

## “THE ONE FAITH”

(Part of Symposium by Alex M. Graham. 1916 Convention Report, Page 184.)

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.” It is a very desirable thing that we should have faith. Do you know there are a whole lot of people in the Christian world who think they have the faith and have no faith, or they have not THE faith. It makes me think of a story a man who lives up in Boston told me. At least they say he lives in Boston, because he knows, and people up there are said to be of that kind, they know things up there because Boston is the city of “beans and brains,” and they know. This man said he knew what kind of religion a man believed by the kind of a car he was running. If he had a Pierce-Arrow he was a Unitarian; if a Packard, he was a Congregationalist; if a Peerless, he was an Episcopalian; if it were a Ford car, he was a Christian Scientist because he THOUGHT he was running a car and he was not. (Laughter.) And so there are a great many people in this world who think they have got the faith and haven't got it. We are told there are about 350 different kinds of faiths in the world. They say there are that many anyway. You know some people have had a great deal of trouble finding out which of these faiths was the real true one. They have done a great deal of roaming around from one to another.

I recall one dear brother who was an infidel before he came to think about any faith at all, and he used to slam the Bible every chance he got. One day a fellow workman who was a Christian said to him, “Did you ever read the Bible?” “No.” “Well, it seems to me you are very unfair if you have not read the Bible to slam it every time you have a chance. How do you know what it teaches if you have not read it?” This gentleman thought it could be a good idea to read the Bible. So he bought a Bible that very evening, and the result was he was converted. He believed it, and then he wanted to know where to go to church. The nearest one to him was a Methodist church and he joined it because he lived near it. He wasn't in there very long, however. He became a Bible student, and he began to study the Bible in the Methodist Church and he began to find out that sprinkling was not baptism. He began to tell them so, but they didn't like it. They said, “We are Methodists in here and we are baptized by having a little water sprinkled upon us, and we are all satisfied. We think you should be satisfied too, and you shouldn't be making a disturbance in here.” He said: “If I can't believe what is in my Bible I will not stay in the Methodist Church.” And he promptly got out. There was a Baptist Church on the opposite corner. They heard about this man, and they said to him, “You are just the man we want. Come right in with us. You are straight on baptism. Come right in.” He then joined the Baptist Church thinking he had found the faith he was looking for, but he kept on being a Bible student, and soon found out that the Bible had a whole lot to say about the second advent of Jesus. And so he began to tell the people what he had found out about the second advent. By and by one of the gray-headed deacons said to him, “We like you very much, but we don't like what you say, it is not good Baptist doctrine. That

is Second Adventist doctrine and we would rather you keep still about that.” “Well, if I can’t speak and believe what I see in the Bible in the Baptist Church I will get out;” and he left the Baptist Church. The Adventist people heard about this man and said, “This is the man we are looking for. He is all right on baptism, and all right on the second advent. He should be here.” They went over and saw him and advised him that he should join the Second Advent Church. He joined them and thought that he surely had a good sound place for his feet at last. But he did not belong to the Second Advent Church very long until, continuing to be Bible student, began to find something in the Bible about another age coming on by and by. He saw something that showed him clearly there was another age after this Gospel Age was finished up. He saw it very indistinctly, but nevertheless saw it plainly enough, and began to tell them about it—that there was another age when, according to the words of Jesus, certain sins would be forgiven and certain other sins not forgiven. The preacher got after him and said, “Look here, brother, that kind of talk will not do. This is a Second Advent church and we believe that when Jesus comes he is going to burn up this earth, and we would like to know where is the chance for another age?” This brother says, “My Bible says there is another age, and if I can’t talk what is in the Bible in the Advent church I will get out.” And he got out. And so finally, I am glad to tell you that brother landed in the truth. He found *the* faith.

