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TEN ASPECTS OF FAITH

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01 -- IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

Faith is an essential element in Christian experience, in the work of the church, in the home, and in the business world. Without faith Christian experience could not be obtained, nor retained; the work of the church could not advance, the home would fall apart and the business world could not progress. Without faith it would be impossible to please one another, or to conduct any business. There could not be any banking business, or any schedules formulated or kept in operation without faith.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God." Faith pleases God and grieves the Devil. Unbelief pleases Satan and grieves God. Faith in man pleases man, and unbelief in man grieves man. Faith in God honors God, and God honors faith. Faith in men honors men, and men honor the faith which is placed in them.

When God ordained faith to be the one time and the all time condition to obtain salvation and to keep it, He demanded something that is possible to all people. God demands faith and this demand is right and reasonable. God can be trusted. He will do as He has promised. Adam and Eve fell through obeying and believing the Devil who is a liar, and in doing so, they disobeyed and doubted God Who is faithful and true. The way back to God is through obedience and faith. Faith in God is the one element which we must exercise in order to obtain anything from God, for "According to your faith be it unto you." Our faith measures the gifts or blessings we receive from God. Currency on earth is the circulating medium of exchange, including coins, government notes, and bank notes. Faith is the currency of heaven which God receives, and in exchange will give us the desired blessings.

The great conflict which came in the Fall of man was between the two great contending powers, even God and Satan. It was a conflict of faith in and obedience to God Who is true and faithful, or faith in and obedience to Satan who is a liar, thief and murderer. God and Satan solicit each person, and to doubt God means to believe Satan. Faith in God involves the exercise of our heart and will.

God is to be trusted, for He keeps His Word at all costs. He can not fail. When we place our faith in Him, He is pleased to verify His promises to us. It honors Him, it pleases Him, and it moves Him to do as He has promised and as we believe He will do. He will never fail to keep His Word. He has never failed to keep His Word in one instance since man has been created. When we place our faith in Him, it moves Him so that He will not disappoint, nor fail us.

Faith honors the one in whom it is placed, and brings courage and rest to the one who believes. This fact is illustrated in the following incident: Dr. A. C. Dixon once related that the report went out in an English town that the bank was about to fail. Five hundred men ran for their deposits on the same day. The pastor of the church in the town was invited by the bank directors to meet them. They said to him, "Sir, if these people press us to the wall, they will lose their money. If they don't press us, we will pay every dollar."

The pastor said, "I will help you; I have some money, and I will trust you." He went home, got his money, came to the bank door, and, standing on the steps, said, "Friends, you all know me; I have been living here twenty-five years, and I believe in this bank. Here are three hundred pounds that I am going to deposit. I believe that the bank is good." In less than thirty minutes every one of those people had dispersed and the bank was saved by faith and testimony. Unbelief was about to ruin that bank, but when faith was placed in the bank it was saved. Unbelief has ruined many lives and institutions. Faith in God is a wonderful element, for it honors God and benefits man.

Faith in men is an ennobling act. It puts confidence, trust and courage in the one who believes, and also in the one who is trusted. An ex-convict who had been converted was employed

by a business man for five years. During that time this man handled twenty-four thousand dollars a year of his employer's money without the misappropriation of a cent. When he was no longer needed, the employer told the entire story to a gentleman in another city who was in need of such a helper, who received this former convict into his employ. Within three weeks he was arrested for stealing from his new employer.

The former employer heard of it and went to see him in jail and said to him: "Ike, how is it that when you worked for me you could be trusted with anything, and that as soon as you came into this new employment you went back to your old dishonest life?" The man burst into tears and said: "I could not help it. He suspected me, and I had to steal." Doubting the man caused him to fall. Doubt and unbelief bring fear and failure. Fear is weakening, and leads to defeat. Faith inspires courage which is strengthening and this leads to triumph, victory and success.

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02 -- INTUITIONAL FAITH

Intuition is knowledge that comes from the I mind without conscious reasoning; it is instinctive knowledge; direct insight. Intuitional faith is natural, innate, and requires no effort, or exercise of the will to believe. Every person is born with intuitional faith. It is manifested more fully in children than in older people. There are no natural born infidels or atheists. Infidels and atheists are made, not born.

