

Faith Cometh by Hearing

"Ye should contend earnestly for *THE FAITH* which was once delivered unto the saints"—Jude 3

FAITH occupies a prominent place in the divine plan of redemption, as a casual reading of the Bible will reveal. Yet the theology of Christendom has reduced the subject of Faith to mere generalities which obscures the meaning of that Faith spoken of in Heb. 11:6, which Paul says is necessary to please God.

Faith is usually treated of as an abstract principle of confidence or trust in someone or something without regard to whether or not such "faith" is based upon *evidence*. We hear the expression, "blind faith," when actually there is no such thing, for faith is the result of belief, and belief must be based upon evidence.

There is a total absence of faith, in the scriptural sense, in the mind of one who has no knowledge of that in which faith is essential. In Hebrews 11:1 Paul says—

"Now Faith is the assurance of things hoped for; the CONVICTION of things not seen."
(RSV)

It takes indisputable evidence to convince one that a thing is true. Therefore, the faith pleasing to God is not some vague, undefinable proposition in which one has "blind" confidence. Scriptural faith is a *definite form of teaching* which God has revealed concerning Himself and His purpose in Christ, which He offers to man as a basis for eternal salvation through faith in Him.

The doctrines presented to man as a basis of faith were designed of God as the things necessary to be understood, believed and obeyed as the way to prepare one for eternal association with Him.

In Rom. 10:14-17 we find how God-pleasing faith is obtained. We are also shown the futility of depending on man-made articles of faith. Paul says—

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? . . . So Faith cometh by Hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Scriptural Faith comes from one source only—*divine revelation*, as delivered by "holy men of God," who—

" . . . spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

Eph. 4:4-6 reveals the seven-fold unity of divine teaching—

"There is One Body, and One Spirit, even as ye are called in One Hope of your calling; One Lord, ONE FAITH, One Baptism, One God and Father of all."

Such a thought is odious to the mind deluded by modern "liberalism"; but the Word of God leaves no doubt—there is but ONE Faith with which God is pleased, and that faith comes in no other way except through knowledge and belief of God's Word.

Worship of any other god, except the God revealed in His Word, is vain worship; likewise any other faith is a delusion. In 1 Cor. 8:5-6 Paul sets this matter at rest—

"For though there be that are called gods, to us there is but ONE GOD . . . and One Lord Jesus Christ."

Christendom has not the faith pleasing to God; for they worship a triune god which does not exist and "another Jesus" whom they say is one part of this triune godhead, thus denying that he is the Son of God. They have "faith" that they will go to heaven to reign with Christ, which never will be realized, for there is *no such promise in the Bible*. Therefore their faith cannot please God.

One must cast aside all human creeds and devote himself to zealous, prayerful and reverential study of God's Word. And therein one will find that THE Faith pleasing to God is based upon CERTAIN promises which God made to the fathers of Israel, which are to be fulfilled in Christ. Let us briefly outline those things given us as a basis for the faith which is pleasing to God.

We read in Heb. 11 how certain persons through faith pleased God and in v. 6 we read that—

"Without Faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

We shall see that Paul did not refer to faith in just any god which the minds of men might invent. He had sole reference to faith in the ONE *God of Israel*, the only true God. He had reference to God who had made certain promises about an eternal inheritance of the land of Canaan and rulership over the earth. This promise became the One Hope and the One Faith, for which, as Jude says the disciples were to—

"Contend earnestly for THE FAITH, once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

It was THE Faith, forming the basis for eternal salvation; distinct, separate and opposed to all the creeds and religions of human origin.

Revelation of THE FAITH begins in the first chapter of Genesis, where we read of the creation of this planet as a habitation for man. And the reason why God created the earth is revealed in Isa. 45:18, where He says—

"God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it; He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited."

Jesus said (Matt. 5:5)—

"THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH."

And Rev. 5:9 (the Song of the Redeemed)—

"Thou . . . hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign ON THE EARTH."

Dan. 7:27—"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High."

Zech. 14:9—"The Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and His Name one."

