needs. We are faithful but God isn't. We are believing Him but He isn't giving us enough money to pay our bills. We are doing our part but God isn't. Is not this what they were saying? Are they not slandering God and blaspheming the gospel with such poppycock. That is not faith; it is presumption and nearer to unbelief. If they were, as they said, living by faith, then they would have the needed money, for God is faithful. He does not call you out P on a limb, saw it off, and expect some man to catch you when you fall.

I have had puzzled people counseling with me after a "step of faith" that did not work out. "But God confirmed it," they said, when I questioned if it were not presumption A instead of faith. "How did God confirm it," I asked. "I put out a fleece." "He told the wife the same thing." "The door was opened." None of these are infallible confirmations. The devil can pour buckets of water on your fleeces or wring them out as fast as they get wet. The real confirmation comes when the Midianites begin to run before you. Don't be afraid to say, "I made a mistake." It is a fool, indeed, who refuses to admit that he may have been deceived and

missed the will of God. To maintain such a position is to slander God, blaspheme the truth and abide in continual defeat. If you have made a mistake, admit it, go back to where you got off track, pick up where you left off and go on. God is pleased with faith, not presumption.

Presumption is not faith. A pediatrician who practices in Tennessee near a large fundamental Christian college complained of being taken advantage of by several ministerial students in the college. They would bring their children to her for treatment and then explain that they were unable to pay for her services since they were "living by faith." Since the doctor was a Christian and wanted to do the right thing about it, she was confused as to how legitimate this was. We are going to consider only the

"Our Faith in Christ wavers not so much when real arguments come against it as when it LOOKS improbable . . . when the whole world takes on that desolate look which really tells us more about the state of our PASSIONS than I about reality.

"When we exhort people to Faith as a virtue, to the settled intention of continuing to believe certain things, we are not exhorting them to fight against reason. The intention of continuing to believe is required because, though Reason is divine, human reasoners are not. When once passion takes part in the game, the human reason, unassisted by Grace, has about as much chance of retaining its hold on truths already gained as a snowflake has of retaining its consistency—in the mouth of a blast furnace. Reason may win truths: without Faith she will retain them just so long as Satan pleases. There is nothing we cannot be made to believe or disbelieve. If we wish to be rational, not now and then, but constantly, we must pray for the gift of Faith, for

the power to go on believing not in the teeth of reason, but in the teeth of lust and terror and jealousy and boredom and indifference that which reason, authority, or experience, or all three, have once delivered to us for truth."

C.S. Lewis »

Chapter 2

First Mention Basics of Faith

THERE IS A PRINCIPLE of hermeneutics (the science of scripture interpretation) that states the first time a subject is mentioned in the Bible, all its foundational principles are present. How valid this is in all cases we are not prepared to argue, but it seems to hold well in the subject of faith. We find it first mentioned in Deut. 32:9-20. "For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his

inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock; and oil out of the flinty rock; Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with the fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape. But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked

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they him to anger. They sacrificed to devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom our fathers feared not. Of the Rock that begat thee. thou art remindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and of his daughters. And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very forward generation, children in whom is no faith."

It is significant that the first mention of faith is in the negative sense. No faith! That is exactly where God finds { us. Faithless. It is in a state of wicked unbelief that all mankind lay when Jesus came to die for us. We cannot understand the true nature of faith and grace until we see the exceeding wickedness of unbelief. There are some who say that since Christ died for all our sins, then men cannot go to hell for their sins but for their unbelief. The fallacy behind this is obvious. It does not consider unbelief to be

sin. Yet, it is the most heinous of all sins and is at the root of every other sin. It is indeed the cause of men's damnation, but it is the sin of all sins against God. We want to consider a number of reasons why `unbelief is so wicked.

WHY UNBELIEF IS SO WICKED

The reasonableness of faith. We may divide things we are asked to believe into three categories: Things very easy to believe, things not difficult to believe, and things difficult to believe. These things do not fall into these categories I necessarily because of supporting evidence for some and the lack of evidence for others. Rather, they fall into these categories for these reasons: Some things we want to believe, some things it doesn't matter if they are true or not, and some things we had rather not believe. I will illustrate:

Suppose someone comes and tells me I am a handsome fellow and have a very pleasing personality. Now, I have

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little or no evidence to support this estimation of myself, and plenty to contradict it; nevertheless, it would be awfully easy for me to believe that because I want that to be so.

A mother has a wayward son. He lies, steals, cheats, he is lazy and selfish. Time and time again he has been caught, rebuked, punished and corrected. Each time he promises to never be bad again. The mother knows he is rotten to the core, yet she desperately wants to believe that he is good. So every little bit of evidence he gives that he is going to change, she believes it. No one else will believe it because they know what the boy is. But she believes it because she wants to, not because of the evidence. So you see how

strong the natural desire to believe something can ignore the strong evidence against it and magnify the scant evidence for it. Even so, in the realm of Bible truth, men will cling to the most absurd doctrine without the slightest biblical support because they want to believe that.

Now let us consider the things that are not difficult to believe, things that will have no great bearing on how I live whether they are true or not. I learned years ago in grade school that Columbus discovered America in the year 1492. I believed it. I also was taught that George Washington was our first president. I believed that also. I have never had any problem accepting those historical facts even though, as near as I can recall, I have never been given any supporting evidence to prove them. It has been no difficulty for me at all to accept the record of the historians. The reason is obvious. It will not make one whit of difference to I me or how I live my personal life if those things are true or not. Let them be so. It does not cut across the designs I have for my own life.

I was also taught that the sun was 93 million miles away from the earth and was so much larger than the earth that if placed side by side, the earth would look like a pea beside a basketball. I never had any trouble believing that. I haven't been out in space with a measuring device trying to validate that report. I just believed it. I do not need any

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supporting evidence. The word of the scientist is enough for me. Those facts are not going to interfere with my life. As long as the sun shines on me in the daytime, warms my body, makes my food grow and disappears at night so- I can sleep, I don't care how big it is or how far away it is.

Now, since we do not have any difficulty accepting those facts as true without supporting evidence, then why do we have so much difficulty believing God?

Why do men subscribe to the unsupported confusing theories of evolution rather than the simple straightforward biblical account of creation? Why will men insist upon their theories of the innate goodness of man rather than the biblical declaration of his moral ruin and utter depravity?

All around them they see the plain evidence of man's inherent wickedness. They cannot deny it in themselves. The biblical fact is the only reasonable thing to believe. Yet, men prefer to deny the truth and believe the humanistic lie. Why, in the face of all reason there must be a settling of accounts, will men refuse to believe that God has appointed a day when He, the just judge of all the earth, will judge every man according to his deeds?

Why, among men who confess there is a God and a way of salvation, will they refuse to believe that only He can save, and that He saves on His own terms according to His own purpose? Reason dictates that God cannot be less than sovereign in all things; otherwise he is not God. If anyone can stay His hand from His intended purpose, then that person who stays God's hand is God instead. The reason is made plain by II Thess. 2:12: "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had . pleasure in unrighteousness." The truth of God's word interferes with my own plans, my own designs, the unrighteous pleasures I anticipate. Evolution leaves no God in the universe and I am my own god: I can do as I please. My ego tells me that I am a pretty nice fellow. Everyone ought to love me because I am basically good. I don't want to believe anything else. I want to believe that I can cheat and lie, use everyone I can to my own advantage and get by with it. If there is a God and men do need to be saved, I

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you? Are you so foolish as to think your own hand has earned for you the abundance around you? You breathe grace, eat grace, wear grace, walk on grace, sleep on and under and in grace. God's grace compasses you on every side. How can you be so wicked as to rob God of his honor and ascribe all this to yourself or luck or chance or men? Only one reason. You do not wish to serve Him. You want to serve yourself, so you believe the lie.

Unbelief trusts in self When Jeshurun waxed fat, he kicked (Deut. 32:15). Unbelieving man imagines himself to be strong. He foolishly believes he can now get along (without God, and his self-confidence builds. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," (Rom. 1:22) — "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is , blessed for ever." (Rom. 1:25) — He, like Lucifer in his exaltation, usurps the throne of God and says in his heart, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:14).

Unbelief serves other gods. Though man may imagine himself to be taking the throne, yet he cannot stay there. As foolish Adam in the garden listening to the Devil's lie, "Ye shall be as gods," he takes the bait and falls captive to Satan. The minute man kicks against God's sovereignty he falls under the power of a lesser god. He becomes an idolator, and demons are the dynamic behind all idolatry.

"They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not" (Deut. 32:16-17). Of course, most men will deny that they are idolators or worshippers of the devil but they are nonetheless. They, refusing confidence in God, will surely put their confidence in something else. It will likely be that thing which they think is most responsible for their blessings or protection. "Therefore they sacrifice unto their

net, and burn incense into their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous" (Hab. 1:16). The

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idols are plenteous: Insurance, job, lodge, friends, crops, land, money, political power, church, denomination, good works, etc. It is whatever you depend upon more than God. It is no less devil worship than that practiced by a heathen witch doctor. And the root of it all is unbelief.

Unbelief forgets and despises Jehovah. "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee" (Deut. 32:18). Having found other sources that seem to be supplying his needs and enriching him, man completely forgets Who lifted him out of the mire. The other gods allow him to live more as he pleases, to think as

he pleases and to congratulate himself in his own achievements. What need does he now have for God? He puts God out of his mind and constantly dwells on his idols. No man can serve two masters. He will love one and despise the other. You cannot be neutral toward God. He must be to you either God or nothing. Without faith it is impossible to please Him. For they that come to Him must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. You cannot believe the first "He is" without the second. If God is then He is the God that rewards those who diligently seek Him. You cannot, therefore, really believe that He is without diligently seeking Him in faith that He is your rewarder. They who do not so seek Him despise Him. They seek another god whom they suppose will reward them.

THE DESIGN OF GRACE

"Therefore, it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also

F which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all" (Romans 4:16). In the early years after my conversion when I was being taught how to evangelize and win souls, I had considerable trouble trying to find the proper place of faith in the design of grace. I understood grace to be pure unmerited favor, that salvation was a gift of God and was freely bestowed upon us for no cause within

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ourselves, and that none could boast in having received it (Eph. 2:8-9). Rom. 9:16 fits quite well into this picture: "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." The trouble can be illustrated in a device I had observed some evangelists use.. After having preached his sermon, the preacher begins to give an invitation to accept Christ as Saviour. In order to demonstrate the offer of salvation that can be accepted or rejected at the sinner's will, he takes a dollar bill out of his _ pocket and offers it to any boy or girl who will come to the front and accept it. After some time of assuring them that (it is no trick and the offer is real, some little boy gingerly steps out, walks down the aisle and receives the bill. As soon as he has the bill in his hand, he turns around and walks back to his seat with a proud and victorious smirk on _ his face to the envy of all the other children. Why didn't they accept it? "They did not have enough faith." Why did he? "He had faith." So, he is proud of the fact that he excelled above everyone else. Such a demonstration of salvation pictures to me saints in heaven strutting around bragging about their faith which got them there. Surely they are much better than those sinners in hell who refused to trust Christ.

The same lie is presented to us today in the form of those who claim to heal by faith, to get certain spiritual gifts by

faith, who have great worldly goods which they claim to have gotten by faith.

If this be true, then faith has no place in the design of grace, but belongs properly in the realm of meritorious works. But that cannot be so. God designed salvation so » » that the very receiving of the gift would also come of grace. Faith, therefore, is a duty wholly without merit within itself. One can never boast in his faith. It is the least any man is obliged to do, and anything less is manifest wickedness in unbelief. A mother bears a child in her womb for nine months. She suffers the travail of giving birth to him. She nurses him, feeds him, changes and washes him. She binds up all his bruises and comforts him in all his

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sorrows in growing up. She cares for him night and day through all his childhood diseases, sitting up late at night. rising early in the morning to care for his needs. After he is grown should she reward him for calling her, "mother"? Indeed not! Anything less would be unforgivable. Having received so much from her hand, what should possess him to refuse to honor her except his own ungrateful proud and wicked heart? He will not allow himself to be in anyone's debt. He has his own designs and mother does not fit into them and he had rather forget about her. What father would not be offended when the son he has begotten forsakes him, if his wisdom and goodness and prefers to seek help from his enemy? You see now the great offensiveness of unbelief. No wonder it is the sin that sends men to hell. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of I God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

It is of faith, that it might be by grace. Faith, true Bible

faith, finds a way to bestow the gift and it still be pure grace." It excludes any boasting of the receiver's attainment. Therefore, when you hear someone telling you how to believe God and get things, bragging about how he got certain things and how he lives by faith, you can be sure he knows nothing of faith nor grace. "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10).

ENEMIES AND ALLIES OF FAITH

A Faith is a gift of God. It cannot be produced or initiated by man. It comes from God. No one can "get" faith or instruct anyone on how to get it. However, there are some things that militate against faith and some things that create a hospitable seed bed for faith. We will list these enemies and their converse allies.

Enemy: Self-sufficiency. Man prefers to depend upon that which is tangible, readily available at his own will and that

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which he can control. Therefore, if he has a choice of trusting his own ability or that of God, and he has reason to believe he is able, then he will not trust God. If he can get along without God, he surely will. Jeshurun· kicked when he waxed fat. And man always will. If he thinks he can he will surely say, I will. Man's own stubborn self will is at the root of his sin and unbelief in God. The essence of sin is found in Satan's declaration of his independence when he rebelled against God (Isaiah 14:12-19). "Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the ' mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Man's confident self-will is not an element ir1

faith. It is a direct enemy.

Self-confidence and self-will is a principle of success among carnal men. It is the raw material from which an aggressive businessman builds his business and exploits meeker people. Salesmen are taught to build their ego and self-confidence this way. But it is directly contrary to the ways of God and the attitudes of the faithful righteous. "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3).

Ally: Insufficiency, need, helplessness. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:23). Jesus had just lost an excellent prospect. He had put his finger on the rich young ruler's problem. The young man wanted eternal life also. . .along with everything else he already had. Jesus told him that he could not have eternal life also; that he could only have it instead of. The young man left sorrowfully. He trusted in his possessions and could not, therefore, bring himself to abandon them and trust in God alone. Had he been destitute this would have not been the case. Riches are not a barrier to true faith but can be a grievous stumbling block. Neither does destitution guarantee faith in Christ. Millions of beggars will be in-hell who refused to believe. But a principle that aids in faith can be seen here. _

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Man must be at least sensibly stripped of everything he can depend upon if not literally. God often systematically does this for us. One by one he takes away all our props, our securities, our loves, our hopes, until nothing is left but Himself and then presents Himself to us as the object of our faith. It is the nature of man to stubbornly resist this stripping process. We do not want to get hemmed up to the

place where we must trust God. Yet, it is the only time that we will do so. Thousands of Jesus' disciples forsook him when he began to preach to them about the Cross in the 6th chapter of John. The twelve did not, by their own confession, for one reason: they had nowhere else to go. Humanly speaking, they could have left Him, but the Saviour had already wrought such a stripping work in their heart, they could not but follow Him. They had seen the futility and emptiness of everything else the world had to offer. Eternal life was nowhere else to be found. It is desperate need that brings God's people to Him in faith.

Enemy: Lusts, strong desire. An act of faith depends Upon knowledge of the will and purpose of God in a specific sense. God reveals his will and purpose to men so that they will know what to believe Him for. But, when a man is obsessed with a desire of his own, he is not free to recognize the will of God in a matter. He interprets everything in the light of his lusts and is willing to believe only that which he thinks will work things out the way he wants them. "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3-4). Men, who have failed to get what they want by violence and force, now turn to the "Christian" way to fulfill their lusts. They "ask" and "believe" God. Yet, they will get nothing from God, because what they have is not faith, but carnal desire. Strong desires are not an element in faith but an enemy. They becloud the thinking and obsess the mind so that a man cannot clearly hear the voice of God. The old sinful flesh in him is raising such a clamor for what he

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wants that the voice of God cannot be discerned. ways cannot be seen because the image of man's desire is constantly before his face. He cannot know the mind of God and, therefore, cannot believe.