A child in its early days, before it can reason things for itself believes everything that it is told. This is the time to instill in them Bible truth and sound faith. Almost all parents fail and come short along this line. They should take time to instill into their children truth, principles, Bible stories and faith in God. Most children in a very intelligent manner grasp many gospel truths and Bible stories at the age of three or four years. When they are three years of age it is not too early to tell them Bible stories and show them Bible pictures. Children then do not have to reason, nor exercise the will to believe these facts. It is natural for them to believe what is told to Them. The faith faculty is an innate part of human psychology. The earliest acts of a little child are not acts of reason, but of faith, which seems to be instinctive and certainly is necessary to the child's existence.

Jews and Catholics are far more careful to train their children in infancy and childhood than are Protestants. They train their children while they possess the intuitional faith. Almost all of their children are so thoroughly indoctrinated in their youth that they seldom depart from it.

Protestant and Christian parents who possess the true religion are very negligent and careless in instilling the truth into their children. Many parents do not live up to the truth they teach their children. Protestants and Christians in general do not succeed as well in rearing their children in the Christian faith by instilling so much truth in them that they will accept the faith of their fathers, as do the Catholics in bringing up their children to become and to remain Catholics, or the Jews in rearing their children to grow up and remain in the Jewish faith. Many Christians and most church members do not rear their children to become Christians, but bring them up to become worldlings and sinners, and even unbelievers and Christ-rejecters.

The Jewish and the Catholic beliefs and principles do not change from generation to generation. Many orthodox Protestants change in their principles and beliefs, taking up with modernism, formality and worldliness.

Infants and children at an early age do not know facts, history nor principles. They must be taught, therefore, they take it for granted that all they are taught is true. If a Protestant infant were adopted into a Catholic home and indoctrinated in the Catholic faith, that child would accept the Catholic faith as the true faith, and would grow up to be a Catholic because it possesses intuitional faith. If a Protestant infant were adopted into a Jewish home and indoctrinated in the Jewish faith, that child would grow up in the Jewish faith and would believe what it was taught. If a Catholic or Jewish infant were adopted into a Christian home and carefully indoctrinated in the true faith, that child would grow up in the Protestant faith and through the right influence very evidently would accept Christ, become converted and grow up a Christian.

It is claimed that Jewish children receive 335 hours of religious training a year, and that Catholic children receive 220 hours of religious training a year. Many Protestant children do not receive any religious training at all. If they go to Sunday School every Sunday in a year without missing one Sunday, they receive only 26 hours of religious training if the Sunday School teacher is faithful in teaching the Bible and does not talk about sports, social or political matters as many do.

It is a sad fact that many parents are not Christians nor Protestants, but sinners. They rear their children to remain sinners, or to become infidels, atheists or modernists. Their hearts become worldly and hardened to the truth. The next generation will be reared in the same manner in which they were reared; thus each generation departs farther from God.

In childhood, the foundation needs to be laid for a life of faith in God and for faithfulness. Children possess a simplicity, and a great capacity for faith, without doubts, which if it is fostered and directed in the right channel will lead to a life of great faith in God. We may wonder why men like Joseph, Moses, Samuel, and Daniel, who were taken out of their homes and spiritual environments into strange, idolatrous and sinful environments, could retain their purity, holy principles, and be true to the God of their mothers. The reason is that faith, truth and principles were instilled into them in childhood which neither sin, alluring elements, Egypt, Babylon, nor enticing offers, could shake out of them.

Many children fail because their mothers fail first. It is said that whenever God makes a great man, He first begins with his mother. We could wish that every mother would feel as did Margaret Fuller when she recorded in her diary on the day her first child was born: "I am the mother of an immortal being. May God be merciful to me!" Prayer should be offered by all parents for themselves and for their children that God will be merciful to them, then continue to pray for themselves and their children as long as they live.

The time to instill faith and truth into the minds and hearts of children is while they possess intuitional faith, for then it will be possible and easy to lead them into evangelical faith. Before children can read, parents should take time to tell them Bible stories, show them Bible pictures,

and explain their meaning. It would be a splendid investment for parents to supply their children with Bible story books, Bible pictures, good children's papers and Christian literature. Farmers invest much money for corner posts, fence posts, wire fencing, then see that their stock are safely sheltered so that they will not go astray, and in addition, will take much time to feed them properly, then they will be sold and taken to the slaughter house. City people will build a good garage for their automobile and it will be repaired and given much attention, then after a few years their cars will be taken to the junk yard. However, parents will give little attention or time to train their children in a Christian atmosphere, nor will they spend any means for their children's character, morals, and eternal destiny. They care little whether they retain their purity, or will go to heaven or hell. The Bible command is: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

