

Principles  
of the  
Gospel  
"Faith and Repentance"



Apostle B. C. Flint

## **"FAITH"**

"But 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." Hebrews 11:6.

We begin this tract with the simplest, and most fundamental principle that can be found in all our study of God, or of humanity either. Faith begins almost at birth. The babe in arms soon learns this simple law of life. Its faith in its mother is as natural as the very breath it breathes.

Then faith enters into every activity of human experience. Our very next breath is ours only on the principle of faith. Whether we will admit it or not, faith is exercised in everything we do. The farmer sees his harvest through the eye of faith, while he is yet in the act of sowing the seed. As we close our eyes to rest each night, we envision the morrow through the eye of faith. Here we should like to present a little poem by Lizzie York Case.

## **"NO UNBELIEF"**

There is no unbelief;  
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod,  
And waits to see it push away the clod  
He trusts in God.

Whoever says  
When clouds are in the sky, "Be patient  
heart,  
Light breaketh, by and by,"  
Trusts the Most High.

Whoever sees  
'Neath winter's field of snow,  
The silent harvest of the future grow,  
God's power must know.

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Whoever lies down  
On his couch to sleep, content to lock  
Each sense in slumber deep,  
Knows God will keep.

Whoever says: "Tomorrow,"  
"The Unknown," "The Future,"  
Trusts unto that power alone,  
He dares disown.

The heart that looks on  
When the eyelids close, and dares to live,  
When life has only woes,  
God's comfort knows.

There is no unbelief!  
And still by night and day, unconsciously  
The heart lives by the faith the lips decry!  
God knoweth why.

This poem is such a powerful lesson on the principle of faith, that we feel it needs little analysis. However, in studying the principle of faith from a purely religious standpoint, it springs into relief as being the beginning of our profession as a fundamental that comes FIRST. "And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God." Mark 11:22.

#### FAITH AND BELIEF

There is a difference between "faith" and "belief," though they both spring from the same human impulse. I may believe that a thing exists, but have very little faith in its value. We well remember when the automobile, or "Horseless Carriage," as it was then called, came into being. We saw the things. We believed they existed, but few had any faith in them as a means of transportation. Today we go even farther than that. Farther than mere faith. We KNOW now that the automobile is the principle means of transportation the world over and we also know that it is rapidly being supplanted by the aeroplane. We are

told by the Apostle Paul, that "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17. This shows what must ever be the beginning of "faith in God." We must first "hear" about God before we can have any faith in Him. Thus "Faith" becomes the first principle of the gospel of Christ. By the very nature of things, it must be so.

In the sixth chapter of Hebrews beginning with the first verse, "faith" is classified as one of six principles that Paul calls the "principles of the doctrine of Christ." This is logical, and when followed in the sequence given, the reason for faith being first, is clearly manifest, because "faith comes by hearing." We hear about God, we learn to believe that "He is." We feel a kinship. This is because of the fact that we came from Him in the beginning. Of course we haven't established that fact, at the time of our hearing. However, since the principles of the doctrine of Christ, in their entirety, is the thing calculated to bring us to God; to bring us salvation, it naturally follows that the normal thing that would happen from our "hearing" about God is that it will lead to an investigation. In other words, our faith begins to grow, to take root. Then comes the sequence. Our faith has reached the point that we realize a difference between us and God as the source of our being, so we desire to bridge the chasm that divides us. We realize that this chasm is due not to God being aloof from us, but that we ourselves have made the chasm, so the next thing, in order that our desire to be "like God" will be realized, will be repentance, which is the topic for our next tract. Repentance is a godly turning from sin, a renunciation of sin, and a burning desire to become Godlike. Baptism in water, for the remission of our sins, follows in regular order, and was so understood by the author of the book of Hebrews and all other New Testament writers. This is then followed by the birth of the Holy Spirit, received through the ordinance of the Laying on of Hands, and these will

be discussed in their regular order in this series of studies.

### WHAT IS FAITH?

Paul tells us that "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1.