Ally: The cross. There is only one place for the flesh. The Cross. It cannot be reformed or remedied. It must die. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (I Peter 4: 1-2). Those

who would learn faith must prepare to deny self. . .to starve ' out lusts. . .to yield up to the cross of Christ everything of the old Adamic nature that cries out for its own way. The spoiled child who always gets everything he wants never grows up and faces reality. He never learns the beauty and wisdom and perfection of his parent's will; he is too busily occupied satisfying his childish lusts. But, the son who has suffered privation and self denial is forced into facing an alternative to his own way. And he learns the way of his elder is a proven and tried way and that he can walk in it and not fall. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live (Rom. 8:13).

Enemy: Instability, options. "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:6-8). Those who look to the Lord have no reserve alternatives. If a man has an option or two just in case the Lord's way does not work out, he will never trust God, He doesn't have to. If God doesn't come through, then he has recourse elsewhere. Do not think you are kidding God by looking to Him on a trial basis. He knows your fickle heart. You are just sampling the possibilities and leaving plenty of open doors that you can scoot through if things aren't working out to suit you. You can rest assured! They will not. As long as you are vacillating back and forth between

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two or more ways, you will receive nothing from God. An alternative possibility tucked away in the recesses of your mind wars against faith and makes it nigh impossible.

"How long hath ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God follow him: but if Baal then follow him" (I Kings 18:21). The people answered him not a word. They couldn't. They were double minded. They had two possible courses and it was impossible for them to commit themselves to either.

Ally: Singleminded Steadfastness. Get rid of all your alternatives and set your mind toward the Lord alone. Put all your eggs in one basket. You will not truly trust the Lord until that is done.

A few years ago a pastor brought a troubled man to me for counseling. When I asked him about his problem, he replied, "I want to serve the Lord but I am having a . terrible time." "What seems to be hindering you?" I asked. "Everything and everybody it seems," he said. "Let's get down to particulars," I insisted. This is his story.

"I have a smoking problem. I know I shouldn't be smoking. It is harmful to me and a blight on my testimony but I am having a hard time giving it up. Then there is my wife. She thinks I am a fanatic and she says if I insist on living a Christian life, she is going to leave me. She wants to have some fun, and I don't want to go back into that kind of life; but I don't want to lose my wife. Then there is my business partner. He is not a Christian and we are having a conflict over some unethical business deals he wants to pull. He says I am holding back the business with my stupid morals and if I don't shape up he is going to force me out. Then, last week I was down in Tucson in a restaurant feeling sorry for myself and this young divorcee approached me. She liked me and made some obvious suggestions and approaches. I almost fell into what she was proposing. But, I don't want to live like that. I'm just in a terrible mess." "You surely are," I said, "but, maybe I can

help you get some things settled. It seems to me you have about four options here. You can only take one of them so

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you may as well eliminate the other three. Let's find out which ones you can take and which ones you cannot and then see what we have left. Here is your first option. You can walk out that door the same way you came in with nothing changed and nothing settled. Can you do that?

"I don't want to."

"But can you?" .

"If I had not wanted help I would not have come here."

"But can you leave without it'? Are you willing to walk out of here the same way you came in? Can you do that? Can you go on living the way you are now? Think about it. Because if you can, you will. There is no use of me wrangling around here with you for two or three hours only to have you refuse to do what you must and leave the same way you came in. If you can do that, then go ahead and do it now. Let's not waste anymore time.

He looked at me, saw I meant it, thought about it a bit and then said, "No, I can't do that. I have got to have some help. I cannot live any longer the way I am.

Something has to be settled."

"Then we can eliminate that option. It no longer exists. Something has to be settled before you leave here tonight. Now we have only three left. Here is your second option: Forget about being a Christian and serving the Lord. Put the thought of it out of your mind and go ahead and do what you like. If you want to smoke, stop feeling guilty about it and puff away. If your wife wants you to go out and get drunk and raise hell with her, go ahead. If your partner wants to pull some fast deals that can make you rich and won't get you in jail, go to it. Take advantage of anybody you can, make as much money as you can, do

what you like and live it up. If you see that divorcee again, take her up on the proposition. Whatever you feel like doing, help yourself."

He stared at me incredulously.

"Can you do that?" I asked.

He shook his head, "No, I can't do that. I can't live that way.'."

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"Are you sure?" ,

"I'm sure."

"Think about it now, and settle it. If you can do that then you ought to go ahead because you will sooner or later. But if you can't, then settle it in your mind that you can't and forget about it. It's no use you ever thinking about it anymore. It is an utter impossibility."

"I can't do that."

All right, that eliminates two options and two more are left. here is your third one: GO home. If you do not have one at home, stop off at a pawn shop and pick yourself up a pistol. Get out in the yard so that you won't make a mess (in the house for someone to clean up, take good aim so that you don't miss and put a bullet in your brain."

He jerked his head back and stared at me. "I can't do that. I'd go to hell."

"Probably so," I said, "but at least you wouldn't have to g live in this hell till you get to the next one."

"No, I can't do that."

"Then it looks like you have only one course left. Follow the Lord. Obey Him. If your wife leaves you, follow the Lord. If you lose your business and all your money, follow the Lord. If it costs you all your pleasures, follow the Lord. You really don't have any other option. You cannot do anything else. Live, die, swim or sink, you must follow Him.

He thought awhile, then lifted his head and slowly as the truth began to dawn upon him, a relieved smile spread across his worried face. "That's right isn't it. It's really very simple. He is my only hope of life. There is nothing else to do."

I prayed with him, shook his hand and dismissed the meeting.

Nearly two years later I was back in the same city and this man came to the meeting. His wife was with him, _ clinging to his arm. They had been, it seemed, through hell itself. His faith had been tried in the fire. The devil had exhausted his resources in his attempt to shake him from

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The commitment he made that night. But, when he had left That counseling session, he was a single-minded man with only one place to go. His eyes were steadfastly fixed upon God as his deliverer. He and his wife both wore the broad sweet smiles of a victory that endures. They had learned Indeed that faith is the victory that overcomes the world. Such as these can give unerring testimony that God is Indeed worthy of our trust. That is faith.

"I do not recall another period when faith was as popular as it is today. Faith has come back into favour with almost everybody. The scientist, the cab driver, the philosopher, the actress, the politician, the prize fighter, the house- . wife. . .all are ready to recommend faith as the panacea for all our ills—moral, spiritual and economic. If we only believe hard enough we'll make it somehow. So goes the

popular chant. What you believe is not important. Only believe.

“What is overlooked in all this is that faith is good only when it engages truth; when it is made to rest upon falsehood it can and often does lead to eternal tragedy. For it is not enough to believe; we must believe the right thing about the right One. Let us beware that the Jesus we “accept” is not one we have created out of the dust of our imagination and formed after our own likeness.”

"Faith is a gift of God to a penitent soul and has nothing whatsoever to do with the senses or the data they afford. Faith is a miracle; it is the ability God gives to trust His Son, and anything that does not result in action in accord with the will of God is not faith but something short of it. "In that great and terrible day there will be those white with shock when they find that they depended upon a » mental assent to Christianity instead of upon a miracle of new birth." A.W. Tozer

Human Faith vs. Saving Faith

LEAFING THROUGH the current issue of a leading evangelical magazine, I came across a test for "Knowledge is of Bible Doctrine." About 16 multiple choice questions were given, one of which was, "What are the steps necessary for salvation?" Four choices were offered: (1) Repent and believe. (2) Believe and be baptized. (3) Receive Christ as Lord. (4) Believe only. Turning to the answer page, the editors indicated that the correct answer was choice no. 4: "Over 200 times," they explained, "the single requirement in the Bible is faith."

I sat down and wrote a letter to the editors objecting to the way they had stated and answered the question. It strongly implied that salvation was possible without repentance. That is not true. "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3-5). It also suggested that salvation was possible while rejecting Christ as Lord. That also cannot be true. To accept a Christ that is not absolute Lord is to receive another Jesus who cannot save. The Christ of the Bible saves the sinner as Lord, not as substitute only. Our Saviour is our God, our Sovereign, else we have none.

Yet, the fact remains that over 200 times in the scripture we are told that men are justified by faith alone. "He that believeth on the son hath life." "Believe on the Lord Jesus

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Christ and thou shalt be saved." "That he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." These are precious promises, and the theme of the great Reformation is built around them. We have no desire to weaken the hope in Christ men have gained through faith in the God of these precious promises. But a problem persists.

Anyone who has been engaged in evangelizing for any

time has certainly been met with numbers of people who believe everything the Bible says, yet have absolutely no assurance of salvation. They have no reason to believe they are in Christ Jesus. Many times "soul-winners" take these passages and attempt to give such persons assurance, but it is futile. They cannot have assurance because they are yet unconverted. How can this be so? Do they not believe? Are the promises of God not true? Can we not take God at His word?

A friend of mine who lives in a southeastern city where there is a large fundamental university related this incident to me. He was stopped on the street one morning by a man whom he knew to be unconverted.

"Pardon me, Mr. C , are these young men, with Bibles in their hands going around stopping people and talking to them, preachers?"

"Well, they say they are. I suppose so."

"In that case I have a problem."

"What is it?"

"One of them stopped me this morning and read from his Bible, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Then he asked me, "Do you believe that?"

"Is that a Bible?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Then I believe it, because I believe everything that is in the Bible."

"Bless your heart! You are saved!"

"I am?" .

"Yes, you are. Now what is your name?" And with this he

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took out a little book and pencil preparing to write it down. Now I did not know that this might not be some sort of trick, so I gave him a fictitious name, which he wrote in the

book. Then he shook my hand and told me that my name was written down in the Lambs book of life, and that he would see me in heaven. Now my problem is this: If that is the name that is written down up there it is the wrong one. How am I going to get that straightened out?

Such a ridiculous incident would be amusing if it were not so tragic. For we have so much evangelism today that is H conducted on no higher level than that. People are told to believe, told when they have believed and when they are saved. Yet, they have no more confidence of salvation afterwards than before.

Our problem is a problem of semantics, the meaning and usage of words. It can be illustrated in John 2:22-24.

"When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." In these three verses we have one Greek word used three times, once in each verse; and each time it is used, it has a different meaning.

Words do not have definite conclusive meanings. They have usages. This can be readily seen in the English language. Take, for example, the word spring. To a farmer, it may mean the time of year that the birds begin to sing and plants begin to grow again. To an athlete, it may mean a leap across a barrier on a track. To an engineer, it may mean a mechanical device that suspends an automobile chassis from its axles. To a geologist, it may mean an orifice or crack in the earth formation at the bottom of some hills where waters gush out of the ground. Yet, it is identically the same word and has the same root meaning.

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The Greek is no different. No language is so accurate that you can build a theology on grammar or a doctrine on meanings of words. Nor do word study books provide a sure way of getting at what is intended by certain words. One must have a working knowledge of the whole revealed truth' of God or at least that particular truth with which he is concerned.

Back to John 2:22-23. In verse 22 the Greek pistueo is translated as believe and refers to saving faith. In verse 23 the same word is translated as believe and refers to human ~ faith, which will save no one. In verse 24 the same word appears again and is translated as commit, and refers to the faithfulness of God. So we see the same word used three times in a three verse context, each time having a completely different meaning.

How do we know that verse 22 refers to saving faith and verse 23 refers to human faith? We know that verse 22 speaks of saving faith because Jesus stated in his prayer in John 17 that not one of the twelve was lost except Judas. That is the only way we know that is true. We cannot tell if it is saving faith on the face of the word, believe, in the passage, but truth revealed in other scripture dictates it to be so. We know that verse 23 speaks of human faith because the next verse tells us that Jesus did not commit himself unto them. We have people believing in Jesus but in whom Jesus did not believe. They were yet unconverted and just as lost as they were before they ever met Christ. If one yet has doubts that this is true, he only needs to read further on down in chapter 4 and find one of those Jews e who believed on Jesus because of the miracles which he saw is identified as Nicodemus. He came to Jesus declaring his faith because of the miracles he saw. What did Jesus say to him? Bless your heart, if you believe in me then you are saved. No! He said, "Ye must be born again." These Jews had human faith but were still unregenerate. Christ would

not commit Himself to them.

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WHAT IS HUMAN FAITH?

Human faith is a logical intellectual conclusion at which a man arrives after due consideration of reasonable evidence. It will save no one. This is where the damning damage is done in an evangelism that does not know the difference between human and saving faith.

Faith in Christ is sometimes illustrated like this: You look at a chair, take note of its materials, its structure and shape and, drawing on your previous knowledge of similar if chairs in which you have sat safely, come to a logical conclusion that the chair will sustain your weight. Having arrived at that conviction, you sit in it. Now that is good instruction for sitting in a chair. And that is human faith. But it isn't worth a dime as far as justifying faith is concerned. It has its origin and roots in man and the human reasoning process, and God is not in it.

The same idea can be projected into things relating to God and salvation. There are plenty of good logical reasons to believe the Bible. The harmony of its spirit and letter, the accuracy of its prophecies, the beauty and perfection of its precepts, its massive impact on the moral character of man through the centuries, its sheer endurance despite its constantly being attacked. All this in the face of the fact that it was penned over many centuries at the hands of widely diverse men who had no opportunity to collaborate.

There is overwhelming evidence that the Bible is the word of God . . . enough to stand up in any court of law in which facts are established when there can be no reasonable doubt.

The same thing can be said of the person of Christ. Sanity demands that we believe what He said about Himself to be true. He had to be either a madman, a master deceiver or the Son of God. As C.S. Lewis, the converted atheist said, "You can put him in an insane asylum, lock him up in a fraud's prison or bow down to Him as God. But no more of this patronizing nonsense about His being a good man, but nothing more than a man. That is an option he did not leave us." A man who wanted to weigh the evidence

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without prejudice must believe that Jesus was God incarnate.

Nor can you charge His disciples and the Church fathers with perpetuating a fraud. Church history, soundly supported by secular history, gives conclusive evidence of the truth. Men do not suffer shame, disgrace, privation, poverty, torture and death for lies. The power of God transformed those men into living sacrifices and eternal testimonies of the truth of God's word. No atheist can read Fox's Book of Martyrs with an unbiased mind and remain a sane unbeliever. When reason alone is confronted with all this P evidence, unbelief becomes irrational. But that resulting faith is not saving faith.

Sometimes human faith is based upon witnessing some miraculous evidence. This was the case in our text. They saw the miracles which Jesus did and therefore believed that God was on the scene doing something. But that is not sufficient faith to convert. They were still unregenerate in heart even though they could not deny that God was and that God was working. Nor are the signs and wonders that men are witnessing today producing any converts. They are sufficient to produce human faith but nothing beyond that.

Sometimes human faith is based upon a personal experience of some kind. An emotional catharsis, a healing,

a supposed answer to prayer, an experience of the supernatural that touched one personally. Without truth, there is no way one can know that such things are a blessing from God or simply a demonic manifestation to deceive one into thinking he has a standing in grace. Such experiences are ~ sufficient to cause one to believe in the existence of the supernatural and the reality of God, but they fall short of producing saving faith in the God of the Bible.

WHY IT FALLS SHORT OF SALVATION

Human faith falls short of saving faith for a number of obvious reasons. We will consider some of the more obvious ones.

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Repentance is not necessary. A decision in the mind does not require repentance. It only requires intelligence. There need be no moral change at all associated with it. It is not a moral act, but rather one of intelligence. It takes no account of the wickedness of men or the holiness of God; only the existence of facts. It does not grieve over anything done in the past or make any resolve toward any particular behavior in the future. It simply believes what is so to be true.

In view of this, it ought to be obvious that such faith will if not justify. There is no justification without repentance. We are not justified by repentance; but neither are we justified apart from it. To those who supposed that certain Galileans must have been especially wicked sinners because they were slaughtered by Pilate in the midst of their sacrifices Jesus said, "Suppose ye that these Galileans A were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:2-3).

John the Baptist, a man sent to prepare the hearts of

men to believe on Christ Jesus, cried, "Repent." It is only the repentant heart that can savingly believe on Christ Jesus. I think we shall discover that when the command, "only believe" is given, it is spoken to persons already in a broken and repentant state, persons whose hearts have been prepared. It is true that God does command all men to believe, and that they are justified by faith alone, but that faith is not possible in unrepentance.