And so people have had a good deal of trouble finding out what the true faith is. It is said there are 360 different Christian faiths, and among so many how shall we choose the true one? For myself I settle it this way: We are living in 1916 and our Lord Jesus lived 1900 years ago, didn't he? Yes. Very well. Suppose we walk right back down the age and see what we find. Go back to about 1870 and the Christian Science Church drops out. Back a little further and we come to the Second Advent Church, about 1840, there the Advent Church comes to an end; then about the year 1800 the Disciple Church drops out of sight. A little further back we get to John Wesley and when we pass him there is no Methodist Church. Then back to John Knox and after you pass him there is no Presbyterian Church. By and by we get back to Henry VIII. He was a queer sort of a fellow. He concluded to have a pope in London instead of at Rome, and looking around to find a suitable person he concluded he was the best one to be a pope and he made himself head of the Episcopal Church, or English Church; beyond him there is no English Church. Then you get back to Luther, and passing him the Lutheran Church comes to an end. You see that when you pass the Protestant Reformation you have passed every one of the 350 Protestant sects. They did not exist previous to that point at all. We can conclude that they are not the faith we are looking for, because it was the faith that was brought to us by the Lord and the Apostles, the “faith that was once delivered to the saints,” delivered by the Lord and the Apostles back there at the beginning 1900 years ago. We can pass by all these other faiths.

You see, dear friends, I am asked to speak for fifteen minutes on the faith. For fifteen centuries *the faith* has been lost to the Church and it is a difficult task to find it and tell

you about it in fifteen minutes. What is this faith? It is faith in God. “He that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” No other thing will do. We must believe that God is, that is the very beginning of the faith. Then it is faith in all God's promises. Every one of those promises must become yea and amen to us, the faith is faith in God's Word. I was talking to a man on one occasion and he said that he didn't like my religion because it didn't give sufficient glory to Jesus. I said, “What is the trouble?” He said, “Jesus was divine, he was the second person in the Holy Trinity.” I said, “What Scripture do you bring forth to prove that point?” He said, “The very fact that he *raised himself* from the dead proves he was divine.” I said, “My dear brother, let me have your bible?” I found seven places in the “Acts of the Apostles” where it said “Him God raised from the dead.” I read them to him and when I got through he looked at me and said, “I don't believe a word of it.” This man had so little faith he did not believe the Word of God. My friends, we must believe the word of God. Unless we can stand upon the words of God we may never hope to have the one faith. The one faith is a faith not only in respect to doctrines taught in God's word, but also includes our conduct in our daily life. That is also a part of the faith, because if a man does not do what the Lord teaches he is denying the faith, the Scriptures tell us. You can deny the faith just as thoroughly by an improper and impure life as by denying the doctrine. We may understand that the one faith is not simply a belief in these doctrines. They are good and wonderful and necessary, but along with that there must be also, purity of life respecting our daily conduct and the spirit we must have.

Dear friends, we need to have that one faith as never before. There never was a time in all the history of the world when it was more necessary that God's people should have the one faith, and that they should stand clear of all these other faiths, and that they should stand on God's word, having nothing more. “The just shall live by faith.”

You remember in Hab. 2:1-4 how he was told to stand on the tower and watch and see what the Lord would say to him. He saw a vision that was to be so plain that every man should see it and be able to understand it. And he tells us that the vision is yet for an appointed time. If it tarry we are to wait for it. It is yet for an *appointed* time. So that vision has not yet been fulfilled. There are some things in that vision that you and I are yet waiting for. Habakkuk in the 4th verse says to the man who thinks he is sufficient in himself, that he is not altogether upright. He has lost his faith. “The just [the justified by faith] shall live by faith.” Let us remember there never was a time when the Church of God needed the faith as at the present. We are walking today by faith, because we do not know where we are walking to. We have been walking from Gilgal to Bethel, to Jericho and to Jordan. But we walk by faith, we have faith in God that He knows how to lead us and having brought us to Jordan He knows how to take us to Himself, how to manage the whole thing, and therefore because we walk by faith, because we have *the* faith, our faith is not going to stagger at this or any other thing. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” “The trial of your faith being more precious than of gold that

perishes, etc.” I want to tell you, my dear friends, that no matter what your trial is of love, of patience, of endurance, of brotherly love, after all it sifts right down to a trial of your faith. If your faith is just what it should be, or if you have the one faith, if that one faith is the dominating influence of your life, it needn't make any difference what trial comes to you, you will be a victor, you are going to rise above it, because “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.”

Dear friends, I pray for myself and for you and all the saints of God that we may all stand upon the one faith, that we may realize that the one faith came from our precious Lord and his apostles, and that the record of it is in His precious word, and if we keep this faith, we will be saved amidst all our difficulties in the world, and we will be able to guide our bark and see that it is finally brought into the glorious haven of rest where there is peace for ever more.