***What is Faith? - CA-017***

Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, was fond of saying that Dallas Theological Seminary had a faculty of one. They had many instructors, but only one teacher who was the Holy Spirit. So it's good to remind ourselves before we study the Word of God, that the Holy Spirit is our teacher, and He needs an atmosphere in which He is free to enlighten our minds; to show us applications; and, to enable us to apply the Word of God. In order to do this, all known sins must be confessed. So let's take a few moments of silent prayer for self-examination, and to deal with any outstanding accounts that we have with God. Shall we pray?

Our father, we are grateful for Your great grace in allowing us to be here, and to learn from Your Word. We do claim the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit as our own. We ask you to help us to profit from it. May our lives forever be changed. May our relationship with you forever be deepened and made better, and may the records in heaven and on this earth be changed because of learning your truth here. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Objections to Christianity**

We've been studying Christian apologetics for several months. Last time we looked at objections to Christianity. That's what apologetics involves – knocking down and destroying objections to believing in Christ, so that saving faith may flourish. We saw that one class of objections we can say is composed of intellectual objections. Some of these are false objections. Some may be genuine. The false ones you can usually tell pretty fast. People want to get the heat off of them. They don't want to change anything in their lives. They don't want to admit that they are totally dependent upon the grace of God. So they come up with false objections.

**False Objections**

For example, I actually had a man do this to me once: He said, "Well, Christianity is just too emotional. It's based only on feeling. There's no substance to it." So I dealt with him a while, and I showed him that Christianity is perfectly reasonable. In fact, it's unreasonable not to believe the Bible, and to trust in Christ. Then he said, "Well, this is just too cut and dried. It's too intellectual. There's no room for feelings there." So unbelievers do this all the time when they want to get the focus off of their personal relationship with God.

So if it's a false objection intellectually, then you try to get to the root of it. It usually involves a moral issue, and it usually has to do with sex. If it's a genuine intellectual objection, then there are answers for those. We're going to review a few that we looked at last week, and then as time goes by, we'll look at some more genuine intellectual objections. For example, evolution: isn't it a proven fact that human beings descended from animals, and from a common ancestor? Isn't this irrefutably proved in all the museum displays and so on? And there are answers for these, even if you're not a biologist or a zoologist. There are adequate answers for these. So there are answers for genuine intellectual problems and objections. For the false ones, you need to aim for the root of the problem. What are they trying to cover?

Secondly, we saw that there are some historical objections. What about slavery in the American South? Didn't preachers in the South use the Bible to justify slavery? What about segregation? What about the Spanish Inquisition? They'd blame all that on the laborers, although the Spanish Inquisition was perpetrated against Bible believers. They may mention the Crusades. Some bad things happened in the Crusades, and it was all the fault of Christians. You just point out to them that, throughout history, the institutional church has not always represented (in fact, more times than not, it has not) true biblical Christianity. So what they're referring to as Christianity is pseudo Christianity.

Then there's always the one about bad Christians: "Well, I have this friend who claims to be a Christian, but, you know, they're really not a very nice person. In fact, they're a slob. So Christianity can't be true because I've known several Christians who were not nice people." So you say, "Great. That is a perfect illustration of what the Bible teaches – that sin is real; sin is ugly; and, it exists. When you become a Christian, you still have an old sin nature." When a Christian who is a good person, and when a Christian who has developed some of the character of Christ, that proves what the Bible teaches about grace. So we need to remember, and we should probably remind people who raise this objection, that the best people in the world are Christians, and so are the worst.

Sometimes people will say, "Well, Christianity makes sense. What you've said makes sense OK, but I just don't see the relevance. I don't see where it really matters. So you give them the information, to enlighten their minds, that the Bible answers all the big questions. What happens to people when they die? How can you prepare for death? Christianity gives you the answers to the big ones. It gives you a basis for morality. It gives you a consistent world view through which you can interpret everything that happens. It will make sense more than any other world view. It gives ultimate meaning to your life.