A better translation, we think, says that "Faith is the ASSURANCE of things hoped for," etc. The reason we like this better, is because it seems to make the idea clearer, as to what faith really is. True faith, from any standpoint, never stops at mere faith. There is such a thing as becoming "an assurance." In fact, by an acceptance of the gospel and an obedience to its principles, we become ASSURED of the existence of God as our Father in Heaven. We become assured of His Son Jesus Christ as our Saviour. Our faith becomes knowledge. Is this the intent of God in sending His Son into the world? Let us see:

"And this is life eternal, that they might KNOW THEE, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." John 17:3 (Emphasis mine. B. C. F.)

Also this:

"And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that KNOW not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Thessalonians 2:7, 8.

Also:

"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." I Thessalonians 1:5.

These texts all prove that the faith in God that comes through obedience to the principle of faith

as one of the fundamental "principles of the doctrine of Christ," does not leave an individual with a mere faith, or belief alone, but it guarantees "assurance."

An illustration of how faith may become knowledge in simple things, even; I am out on a road where I might have never been before. It is night, and I cannot see any distance at all. It is early in the springtime, and apple trees are in bloom. Suddenly the breezes waft to my sense of smell the fragrance of the blossoms. It is dark. I cannot see them. I do not know if there is an apple tree or a whole orchard in the vicinity but my faith is absolute, that there are apple trees near. On the morrow, when it becomes day, I can have my faith of the night before made into an assurance, even a knowledge.

Even so does God design to give a knowledge of Himself through obedience to the principles of the gospel. And it begins with faith.

### TWO KINDS OF FAITH

There is, as we have shown, a simple faith. A faith that is found in the natural exercise of our normal faculties. This is the kind of faith that is also one of the fundamental principles of the gospel as we have shown, but there is another kind of faith mentioned in the scriptures, and that is a SPECIAL GIFT of faith. Paul so enumerates it among the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He says:

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another FAITH by the same Spirit; to another the gifts

of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." (Emphasis mine. B.C.F.) I Corinthians 12:4-11.

Now, by thus introducing the principle of FAITH as one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, that is to be given as an abiding Comforter, as a result of obedience to the Gospel, we have opened up the whole Bible story, in its marvelous array of miracles. It was this faith that enabled Noah to preach for over a hundred years, and with seemingly little success. It was what enabled him to believe God that there would be a literal flood, and that as a protection against which he must build an ark, that could ride the waves. By faith Abel's offering was acceptable to God, and Cain's wasn't. By faith Enoch was translated, and did not see death. "By faith Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness." By faith Abraham was willing to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice, because he believed that God required it. We know how this faith was rewarded.

Every outstanding story of the Old Testament where some wonderful miracle was performed, will indicate that it was faith that brought these wonderful things about. It also led to obedience further, as in the case of Naaman, the Syrian leper. He had faith to journey to where the Prophet Elisha was but when told what to do to rid himself of his leprosy, his pride rebelled, and he came near forfeiting the boon he sought, until reminded by his servant that it was obedience as well as faith, that eventually brought the desired result.

Faith stopped the mouths of lions, beat back the floods, opened the path through the Red sea, that the children of Israel might go through dry shod, quenched the fires of destruction, tamed the rebel-

lion of sinful men, and proved that it was and is the most potent force in the world, when exercised in keeping with the will of God. In short, it is the thing above all things that brings us to and keeps us close to God.

First, we must have faith in God the Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. These are the authors and finishers of our faith. Then we must have faith in our fellow man. We must have faith in our country. We must have faith in ourselves.

The wise men had faith that if they followed the star that at its end they would find the King they had come to worship. The shepherds had faith that it was the Messiah whom they saw as a babe in Bethlehem's manger. Mary had faith to believe that God was not playing her false, in the wonderful announcement that she was to be the mother of the Son of God. So, in this not only were her hopes realized even when she beheld that Son nailed to the cross, and she knew He had finished His work among the Jews, but from that cross has the whole world been illumined with the faith that conquers all.