The early church knew and gave record that repentance was necessary if men were to be saved. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). Paul did not neglect its primacy in his instruction to young Timothy. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves that peradventure God will grant them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will (II Tim. 2:25—26).

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Human faith takes place without repentance and therefore produces no moral change in a person. Therefore, we have multitudes of people believing in Jesus, on the way to hell, being told they are saved.

Humility and contrition unnecessary. The essence of justification is union with Christ. It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory:" (Col. 1:27). The indwelling life is our hope of justification and eternal life. He is the Righteousness that makes us acceptable in the beloved (Eph. 1:6). "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates." Paul allows two possibilities. All who have hope, have such hope because

God has chosen to tabernacle Himself in them.

Now, Isaiah 57:15 describes the kind of man in whom

God will tabernacle Himself and in whom He will dwell.

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Christ commits Himself to the humble and broken man.

A man may intellectually believe the Bible and believe in Christ Jesus yet never be humbled or broken. In fact, multitudes exhibit rank pride in their orthodoxy. They boast in their adherence to the fundamentals of the faith. Such faith is not justifying faith because Christ is not in it. He resists and stands afar off from a proud and haughty person. ·

The beatitudes of Matthew 5:3-11 describe the attitudes of the blessed. They are not commandments but descriptions of those who have been blessed by union with Christ-Jesus. It is not said that some of the blessed are such and such and other of the blessed are something else. All that are blessed have these attitudes. Where these attitudes are not evident there is no sound reason to believe the people are blessed.

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of

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heaven. The kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit and only them.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. The mourners, those who mourn over their sins and the wickedness of the earth shall be comforted. The Comforter, the Holy Spirit is sent only to the mourners.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. The meek, and only the meek shall inherit the earth.

These are descriptions of broken and contrite souls. Souls who have been humbled under the mighty hand of God. If they are meek and lowly in spirit, they mourn and weep. Just as surely as these are blessed, those who do not bear these traits are cursed. Consider the converse.

Cursed are the haughty and proud, for theirs is the prison house of darkness and damnation.

Cursed are the frivolous and foolish, they that revel and laugh in the midst of wickedness: for they shall be tormented.

Cursed are the arrogant and cocky, for they shall inherit the lake of fire.

All men are born proud. They have nothing to be proud of, true, but that does not stop them from strutting. If you have never been broken and humbled, then you are surely still proud.

Your human faith will not cure your pride. Nor can you lay hold on saving faith until you become pliable clay in the Master's hand. It is only then that you will begin to lay hold on a higher faith that justifies.

Holiness not necessary. There is no dynamic in human faith to transform man into a Christlike image. The facts are detached in such a way that they bear no compelling influence on the believer.

There are two kinds of holiness in the scripture, imputed and imparted. Imputed righteousness is legally accounted to the believer at conversion. It is perfect, for it is the very righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Imparted righteousness comes subsequent to conversion. It is imperfect but it

is being perfected as evidenced in spiritual growth. It is an

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actual experimental participating in the holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ. He chastens His sons that they might be partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12:10). We are told in verse 14 that without this holiness we have no hope in Christ.

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:"

Now holiness is not a prescribed list of do's and don'ts that we perform externally. It is an inward attitude, a condition of the heart, a disposition of the soul of man who has truly been born from above. We go back to Matthew 5 in the beatitudes again:

Verse 6: Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. All who have been genuinely converted to Christ have an unquenchable thirst for righteousness. Not only do they loathe their old life; they long to lay hold on the full expression and experience of the New Life in Christ Jesus. The old carnal man wants to know how wicked he can be and still be saved. The new man in Christ wants to be as holy as it is possible for a man to be on earth.

Verse 8: Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. This holy disposition is evidenced in a kind and compassionate disposition toward all men.

Verse 9: Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Only the pure in heart shall see God. The heart is turned from the vile and corrupt things of this earth to the heavenly and pure things of God.

Verse 10: Blessed are they which are persecuted for _ righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The apostle assures us that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. A disturbing declaration in view of the ease and approval in which professing Christians live today. Is there not enough holiness about us to provoke the devil?

Although holiness is not an external thing one does, but an inward attitude he has, we must face the fact that if the real inward attitude is there, it will be evidenced in an outward performance. There must be an actual separation

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from sin and all that is sinful. Justification is union with Christ; and Christ has no union with the devil, with darkness, with Belial, with idols (II Cor. 6:14-16). "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:17-18).

Christ is not in it. There is no assurance in human faith because Christ Himself is not in it. It is Christ in you that is the hope of glory. As Calvin said, "We are justified by faith, and faith alone. But that faith is not alone: God is in it!"

This brings us to the third usage of the Greek pistueo in John 2:24. "But Jesus did not commit himself to them because he knew all men." The word "but" indicates a departure from what might be expected. In this it is strongly implied that Christ does commit Himself to those who savingly believe in Him through true repentance. Now

that is- a staggering thought. It is one thing for a man to commit himself to Christ, but quite another for Christ to commit Himself to a man. Yet, that is exactly the transaction that takes place in true conversion.

Although the same word is used in each case, it is used in a different sense. I commit myself to Christ as one who entrusts an able and qualified artist with a marred portrait for restoration, a skilled mechanic with his automobile for repairs, a trusted banker with his treasure for safe keeping. If I really trust these, I will not be constantly checking up on him to make sure he is doing the job right and is not mining or losing what I have entrusted to him. I trust him and rest the possession in his safe keeping. Even so I have abandoned my life at His feet, not to perform some service for him, but for what He can do for me.

When Christ commits Himself to me, He is certainly not trusting me to take care of Him. He is pledging Himself and all that He is for my every need. He is (I say it carefully and reverently) putting Himself at my disposal.

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Not that I am going to take charge of Him. (He has already taken charge of me.) But since He has accepted responsibility for me, He will spare nothing of all that He is to see that I am saved to the uttermost. All His righteousness, His virtue, His authority and power, His standing with the Father is mine by virtue of our union together.

Has the wonder and marvel of this great salvation struck you yet, dear reader? With what shall we compare it. Do you have a letter of commitment from your bank? To what extent have they committed themselves to you? The extent of your credit? Your collateral? Your friend's resources? All the assets of the bank? I have a letter of commitment from God. And what does it assure? God has committed Himself

to the extent of all He is for all my needs as long as He lives! Who shall threaten or intimidate me? Let the world A rattle her pod of peas. Let Satan roar, threaten and intimidate those who have no hope. The Eternal God is my refuge; and underneath are the Everlasting Arms (Deut. 33:27).

And can it be
That I should gain
An interest in
The Savior's Blood?
Died He for me

Who caused His pain?
For me, who Him
To death pursued?
Amazing Love!
Amazing Love!
That Thou my God
Should die for me!

Charles Wesley

Five Levels of Faith

THE PRECEDING CHAPTER was given to consideration of human faith, demonstrating why it does not justify the sinner, and why it stops short of salvation. In this chapter we are going to view the progressive nature of saving faith.

"I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and the unwise. So much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:14-17).

A GREAT SALVATION

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to the believer. It will not save the unbeliever. He does not believe it. To the unbeliever, God speaks in His holy law. It is the law that converts (Psalm 19:7), but the gospel that saves. The law convicts, exposes the sinners wickedness, threatens with God's righteous wrath and brings the sinner to a need of the gospel wherein he may find salvation in Christ Jesus. But the gospel will do nothing for any man until he becomes a believer. The gospel is given to God's believing people.

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Now I know this will be confusing to many of my readers since we are accustomed to considering a believer as already saved. This is because we have been mistaught what the Bible means when it speaks of salvation. Salvation is much greater than justification. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;" (Heb. 2:3). It is a great salvation much greater than any of us know about yet. And it can be neglected with the result of loss. Just what that loss might be cannot be stated in blanket terms. A man may begin with human faith, neglect it and perish. The disturbing facts are before us: It is a great salvation. It can be

neglected. Those who neglect it will not escape.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation because in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. There is a contrast between Rom. 1:17 and Rom. 1:18-32. In Romans 1:17 the righteousness of God is progressively revealed from faith to faith. From Romans 1:18 through the rest of the chapter the unrighteousness of man is being progressively revealed from unbelief to unbelief. Every man is traveling in one or the other of these directions. Through believing the Gospel he is moving from faith to faith because he is seeing more and more of the glory of God, or through rejection of truth, he is moving from unbelief to unbelief, his foolish heart is becoming more and more darkened, and his ultimate wickedness is being progressively exposed.

The positive side of progressive salvation is demonstrated by the trilogy found in John 1:16, Romans 1:17 and II Cor. 3:18.

John 1:16: "And of his fullness have all we received, and I grace for grace." The Authorized Version gives an excellent translation of this verse. It does not mean "one blessing and favor on top of another" as most of the modern "translations" render. It means that we have received grace because of grace. Only grace can cause grace; otherwise grace is not grace, but reward or compensation.

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Romans 1:17: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." Faith builds upon faith. It takes) faith to apprehend faith. As revelation moves, faith ' must also move forward or die.

II Cor. 1:18: "But we all with open face beholding as in a

glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." As the righteousness of God is revealed and we believe, we are transformed into his likeness.

God. has predestined us to be conformed to the image of his Son. That is the side revealing God's sovereignty " (Romans 8:29). "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure" (I John 3:3). That is the side of man's responsibility. They both are true and stand side by side. Those of us who have received grace because of grace are moving from faith to faith through the revelation of God's righteousness in the gospel, and are being transformed from glory to glory.

It takes faith to get faith. If you don't have any then you cannot get any more. In the economic world, capital earns money. Money makes money, and it takes money to make more money. Jesus used this principle in one of His parables which demonstrates that which we are considering in this matter of progressive salvation in faith to faith. "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath" (Matt. 13:12). The Saviour had begun to speak to them in parables. Upon being asked why He was using parables, He replied, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." The unbelieving Jews who had J been faithless with the revelation that was given them would be given no further opportunity of light. Christ would hide truth from them and take away their very capacity of believing.

Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Obviously he that "hath not" had something, otherwise he could lose nothing. But he did not have what

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he should have had. This is shown more clearly in the parable of the talents, (Matt. 25:14-29), at the close of which Jesus again repeats, "from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." That which every man has to begin with is the natural ability to believe in human faith. God has endowed all men with intellect and reason, and has displayed before them His glorious works.

These are the ingredients necessary for human faith and they make every man responsible toward God. This human faith of which he is capable is not sufficient to justify him, but neglect of it is sufficient to damn him. If he responds ___ rightly to human faith, he will gain justifying faith. If not, he will lose even the capacity to think and reason properly. When that happens, all hope is gone.

Faith dies under disobedience; There is such a thing as dead faith. It has no works and is imperfect, therefore will save no one (James 2:14-26). Two men built houses. One was likened unto a man who heard the word of God, believed and obeyed (Matt. 7:24-27). He is said to have built a house upon a rock and it withstood the storms of testing. The other is likened unto a man who heard the words of the Lord and did not obey them. He is said to have built a house upon the sand, and when the storm was over he had nothing left. Both men had something to start with. One was neglectful in what he heard and he did not escape. He lost all that he had at the same time the other was simply becoming more soundly anchored in his rock. Men cannot remain static. They must either gain or lose. They progress forward in this great salvation or they digress backward to their ultimate damnation. The servant who was given five talents gained five more and was commended of the Lord. The servant who was given two talents gained two more and was blessed of his master. The servant who did nothing lost all and was rejected by his Lord. Faith always moves from faith to faith. But neglect

stops us short and further progress is blocked.

We want to now outline this great salvation as seen in five levels of faith. Human Faith, Justifying Faith, Sanctifying Faith, Deliverance Faith and Warfare Faith.

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HUMAN FAITH

Human faith is simply believing what God has done. That is what the Jews in John 2:23 did. They believed the works of God which they saw done in Jesus. So did Nicodemus. "We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him (John 3:2). In essence, he was saying, I believe because I see . . . your works. Yet, Jesus replies, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He might see the works of God but he cannot see the kingdom " of God.

The works of God are displayed to draw our attention to the word of God that we may know the ways of God. Believing in such works of God are never enough to save us but they are enough to make us accountable to believe His word. Once having beheld the works of God, man is faced with His word, His truth. He must either believe it or deny it. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;" Why? "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him (the things Nicodemus could not see) are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made (the things he did see), even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:" (Rom. 1:18-20). Regardless of whether it is the wonders of life, the marvels of the created universe, or the supernatural intervention of God in the normal course of nature; all these works of God point us to give earnest attention to His word. Else we shall never know His ways.

Will the heathen who have never heard the name of Christ perish? Most assuredly they will. How can God punish them (the question often in men's minds) for refusing to believe in a name they have never heard? "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10:14). Ah, but you have not finished reading that passage yet. Did you not continue to verse 18 and find,

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"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." The apostle appeals to Psalm 19 where it is declared that there is no place on earth where man has not sufficient witness of God to make him accountable to seek to know and worship Him. The illiterate, ignorant heathen who sees the works of God displayed all about him, honestly faces the wickedness of his heart being condemned by the law of God written in his conscience, and earnestly seeks to know God will certainly be sent a missionary with the message of Jesus Christ. But if you, O man, who having like testimony _ before you, yet continue in your sins, preferring to remain ignorant of the true God lest He demand your repentance, have no reason to expect a higher revelation. You would only trample it under your feet as a sow would precious pearls.

If I give six people material sufficient to learn the alphabet, some may apply themselves to it, learn, seek more reading material and become learned readers. Others may throw away their first foundations. Should those who neglected to learn the ABC's feel discriminated against when I bestow an encyclopedia on their diligent faithful fellows, while withdrawing from them that which I originally supplied them? Even so, those who will not respond rightly to the works of God can never receive the word of God. And those who rebel against the word of God may

never know the ways of God.

Nicodemus flunked the test at the word. We do not know if he was ever converted or not, but he certainly was not saved according to the record of John 3. He believed the works yet stumbled at the word; And the last thing Jesus said of him was, "ye believe not!" (John 3:12). The new birth violated his sense of reason. How tragic! Our eyes behold the works of a supernatural God and we readily consent that such works are too wonderful for us to comprehend. But, when our minds are presented with a truth that likewise transcends our understanding, we want to balk.

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Nicodemus wanted to do it himself. "How do I go about that?" In my early foolish years of attempted soul-winning, when people asked me that question, I (as I supposed) told them how. "Just repent and believe," I said, "and when you do that, you will be born again." Of course, I had no scripture for this, but thought myself obliged to explain what Jesus neglected to do for Nicodemus. Christ gave no such instructions! Repentance and faith are the fruit, not the cause, of regeneration. But back to Nicodemus. "How is this possible? Can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" He foolishly forgets that he had nothing to do with his first birth and thinks he is obliged to engineer his second one. The new birth is no commandment to man. It is a declaration of God's way of salvation. It is all of God. That is where the rub is. It is not what a man can do but what God does. The question is not, "Can a man," but "Can God" or more direct, "Will God?" The wind bloweth where it listeth, and the Spirit moves as He pleases. This is the truth to which we must consent if we are not to neglect human faith.

The continuing theme of full Bible salvation is God's

sufficiency in the face of man's inability. The Lord demonstrates his power, reveals His goodness in truth and then faces us with insurmountable obstacles. He makes promises to us and then bids us take them when it seems impossible for us to do so. It is the way of faith. It is the way of destruction to the human ego. It brings to an end dependency upon the arm of flesh. The children of Israel were brought out of Egypt to be brought into the full salvation of the land of Canaan. But most of them never made it. They were given human faith by God's demonstrated miracles. They saw His works. Yet, when given His word that He had already given them the land of Canaan, they would not believe it. "We be not able . . . for they are stronger than we" (Numbers 13:31). Their complaint sounds strikingly similar to Nicodemus. "How can a man?" It is the same complaint the sinner cries when faced with the demands of a holy God upon his depraved nature. His

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impotency is evident but God's sufficiency is not. Unless he takes that step of obedience thrusting himself upon the mercy of God in faith, he will never know the wonderful ways of God.

"Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore, I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart: and they have not known my ways (Heb. 3:7-10). They saw His works and on that basis should have hearkened to His voice, but would not and so, never knew His ways. Human faith dies under disobedience.

JUSTIFYING FAITH

Where human faith is believing what God has done, justifying faith is believing what God has done for me, personally and particularly, in Christ Jesus. It is one thing to believe that Jesus died on the Cross and arose from the dead; to believe that God had a particular design and purpose in the death and resurrection of Christ. But to believe that God had me in mind and the purpose of Christ's atonement was to reconcile me . . . that is another matter altogether. I cannot, of myself, believe that, nor can any unrepentant sinner believe it. It is futile for soul winners to tell individual persons that Jesus died for their » sins. In an unrepentant state, they cannot believe it, no matter how earnestly and fervently you reason with them. No one in the Bible ever told an individual sinner that Christ died for him. They only declared that Christ died for sinners and that in view of this, God commands men everywhere to repent.

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is

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no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:21-26). Justification is a term taken from courts of law. It is what happens when a judge presiding in a court of justice faces a criminal with all the evidence against him demanding his punishment and, knowing very well the man is

guilty, pronounces him innocent. That is exactly what God has done in our case. He has justified us, knowing quite well we were guilty and deserving Of_ eternal punishment. Now, what would you think of a judge who did such things? How would a citizen react to a judge in their court who had a reputation for finding defendants innocent when he knew very well that they were guilty? That is the problem the apostle is dealing with in the passage just quoted . . . that God can vindicate His righteousness while justifying sinners. How can He do such a thing? He may demonstrate his mercy, kindness, forbearance and grace in justifying sinners, but how can he be just in doing so when justice demands they be punished? How can He be just, and (at the same time) the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus?

Mercy and justice are here at odds with each other. How can they meet without violating each other? How can God implement His mercy in justification of me when I stand before him with justice pointing out all my sins, with every true witness declaring that I am worthy of death, and nothing to plead in my defense.

God has found the solution in Christ Jesus. The just Judge of all the earth has, in the Person of His only begotten Son, taken full punishment for all the crimes committed by those who put their trust in Him. He has satisfied the claims of justice against the poor helpless sinners, and having done so, is free to justify them according to His abundant mercy.

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But how does a sinner believe that God has reconciled him to Himself in Christ Jesus? How can he believe that his sins have been propitiated in the death of Christ? How can he come to a comforting hope that he has an interest in the Saviour's blood? There is no way he can persuade himself

that this is true. All the arguments and reasonings presented to him by others can only appeal to a decision in his mind, yet his conscience will still be defiled and the guilt or burden of his soul will not be lifted. He cannot produce this justifying faith by an act of intellect, emotion or will. There is only one thing that he can do in such a condition. If he ___ has truly been brought to see that he is, as God has declared in His word, a wicked, hell deserving sinner, he can confess that to be true. He must also confess that he has no hope of improving himself so that he will ever be any less deserving of the wrath of God. He must see that there is no way for him to oblige God to receive him. He will likely at this time confess that he has no reason to believe that God would receive such a wicked person as he. But, if, in spite of all this, He chooses to forsake his sins, to throw down his arms of rebellion and to cast himself upon the mercy of the Court, then a very wonderful thing begins to happen.

Finding himself incapable of justifying faith, he has pleaded . the faithfulness of God and God has responded. God sends forth the Spirit of His Son into the repentant sinner's heart crying Abba Father (Gal. 4:6). The sin burden is lifted, peace and joy floods his soul, and he, for the first time, sees that God had him particularly in view in the death of His Son. He sees Christ, for the first time, as his substitute and is filled with love and gratitude for the free gift of salvation. Justifying faith, then, is seen to be not something the sinner is capable of producing within himself for then it would be man's own faith; his part in salvation. It would be a sort of meritorious purchase of salvation in which man could boast. But God has excluded all possibility of that in the design of grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). Justifying faith is the responsive gift of God to

the sinner's repentance, which is also granted by God (Acts 11:18, II Tim. 2:25). In essence, it is not the sinner's faith, but the faithfulness of Christ Himself whose Spirit has taken up abode in the seeker's heart. Man must believe: He will perish if he does not. He ought to believe. Only his wickedness prevents it. But when he does believe it is God's gracious gift of faith.

Man's first true revelation of the beauty and glory of Christ- takes place after God has already done a work of regeneration in him. Paul~ speaks of his conversion as ___ I "When it please God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me" (Gal. 1:15-16). It is Christ in you that is your hope of glory (Col. 1:27). One cannot have sound hope of salvation until Christ by the Holy Spirit has indwelt him. It is then that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God (Rom. 8:16). That is justifying faith, and it is wrought by God's wonderful grace in the heart of the repentant sinner. It brings us into vital union with Christ. Our need has thrust us to Him and He has stamped His seal upon us; and all that Christ is, is ours, for we are one with Him. He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness and sanctification and redemption (I Cor. 1:30).

SANCTIFYING FAITH

Human faith is believing what God has done in Christ Jesus. Justifying faith is believing what God has done for me in Christ Jesus. We are now ready to consider the third . level of faith Sanctifying faith. Sanctifying faith is . believing what God has done with me in Christ Jesus. Some will object to the idea of sanctification by faith on the basis that we cannot become holy by just believing we are. Granted there is much more to it than that. There is a sense in which sanctification can be considered at the same time a work of the word (Eph. 5:26); a work of the Spirit (I Pet. 1:2); a work of the chastening Father (Heb. 12:5—10); and the responsibility of the believer himself (I John 3:3).

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But all these scriptures are not at odds one with another. They all are a part of the gospel, God's good news. It is us, and it saves us who believe it to be true. Sanctification is simply a part in God's great salvation.

Perhaps this would be the place for us to define what are talking about when we speak of sanctification. Sanctification and holiness are synonyms; they mean the same thing in the scripture. The Bible speaks of two kinds of holiness: imputed and imparted. The first is legal, the second experimental. The first is perfect and complete, the second, imperfect and yet incomplete. The first is Christ's, or the second becomes our own through transformation of the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:2). At conversion, the point of justifying faith through union with Christ, God imputes to our account the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. He accounts the Lord's holiness as our own. All that the Lord Jesus Christ is, He lays to our account making us legally perfect in His sight. That is justification: God pronouncing us innocent when He knows we are guilty. But God then immediately begins a sanctifying work in us that must culminate in His predestined purpose for the redeemed; they will be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29).

Let us go back and consider the justifying Judge for a moment. Having paid the penalty for the guilty's crime he can legally and justly release him. Justice has been satisfied and so cannot punish him for what he has done. But that has not changed, in the least, what he is. Shall the judge release this man who is still a criminal and will surely continue his crimes? Can he set him free to steal, plunder, burn, murder, rape and ruin as he has previously done?

Such an action might be legal, but it is not moral. Although men's courts of law may allow for such, God cannot; because God is not only just; He is moral. His Holy Nature will not permit Him to justify the sinner and yet leave him a sinner by nature. Not only has He done something for the sinner in Christ Jesus: He has done something with him. We must understand that the Gospel is the preaching of

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the Cross. That is, everything that is good news to the sinner has already taken place in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Man's total redemption was finished there in one mighty stroke. What is today was finished then. Yet, it cannot be ours in experience until we have heard it in the Gospel. And then it will not save us until we believe it.

Paul takes up the continuing sin question in Romans 6:1. There are those (and I mean no reflection upon their integrity or scholarship) who dogmatically affirm that Romans six has nothing to say about sanctification, that it "orlly deals with justification; but the first verse of the chapter denies this. It is manifestly taking up the problem of the justified believer's walk in holiness, how he is going to deal with continuing sin in his life after he has been justified. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" The popular answer to that question is "Of course! How can you do otherwise?" If not stated in those blunt terms, it is no less emphatically declared in the historic confession, "We sin daily in word, thought and deed." I know I am dealing with a sacred cow here and so want to be careful that I am not misunderstood. I am not taking issue with the fact of whether men do actually sin daily in word, thought and deed, but the

advisability of continuously telling them that they are going to, that they cannot help themselves, that they can do nothing about it, that in essence there is nothing in the Cross of Christ to deliver them from the power of sin. Then after men are told that they are exhorted to stop sinning, to be holy, to put away all sinful thoughts, intents and deeds.

How confusing! Since men must sin, and we preach to them that they must not, perhaps we ought to make a list of sins that are permissible and those that are not. Maybe, we could prepare a chart with different shades of sin and illustrate to folks just how far they can go and when they must and can stop.

Once again let me say that I do not want to be misunderstood or misquoted on this point. I am not going

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to debate an issue of whether men do sin or not. The issue is, must they? Are we still bound by the power of sin? Has Christ delivered us from its penalty and yet left us in its power? This is a level of faith where many stall. They believe that God has done something for them in Christ Jesus, but do not believe that God has done something with them in the Lord's death. In exactly the measure in which they do not know or do not believe that God has delivered them from the power of sin, they will continue to be defeated by those sins.

What says the gospel? "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. 6:6). The "old man" is the totality of all that we are apart from Christ. It is self with all its wickedness together with its imagined abilities, goodness, and rights. It is the rebel sinner that is the author of all our crimes. It is the incurable criminal that the Holy Law of God has condemned to death. That death sentence was executed in the body of the

Saviour on Calvary: God put me to death in the person of Christ. The "body of sin" is not the natural body of flesh, blood, and bones. It is the dynamic of the flesh, the law of sin in the members (Rom. 7:23). It is the power that wars against subjection to God and all His Holy law. The old man is crucified that (in order that) the body of sin might be rendered of no effect. The word "destroy" does not mean to annihilate, but to strip of its power. That is the message of the gospel concerning the question of continuing sin after we have been justified freely by the grace of God. We are not made incapable of sin, but the power of sin has been broken. What else can such passages as these mean? "He that is dead is freed from sin" (Rom. 6:7); "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. 6:14); "Being then made free from sin" (Rom. 6:18); "But now being made free from sin" (Rom. 6:22). That such passages have no reference to the legal consequences of sin but the power of it in the believer's walk is seen by the usages of such words as serve (vs. 6); reign (vs. 12); obey (vs. 12); yield (vs. 13);

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dominion (vs. 14); servants and obey (vs. 16—20,22). These words have reference to the power and dominion of the sin principle in the believer, and their declaration is that God has set us free from it by His great salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. That is the gospel of our sanctification. Can you believe it? If you can, then the power is there to save you from continuing sin. If you will not believe it, however, it will do nothing for you, although the work is already finished in Christ Jesus.

All faith is called upon to believe what God has done in the past, yet at the same time it must relate that finished .. work to a present reality. It is a futile and useless faith that believes in a God in the past and a God in the future, but . which cannot believe Him for any present reality. "They

that come to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Present day dispensationalists are the counterparts of the Pharisees of Jesus' day. They believed in the God of Moses and the Prophets. That was past. They believed in the Messiah of the future. Both of these were out of the range of the present. The trouble they had was with the God of the present, Jesus Christ, whom they now faced. Your faith in the person and reward of God must be brought to the present. It is indicated in the verb, "is" in Rom. 6:6. Now there are those who will argue that this verb should have been translated "was" since it indicates something that has been completed in the past. I have no argument with that because the crucifixion of our Lord was a once-for-all completed event. By one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10:14). All that happened when Christ died is complete forever. But since He was crucified, His crucifixion still stands. And since we were crucified with Him, our crucifixion is still a fact. What was slain then is still dead. there was a new man raised up with Him to live in resurrection power, but the old man that was executed there is still in the tomb. God will never resurrect him.

Human reasoning stumbles over the fact that we were put

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to death in Christ Jesus before we were born . . . as the title of L. E. Maxwell's classic book, *Born Crucified*. But this is because we are accustomed to thinking in terms of time and sequence, and God never does. All that shall ever transpire in time was complete by Him in eternity. Therefore, he can "expiate our sins in Christ before we have committed them. Indeed, he is the "Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world." If you have been brought to

believe that Christ died for your sins when they were all in the future, is it too difficult a step to believe that you died in Christ before you lived in the flesh? -

"Wherefore as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). All the human race was present in Adam when He sinned. You were there, and share in the death sentence passed by the Holy Law of God. Men now justified were executed in Christ Jesus. You were there, receiving the execution of that death sentence. You do not remember either of those events. But that does not make them any less fact. You do not remember your conception in the womb or your natural birth but it is no less a fact. You now experience that life that was born, but it existed before you experienced it or believed it.

There is a difference, however, that makes the analogy of the natural to the spiritual imperfect. We experience natural life and consequently believe it. But we must believe in the spiritual work before it can become an experimental reality. How can a man do this? Once again the impossibility of faith presents itself. Regardless of the record of God's word, the ability to reckon on what He has said escapes us. We must be shut up and pressed into this level of faith by need, by desperation, by the requirements God makes of us which we are totally unable to fulfill. As Christ was revealed to us in the gospel as our sin-bearer, He will then be revealed to us in the same gospel as our sin-Deliverer through co-crucifixion.

This revelation does not come until the heart, being set on complete obedience to Christ, being exceedingly grieved

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with its failure and disobedience cries with the frustrated Apostle, "O wretched man that I am, Who shall deliver me

from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). He has found himself utterly incapable of subduing the "body of sin." It keeps crying out for its rights, its desires, its pleasures, and though justified man delights in the law of God after the inward man, he cannot consistently obey it. It is then that the gospel declaration comes through to him. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). Dead men have no rights, privileges or desires. They have no power to demand anything. We in discover that we have been foolishly catering to the whims of a dead man. Find a dead man lying in a coffin, walk up to him and begin insulting him _and slapping his face around. See if he comes up fighting like you do when the same happens to you. There it is. That is the only conditions under which we can peacefully obey the commands of the sermon on the mount. There is not a man alive who can take such abuse and bless, but I am not talking about a man alive. I am talking about a man, dead, in Christ . . . crucified with Him.

But that is only half the story, the negative half. Victory is not in death, but in life. Crucifixion puts away the old, but resurrection brings forth the new. And as sure as our crucifixion with Christ, so is our resurrection. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (Rom. 6:8). Not only must Adam die but Christ must live. As God put all of Adam, including me, to death in Christ, so He brought all of Christ, including me, up from the grave to live in the newness of life. It is the dead Adam that will not retaliate when cursed, but the risen Christ that does good to those that hate Him. It is the dead Adam that does not protest when compelled to go the mile, but the risen Christ which goes the second. It is the dead Adam that does not protest God's Holy Law, but the risen Christ that delights in His commandments. It is the dead Adam who no longer cries for the flesh pots of Egypt, but the risen Christ who delights in the milk and honey of Canaan,

the unseen spiritual realities, the heavenly things of the Lord.

What has happened as this begins to characterize the believer's life? Has he gotten something that he did not have before? A special separate work of grace? A second blessing? A state of entire sanctification? Filled with the Spirit? Many terms are used which have varying degrees of validity, but the fact is, the believer has nothing more than he had when he was justified. Justification is Christ in the believer for his justification by faith. Sanctification is Christ - in the believer for his sanctification. His sanctification begins to become real to him in experience as he begins to believe and reckon on all that Christ is instead of all that he, himself, is not. He is no longer limited by what He is but by what Christ is in Him. And Christ is in the believer for all things that pertain to life and godliness. Therefore, God will never make any demands upon the believer for which He has not supplied that sufficiency in the indwelling Christ. Nothing has been added since justification except faith, sanctifying faith. Through the gospel the righteousness of God in making holy people of wretched sinners through the Cross of Christ is revealed; and men, in beholding, are being transformed from glory to glory.

DELIVERANCE FAITH

We are now ready to consider the fourth level of faith: Deliverance faith. Human faith is believing what God has done in Christ Jesus. Justifying faith is believing what God has done for me in Christ Jesus. Sanctifying faith is believing what God has done with me in Christ Jesus. Deliverance faith is believing what God does in me in Christ Jesus. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness

and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son"
(Col. 1:12-13).