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03 -- HISTORICAL FAITH

Historical faith is based on man's sayings; is a head faith as distinguished from a heart faith; it is a reasoning faith; an intellectual faith. After the intuitional faith in infants and beginners (ages one to five) who believe all that is told them, there will soon come to them the reasoning or historical faith. In infants there evidently is not a strong degree of voluntary control or consciousness. Yet an infant is not a mere machine, but a living person. At birth, children are blank as to knowledge, experience, or consciousness. The exercise of the will is limited. They react quickly with little deliberation to impressions or consequences. As they grow and experience things, they learn rapidly. At the earliest age of intelligent consciousness, they accept and believe everything they are told. They have not the ability to reason things for themselves.

Young children are credulous. They are inclined to believe whatever they are told. Parents should not take advantage of the credulity. To subject them to sudden shocks of disillusionment, to ghosts, or bears, or policemen, etc., is wrong and will lead children to doubt, mistrust and infidelity. The reaction in a child will be very harmful. When children pass the kindergarten age and begin to learn to read, they will also begin to reason, memory will develop, and they take on an inquiring form. They want to know the "how" and "why" of things. It is now that children become less credulous. They begin to question the truth of certain things. Yet they have a great desire for a certainty of things. Parents and teachers who instruct them should be very careful to practice what they teach and not betray their confidence. The reason some children depart from their early training is that when they reach the reasoning age, they observe that their parents do not live up to the truth, nor the ideals and principles they teach them, neither do they act as if it were a vital and experiential matter to be holy, just, honest, spiritual, prayerful, kind, etc.

The story is told of a mother who taught her little son and daughter to love Jesus, and whenever they told a lie, she instructed them to ask Jesus to forgive them or else they could not go to heaven. There was a sand pile near their home where the children took great delight to play. The mother did not want her children to go there to play, and gave the reason that bears were there and would devour them. The children doubted their mother, yet feared to go lest some bears might be there.

After a while their pastor came along and they concluded to ask him whether there were any bears at the sand pile. He told them there were no bears there, for he had just passed by the sand pile. The children insisted there were bears there because their mother said so. He said, "Your mother told you a lie, for there are no bears at the sand pile."

The children ran home and said, "Mother, there are no bears at the sand pile."

"Yes," the mother insisted, "there are bears at the sand pile."

"No, there are no bears there. Mother, you told us a lie. The preacher came along and we asked him, and he said there were no bears there. We told him, you said there were bears there, and he said you told us a lie. Now mamma you will have to ask Jesus to forgive you or else you cannot go to heaven."

The mother knelt to pray to ask the Lord to forgive her for telling her children a lie, when the little girl spoke up and said, "Mamma, let me pray and ask Jesus to forgive you, for you might tell Him a lie."

These children were passing the transitional period in their lives, from the intuitional faith to the historical or reasoning faith. Such child training wrecks the faith of children and starts them on the path to unbelief and skepticism.

People learn to accept what they read and hear. The historical faith is essential in the human, physical, and intellectual realm. Without historical faith there could not be any educational system, commerce, schedules, banking, etc. This faith must be distinguished from the evangelical, or saving faith, which is so essential in the spiritual realm, and which has its foundation on God's Word. Historical faith does not change the heart nor the conduct. It is a head faith, which is seated in the intellect, and not in the heart.

People believe the books of history which are written, the text books, the news, etc. The historical faith is essential in the common affairs of life and in the business and commercial realm even as the evangelical faith is essential in Christian experience.

Many people believe the historical accounts of the Bible, and in a historical Christ (if they are not modernists). The historical faith does not save any one from sin, nor will it change the heart, for it is not a heart faith. It is well to possess a good intellectual knowledge of the Bible and to believe it from the historical standpoint, for head faith has its value, and may lead to heart faith under the operation of the Holy Spirit, if the person yields himself to the Lord.

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04 -- EVANGELICAL FAITH

Evangelical faith is a heart faith -- saving faith -- justifying faith, or the faith which leads to salvation. This is the faith which moves God to pardon the sinner and brings the desired blessing of eternal life. It is the faith which is essential to our salvation.

Every person must exercise this faith for the salvation of his own soul. Others may believe in behalf of the unsaved, but not until the individual himself believes for his own salvation, will he be saved. Salvation can never be by proxy.