#### HOW MUCH FAITH MUST WE HAVE?

Speaking to His disciples Jesus said:

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove;" Matthew 17:20.

"Oh," says some one, "that isn't much faith. Any one can exercise that with very little effort." But stay, Jesus didn't say that it was the size of a mustard seed that He was talking about, but "as" a mustard seed, and a mustard seed is a growing thing. So, "as" a mustard seed, we must have a growing faith. In proof of this let us ask the Master to explain further:

"And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the

kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth; But when it is sown, it GROWETH UP, and becometh greater than all herbs," etc. Mark 4:30-32. (Emphasis mine. B.C.F.)

Yes, if we have faith AS a grain of mustard seed we will have a growing faith, and then we are told, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matthew 24:13.

### IS FAITH ALL SUFFICIENT?

"What doth it profit my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

Even so, faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; show me thy faith without any works and I will show thee my faith by my works.

Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scriptures were fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justi-

fied by works when she received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." James 2:14-26.

By the above, we are able to understand a living, working faith, such as has been manifested toward us, by our kind Father in Heaven, Himself.

"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." John 3:16.

Yes, God "so loved the world that He gave," yes, gave the most priceless gift, the gift of His Son, that we might live. So in turn we are asked to labor on unto that perfect faith, that will enable us to lay hold of the salvation promised to us through the precious blood of that Son of God, that was shed for us, and, to apply that blood we must obey those principles of the gospel, that Christ on the cross made effective for that very purpose. In short, the only way that we can apply that precious blood is by complying with the requirements that Jesus laid down as the means of our becoming heirs with Him in the Kingdom of His Father.

Jesus says, "come follow me." Then He proceeds to set in operation in His life the things He expects us to do, to follow Him. At the baptism of Jesus, John demurred: "I have need to be baptized of thee and comest thou to Me?" Ah! but listen; "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."

Just as James reasons, when I have that living working faith that leads me to the Master, and I desire to be His disciple, I'll follow Him all the way, and make no excuses. "And Jesus saith unto them, Have faith in God."

### "REPENTANCE"

"In those days came John the Baptist, preach-

ing in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Matthew 3:1, 2.

#### WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death." II Corinthians 7:9, 10.

By the above we can readily understand why the principle of "repentance" comes second in the plan of salvation, because of having heard of God, having believed in Him, having established that faith that makes us understand our relationship to God as our creator, as our kind Father in heaven, having been made to realize that through the fall of man, and our own transgressions, we are aliens, and that there is a chasm between us, that must be bridged by ourselves and that Christ came into the world as the gift of God to His creation with a plan to enable us to accomplish that end, we normally sense a desire for the bridging of that chasm. In other words, we begin to "repent." I say begin to repent, because repentance is a matter of progression, the same as faith is. Our text from Second Corinthians proves this, because it says: "For godly sorrow WORKETH repentance to salvation not to be repented of:" Thus we see that just as we grow in faith until we receive a perfect knowledge of God, (and this continues throughout life) just so, as we realize more and more our need of repentance, so will our godly sorrow increase.

In our latter day revelations we have been told to "say nothing but repentance, to this generation." This is not to be understood, as meaning that we shall preach on no other subject, but the gospel principle of repentance, but it does mean that ALL we say, on ANY subject, should have for

its purpose the bringing of us closer to God.

Therefore repentance, rightly understood, will follow faith as naturally as night follows day. We cannot have gospel faith without repentance.

The great evangelist, Sam Jones, once said that repentance means to "quit your meanness." That is very good so far as it goes, but "quitting our meanness" is not always repentance. Some people's meanness reaches the point where society protects itself, by taking up the transgressor, and lodging him in prison, and there he MUST "quit his meanness," because there is nothing else that he can do.

This lesson was brought forcibly home to me when in the early days of my missionary experience, my route took me past the grim old walls of the Wisconsin State Penitentiary, at Waupun, Wisconsin. Inside those walls some nine hundred and more unfortunate human beings had "quit their meanness" because they had to. It may be true that some of them did actually repent in the true sense of the word, and yet I couldn't help but think, should any such force be needed to cause human beings to truly repent?