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It was a great victory for the devil when the Christian church began to leave demonology out of soteriology. And every book that has been written on sanctification, as great a blessing as they have been up to a point, have fallen short because the writer has ignored the dynamic of evil: Spiritual powers of darkness. The cry is constantly made against the Flesh, the Fwsh, the Flesh! Yet the word of God plainly declares that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12). The flesh (the body of flesh and blood) is not inherently evil, but neutral. Evil does not exist in things but in spiritual principles. There is a natural propensity toward sin in fallen man, in the old unconverted nature, but it is a weak fallen power. Jesus declared that the flesh is weak (Matt. 26:41). We are not being overcome by our flesh but an evil principle in the flesh. Paul never cries out against the flesh in Romans seven, but evil in the flesh. Verse 17—"Sin dwelleth in me." Verse 18—"In my flesh dwelleth no good thing." Verse 20—"no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Verse 21—"evil is . . . present with me." There is an evil dynamic in him overcoming him causing him to sin that is not him. Nor is he absolving himself of personal responsibility for he confesses: "I am carnal, sold under sin."

The flesh is involved in all sin and is the occasion of bondage of man to sin, but it is not the power. That power is a demonic power . . . principalities, rulers of the darkness of this world. Paul found his victory in Christ Jesus, as

every believer must find his. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Where demonic powers have been recognized and dealt with it is usually in extreme cases involving the occult. But we must, if we are to have real lasting victory, recognize that the working of demons is not so limited. Did not a third part of the angels join Satan in his rebellion against God? (Rev. 12:4). Then what are these fallen spirits doing? Sitting around twiddling? You may be assured they are not. Then in whom are they working?

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First, we should say that demons work in all unbelievers. Ephesians 2:2 "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." The prince of the power of the air is Satan. His "spirit" is demon spirits, and they work in unconverted sinners. Why should they not? Demons desire men to worship them, that is to do their will. They desire to have bodies in which to exercise their wicked natures. The lost sinner has absolutely no defenses against demons. They can come and go as they please because the sinner is still under the power or rule of darkness. He belongs to Satan's kingdom.

But are not Christians immediately and automatically delivered from these powers when they trust Christ? No, they are not. But, the objection is made that the scripture plainly declares that He has delivered us. How could we still be bound if He has already delivered us? We can find the same terminology in relation to justification and sanctification. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy

calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Tim. 1:9). God had already saved all who should be saved before the world began. Must not unconverted people then be saved since they already are in the eternal finished work of Christ? Indeed they must or they will surely perish! "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14). Must not men be sanctified since they were in the finished work of Christ on the Cross? Indeed they must! God's works were finished from the foundation of the world, but we must be brought to experimentally partake of that finished work if we are to derive benefit from it. We become what God has already made us in Christ Jesus by believing the fact of it and reckoning on it. Until then it is of no consequence to us, although the "works were finished" (Heb. 4:3).

In like fashion, God has delivered us from the power of the devil, but it will be of no avail to us until we believe it.

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Satan is a legalist when the law is on his side. He will demand and claim all that is within his power to possess and rule. But when the law is against him, he is an outlaw. The whole tenor of his person is lawlessness. He is in constant defiance of God's law. And though the death and resurrection of Christ has rendered him subject to the believer rather than the believer to him, he will still hold dominion over the child of God unless that child of God believes the Gospel. The portion of the gospel that he must believe at this point has to do with Christ's victory on our behalf over the powers of darkness. We must not forget that any victory Christ won over the devil had to be in our behalf since Satan has never had any dominion over Christ. All Christ did in relation to the devil and demons has our

personal victory in view. What does the gospel say?
"having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shrew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15). He robbed them of all their power over those who shared in His death and resurrection. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet . . . And hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:19-22, 2:6). God has put every creature, angel, man and beast, in heaven, hell and earth under the feet of Jesus. Then He has raised us up to sit in that exalted position in Christ. If demons are then under Christ's feet, they are also under ours!

Will you believe it dear friend? If you will not, it does not change the fact. "If we believe not, God abideth faithful. He cannot deny himself." But the facts of the gospel will be of no benefit to you until you believe them. The gospel saves believers.

It would be only fair to say at this point, that many

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cannot believe in this level of faith because they have balked at some prior level. Only those who respond rightly to human faith can know anything of justifying faith. It IS no good to try to lay hold of sanctifying faith if you have not yet been justified. And no one can consistently lay hold of deliverance faith if they have not gotten a good grasp of

sanctifying faith.

The occasion of demonic powers is flesh. Uncrucified flesh provides the beachhead for this enemy to invade the man. ” Before man has a demonic problem, he has a flesh problem.

It is always true. Much of the quibbling about whether something is flesh or demons is a waste of time. It is usually both in some measure. Is idolatry and witchcraft, demonic or fleshy? If we could say of a certainty that anything is demonic it would have to be idolatry and witchcraft. They are supernatural to the core. Yet Galatians 5:20 lists them among the works of the flesh! "I am carnal, sold under sin," cries the apostle. In that area where flesh rules, the devil has dominion. It opens the door.

Suppose we are sitting in a room with the door open and mosquitoes are swarming around biting us. Would you say we had a mosquito problem or a door problem. Obviously, we have both. The mosquitoes need to be exterminated, but it will do no lasting good as long as the door remains open.

Close the door, swat the mosquitoes and the problem is solved . . . so long as the door is not again opened. The door of uncrucified flesh must be kept firmly closed before one can know lasting deliverance from the power of demons. But many have gone this far and yet find themselves in a bondage that confession and reckoning on co-crucifixion with Christ will not break. Such must recognize that this overwhelming power is not flesh but spirit, demon spirits, and counting on their resurrected position in Christ Jesus, take authority over the particular spirit causing the problem and demand that he leave and never come back. These are the mountains that Jesus said would remove themselves upon our command in faith. This is a realm of faith and victory of which too few Christians of this day and age know anything. May the Lord give us grace to believe it.

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WARFARE FAITH

We are now ready to consider a level of faith that few Christians indeed attain. Warfare faith is believing what God does through us. As far as I can determine from study of the scriptures, since Abraham came upon the scene, God never acts among men apart from the cooperation and intercession of His people. I do not say that He cannot act, but it seems that He does not. "Surely the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

When the Lord determined to destroy Sodom for her wickedness He said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" The answer was an obvious no. The ensuing conversation typifies God's dealing with a man in his prayers and intercessions until the man agrees with God on the matter. When Abraham saw that Sodom indeed was worthy of destruction and without remedy, then God proceeded with His purpose.

God appointed men in the Old Testament, priests, to stand between Him and the transgressor that He might deal with them mercifully. He appointed a man, Christ Jesus, to be our eternal Intercessor. He has appointed the means of intercessory prayers and the preaching of the gospel to facilitate the salvation of sinners. It cannot be demonstrated that anyone was ever soundly converted to Christ for whom someone else had not interceded. Since God only responds to faith, and the unbelieving are incapable of faith then, someone else must believe for those who cannot.

_ We are talking about vicarious faith. This is a faith that one person has in someone else's behalf, believing God for someone else. Such faith is not a stranger to the scriptures; examples abound. Jesus declares the failure of His disciples to be caused by unbelief: "Why could we not cast him out?"

And Jesus said unto them, because of your unbelief" (Matt. 17:19-20). Our failures on the behalf of others are not caused by our not working hard enough, long enough, skillfully enough, but because of our unbelief.

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When a father brought his demon possessed son to Jesus, the Lord asked the father, not the son, to believe (Mark 9:23). The little boy was incapable of faith. He was bound by the demon. It is true of your own loved ones who are lost. They are not free moral agents who can accept Christ at will when a persuasive enough argument is put to them. They are bound immoral prisoners, totally incapable of laying hold on saving faith. Someone must believe God for them so that the power of the devil can be broken on their I hearts and minds.

This truth is dramatically demonstrated in Mark 2:1-5. Four men come bearing their palsied friend to Jesus. Unable to approach Christ through the normal route, the door, they climbed up on the roof, took up the tiling, and lowered the sick man down into the room. "When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." What sort of theology is that? We can safely say it is biblical theology, and one that is every bit practical. One man's sins are forgiven because of the faith of others! And it is a principle that —we dare not ignore. If we are to wage an effectual warfare for the souls of men, we must believe God for them.

Now comes the next logical question. For whom am I responsible to believe God? Can I believe Him for just anyone at will? If so, why not for everyone in my community, my city, my state, the whole world? If such a thing were possible, it would only be so theoretically,

because it has never been demonstrated. No one has ever done it. Nor do we have any scriptural grounds to say . someone should have. But we are responsible to believe God for someone. Then who is it? How can one know for whom he is to intercede, for whom he is to spare nothing for their J salvation, for whom he is to risk all and spare nothing until he presents them to Christ?

The answer to these questions may be found in Jesus' parable of the importunate friend in Luke 11:5-8. "And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me

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three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you. Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." Now we must notice that this man was asking nothing for himself. He was interceding in behalf of the need of another person. We must also notice that his .. success was not due to his good standing with his friend.

"He will not rise and give him because he is his friend." He is not pleading from the basis of his friendship or anything his neighbor may owe him. He is pleading solely on the basis of his utter inability to supply the needs of another person for which he has found himself responsible.

As all parables this must be interpreted into spiritual realities. Someone is standing on your doorsteps crying for bread. Bread is a type of Christ. It is the bread of which a

man eats and lives forever (John 6:51). Do you have anything within yourself-to feed them? Can you supply their need? Can you save them? Can you deliver them from the power of darkness? If you think you can, my friend, then you are surely deluded. Only God can meet the needs of those for whom you have become responsible. Can you believe God to meet them? Are there grounds for your faith on their behalf? Yes! Yes! Yes!! The highest and soundest grounds that exist. For if someone is on your doorsteps crying for bread, you can be assured that God sent them there; and He did not send them there to mock you. He sent them there to drive you in desperation to Him that they might be saved!

What are you going to do about those three little children He has put in your home. Surely you are not going to mope around wondering if they are elect or not. Get busy · campaigning for them. He charged you with the responsibility to train them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. You are to watch for their souls. They may not now

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appear so to you, but they are just as mean as any man who ever lived. They will lie, cheat, steal, hate, fight, slander and do everything that any and all of the fallen race of Adam will do. And you cannot stop them. Surely you can love them, lick them and learn them while they are at home and in your sight. But you cannot watch them all the time. Some day they will leave home and then they will really be what they are, not what you forced them to be. And if God doesn't save them, they have the potential of becoming the worst sort of criminal. It may so be that you will have impressed strong enough social restraints upon them that they will become polished hypocrites and respected church members and then die and go to hell. Is it coming across,

dear friend. You don't have any bread? You are bankrupt. If God does not intervene, you are sunk. You have to trust Him.

What we have said about your children may well apply to any person you find yourself in a position to minister to. A relative, wife or husband, a neighbor, business acquaintance, fellow worker. It could be anyone, who in some way is looking to you for bread. If you can believe, all things are possible for him that believes (Mark 9:23). It is only fair to say that there will be some for whom you cannot believe. It does not mean that they are non-elect. It simply means you cannot believe for them. But there are some for which you must believe. Do it! It is the highest motivation you will ever have to believe God.

"He who is called must go out of his situation in which he cannot believe, into the situation in which, first and foremost, faith is possible. But this step is not the first stage of a career. Its sole justification is that it brings the disciple into fellowship with Jesus which will be victorious.

So long as Levi sits at the receipt of custom, and Peter at his nets, they could both pursue their trade honestly and dutifully, and they might both enjoy religious experiences, old and new. But if they want to believe in God, the only way is to follow his incarnate Son.

"Unless a definite step is demanded, the call vanishes into thin air, and if men imagine that they can follow Jesus without taking this step, they are deluding themselves like fanatics.

"Only the obedient can believe. If we are to believe we must obey a concrete command. Without this preliminary step of obedience, our faith will only be pious humbug "
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Chapter 5

A Faith Cometh .

CAST NOT AWAY THEREFORE your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report" (Heb. 10:35; 11:2).

A study of faith is usually begun with Hebrews 11:1. But if we begin there we miss the tone of urgency that is set in the closing verses of chapter ten.

THE ULTIMATE END OF FAITH

Make no mistake about it. Hebrews 11 is not an exposition on a handy accessory to the Christian life that tells how to believe God and get things from Him. It has » nothing less than justification and full salvation in view all the way through. The phrase "obtained a good report" in verse 2 and verse 39 is translated from the Greek *martureo*. It is translated elsewhere in the New Testament "bear

record," 13 times; "bear witness," 25 times; and "testify," 19 times. It is the same word used of Abel in verse 4, "he obtained witness that he was righteous." The faith that the writer of Hebrews is urging upon us is the faith that brought witness and testimony of these people's righteousness . . . that God had justified and received them. That is, the good report that they obtained.

That is the end toward which we are urged to persevere in the closing verses of chapter 10. "Cast not away your confidence." "Ye have need of patience." "For yet a little I while." "The just shall live by faith." "We are not of them that draw back." Perseverance is the dominating part of faith from man's side. SO much so that we can almost say that perseverance is faith, but we cannot for that would make it man centered.

We must understand that faith is linear, progressive, dynamic, moving, looking toward, rather than stationary, static, past and settled. It always has the ultimate salvation of the soul as its future end—"them that believe to the saving of the soul." And while promises along the way of lesser blessings may be received or not received, the salvation of the soul is ever in faith's eye. In Hebrews 11 we are told of many who through faith "received." But then we are told of some who "received not the promise" (vs. 39), yet obtained the good report, of justification in God's sight because of their continued perseverance in faith.

In true Bible faith the possibility of apostasy is never forgotten and the warning of the sure consequence of eternal perdition is ever before us. It is manifest that some do draw back into perdition (Heb. 10:39), but we must make sure that we are of them who do not but believe to the saving of the soul.

Having now put in right perspective the purpose of

Hebrews 11, we will consent that along the way of faith we are encouraged by receiving certain blessings that God has promised us. The presence of these does encourage us, but the absence or scarcity of them must never be allowed to discourage us and turn us from trusting God.

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WHAT IS FAITH?

No one can give an exhaustive and conclusive definition of faith. There are several things that we can say faith is, but none of them will sufficiently define faith. We have already stated that faith is something you do in view of who God is and in response to what He has said. Hebrews 11:1 gives another look at what faith is. Many and sundry have been the expositions on this verse, but its meaning is still obscure to the average Christian layman. We are told two things that it is, substance and evidence. The substance is of things hoped for but not yet received and the evidence is of things that are not yet seen.

The Greek word translated substance means Substratum, the underlying support. It is that which gives grounds and support to a thing. The Greek word translated evidence is elegcho which is translated elsewhere in the New Testament "convict" once, "convince" 4 times, "reproves" 5 times and "rebuke" 5 times. It is the same word used in John 16:8 where it is said of the Holy Spirit, "And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." The word means to so impress upon one's heart and mind the truth of a matter so as to cause him to commit himself and his actions to that truth. Putting that together we have the following paraphrase: "Faith is the underlying support and basis of the things for which we have hope, and is that which convinces us they are true even though no visible or tangible evidence exists."

Now let us demonstrate that through one example of faith in the Bible. It is called little faith, but it is faith nonetheless. Matthew 14:25-31 records an incident when Peter walked on water. When Peter stepped out of that boat on to the water what was the substratum under his feet? The water would not support him. What did hold him up? — It was nothing less than the word of God, Jesus invitation to "Come." What convinced, persuaded him to leave the boat and stand upon the water? It was no evidence of anything there to support him. It was not because of past

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experiences in walking on water. What, then, convinced him? The same thing that supported him in the act of faith, the word of God. Christ's command to come. Nothing else can convince and nothing else can support. The same word that convinces is the word that supports. Faith that comes from God is supported by God. If anything else other than God and God's word gives correlative or supporting evidence or if we are depending on other than God to support us in our act of faith, then it is not pure faith. "They that come to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Most everyone believes in the first "is," that is the existence of God. But how difficult it is to believe in the second "is." He is now, presently my rewarder, my support, my strength and my salvation.