Evangelical faith is the faith which is mentioned in John 3:16, that whosoever believeth in Christ should not perish but have everlasting life. This is evangelical faith because it accepts the Gospel and the atoning merits of Christ which saves.

It also is called saving faith, for it is faith in the Saviour Who alone can save the sinner. It is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the only condition by which we can be saved.

Evangelical faith is also called heart faith. Paul preached, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Born. 10:9, 10). This is a faith in the supernatural God Who wrought a supernatural work when He raised Christ from the dead, and that can change all who are dead in trespasses and sins, and make them alive in Christ. The Gospel which has power to change lives is called "the word of faith," because it is the object of our faith-the precept of our faith, commanding it-inspiring it-making it the one time and all time condition for being justified.

Saving, or justifying faith, is believing with the heart, or a heart faith (Rom. 10:9). In the Bible, the heart stands for the thoughts, feelings, motives, desires and will. This faith manifests itself in those who exercise it by doing that which the One Who is believed in bids. Saving faith accepts Christ; rests its hopes in His atoning blood; commits itself to Christ; calls upon His name (Rom. 10:13); confesses the sins of the past and forsakes all sin; it will confess Christ as Lord, and not shrink from confessing Him before the saints that he is one of them, nor before sinners as being through with sinning. God delights to be believed in, and trusted. When a person believes, God will do exactly as He has promised in His Word.

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05 -- DOCTRINAL FAITH

Doctrinal faith includes the essential doctrines of truth; the Gospel; the teaching of the Scriptures regarding Christ, His vicarious death and triumphant resurrection, and the doctrines which save from sin. It is truth concerning salvation and Christ. Doctrinal faith is teaching; the creed, or articles of faith which are true and never change.

Sometimes denominationalism is spoken of as a faith, for example, the Methodist faith, or the Lutheran faith, or the Catholic faith. Denominationalism is not referred to as a faith in the New Testament. Denominational faith is the creed, or article of belief, as taught, believed and practiced in a denomination. However, doctrinal faith, or the orthodox teaching of the New Testament is intended for all people to believe, accept and practice.

A few references selected from the New Testament will make clear the doctrinal faith, and that it is a sound belief, teaching; the essential doctrine of truth concerning salvation.

"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). The priests who were opposed to Christ, His claims and teaching, accepted the gospel truth as proclaimed by the apostles. They had preferred the law and Judaism but now were willing to let them go and accept the gospel of Christ, believing the teachings of Christ which led to their conversion.

"And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27). The door of faith was opened to the Gentiles through the preaching of doctrinal faith, or gospel truth which led to evangelical, or saving faith.

"And so were the churches established in the faith" (Acts 16:15); that is, the doctrinal truths concerning Christ. They had suffered great persecutions because of their belief in Christ.

Paul wrote, "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith" (I Tim. 4:1). Faith here is doctrine, sound teaching. Jude admonishes as follows: "Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Faith here also is doctrine, or the revealed truth which needed no additions and could have no subtractions, neither any alterations, for it would never change.

The sound doctrinal faith, if declared, leads to evangelical, or saving faith. That is, if the gospel truth is declared and believed, it will lead to salvation. Every person who has accepted the evangelical faith and is saved, should also accept the doctrinal faith in order to keep saved and be sound in belief. All ministers, Bible teachers, and gospel workers are the proper persons to exercise this faith by preaching and teaching it to others. This will lead to the conviction of sinners, for the Holy Spirit will bear witness to the truth of the gospel, and this will inspire evangelical faith, which leads to the salvation of sinners. Doctrinal faith also will strengthen and establish Christians so that they will not be driven about by false doctrines.

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06 -- GIFT OF FAITH

The Bible teaches that there is such a thing as the gift of faith. This faith must be distinguished from saving faith and doctrinal faith. The gift of faith is a gift. Saving, or justifying faith, is a grace.

Faith as a gift is a divine enablement; a divine implement; an employment. The gift of faith is given by the Holy Spirit, not to sinners, but to believers. All believers do not possess the gift of faith. This gift is not given to all, but like all other gifts only to some. This is one of the gifts of the Spirit and is classed with the spiritual gifts.

Paul writes, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal (for the profit of all). For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another (not all) faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit." (I Cor. 12:4, 7-9). It is to be observed here that all gifts are not given to the same person, but a different gift is given to a different person. However, the different gifts which are given to different persons are given by the same Spirit. We see here that not all, but only some possess the gift of faith. It is to be observed from I Cor. 12, the great chapter on gifts, that the Holy Spirit has a treasury of gifts. These He gives to men, but not all to one man.