Another lesson was learned from this same experience. From the flagstaff on the big central tower of that prison, floated the stars and stripes, Old Glory, and I thought, here, over the heads of those nine hundred delinquents, was displayed what to me, and all law-abiding citizens of our country, is an emblem of liberty, of freedom. But to those under its folds there, it was not an emblem of liberty, it was an emblem of power. And I thought of the contrast. God also can enforce obedience, can enforce the repentance; but will He? No! He wants me to be sorry that I have done wrong, not sorry that I got caught at it. He wants a godly sorrow for sin committed.

Again a godly repentance is not merely the turning away from sin, and forsaking it. It is not merely

deep regret for wrongs done. Judas was so remorseful for his act of selling his Lord for thirty pieces of silver, that he went out and hung himself. God doesn't want us to do something like that. Had Judas' remorse led him to have dedicated his life to an effort to have undone the wrong he had committed, it would have had much more value to the human race. Peter too, forgot himself and betrayed his Lord, he denied Him and cursed and swore, the Bible tells us, but his remorse led him not to take his own life but to give it doubly to the cause of the Master, and he became one of the greatest evangelists of his day, and finally died a martyr to the cause of Christ.

Restitution then is as much a part of true repentance, as the ceasing to do evil is. It is true that we may not always be able to make restitution to the one we may have injured, but if it is true repentance, God will find ways in which our acts of restitution will be vastly beneficial to mankind in general. So whether either Peter or Judas could ever make up to Christ the wrong they did Him or not, it is to be remembered that Jesus Christ, the man, was not all that is included in the Christ idea, or the idea of a Messiah. Christ was the impersonation of a system. God's system for the salvation of mankind and the redemption of all of God's creation. We may "sell" Christ today, yes, we may even crucify Him, and much of the world today is doing that very thing, hence the command to "say nothing but repentance to this generation." Here a slight digression might illuminate the principle of repentance. We are told in the book of Revelation that Christ was "a lamb slain from the foundation of the world." This brings out the thought then that the work of Christ had its beginning with man's need for it, or at the time that man fell and so separated himself from God. God had no intention of making man, whom He had created in His own image, an automaton, or a machine in His (God's) hands. He made man a free agent. One who could act for himself and accept consequences of his own act. One

place in scripture we are told that: "Adam fell that man might be, and men are that they might have joy." This is simple, and it is logical and scriptural. Had man remained in the state of innocence such as he was in the Garden of Eden, before he brought death upon all of God's creation, there would have been nothing but pure stagnation. There would have been no children born, because they would have changed the simple creation of our first parents, and our first parents would have had no joy because they knew no misery. Therefore, it was very plainly God's purpose to give man his agency, so that by exercising a right of choice, he might become a man, and work out his own salvation.

And because of that, God had prepared His own sacrifice, to bring about the atonement for fallen man, by giving His own Son as a "lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Thus we see that the plan that this slain lamb would bring to humanity, would be a simple plan, but it would be a natural one, and one that man could comply with in an intelligent manner. Man must learn by faith to know God. Having done that he MUST repent, and return to God. There is no question but that Adam learned to have faith in God, immediately after his expulsion from the Garden of Eden, but he had to learn repentance by the bitter experiences that followed his entrance into the changed earth that he had become responsible for, and "Adam" in the form of the human race has been learning that lesson ever since.

Another sidelight on this question may be drawn from the manner in which Christ, the Savior and Redeemer, undertook this great task, the task of winning man back to God, for he never for one moment considered the idea of "forcing" man to repent. His was to be a plan of love, and an appeal to the nature of man that had been created godlike, or what we term, the "better side of man's nature." We will try to visualize Christ in meditation, while contemplating the great work before Him. I presume that it is fair to suppose that He took into



consideration all of the obstacles and difficulties that would be entailed. The very fact of man having been made a free agent would of itself make him a difficult problem. Then there was the force that had been let loose, in the beginning, to tempt and lead man astray, to meet and overcome. In short, how would He go about it? What would be the most effective thing that He could do? Should He send legions of angels to herald the message from one end of the world to the other? No, that would only antagonize man, because man was not yet an angel. Should He cause the message to be emblazoned in letters of fire across the great expanse of heaven, so that man might thus read the message? No, that would only engender fear on the part of man, and it was not fear, but love, that Christ would want from man as His brother. Should He cause the world to be flooded with a written message, so that man might read it at his leisure? No, if that were done, man would resent it and ask, "Why am I chained to earth while you remain in your secure heaven?"