HOW FAITH COMES

How does a man come by this faith? How does he lay hold upon it? How does he come to believe that God is his

rewarder? You may read dozens of books and pamphlets and listen to hundreds of sermons that will tell you how to get faith, to believe God, to turn your faith loose, to exercise your latent faith. They are all lies! Nowhere in the scripture are we told any of these. We are commanded to believe God. We are told if we have faith such and such is possible and nothing will be impossible to us, but we are never told in the Bible how to get it. It is foolish and ignorant men who tell you that. If what they were saying were true, if it indeed would work as they assure you it will, then that secret would have gotten out a long time ago and everybody would be doing it and working miracles, creating new worlds and everything that God alone can do.

Faith cannot be initiated from the human side. How shall we recognize a situation in which it is possible for us to believe God from purely human emotion, will or intellect? Not by human desire (emotion). Human desires cannot be trusted. They are too easily inflamed by the devil and too

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often these are simply the cryings of the fallen nature. "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Even noble seeming evangelical undertakings may simply be appealing to our religious pride.

Not by human will. Least of all this! "I will" is the very essence of sin. This was the cry of Lucifer in his rebellion against God. (Isaiah 14:12-14) "I will ascend unto heaven, I will exalt my throne. . . , I will sit also upon the mount.

I will ascend above. . . , I will be like the most High." It is the throwing off of God's will and substituting self will. Too

often we have convinced ourselves that the strong "I will" is God's will. Not so. The man who bends to the will of God does it in meek submission, not in aggressive defiance. You cannot work up faith by a strong assertion of the will.

Not by the virtue in the thing. Hundreds of potential deeds have great virtue in them. Which does God want you to do? Manifestly you cannot do all of them so that it cannot be His will for you to do them all. What is the one thing He wants you to do in faithful obedience? Six hundred million starving pagans in India. Two thousand dialects with no Bible and no gospel in the dark extremities of human habitation. Scotland and England, once the home bases of world evangelism have now become apostate and need to be re-evangelized. America has long become pagan. Your own community. Orphanages, nursing homes where elderly people are dying and slipping into hell. Work in any of these areas would be greatly virtuous, but does that alone make it a work of faith?

Let us assume for a moment that the virtue of a thing would make it a work of faith and that God would honor it as such and let us presume a course of action on that basis. Since everyone seems to believe that Jesus is coming soon and that millions will go to hell if they are not saved, then it is sheer foolishness to continue to work on a job and earn money to buy food, clothing, shelter and pay bills. We will all quit our jobs tomorrow, sell all our possessions, give to the poor, get a sack of tracts and Bibles and start

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evangelizing. Will not God honor that? Did He not tell us to go into all the world and preach the gospel. Are not the cattle on a thousand hills His? Then let's go. What are you waiting for? "Ah," you say, "I don't have any faith."

"Nonsense," I reply, "turn your faith loose. Put God on-the spot. Obligate Him to take care of you." But all of my foolish arguments will not produce one iota of faith in you. And without faith, you had better continue on your job and as the scripture says "do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are 'without, and that ye may have lack of nothing" (I Thess. 4:11-12).

Not by sheer urgency. Faith cannot be initiated simply because our intellect tells us that a situation is so desperate God has to do something. You come upon an automobile wreck. Three people are dying in it. Broken bones, crushed chests, blood gushing out of ripped arteries. Alcohol is everywhere. The three are lost and they will be in hell in 15 minutes if something does not happen. Can you believe God to heal them all immediately so that they can be saved? Can you prevail upon God to give them' consciousness and saving faith so that they may be converted before they die?

Where are all these "healing" evangelists who claim that it is always God's will to heal? Surely one of these would have enough faith to do this, don't you think? Your neighbor's house is afire. Why don't you just believe God to send a downpour and put it out? Didn't Elijah believe God for rain? Was not he a man just like you? Then why can you not do it? There is an answer for all the questions. Faith cannot be produced or initiated from the human side. You F do not have it to turn loose, and you cannot get it. It comes from God at God's prerogative.

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). If this passage read as it is generally understood, it would read like this. "Faith cometh by hearing the word of God." For we are told that the more preaching one listens to, the more Bible he reads, then the more faith he will have. Such may be true in some cases but

certainly not in all. For multitudes have sat in church for years listening to sound Bible truth and have not an ounce of faith. Others, having taught Sunday School for years, have spent long hours with their Bible and yet know nothing of faith. Why? Because, although they have "ljustened" and read, they have never "heard" and have never "seen." In order to understand Romans 10:17 we must carefully consider the "So then" with which the verse begins. These words point us to consideration of the foregoing verses 14 through 16. _

Romans 10:13 is also frequently quoted out of context as a formula for salvation. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Upon this "promise" any man at any time under any conditions is urged to call upon the Lord to save him. That many do so call and are not subsequently saved is a fact that anyone knows well if he has ever attempted this sort of evangelism. They are not saved because there has been no faith in the call. This "promise" is immediately followed by four "how shalls" which will always qualify a call upon the Lord in saving faith.

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? Obviously many do call in unbelief, but it is not a call according to Romans 10:13.

And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? Obviously they cannot.

And how shall they hear without a preacher? The absolute necessity of human instrumentality. A

And how shall they Preach except they be sent? Ah! Have not many found ways to do this? Are not many uncalled preachers preaching? Most assuredly, yes. But the hearing of faith will not accompany their preaching. Before one can savingly call upon the Lord, he must call upon the One of whom he has heard by the voice of a God-sent

preacher. That preacher is sent by the word of God. So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Many hear and hear yet do not hear because they have not yet received the hearing ear.

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To every one of the seven churches in Asia of Rev. 2 and 3, the Spirit speaks three things: "I know your works." "He that hath an ear to hear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." "To him that overcometh I will give . . ." Obviously, the Spirit is not addressing Himself to everyone, but only to those who have the hearing ear. Jesus used the same qualification many times. "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 13:9).

The natural faculty is not in view here. Else God would be excluding only those who are physically deaf. It is a spiritual ear, an ability to receive intuitive communication from God that is indicated. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God (I Cor. 2:9-10). This is a direct quote from Isaiah 64:4. "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him

that waiteth for him." We do not hear God's word by the outer hearing faculty nor do we see spiritual realities by the natural eye, nor do we receive them by the "heart" or natural emotions. God is a Spirit and He always communicates with us spiritually. This is not to set aside the importance of the preaching of the word by human instrumentality. Two witnesses are given. The witness from without through the preached word and the written scriptures and the witness within by the Holy Spirit. But the witness without can never provide the "evidence of things hoped for," the convincing that is needed to cause one to commit himself to that truth. The Holy Spirit alone in communication with the human spirit can do that.

This hearing ear comes by the creative word of God, the . revelation of His Arm of salvation. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isaiah 53:1). This is a literary device in which two questions are asked, the answer of the first contained in the

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second. Who believes? He to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed. That is creative hearing by the word of God. This passage is quoted by the Lord Jesus in John 11:38 and again by the apostle Paul in Romans 10:16, both in the context of man's ability or inability to hear and believe. "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them."

SECOND MENTION BASICS OF FAITH

The second time we have faith mentioned in the Bible is in Habakkuk 2:1-4. We will glean some further basics of faith. First of all from the context, we find that an opportunity for faith comes during adversities and perplexi-

ties. The prophet could not understand why God was not doing something. The law is slacked. Judgment and justice ' is not gone forth. The wicked have trodden down the righteous. How can God look on such evil when He is so pure? Why does God not consume these idolators who worship their nets?

Eventually Habakkuk makes a wise decision: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd. And the Lord answered me, and said, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by faith."

Stop complaining about the situation you are in and railing against God because He has not done anything yet. You cannot make God answer to you, so stop trying. Sit down and wait for Him to speak. If you cannot remedy the situation and you cannot make God do it then there is nothing else for you to do. Wait for him to speak to you and be prepared to respond, for you must do something when He speaks. He will speak.

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When God speaks you have your basis for faith. You can "write the vision," engrave it upon tables of stone. It will not have to be erased and revised tomorrow, next year or in a thousand millenniums. God's Word is as immutable as He is. What He has said ten thousand years ago is just as fresh and dependable as the day it was uttered. Who could want a better substratum of things hoped for.

Whoever reads this word must "run." When the word

comes, a commitment must be made to it. You cannot act until the word comes, but when it does come you must act. To not act is dead faith and useless. Here is human responsibility at its critical point. There will be no other reason or incentive for you to act except the "vision." But that will be sufficient. Again we say: Faith is something you do in view of who God is and in response to what He has said.

ELEMENTS IN REAL FAITH

We now want to point out some elements that are always present in real Bible faith. Some of these will seem strange to us, but if what we are calling faith does not have them, then what we have is not real faith.

Doubt: Doubt is not the opposite of faith as some suppose, but a vital element in it. If you have everything wrapped up in a neat package where there can be no possibility of error or slip as one would say, "a lead pipe cinch," is there any faith in such a thing? If there are no challenges, no suggestions of failure possible, then it is not faith. Hear the cry of the demonized boy's father: "Lord I believe. Help thou mine unbelief!" Was doubt there? It most certainly was. Was it yet faith? Yes. The boy was delivered and Jesus had conditioned the deliverance on the father's faith. Did the Hebrew children doubt that God would deliver them from the fiery furnace? They certainly did. There was not a note of assurance of deliverance in their answer, only assurance that they intended to trust God whether they were delivered or not. Is that faith? It

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certainly is. Cast not away your confidence in God because of your doubt. If you continue to follow Him, it is faith nonetheless. Doubts of salvation is common among the

genuine children of God just as false assurances of salvation are common among the disobedient children of the devil.

Fear.- "When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops" (Hab. 3:16). Is that a description of a man's fears? It certainly is. Could such a man have faith while in such fear? Yes! Listen to his confession: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places." A greater confession of faith you will find nowhere. And it was made by a man with butterflies in his stomach, his knees knocking and his limbs as weak as water he was so afraid. Don't throw away your faith because you have fear and trembling. Indeed, the Lord has admonished us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. We are extremely skeptical of faith which does not have an element of fear in it.

Choice: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaohs daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of reward" (Heb. 11:24-26). We stated that faith cannot be initiated by and act of the will, but once it is initiated by God the will must choose. Choice does not produce faith; but faith, . when it comes, chooses. See what convincing evidence God must have given Moses through the ear and eye of faith. He

was directly in line to the Pharaoh of Egypt, dictator of the mightiest power he knew anything about. He could have allowed himself to be called an Egyptian and become the heir of all of Egypt's treasures. But he would not allow himself to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter because he was the son of Levi's daughter and although it could not yet be seen with the natural eye, an heir of all the riches of Christ. All that Moses could see with the natural eye was the Egyptian slave camps where the people with whom he chose to identify himself with were suffering. You see how powerful this "evidence of things, not seen" is. What powerful, persuasive, convincing force it carries. It can tear a man loose from the strongest material, emotional, social and logical ties on earth. But that man, when faced with such evidence, must himself choose. What are you dear friend? An Egyptian? If so, you may well enjoy the world. But if not an Egyptian, a spiritual Jew, then you may as well chuck it all and throw your lot in with God's people, whoever and wherever they are. It is where you belong and where you will find the true riches.

Warfare: "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of alien" (Heb. 11:33-34). No matter how peaceable and congenial you may be, when you commit yourself to a life of faith, you have declared war. The enemy will surely challenge you on every side. He will threaten you with the loss of everything you hold dear. He will promise you material, social and religious ruin, and will do everything in his power to make his promise good. You will be beset by fears and doubts, obstacles and perplexities, disappointments and treachery everywhere you turn. But all of this can not shake the pure perfect end of your faith one bit. It is anchored

solidly in the person and word of Almighty God. You cannot possibly lose the battle. Unchallenged faith is worthless, and a victorious warfare of faith is priceless.

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Delay, wait: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. 3:3). You must wait for God to speak. Then when He speaks and you respond, you must then wait for the promise. And though there is a delay, it will not be late. During this delay will be the time when faith is challenged, tried and purified. Noah preached for 120 years building the Ark, and outside of his own family, had not a single convert. But that was not the real test of his faith. When the Ark was completed and God had drawn all the animals aboard, He spoke to Noah to take his family and come aboard. When Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives were aboard, God shut the door. Then they sat there while nothing happened for seven days.

Can you not picture this scene? Mrs. Noah awakes the first morning and looks outside to a beautiful sunshiny morning. She looks at Noah but says nothing. The second day, the same thing. The third day, she says, "Noah, it isn't raining yet. Are you sure about all this. I feel like a fool sitting here like a rabbit in a cage." The boys and their wives can be heard off to one side of the room. Mrs. Japheth says, "I think the old man has gone off his rocker." "Shhh," says Shem, "he will hear you." "I don't give a hoot if he does," Mrs. Ham lashes out, "I'm sick and tired of this whole thing. Just get that door open and I am going to get out of here." While this is going on inside, there is the drunken, jeering, mocking crowd on the outside. They thump on the hull of the ark and laugh. "Hey Noah, where

is the rain? How is the weather in there Noah. It's fine out here." And on that goes until the seventh day. But when the seven days were fulfilled, the fountains of the deep burst forth and the heavens opened with a mighty deluge. "Ye have need of patience that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36).

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WHO CAN BELIEVE?

We see that men cannot believe God at will, that faith is a gift of God and that it comes. But we cannot absolve man of his responsibility to believe. And although he cannot produce faith himself, there are some things which he can do and most certainly ought. Because some will not do these things, and because they do other things that harden their obstinacy and rebellion against God, for these faith is not possible. It is no good to admonish them to believe. They cannot.

Jesus lists ten reasons why some men cannot believe in John 5:37-44. We read first the rhetorical question of verse 44. "How can ye believe?" The obvious answer is, impossible. They cannot. Why can they not?

1. Vs. 37: You have not heard his voice. Since faith is based upon the word of God, men who have not heard, cannot believe.
2. Vs. 37: You have not seen his shape. The only eyes you have and physical ones, being spiritually blind, you can only believe what you can see, and God is invisible.

3. Vs. 38: His word is not abiding in you. His word alone is truth, and without truth there can be no basis for faith.
4. Vs. 38: You will not believe God's messenger. You haven't heard his voice and you will not listen to one who has.
5. Vs. 39: You think you have eternal life. No one is so impossible to move as the person who thinks he has arrived. You are satisfied in your delusion.
6. Vs. 40: You will not come to Christ. Only Christ can give you faith and you refuse to come to Him.
7. Vs. 42: You do not have the love of God in you. Not loving God, you would not obey Him, even if you knew His word and will.
8. Vs. 43: You will not receive one who comes in the name of the Lord. You think yourself the final judge

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and authority of all things and will reject the authority of God in another man.

9. Vs. 43: You will receive a man coming in his own name. This world is tuned to receive the brash, showy, loudmouth, I-know-everything braggart. It has no respect for the meek, humble man. It is looking for a presumptuous, self-willed, aggressive man blowing his own horn. No wonder it stumbles over Christ.

10. Vs. 44: You receive honor one of another. You have everything wrapped up between you. You have entered into a pact with men and men's organizations so that you will not possibly need God for anything. You have your insurance paid up, your Social Security, your Medicare, your labor union to fight your battles and get the wages you want, your club

and lodge memberships so that you will receive the favored treatment you want. You keep your nose clean with your denomination. You, like the unjust steward, have indebted men to you so that when you need help, they will have to come to your aid. You do not need God. You have made sure that you will never need Him. But you have also cut yourself off as a candidate for faith. Some day you will need something men cannot give you, and then where will you be? Seek honour that cometh from God only.

What kind of man, then, can believe God? How does one become a candidate for faith. We have seen that faith must be based on the revealed word of God, that before man can believe, he must hear God speak to him. A man, then, who is a candidate for faith must be one who can discern, hear, and know the will of God. He must be able to distinguish the voice of God from two other voices that will attempt to insinuate themselves as God's voice, the voice of the flesh or self, and the voice of the devil. We cannot stop the devil from attempting to deceive us but we can render void his beachhead, the flesh, by the Cross of Christ.