Another Scripture: "Though I have all faith, (gift of faith) so that I could remove mountains and have not charity (a grace), I am nothing" (I Cor. 13:2). Moving mountains does not save a person. Possessing gifts does not save us. Doing great things does not save a person. We are saved by grace through faith (evangelical or saving faith).

The gift of faith is not essential to our personal salvation, neither is personal salvation obtained through this faith, for then salvation would be by the exercise of some gift, and by works. It is given by the Spirit to some Christians as a gift, or divine implement, to exercise in their ministry or calling, after they have been saved. Evangelical faith is personal and subjective, while the gift of faith is general and objective. Again, the gift of faith is not for personal gratification, personal benefit, nor for personal glory, but for the benefit of others. It is to be employed for the benefit of the members of the body of Christ.

The gift of faith is to be employed by the one that possesses it for others, even as a believer possesses any other gifts, which are to be exercised for the edification of believers, or the addition of sinners into the body of Christ through repentance and evangelical faith.

If the gift of faith is exercised in relation to a minister or evangelist who declares the doctrinal faith (preaching the gospel) to sinners, it will make it effective in relation to the unbelievers, and may lead them to believe the doctrinal faith and then to exercise evangelical faith, and thus be converted. It is to be exercised in relation to all who labor in the gospel in any way. When faith as a doctrine is declared by a minister, then is backed up by faith as a gift in a Christian, it may inspire evangelical faith in a sinner, which will lead to his salvation.

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07 -- ACTIVE FAITH

Active faith might be classed under evangelical faith, and also the gift of faith. However, we want to consider active faith not in relation to getting saved, neither the exercising of the gift of faith which only a few persons possess, but the general exercising of faith in relation to our needs, our victories, our successes, after we are saved. Faith must be exercised all along by every saved person in order to keep saved, to obtain blessings, to achieve victories and to obtain answers to prayer. Active faith is that faith which brings blessings, deliverances, and things to pass.

Hebrews eleven, the great faith chapter, gives us many clear examples of active faith. It was by faith that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice to God than Cain. By faith, Enoch was translated that he should not see death. By faith, Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house. By faith, Abraham obeyed God, going out of his own country, not knowing where to go, only as God revealed His will to him. By faith, Sarah was enabled to become the mother of Isaac. By faith, Moses led Israel out of Egypt. By faith, the walls of Jericho fell down, etc. Then in a concise record the writer says, "and what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Japhthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 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 the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again" (Hebrews 11:32-35).

These are illustrations of active faith. These saints possessed active faith. It set things in motion, mighty acts came to pass through their faith. Active faith is manifest, is spectacular. It encourages people to believe God for more and greater things. Answers to prayer inspire us to pray more.

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08 -- PASSIVE FAITH

There is such an element in Christian experience as passive faith. This passive faith should be distinguished from evangelical faith and the gift of faith. Here is where many need help and instruction. Many people are tempted because they do not see things come to pass, because their prayers are not answered, because they have to endure many sorrows, trials, poverty and afflictions. The Devil suggests to them that they do not possess any faith, and they often chide themselves because they think they do not possess any active faith, therefore, do not possess any faith at all. Some good people who possess active faith may not understand nor appreciate some dear saint of God who does not possess active faith, but has passive faith.

Passive faith must be distinguished from active faith. It is not the faith that acts, but that is acted on. It is the faith that suffers, which endures, though it does not receive what it desires, yet it trusts in God and commits itself to God.

Job possessed a passive faith. He sustained great loss and was afflicted for months. He did not know why so much befell him, why all that he possessed was swept away, why he lost his health and was afflicted, why all seemed so dark and no light for a long time shone upon him, or his condition. He endured, though he was denied. He said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

The careful Bible reader will observe a change from the active faith in Hebrews eleven, to that of the passive faith. This change is observed in verse 35, the last statement of the active faith, and the first statement of the passive faith are these: "Women received their dead raised to life again," "And others were tortured." Continuing our consideration concerning the passive faith, we read, "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and

imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Hebrews 11:36-38). Unto many today it would seem that these did not possess any faith, and were not worthy to be named, but only to be designed as "others." The question might be asked in connection with and in contradistinction with the heroes of faith as named in verses 32-34 who possessed active faith, Did these "others" possess any faith?