The Faith pleasing to God is not belief in something He never promised, an inheritance "beyond the skies", but *Faith in what He HAS promised, an eternal inheritance on this earth*, which He created to be inhabited by that immortal throng which He, through faith, is taking out of the world—a people for His Name, to be rulers in His kingdom.

Man sinned and lost any right to which he might have attained as an inhabitant of this globe in a state of perfection. But God provided a Redeemer through whom God's plan for an eternal Paradise on earth was to be consummated.

In Gen. 3:15 we have the promise that the Seed, or descendant, of the woman was to "bruise the Serpent's head," a symbol showing that Jesus Christ, the woman's Seed, was to destroy sin from the earth and fulfil God's purpose concerning the earth and man upon it. This promise was developed

as time went on, but *it remained the unchanging purpose of God, the basis for Faith in Him*. We come down many centuries to Gen. 12, where God called Abraham from his native land and promised him—

"I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great . . . and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Paul, speaking of Abraham's faith (Heb. 11:8), says—

"By FAITH Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed."

When Abraham arrived at this "place" he found it to be the land of Canaan, and God said to him—

"Unto thy seed will I give this land."

In Gen. 13:14-17 we read where the Lord again appeared to Abraham and re-affirmed the promise of the land inheritance, where it is made certain that *Abraham at some time was to possess this land*, as we read—

"For all the land which thou seest, to THEE will I give it, AND to thy seed forever . . . arise, walk through the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto THEE."

In Gen. 22:17-18 the promise to Abraham is enlarged to define just *how* ALL nations were to be blessed in him and his Seed. He is promised that—

"Thy Seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and **in thy Seed** shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

It is clear that this Seed was to bless all nations by establishing a kingdom on earth, conquering and ruling over all people. In Gal. 3:16 we are told who this seed is—

"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds as of many, but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is CHRIST."

In Rom. 4 Paul tells us that this Faith was counted unto Abraham for righteousness, and that all who walk in the steps of that faith shall be blessed with him. Without that faith none can please God or win salvation. For Paul says:

"Wherefore remember, ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh . . . That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the Covenants of Promise, HAVING NO HOPE, and without God" (Eph. 2:11-12).

God made a similar promise to David (2 Sam. 7:10-16) in which David was assured that the people of Israel would be "planted in a place of their own to move no more;" that his throne would be established forever through a Son who would rule forever upon that throne in the presence of David. In Acts 2:30 Peter tells us that this Son promised was Christ. The angel's words to Mary before the birth of Jesus, were a confirmation of the promise to David—

"The Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever."

The "Covenants of Promise" are the "*Hope of Israel*" which Paul preached; the Gospel "which is the power of God unto salvation;" the foundation upon which Christian character is built. (See Acts 26:6-8; 28:20, 23, 30, 31; Rom. 1:15-16; Gal. 3:8; 2 Peter 1:4-11).

The whole mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, past and future, was designed to *fulfil the Covenants of Promise*, and prepare a people to reign with him when he is given "the nations for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession" (Psa. 2:8). It was to confirm the Covenants of Promise that he died and rose from the dead (Rom. 15:8; Heb. 9:13-15). *Christ's mission would be meaningless if disconnected from the Promises to the Patriarchs.*

In putting on the Name of Christ in baptism, the believing sinner thereby becomes an heir with Christ of the Promises to the first Patriarchs of Israel (Gal. 3:27-29)—

"As many of you as have been baptised **into** Christ have put on Christ . . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and **heirs according to the Promise.**"

In speaking of God-pleasing faith, let us keep in mind that knowledge and acceptance of that Faith alone will not save us. It takes faith like Abraham had, who—

". . . was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being FULLY PERSUADED that what He had promised He was able also to perform."

Faith which does not *put one to work* is not faith pleasing to God. The sinner is justified by faith; the saint is perfected only by works which (Eph. 2:10)—

"God hath ordained that we should walk in them."

True Faith moves all who have it to ENERGETIC action—

"FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD" (Jas. 2:17-26).

—O.B.