"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the
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flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to lusts of men, but to the will of God" (I Pet. 4:1—2). A man who is harassed by his uncrucified flesh is not free to consider God's will. His longing is to satisfy the demands of his belly, his lusts, his ambitions, his petty peevs and delights. You must come to a place where you will be perfectly content with any sort of circumstances that are ordained by God. You can never know the will of God until you are committed to it, whatever it might be. That will not happen until you arm yourself with a mind to willingly

partake of Christ's sufferings in order that sin and rebellion against the perfect will of God in your life will cease.

There has to be a total presentation, 3 an abandon of one's complete person into the hands of Christ for His use or disposal according to His good pleasure. "I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:1-2). We are never told to find God's will or to get in the will of God. That is something we cannot do. If God should choose to hide His

3 In these areas where a total presentation, an absolute surrender, complete obedience, subjection in all things, are recommended and demanded, we are in no wise suggesting that the sinner can come to Christ while knowingly making reservations. Certainly one cannot be justified unless he, according to all he knows and understands about himself and these issues of life, makes a total presentation and abandonment of self to Christ. His heart must, at that point, be set on complete obedience or he will never gain hope in Christ Jesus. But as unknown areas are brought to light, as before unknown commandments are made known to him, as cherished sins are revealed to him, as obedience to a special command when the enemy threatens ruin if he obeys God, when these situations in his life face him, then the believer must choose once again to cast his all upon the faithfulness of God.

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will from us, we surely could not find it. If He desires to reveal His will to us, then we cannot keep from knowing it. We are simply told to present our bodies, abandon them at His feet alive for His use. As we do this, He accepts us and begins to transform our minds. He puts us in His will and as we begin to know Him we can see it proved that the

guidance that we have received has really been His perfect will. Our responsibility is the presentation. His is the revelation.

DISCERNING THE VOICE OF THE LORD

We are often asked, "How can I tell whether it is God speaking to me or the devil." Now anyone who tells you it is easy is a novice. It is not easy because the enemy is subtle, and he knows us well. He is a master at deceit. There are no few quick tricks you can learn that will assure you that you will never be deceived. There are, however, some unvarying principles which you must learn and then you simply have to learn by experience to know the Lord's voice. All Christians have discernment by nature of the life of Christ that is within them. But it is a sense that must be exercised and developed through use. "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14). As you begin to exercise these senses of discernment, you will make some mistakes; but every one of these mistakes_ teaches you something about the Lord and about the enemy. Jesus said, "learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:29). There is no way to instant maturity. You grow and learn to know the Lord. But here are some guiding principles.

1. The Cross of Christ must have rendered you neutral so far as self will is concerned. "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin that he might live the rest of his life, not in the lusts of the flesh, but to the

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will of God/' Three times Christ prayed in the Garden.

"Not my will but thine." You must truly rid yourself of all your personal goals and objectives. Especially treacherous are these high sounding religious goals and objectives and longings: i.e., a great ministry, power to witness, a special gift, etc. You must have truly presented yourself for Christ's disposal according to Romans 12:1. It is only then that you can be pleased with what God says, no matter what it is.

2. Know the truth. Get a good working knowledge of the Bible. The Holy Spirit does not cross Himself by saying one thing in the Bible and then lead you to do something contrary to Scriptural principles.

3. "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established" (Prov. 16:3). Proceed in a normal course of life, trusting the Lord to establish and order your thoughts as He has promised to do for those whose only desire is to work the works of God. Trust Him to check you in spirit or in providence if you are about to take a wrong step. Listen for His voice. He is able to guide you. Give Him credit for doing what He has promised to do. You do not have to strain and fret over every little decision. He is more able to speak and cause you to hear than you realize.

4. In matters of great importance where there is no definitely revealed word, do not move until you are constrained to. If there is uneasiness about the move, wait for a more sure word. God can make you certain. You can afford to wait until you are. You are not going to miss anything by waiting; and God is not going to scold or punish you while you are testing the 'spirits. Did he not command you to do so? Consider His patience with Gideon.

5. The Holy Spirit is consistent and persistent. God is immutable. He does not change. If, while waiting, you have a number of different impressions, each one seeming better than the previous one, throw them all out. The Holy Spirit leads you in only one direction. He

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will never change His Mind about that. The same leadership will continue to persist until you obey.

6. The Holy Spirit does not drive and demand. It is the devil who puts you in a rush and demands that you act immediately. You will feel that if you take time to pray and wait, that you will miss something. Do not listen to that spirit. It is not God but the devil. God will lead you and give you time to consider until you are fully persuaded. And there will be peace in the - action, not pressure and torment.

7. Look for providence. God sponsors what ‘He initiates. He provides the way and clears the obstacles. He opens the appropriate doors. The devil can cause hindrances, but he cannot stop what God has led you to do. As you proceed, God will confirm or He will stop you.

WHEN FAITH BECOMES POSSIBLE

Faith becomes possible when God speaks to a man for whom faith is possible. We will elaborate on this a little further along.

Several years ago, I was attending a Bible Conference where my good friend, Manley Beasley was ministering. At

the time, I was under a tremendous burden. I was at an important crossroad in Christian growth and it seemed that if I were to continue on to follow the Lord it would cost me everything . . . ruin me . . . that is, unless God marvelously and miraculously intervened. Brother Beasley made one statement that evening which the Holy Spirit so profoundly impressed upon me that I had to get up and leave the meeting immediately and meditate on what had just been shown me. This is what he said: "A need is positive evidence of God's abundant supply to meet that need. In fact, the need is created to bring us to the supply." The sheer force of that truth hit me like a sledge hammer and I had to commit myself to it. When I did, the Lord

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immediately intervened and supplied my need in a precious and blessed way.

I happily walked in that light for some time before another problem began to materialize. I was having trouble identifying what a legitimate need was. Sometimes I could create my own needs. Sometimes "needs" were only carnal desires, or ambitions or objectives of my own. How was I to identify a legitimate need? I found the answer in the substance of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*. Bonhoeffer ties faith and obedience so close together that he stated the double truth. "Only those who believe can obey, and only those who obey can believe."

As God speaks and we obey, we are thrust into a situation whereby if God is not faithful we are ruined. Here is the full statement:

Faith becomes possible, when in obedience to a call or command of God, a need is created that only God can meet. It is obedience to God that creates a legitimate need. And

such needs will certainly, without fail, be met, even if God has to move heaven and hell to do so.

The Christian life, the life of the justified, thus, becomes a life of faith. The just shall live by his faith. It is not only a life that is lived with a constant eye upon God, looking to Him continuously, but it is a life that is filled with crises. As we walk in obedience to God, we are repeatedly called upon to face impossible situations. Our obedience in these circumstances will threaten to prove our ruin. But it is in just such a trial that our faith is purified and perfected, and we come to know the Lord in all His power and glory.

The ultimate objective of these trials of faith from God's standpoint is to teach us His faithfulness. He wants us to worship and adore Him and we cannot do it because we do not appreciate Him fully. But every time we, by obedience to His commands, are faced with these desperate needs, we see His abundant supply coming to our rescue just in time. We learn that He can be trusted. We discover that His word cannot fail. We find that there are no circumstances, no matter how impossible, that He cannot instantly change

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In order to fulfill His promises. We are thus drawn
Irresistibly to worship and adore Him. More our
Desires are to cling more closely to Him and to be
Conformed to the image of His Son. We learn of Him and
Find rest unto our souls.

The first act of saving faith consists in a discovery and sight of the infinite greatness, goodness, and other excellencies of the nature of God, so as to judge it our duty upon His call, His command, and promise, to deny ourselves, to relinquish all things, and to do so accordingly.

"The formal object of faith in the Divine promises, is not the things promised in the first place, **BUT GOD HIMSELF** in His essential excellencies, of truth, or faithfulness and power.

"It is the nature of faith to mortify, not only corrupt` and sinful lusts, but our natural affections and their most

vehement inclinations, though in themselves innocent, if they are any way incompassant with duties of obedience to the commands of God. . .yea herein lies the principle trial of the sincerity and power of faith.

"Where faith enables men to live unto God, as unto their eternal concerns, it will enable them to trust unto Him in all the difficulties, dangers, and hazards of this life. To pretend a trust in God as unto our souls and invisible things, and not resign our temporal concerns with patience and quietness unto His disposal, is a vain pretense. Too many deceive themselves with a presumption of faith in the promises of God, as unto things future and eternal. They suppose that they do so believe, as that they shall be eternally saved, but if they are brought into any trial, as unto things temporal, wherein they are concerned, they know not what belongs unto the life of faith, nor how to trust God in a due manner."

John Owen

Chapter 6

Great Faith

WE HAVE SAID THAT FAITH is the most impor-

tant subject in the Bible. In this closing chapter we are going to demonstrate great faith by tying faith in with another primary Bible principle, authority. All the foundational principles of the Bible are found in the book of Genesis. So we want to take our first reference from Gen. 2:16. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying . . ." It is significant that this is the first record of communication between man and God after man has been created. It lays the foundation which will establish the proper relationship between God and man so long as man inhabits God's creation. It will insure man's welfare, safety and happiness. It will render the proper honor and glory accorded to God. The principle is very simple: God commands man. Absolute unquestioned authority. Man's total submission to the law of God.

ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY

We must not think that law ended with the Old Testament, no more than we should think grace began with the New Testament. Noah found grace in the eyes of God.

Such grace as Noah found is no different than the grace and truth that came by Christ Jesus. And Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount are no less law than that which

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Moses brought down from Mt. Sinai. Man is never without law to God and never will be. It is the only reasonable relationship between creature and Creator.

Enlightened men know that the absolute unchanging law of God, His sovereign rule over their lives is for their benefit: It is an unspeakable comfort, a delight and joy. They have been Spirit taught as to the sweet security of unquestioned obedience to the wise and gracious counsel of

God. Before Satan rebelled, there was only one will in the universe, the will of God. After Satan's rebellion, there were two wills in the universe; the will of God and the will of Satan. When man was introduced into the universe with free will, God made provision to protect him from falling into the will of the devil. Man was to be obedient to the will of God. As long as he was so obedient, he would never do the devil's will and so fall under his power.

That is the way God ordained things in the beginning: absolute law. It was never to change, and God has not changed His mind about that. Indeed He has ordained a time when all things will once again be put under His feet literally.

We now go to II Thess. 2:7-8 and we will see the course of the age, the way things are working in this present evil age. "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

The word that arrests our attention here is in verse seven. iniquity is translated from the Greek anomia which literally

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means lawlessness. It is the mystery of lawlessness that is working out down through the course of the age. God's perfect order is seen in absolute law. Man's fallen fixed aversion to the rule of God is seen more and more through the course of the age until the age closes in full revelation of the utter lawlessness of mined men.

We get a look at this revealed lawlessness in the little book of Jude. Jude has sometimes been called "The Acts of the Apostates." It is a fitting title. And it is not without significance that the New Testament Church age opens with the Acts of the Apostles and closes with the Acts of the Apostates. The Acts of the Apostles is a record and testimony of the character and deeds of those who believe and obey God. The Acts of the Apostates is a record and testimony of the character and deeds of those who disbelieve and disobey God. As faith and obedience are inseparable, so unbelief, disobedience and apostasy are all one lump.

Without going too far into the book of Jude, we can look at a few verses and see the characteristics of apostates.

Verses 8-11: -

"Likewise also these filthy dreamers . . ." They are dreamers. They will not face reality. They have refused all objective truth and made everything subject to what they are, or think they are, experiencing. The direct light of truth to them is too harsh for their darkness accustomed eyes. They want to fantasize; and when they are presented with

any information they want it in an oblique way. Is it not significant that the most popular means of "presenting the gospel" today is by means of puppet shows, ventriloquist acts (when you have another dummy besides the preacher), magic shows and religious movies? Now, people know very well the performers in the movie are only pretending to pray or preach or repent; and they know quite well the magic is a trick, and that dummies do not speak. But they like to dream Why? They are filthy! They cannot bear the unmitigated truth of God's word. They had rather pretend it is a game so that they can go on in their wicked rebellion.

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They tell themselves that if the means is a fake, then so is the message. The word has no edge, the sword no temper and the hammer no force. It degenerates into third rate religious entertainment for people who would be happier with less mind than they have.

"Defile the flesh." They prostitute their bodies for their own base pleasures. I am not speaking of the street-walkers in the red-light districts who sell their bodies for someone else's pleasure. I am speaking of those ordinary people who everyday, defile, indulge abuse, ruin and corrupt their own bodies in an ever-increasing attempt to satiate their insatiable lusts.

"Despise dominions." They hate anything that stands for rule, order or authority. They will not be restrained from that which they wish to do. No more does an ordinance appear than they hate it; no more do they hear of a law than they lust to break it. No more does a precept appear than they trample it.

"And speak evil of dignities/" They rail against authorities. They curse their magistrates, rail against their governors and presidents, revile their employers and supervisors.

Are you not familiar with this dear friend?

"They have gone in the way of Cain." The way of Cain is the way of a man who does that which is right in his own eyes. He ignored the word of God, worshipped to please himself, bringing to God fruit of the ground which He had cursed. Refusing the sin-offering, he rose up against his righteous brother and murdered him, lied to God, refused to confess his sin, died and went to hell.

. "Ran greedily after the error of Balaam." Balaam is the covetous hireling. Unable to curse the people of God, he found a way to earn Balak's money by advising him to seduce God's people into adultery and idolatry. It is still the way of hireling preachers. Is it not true that many so-called preachers are paid solely because they will not preach the truth? If they did preach the truth they would no longer be paid.

"Perished in the gainsaying of Core." Core is the Korah of

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of Numbers 16 who decided God's man, Moses, had too much authority, and gathered 250 big-shot Israelites with the objective of taking the preacher down a peg or two. Korah is the pioneer of the "Lay movement." "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them . . . (Num. 16:3). God showed in no uncertain terms His disapproval of such rebellion. He did an entirely new thing _for them: opened the earth beneath them and sent them all to hell alive!! You want to be very sure you don't become a part of Korah's rebellious posterity.

THE LAWS OF AUTHORITY

Having now seen the foundational nature of authority and man's tendency to throw it off during the course of the age, and the ultimate rebellion that characterizes the end time, we will now consider the laws embodied in the principle of authority. Please consider Romans 13:1-4.

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." From these verses we can glean a number of facts and unchangeable laws. We must note that the word here translated "power" is the Greek *exousia* which means, not dynamic force, but authority. To clearer illustrate these laws we are going to use the more definite authority where power appears.

1. Every soul has a higher authority. It is not said that every soul ought to have a higher authority but it is

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expressly declared that he has one by the admonition that he is subject to it. Putting it simply, everyone has a boss! This applies not only to the realm of men but to the animal world. If it is nothing but a herd of

cattle in a pasture, there is either a bull or a boss-cow there. And they all are aware of the butting order. If it is nothing but ants in an ant-hill, there is a boss ant there, with a chain of command through the lesser ants that keep the whole complex made up of thousands of ants in perfect order. 1

I was staying in a home some years ago where one of the teenage girls had a birthday. Since she was involved in 4-H work she was given, by various people, some bantam chickens. They had to prepare a pen for them which they did. When the little pen was finished and the chickens deposited in it, one of the children came running in crying, "They are fighting, the chickens are fighting each other." "Just let them alone," I said, "they will settle down as soon as they get the pecking order straightened out." Sure enough, in a little while, the head chicken was established and they all were walking around singing contentedly. Would that men could settle things that quickly!

2. That authority is ordained of God. Regardless of the circumstances of the placing of the authority, God saw to it that he was placed in the position that he is in. Whether by political process, birth, marriage, employment, choice or whatever, in it all God saw to it that the authority was installed. You cannot believe Romans 8:28 or Eph. 1:11 or Daniel 4:25 if you do not believe this. If the principle of Gen. 2:16 yet stands, and it does since the laws of God are immutable, then God surely has ordained authority wherever it appears.

3. All are commanded to be subject to that authority.

4 We may not choose whether we will obey this

When the doctrine of unquestioned submission to human authority is advanced the question of conflict with God's commandments is

authority on the basis of who the authority is, good or bad. We are commanded by God to be obedient to His ordained authority.