In answering the question, Did they possess any faith? we must answer, Yes. They possessed a passive faith, an enduring, a suffering faith. Of these it is recorded, "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith." Let it be observed that they possessed a higher type of faith than those who possessed the active faith. The passive faith is more pleasing to the Lord, and is greater in His sight than the active faith.

Why are these who possessed passive faith mentioned last and not first? Is it because their faith was inferior to the active faith? No, not at all. They are mentioned last because their faith was better, of a higher type, more pleasing to the Lord and more in the spiritual realm and not in the material realm. The Scriptures will bear out this fact. According to the universal testimony of the Scriptures it was the best, therefore, it was mentioned last. We read, "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual" (I Cor. 15:46). With God, all things are better farther on. There is a gradual revelation of God to man. In each succeeding age, there is an advanced revelation of His love, goodness and power over each preceding age. The best with God is served last. The world, sin, and Satan, serve their best first, and the worst last. With God, everything gets better and better as time goes on. According to this principle, the passive faith of these who were tortured, mocked, scourged, imprisoned, stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, pleased God more than those who possessed active faith.

People think if they had faith they would receive anything and everything they ask of God, and if they do not receive it, they do not possess any faith. Sometimes people throw away their confidence because they do not see more come to pass in their lives. Paul commands that we "fight the good fight of faith" (I Tim. 6:12). There are times when we must exercise faith in order to keep our faith; yes, fight to keep it. Paul calls this a good fight.

The apostle Peter writes something very encouraging concerning the passive or enduring faith: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:6, 7). There are some interesting facts stated and implied in this Scripture. When we receive what we have asked for, our faith is not tried. When we do not receive, but are denied, then our faith is tried. It may seem to us and to others that we do not have any faith, but Christ knows all about us, how much faith we possess, and how much and how long to try our faith. If we can rejoice, even though we are in heaviness, and denied, yet endure, this faith is more precious to God, and the value of it will be more precious to us than the gold of this earth. The passive faith will not always be denied. If it is not rewarded in this life, it will be

revealed and rewarded, and "be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." The longer faith has to wait, the more it will receive.

The active faith and the passive faith stand in marked contrast. In the active faith, some escaped the edge of the sword, while in the passive faith some were slain with the edge of the sword.

In the active, some stopped the mouths of lions. In the passive, some were sawn asunder. In the active, some quenched the violence of fire, were made strong, subdued kingdoms, etc. In the passive, some were imprisoned, destitute, afflicted, tormented, wandered in deserts, hid. in caves, etc.

God will test us and our faith. It would require far more grace and faith, and faith of a higher type to be slain with a sword than to escape its edge; to be devoured by lions, than to see their mouths stopped; to be poor, destitute, afflicted, tormented, persecuted and misunderstood, than to receive an abundance, always have good health, be applauded and honored. It will test us far more to be denied and yet remain sweet and joyful, than to get what we want and rejoice.

The Lord receives far more glory out of the passive faith, that is, when we endure, suffer and wait, yet are patient, obedient, and trustful, than He does when we receive all we desire, and think it was our great faith that brought it, instead of the goodness of God.

The prophet Habakkuk had learned the secret of surmounting denials, poverty and trials when he wrote: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor 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" (Hab. 3:17,18). Such faith will be honored by God, will make His strength our strength, will make us quick and sure-footed like hind's feet, will enable us to live above every opposing element (See Hab. 3:19).

Let us illustrate the difference between the active or working faith, and the passive, or enduring faith in relation to the testing of faith: Suppose an evangelist receives a call to be the evangelist of a large and strong church. He is met at the depot by a delegation and given a warm and hearty welcome. He makes his home with a rich family and enjoys modern conveniences. Success crowns his labors, and he makes a report that one hundred fifty seekers sought the Lord under his ministry. Many honors are bestowed upon him and he received an offering of three hundred dollars for a twelve day's revival. He is elated and rejoices greatly. He may even congratulate himself that he possesses great faith. We will all agree that his faith under success and prosperity will not be tested greatly. He does not need to sacrifice to rejoice. It requires no effort to shout.

