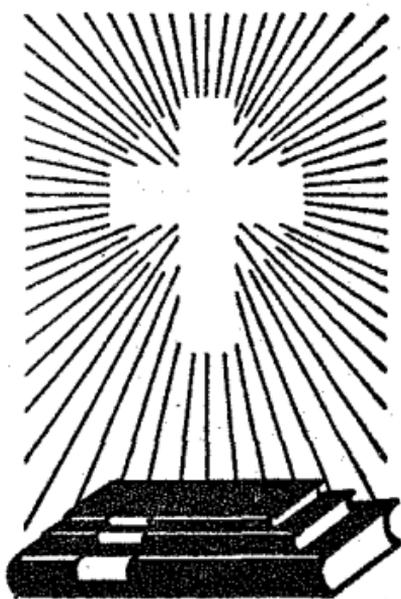

FAITH

BY ELBERT A. SMITH



**REORGANIZED CHURCH
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FAITH

Text.—"Have faith in God."—Mark
11: 22

What Is Your Mental Attitude?

A very ancient and wise preacher named Alma told his hearers that if they could do no more than "desire to believe," they should encourage that desire until faith came, and after faith, knowledge. Do you "desire to believe"?

A very modern philosopher named William James has a book entitled, *The Will to Believe*. He argues that it is perfectly logical to have the *will* to believe.

Faith offers all. Doubt offers nothing, and will take away that which you have. It is the creeping paralysis of all hope and all initiative.

Faith Dynamic in All Human Institutions and Activities

The home is the unit of civilization, yet marriage and the home are based

on faith. If a man can trust a woman with his name, his honor, and the souls of his children, he ought to trust the God who made the woman.

All democratic governments are based on faith. All business and financial systems and credits are based on faith. If you trust the promise of men on a slip of paper, why not trust God, whose promises stand sure forever?

By faith men plant, believing that they will reap. By faith men build, believing that they will occupy. By faith men explore, hoping to discover.

A Universal Human Instinct

All races have some form of religion. The religious sentiment is universal, and has always been so. Every idol, however crude, expresses an ideal. It testifies to the never ending search for God. Faith is natural. Atheism is an artificial culture.

Faith in Law the Basis of All Science

All sciences are based, first on faith in *continuity* of law; second, on faith in *universality* of law. We cannot go back beyond recorded history, yet we believe that law has always been in force and will always continue. Lodge has a splendid lecture entitled, "Con-

tinuity." On that principle he bases his belief in the immortality of the human soul.

We are chained to this old earth, which is small compared to some of the heavenly bodies. If a man could journey toward the most distant visible star with the speed of the fastest express train, he would be old and dead long before he got out of the switch yard; and his bones would be turned to dust before the conductor came to take up his ticket. Yet we assume that law reigns supreme in that distant star and in other stars beyond it, as far as it is from this earth. We believe, in other words, that law is universal.

By faith astronomy weighs the stars. By faith geology reads earth's prehistoric records. By faith chemistry mixes her compounds.

Science rears her edifice on faith in continuous and universal law. Religion rears her temple on faith in the great Law-giver, a self-existent, universal, never-changing God. "I am the Lord, I change not."—Malachi 3: 6.

The Testimony of Scientists

It has been assumed that science is in conflict with religion. This is not

true. There is no conflict between true science and true religion.

Sir Oliver Lodge says, "Religion has its roots deep in the reality of things."

Lord Kelvin says, "Science positively affirms creative power."

Professor Larkin, of Lowe Observatory, says that there is not a great scientist living who is not aware of the existence of a dominant mind in the universe.

Faith Carries Her Own Credentials

Doubt is negative and destructive. Faith is constructive and affirmative. Why not join the builders? Ally yourself with those who believe and affirm and create. Christianity is creative.

Atheism leads only to chaos. Emma Goldman's creed began, "I believe in no God." It ran on very logically: "I believe in no God. I believe in no government. I believe in no marriage. I believe in no property."

The Sound Basis of Faith

Credulity has its root in ignorance. Any half-wit can be credulous.

Faith has its root in observation and revelation. It calls for the keen-

est minds, the biggest hearts, and the cleanest lives. Faith studies the known, and reasons from the known to the unknown. (Romans 1:20.) With its feet upon the known and the real it reaches into the unknown and discovers truth.

The universe argues the existence of a creator. A study of the universe leads to a belief in his existence. Revelation shows his moral nature and his will concerning man. Both study and revelation are necessary.

Faith Taught by the Revelations of God

Jesus, to whom the whole Christian world renders homage, gave as the first postulate of his creed, "Have faith in God."—Mark 11:22.

The whole body of the written revelations of God's word appeals to faith because it meets man's spiritual need. It brings him hope when otherwise there would be no hope.

Finally, however, there is the great character of Jesus Christ which is the supreme revelation. He is the "word [the revelation] that became flesh." (John 1:12.) The beauty, the wonder, and the importance of that revelation will grow upon you as you contemplate it. The forces and

powers of nature reveal to you a God of power and of dominion. But Jesus came revealing to you a personal God of love and of mercy, "full of grace and truth."

The War Between Faith and Doubt

There is a never-ending war between faith and doubt. No thinking man can avoid taking part in it at some time. "There is no discharge in that war."

You cannot escape that war, but you may have your choice. You may fight against doubt and on the side of faith, or you may fight against faith and on the side of doubt. You may stand in the shadow and in the darkness with doubt, and fight against the appeal of God that comes into your heart from time to time. Or you may stand in the light with faith and fight against the powers of doubt and despair that assail you. Why not fight under Immanuel's flag?

The follower of Jesus Christ has everything to gain and nothing to lose. The atheist has all to lose and nothing to gain.

This church calls you to have faith, and to serve a personal God, a universal, all powerful, all wise God, who is the same yesterday, today, and

forever. He is willing to bless man, to heal man, and to reveal his will to man today just as he did in all past ages when man had faith. In him there is no variableness, neither shadow of changing. He is an ever present help in every time of need.

Accept, then, the first great fundamental principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and have faith in God.

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