4. That authority is God's minister to you for good. Regardless of who he is, he is God's minister. He may be an infidel, yet he is still God's minister to you for good. Wife, your husband is the best man on earth for you. Children, your parents are the best on earth for you. Man, that wicked, miserly, unreasonable employer always brought forth. These questions usually come from those who are not really interested in how far they must go in obedience but rather if they can get out of obedience altogether. Also some hypothetical situation is generally advanced as, "What if the husband demands his wife do such and such a thing?" Hypothetical suppositions are just that. They cannot be answered because they are not real. Answers exist only for real situations. Many people imagine they know such a real situation, but there are always factors one does not know of and therefore he does not know the whole reality of the thing. Such fears and objections are the devil's fabrications. No one ever takes a step in faith without his threats of "what if" or "suppose such and such." It is enough to say that the woman who obeys her husband needs not have confidence in him. Her confidence is in the God to whose law she has submitted. God is bigger than her husband's meanness. Can you not believe God to protect a woman who so trusts Him? We have at least one scriptural example to illustrate He does.

". . . being in subjection unto their own husbands: even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord:" (I Pet. 3:5—6). Such obedience twice sent Sara to a heathen king's harem from which God faithfully delivered her without a man touching her (Gen. 12:11-20, 20:2-14). Much destruction has been done to homes by teaching women to rebel against their husbands in order to perform religious duties.

There are limitations, however, to obedience but not to submission. When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship the king's

image, they did not so out of rebellion against the king. They could not transgress God's commandment of worship, but they did not rebel against the king's authority. They had an alternative: the burning furnace. They simply chose the only alternative the king gave them.

This is a far cry from the so-called civil disobedience which is nothing less than lawlessness that characterize today's rebels against what they consider unjust laws. In extreme cases you may not be able to obey, yet you can submit and trust God to take care of you in the consequences.

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is the best boss on earth for you. Be careful that you do not belie your confidence in God's word here. Although you may not be able in your circumstances to see this truth yet you must confess and embrace it as all of God's precepts are, good and right.

5. That authority is a terror to the evil. "Evil" can properly be considered in a personal sense here. The authority of God terrorizes the evil one. He is God's protection over you against the devil.

6. To resist that authority is to resist God Himself. Rebellion against God's ordained authority is tantamount to direct rebellion against God. To spurn the King's ambassador, his Vicar, is to insult his Majesty himself. God commands the man. He rules him through His ordained order of authority. Receiving orders from the authority is reception of orders from God insofar as this principle goes.

7. All who resist or rebel against the authority voluntarily bring damnation, judgment, hell right down upon themselves. They have deliberately made themselves a bed in hell. They have brought upon them-

selves more misery, trouble and bondage than they

ever reckoned on. And they have no one to blame or thank but themselves and their rebellion.

THE SIN OF REBELLION

Please now consider the full implications of the sin of rebellion. For an illustration we will look at a scene in the Old Testament. This is the setting: God has commanded Saul, king of Israel to "go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all they have, and spare them not; but slay both 5 man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (I Sam. 15:3). Saul, however, failed to obey the Lord completely. Foolishly thinking he knew better than God what ought to be done, he spared the Amalekite king, Agag, and the best of the sheep, and the oxen and the fatlings and the lambs. He only destroyed that which he

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considered inferior. Such partial obedience is nothing less than outright disobedience. The man who edits and censors God's commands, who obeys only that which seems reasonable to him is no more obedient to God than the confessed unbeliever. He is just as much a rebel as ever. God is not King; He is.

Now the word of the Lord comes to the prophet Samuel. "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments." As Samuel goes out to meet Saul at his return he is greeted with the hypocritical bragging of a self-willed rebel. "Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord" (I Sam. 15:13). But the bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen belie Saul's boast. And it will be always so with you, dear reader. You

may boast convincingly about your faith and submission to God, but the fruits of your rebellion and disobedience will drown out your lies. No one will believe you.

Now see the awful implications of rebellion. I Sam.

15:22-23—"And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken then the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." The italicized words, as is, in verse 23 are not in the original text, but are inserted to help the passage be more readable. But the passage has more force if they are left out. Notice: Rebellion the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness, iniquity and idolatry. We saw in chapter two how that unbelief always serves other Gods, that to turn from God is to turn to idols. Now the Bible has plainly made rebellion and witchcraft, stubbornness and idolatry synonymous. How about it, dear I reader. Are you a witch? Are you an idolator? Of course not, you say. Yet according to God's word if you are unbelieving and rebellious you are a witch. If you stubbornly resist the commandments of God, you are an idolator. Demon worship

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is not something strange and foreign to you. You practice it. Why should you be shocked with reports about Satanic cults? You have had your own going for years! Unbelief, rebellion, witchcraft, stubbornness, idolatry and demon possession are all part of the one and same package.

Consider a New Testament warning. I Cor. 11:3-10, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every

woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she was shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power (exousia, authority) on her head because of the angels."

We are told further in verses 14 and 15 that even nature teaches us that it is a shame for a man to have long hair and that a woman's hair, being long, is a glory to her for it is given to her for a covering. There is more than ' coincidence in the modern trend toward short hair on women and long hair on men, feminine clothes on men and masculine clothes on women. It is all part of the latter day rebellion. There is a natural difference between male and female and God has seen to it that this difference is to be noted, observed and kept. Nature teaches it. The difference is readily recognized in the animal world. In such beasts as cats, dogs, horses, cattle, etc., physical configuration reveals the sex. In creatures where this configuration is concealed, , God has dressed the male and female in distinctly different garments so that anyone can tell a rooster from a hen. Correspondingly God has demanded there be at least two ways to distinguish a man from a woman: The garments

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they wear, and the relative length of hair. However long a man's hair is, it ought to be shorter than a woman's and woman's longer than a man's. Whatever a woman wears, it

ought to be distinctly feminine. And a man's garments must be unmistakably masculine. A little child ought to be able to look at his parents and tell which one is his father and which is his mother without their undressing. Otherwise he will have trouble identifying with the one he should. For this reason, millions grow up to be lesbians and homosexuals.

But the passage to which we wish to direct our attention now is verse 10. "The woman ought to have (the symbol of) authority on her head because of the angels. The symbol, or token, of a woman's submission to her husband was a covering that she wore in public. A woman who wore no such covering was indicating that she was not subject to a man. It was especially important, the Apostle tells us that a woman wear this covering and so display her obedience when she participated in worship because of the angels. Why angels? We must remember that all angels are not good ones. A third part of them joined Satan in his rebellion (Rev. 12:4). These seem to be one and the same as the wicked spirits, principalities and powers, that are more commonly known as demons. They are Satan's emissaries and only wait on an opportunity to take advantage of someone unsheltered by God.

Submission to the man's authority is the woman's protection against these fallen angels, just as man's submission to Christ's authority (his head) is his protection or covering against demons. God both commands, rules and protects all his creatures in this way. In the family unit it is illustrated as Christ under God, man under Christ, the woman under man, and the children under the parents. , Other social units also have a like order established whereby God rules and protects each. To rebel against the higher authority which is ordained of God is equivalent to serving notice that one is displeased with the way God is ordering his life and to issue an invitation to the devil to replace God

as his king. He will surely take you up on it. I
Several years ago when we were experiencing this world-wide outbreak of rebellion, I thought that it was caused by a worldwide invasion of demons. The two are related, true enough; but I had the cause and effect reversed. For the past several decades we have had progressively less doctrinal content in our preaching and teaching. The god of success and growth demands that we ignore the long and tedious process of teaching and preaching sound truth and get on with the business of producing more spurious converts. As true doctrine faded from the picture, authority had no absolutes upon which to rest. Situation ethics, every man doing that which is right in his own eyes, became the vogue. With this philosophy, human authority anywhere became openly despised. Every law and every magistrate was subject to contempt. Rebellion broke out everywhere. Children against parents, wives against husbands, students against teachers, citizens against government, labor against management. Satan had so many invitations for demons, hell must have been taxed to supply them. That is why, dear reader, we are today experiencing such a revival in devil worship. Everyone has thrown off their covering and invited hell to come and rule over them.

I quite well know that this is not what men intended. They only wanted their liberty to do as they pleased. But, nevertheless, they met the conditions of witchcraft and Idolatry and the occult powers immediately moved in. Several years ago, I left a city after closing a series of

meetings Sunday night and headed for my home about 250 miles away. I had reached a stretch of highway about 90 miles long with several small towns 10 or 15 miles apart which had speed limits of 25 miles per hour. I was driving the legal speed limit which was then 60 miles per hour on the open road, slowing down for each small town. But the time had already gotten into the early hours of the morning, I was tired and my mind became dull. Driving along in a semi-stupor suddenly four things registered on my mind

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simultaneously: A Speed limit Sign posting 35 mph, One posting 25 mph, my own speedometer registering 55 mph and a police car parked by the side of the road at the point I was now passing. I immediately snapped to attention, slowed down gently and tried to creep on through town while watching the police car in my rear view mirror. But it was too late. Here he came with his blue light flashing. Now I did not intend that to happen. But I had broken the established law; I was inside the city limits and I was completely under the power and authority of the city of Oberlin. They could have legally taken my car and locked me up. Just as surely, dear reader, as you break the laws of God and rebel against His authority, you fall under the sphere and authority of the devil and he will not fail to avail himself of this advantage.

THE HERITAGE OF THE OBEDIENT

So much for the negative side. Now for the positive benefits of submission to authority. We will consider, for illustration, the encounter of a Roman soldier with Christ. Luke 7:2-9, "And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sickly and ready to die. And when he

heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagouge. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him and turned

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him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Now here is a remarkable statement. Jesus is saying that in this man, He has found a greater faith than he has anywhere else in all His earthly ministry! Does that not stir us? How many of us would like to have the Lord say unto us, "great is thy faith." If we can learn then, what the centurion knew, perhaps we can also have this great faith. How is it that this Roman soldier, a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel, who had not access to the great theological teachings of the scripture, had faith that shamed the doctors, priests, Pharisees, and Sadducees of Jesus day? The fact of the matter is, he probably knew little or nothing of faith. It would not be surprising if he were unable to give a reasonable definition of the word. He was not a theologian; he was a soldier. And as a soldier the

principle he had learned and understood well fitted him for great faith. He understood authority. He knew how authority worked. He lived and worked in a realm that demanded absolute obedience to the higher authority, and had seen its unfailing principles in operation.

Now you, dear reader, are not likely a theologian either; but you need not be to have great faith. You need not understand all the ramifications of faith. But if you can learn what this centurion knew about authority, and make it a principle and practice of your life as it was of his, then your faith will know no bounds. You see, my friend, your problem is not primarily a faith problem: It is an authority problem. You have a faith problem, true enough, but you are never going to get faith by trying to get faith. You must learn to live within the principle of Genesis 2:16. The Lord God commanded the man.

Notice the boldness of the centurion's message to the Lord as he neared his home. "Lord, you do not have to go anywhere or do anything. All you need do is speak the word and my servant shall be healed. He was not trying to assert his faith or advance his opinion by prefacing what he said

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with "I believe" this or that. He was not speaking from theory or conviction. He was speaking from what he knew to be true. He makes no allowances for it to be otherwise. He knows that if Christ speaks, the spoken word has assured the finished work.

How does he know that? We are told precisely how he knows. "For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers." The two key words to be noted here are

also and under. "Also" because he recognized that Christ was every whit as much subject to the higher authority as he was. "Under" because the key to having authority is not getting over someone but by getting under someone. Being under, he is over. You cannot get over; you can only get under. But if you are under, then you are over all that he whom you are under has placed you over in the same capacity he is over. Think awhile on that. Get hold of it and you will never be the same.

The centurion knows it works. "When I want something done, I do not have to go anywhere. I do not have to throw my weight around, spend a lot of energy and words, begging, threatening, enticing, persuading, cajoling. All I do is tell someone to do it, and he does it. I say go, and off he goes. I beckon, and he immediately comes to me." Now why do these hardened soldiers obey this centurion so readily? Is it because they fear him? Has he gained his position of authority by whipping every man in his charge with his bare fists? Does he carry a better sword than they? Is he so much bigger and stronger that they fear him? None of these. The centurion may well have been a small 140 pound weakling and the soldier who obeyed him so readily may have been a big 250 pound brute. That soldier was not subjected by the intrinsic authority in the centurion. He was not afraid of him. He was afraid of the Roman empire. Caesar's legions stood behind every word that centurion spoke, as long as he was under his superior authority. But now suppose one day the centurion received some orders of which he so disapproved that he disobeyed them and went about to do whatever he thought best. What

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would be the immediate result of such rebellion? His rank

and authority would be stripped away, and he would be relieved of his command. What then would be his standing with that 250 pound soldier he had so easily subjugated? In all likelihood, he would fear for his bodily safety. He would try to stay out of his way and hope their paths did not cross. Because when one gets out from under authority he not only loses all his authority, but all his protection. If you are not under, then you are under all that you would be over if you were under. Whereas all of Satan's demons are under your feet as you are submitted to Christ, rebel against Him and you are nothing but serpent's meat . . . 'dust. You are prey to all the powers of darkness and victim of all that man would desire to do with you.

There is no authority but of God (Rom. 13:1). Wherever authority is, it is God's. If you would gain authority, it must be bestowed upon you by God; and God bestows it only upon those who submit themselves to His authority. Pastor, would you gain authority over your flock? You will never gain it by trying to assert it. Get under obedience and absolute subjection to Jesus Christ and His authority will rest upon you. The flock of God will know it and will without fail submit themselves to your leadership. But you can never have authority in disobedience to God.

Husband, would you gain your wife's submission? Would you, as the scriptures says you must, rule your house well? You cannot make your wife obedient by trying to overcome her rebellion. You will never either by clever words and subtle devices or loud threats and physical abuse rule that woman. If you would have authority over your home, submit to Christ. If you have no authority, you may be sure you are not properly submitted to the Lord. When you submit to Christ in all things, your wife will most assuredly . submit to you. She must because the authority of God upon you will demand it.

Wives, do you wonder why your children are disobedient and disrespectful of you? Do you despair of their rebellion?

Wonder no longer. You are disobedient and disrespectful of

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your husband. The only authority you can possibly have over your children is that which comes from God. You cannot get it from God; you must get it from your husband. That is God's way of bestowing it. Submit yourself to your husband and the spirit of rebellion will flee your children. I know some of my readers are going to have difficulty believing the above facts. But are we not yet talking about faith? How did the centurion come to say, "speak a word and in servant shall be healed? Was it not a confidence that came by practicing and doing what authority promises? Was it not in this that he learned that when authority speaks, the work will be done? Yes, and he learned it in the realm of human government. If his word, spoken under the authority of Caesar could not fail, then how could the word of Christ, who was under authority to God? Even so, dear friend, you must learn that as you submit and obey the word which God has spoken, the words which you speak in obedience to that word will surely come to pass. The authority of the Eternal God is upon you to see that nothing shall fail. "If God be for us who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Doubtless many shall be against us, but none can prevail against us. Shall He who spared not His own Son be frustrated in His purpose to give us all things? It is God that has justified, and God that has promised. He cannot fail.

Learn to appropriate as Joshua did. The principle still stands. Here is the promise: "There shall not any man be

able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Josh. 1:5). What are the conditions? Only one: "Only be strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever, thou goest" (Josh. 1:7). At any time Joshua may have had occasion to doubt, he needed only to remember God's word, "Have not I commanded thee" (Josh. 1:9). Knowing God had commanded and sent him in obedience to that commis-

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sion it was impossible for him to fail. No wonder he was such a mighty man of faith. He learned the principle of authority and obedience. When the time came that he needed more daylight time to do his job than the sun's course could afford him, he suspended the natural laws of the celestial bodies by the spoken word of authority. God's authority is obeyed even by the inanimate creation of the universe. That is the faith that moves mountains and stills the tempest.

The word of faith is ever a word of action. Faith is something you do, in view of who God is and in response to what He has said. Believe can never be separated from do. In closing consider the Old Testament foundation for Romans 10:8. "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach;" (Deut. 30:11-14). "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring

it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. Three times "do it" appears. There it is, dear reader. God has shown you what you should do. Do it. Are you fearful? Do it! Do you doubt? Do it! You will never know faith or God until you do. Do it!