Over against this picture there is this incident: An equally holy evangelist accepts a call. He pays twelve dollars for his carfare to take him to his appointed place. He has barely enough money for his fare, and not enough for the needs of his family. He is not met at the station by a delegation nor entertained in a modern home, but is entertained in a home of poverty and has poor accommodations. He weeps and prays more than the former evangelist. There are only twelve

definite conversions in a two weeks' effort. The offering he receives is small, so that he is not able to meet his rent, light bill, etc., nor to replenish his larder which had become depleted. In addition to temporal needs pressing him, Satan tempts him sorely. He has to pray much, and sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving to keep joyful and trustful. The trial of his faith is severe. His faith is of a passive type, and is tested far more than the faith of the former evangelist.

Let us not judge people and say they do not have any faith when they are called upon to suffer loss, endure afflictions, or are denied. The Lord knows the measure of faith they possess. Satan takes advantage of many people that are poor, afflicted and limited, who wonder why they are denied, and health, hope and help do not come. Let these hold on, weep on, trust on. Their faith is passive. This is the kind of faith the Lord tries and it is precious in His sight. It will be rewarded at His second coming.

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09 -- INCREASING FAITH

Faith is an element which may be obtained F increased or lost. The faith of some people becomes crippled, and they become chronic doubters. These are hard cases to deal with. A Christian specialist on faith who knows faith, how it is increased, how it is crippled and how it may be recovered; or in other words, a spiritual diagnostician who can diagnose the disease called doubt and unbelief and prescribe the proper remedy can help such persons.

In the ninety-six or more distinct elements which have been discovered, very few exist singly. Practically everything is a combination of two or more elements. God is the great Combiner. The more we discover the proper combination of elements, the more we are made to marvel at the wisdom and goodness of God. This fact is true in the virtues and qualities of Christian experience; Christian growth and success in the ministry.

If faith is to grow, it must have the proper soil in which to grow and the proper elements to enrich it. Three elements which must unite in order for faith to operate are: obedience to God's Word, humility of heart and patience. Faith is an act of the heart and will, therefore, involves obedience. We can not obtain what God has promised and disobey God. We can not disobey God and believe God. The element of disobedience absolutely can not combine with faith. They are not compatible. God's promises are all given upon the condition of obedience and faith. It has been observed that seekers at an altar did not get through though they prayed, confessed and wept. To the observer it seemed that God denied them. The element of obedience was lacking. The instant they settled it to obey God, that instant faith mounted up and moved God, and the answer came instantly. The same is true sometimes in the lives of Christians when their prayers are denied. Such a one should check up on himself and see if there is a glad "yes" in his heart to the whole will of God. The ten lepers were cleansed "as they went." They prayed to Christ to cleanse them. He said, "Go show yourselves unto the priests." "And it came to pass that, as they went, they were cleansed." All the faith that it required to be cleansed was to obey Christ. It was a test to their obedience whether they would go before they were cleansed or wait until after they were cleansed. If they had argued and complained as follows: "We will not start until we are cleansed," or, "It is no use to go until we are cleansed," nothing would have been gained, nor cleansing

obtained by arguing and disobeying. Evidently by the time they were out of sight, they were cleansed. Let it be remembered that faith will respond in obedience to God's Word. He will keep His Word at any cost.

In the case of Peter catching fish in the day time and getting a net full to fill two boats to the sinking point was an act of obedience more than it was of faith. Peter said, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing." This implied that there was no use to try it in the day time. Peter further replied, "Nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net." It was his obedience which brought results. Obedience to God must run parallel with faith in God.

The element of humility also is a wonderful aid to faith. Taking our right place before God moves God to do what He has promised. Humility honors God and abases self. He who humbles himself will be honored by God. The person who is employed by God and does not take the honor, but gives it to God, and does not touch the glory, may go as far with God into grace as he desires.

Patience must have her way for God to work out His plan. A weak faith tries to hurry God. God never gets frustrated, nor in a hurry, for He has all eternity in which to work. Abraham and Sarah had to learn that the promises of God are inherited through faith, obedience and patience. In God's time, John the Baptist was born, even though Zacharias and Elisabeth had forgotten their prayers and given up hope. Sometimes God can answer prayer instantly. When He deals with men, who are creatures of time, it often requires time to bring them to the place of surrender.

If more faith is desired, the believer should search the Scriptures. When people desire to purchase anything, they go where the merchandise is kept in stock. If people want groceries, they go to the grocery store; or when they want hardware, they go to a hardware store, etc. If more faith is desired, go to the Lord and the Scriptures. Read the Scriptures -- feed on the Scriptures -- obey the Scriptures -- believe the Scriptures -- this will make faith grow. We read, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17); and "Many of them which heard the word believed" (Acts 4:4). Believing what God has said in His Word increases faith.