"I know what I will do, I will go down to the earth, and live with man. I'll live his life, and learn to see things from His viewpoint." So the Word became flesh and dwelt among men. And we are told concerning Him and His life here on earth, "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." Hebrews 5:8.

Early in man's experience on the earth we find that God coupled the idea of repentance with that of restitution, for in Leviticus 6:1-5, we read:

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbor in that which was delivered to him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbor; or have found that which was lost and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein; then it shall be, because he

hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered to him to keep, or the lost thing which he found.

"Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering."

Of course we all understand that the above was given under the old Mosaic covenant and was enforced by the magistrates. However, the principle is the same as that which Christ undertook under His plan of salvation, through love, as the following striking example will show:

"And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold." Luke 19:8.

This is the story of Zaccheus the publican who climbed up in the sycamore tree to see the Master as He passed by, because he was a man of small stature, and whom Jesus, knowing the man's heart encouraged by making a visit to his home, and it was on this occasion that he made the statement just quoted from Luke. Now publicans of that time were revenue collectors, or collectors of Roman tribute.

"The principle farmers of this revenue were men of great credit and influence, but the underfarmers, or common publicans, were remarkable for their rapacity and extortion, and were accounted as oppressive thieves and pick-pockets. Hence the Jews classed them with sinners, and would not allow them to enter the temple or synagogues, to partake of the public prayers or offices of judicature, or to give testimony in a court of justice." People's Dictionary of The Bible, by Edwin W. Rice, D. D. page 181.

This little sidelight enables us to understand the Pharisees' feeling toward the Master when they saw Him accept the hospitality of a sinner of this type. The interesting thing in the whole account is the type of repentance that Zaccheus manifested and which won him the approbation of the Saviour.

## **REPENTANCE**

### **As One of the Six Gospel Principles**

"Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, (another and obviously better translation says "not leaving the principles," etc. B.C.F.) let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and the laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Hebrews 6:1, 2.

Here we find the principles of the doctrine of Christ, mentioned as "Faith," "Repentance," "Baptism," "Laying on of Hands," "Resurrection of the Dead," and "Eternal Judgment." The reason we interjected the better translation is because it should be quite evident to everyone, that we could scarcely expect to attain much perfection outside the principles of the doctrine of Christ. It is the "foundation for them" that we are not to try to "lay again." These six principles are fundamental to Christian life and development. They are the "foundation" upon which Christ built His work, and they follow man clear down to the time of the judgment. The first four are initiatory and are designed to induct mankind into the visible Kingdom of God, the church on earth; and, we are told that "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid." This refers to Christ, and we have already shown that Christ, as a man, was and still is the impersonation of the divine system of salvation. He came to the earth, and shed His blood on Calvary to make effective for our salvation. So repentance is, and logically so, the second one of

these foundation principles. It, with faith, is the natural prerequisites to Baptism in water, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that by the operation of God through His spirit, makes us citizens in the divine kingdom of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

We have faith in God. We repent of our sins. We have those sins remitted in the waters of baptism, and receive the birth of the spirit, through the Laying on of Hands.

This makes us full-fledged citizens in the Kingdom of God, the Church of Christ, on earth. By this we are "baptized into Christ." We "put on Christ," and by receiving the Holy Ghost are able, now, to "Go on unto perfection, not laying (again) a foundation," upon dead works.

The next tract in this series will be "Baptism in Water for the Remission of Sins." That, in turn, will be followed by the one of the "Baptism of the Spirit," received through the "Laying on of Hands."