Faith also is increased by looking to the Author of faith. The "look" of the Old Testament is equivalent to the faith of the New. In the O. T., the Lord commanded people to look. We read, "It shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live" (Num. 21:8). This was a faith of obedience. Again, we read, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. 45:22). In the N. T. we read, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31), and "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2). Faith comes, or is inspired by looking to Jesus. This looking is one of desire, hope, trust, and expectancy. The Lord will not disappoint those who look to Him.

Faith is a gift of God and the act of the creature. God naturally endows us with the faith faculty, however, we must exercise this faculty and do the believing. God gives us the faculty of sight, but we must do the looking. He gives us the ability to walk, but we must do the walking. As a gift, it is at the disposal of all who want it and exercise the will for it.

Faith can be had for the asking. Christ said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Luke 11:9). This promise is given in

connection with prayer and faith which will be seen by reading Luke 11:1-13. The father of the demon-possessed son said to Christ, "Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). He placed little faith in his own faith, but asked for a greater faith in Christ.

There is yet another manner in which faith may be increased, and that is by using the faith we possess. Many great men have testified to this fact. To begin with, their faith was small. They prayed for certain things and their faith grasped them. That encouraged them to ask for more and greater things, which also came to pass. Thus their faith kept growing. Christ said, "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (Matt. 25:29). The Lord gives more faith to the person who properly employs the faith he already possesses.

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10 -- REALM OF FAITH

Faith always operates in its realm, its province. This means, faith operates along the line of that which God wants done. The thing for every Christian to do is to find out what God wants him to do, then obey. It has been said that God's promises hang over God's purposes.

A power line always follows the track where the trolley runs. When the trolley car is on the track, the power is right above it where it can always be contacted. If it runs off the track, the power can not be contacted. It operates only where it is intended to run. The track or rails symbolize the purposes of God. The power line symbolizes the promises of God. The electricity or power symbolizes the Holy Spirit and His power. The car symbolizes the people of God. When a man of God is in the will of God, he may freely employ the power of God, which is always within reach.

We learn much concerning faith from the great faith chapter of the Bible (Hebrews eleven). Faith enabled each person to do what God called him to do. Adam and Eve are passed over. Their faith and justification were passive and receptive. The Lord God killed some innocent animals and made coats of their skins to cover (which means atone) their nakedness. Abel learned this lesson, therefore, his faith led him to kill a lamb for a sacrifice. God was pleased with his faith and sacrifice and witnessed His approval by saving Abel. God's purpose for Enoch was that he should walk with Him and warn an unbelieving world. God placed His seal on his faith and testimony. God's purpose for Noah was that he should build an ark to the saving of his house. His faith was honored by the Lord, for that was His purpose for him. It would be fallacy and ridiculous for any one now to build an ark and teach that a universal flood was coming. The Lord would not bless any such undertaking, for that is not what He wants done. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, obtained faith to do what the Lord called them to do. So it was with every Bible character. Faith was granted to each one to believe for the accomplishment of God's purpose for his life. With every gift God gives, or whatever calling He bestows, He also gives the proper amount of grace and the proportion of faith (Romans 12:6).

Faith is not a thing of uniform results. It acts or behaves differently in different people. Abel's faith resulted in death. Enoch's faith took him to heaven without dying. Noah's faith resulted

in a holy fear that God would drown all men, so he did something about it and built an ark. Abraham's faith resulted in leaving his country and going into another one, which the Lord showed him. The faith of Joseph was manifested all through his life, but particularly when he died. When Moses was born, his mother's faith led her to hide him for three months. By faith Rahab perished not with those who perished. Faith led each one to do the right thing.

Faith also is farsighted. It sees and foresees. All who were possessed with it became farsighted. Though the patriarchs died, not having received the promises, they saw them afar off. They had eyes of faith. It persuaded them to believe, live and act as though they already possessed them. They also had arms of faith. They embraced the promises of God into their bosoms and cherished them as if they were present, real and already in their possession. Such faith enabled them to suffer and be faithful to the Lord. It took them through with victory and assurance. It gave them soul rest and peace.

Let each person discover what God's will is for this life -- the line of his calling, then live in that will, for there He will give the proportion of grace and faith to do what He wants done.

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THE END