Also, Christianity gives you the solution for the guilt problem. Everybody in the world feels guilty. Christianity gives the solution for guilt. Speaking of guilt, that's another objection that people bring. That is they feel that, "I'm just such a bad person. You know, Christianity might be OK for some people, but I've been so bad that it's not for me. God would never accept me." Praise the Lord if you ever have an objection like that, because you can say, "Great. You realize you're a sinner? That's the kind of people God's looking for. Those are the people that He sent His Son to die for – his enemies, the sinners. Jesus said, 'People who are healthy don't need a doctor.' But if you're a sinner, then I've got great news for you. The gospel is for you."

Then we looked at an objection that we call personal integrity. We probably should call it ego, or ego involvement. A person will say, "Well, what you've said about Christianity, it makes sense, and I can see its consistency. I believe it's true. But, man, I've been in this cult all my life. I've been in Masonry for 30 years. I've told people that I'm an atheist for the last 25 years. I can't admit I've been wrong about that." When someone says this, then just focus for a while on the attractiveness of Christianity.

First of all, separate the person from the problem, don't attack the person. Admit that there is a problem, and separate the problem from the person, and then just focus on the attractiveness of Christianity. You might say something like, "Well, it sure is a good feeling when you know your sins are forgiven; you're on your way to heaven; you have the presence of God in your life all the time; you're learning and growing; and, you can share the greatest thing in the world with other people. It sure is a nice feeling. It sure is attractive," And identify with the other person. Say something like, "You know, I used to believe that, but I changed my mind. Man, I sure am glad I did." Remember that apologetics is not about winning arguments. It's about sharing the greatest thing in the world with people.

Sometimes you talk to someone who is committed to another system. They have a religion or a world view that they don't want to give up. So, first of all, you ask them to tell you something about what they believe. You ask about the history of their cult or their belief system. Remember that Christianity has been attacked like no other world view or no other system for 2,000 years, and it's still here, and it gets stronger every day. So ask them some questions about their history. Ask about their presuppositions – what you have to believe to identify with your world view. To be a good Muslim, what do you have to believe? To be an agnostic, what do you have to believe? Ask them for their presuppositions, and then watch for the holes that you can poke in them, because everyone has weak places.

But the key to all of these is to listen. You've got to listen, because by listening, you not only learn where they're coming from, but you earn the right to be heard. Once you have listened to them, then they're obligated to listen to you. So if you can convince someone, if you can just gently point out the weaknesses in their presuppositions and in the questionable history of their cult, you're not going to be able to change their world view instantly, although sometimes the Holy Spirit does this. I can't say that it won't happen ever. But usually the best thing you can do is plant the seeds of weakness and decay and doubt into their system by offensive apologetics – by attacking, gently and with love, the weak points in their system.

Then there are misunderstandings about the true nature of Christianity. Some people object to Christianity (to what they think is Christianity), but it's nothing like real Christianity. Some people identify Christianity with snake handlers, or some of these wild Pentecostal groups. So if someone is antagonistic for Christianity, it's a good idea just to ask them, "In your mind, what do you believe that Christians believe? What kind of people are Christians?" And then you can listen to what they say, and then gently correct them.

**A Demand for Absolute Certainty**

The final objection, and this is where we are picking up from the last session, is a demand for absolute certainty. I'll give you an example of this from the New Testament. Mark 15:31, when Jesus was dying on the cross: "The chief priests also, with scribes, were mocking Him among themselves and saying, "He saved others. He cannot save Himself. Let this Christ, the king of Israel, now come down from the cross so that we may see and believe." They were saying, "OK, you claim to be the Son of God. You're hanging up there on the cross. I'll tell you what. If you come down, you take yourself down from the cross, I'll believe, and I'll become a Christian." Guess what? It wasn't going to happen. God was not going to do that for them. There are people today who say, "Well, if you will just prove to me that what you're saying is true, I will believe it," when they know there is no way that you can absolutely prove anything beyond a doubt. In fact, everything we believe is based on evidence. If you tried to prove anything beyond a doubt, you'd be in trouble.

Most of us have never been to China. But we believe there is a nation on the other side of the globe called China, and we believe certain things about it. None of us have ever met George Washington, or Napoleon, but on reliable eyewitness testimony that has been recorded (on the testimony of people that we have confidence in), and on the basis of historical records, we believe that there was a man named George Washington who was the first president of the United States. But you would be hard-pressed to prove this beyond a doubt – to furnish the same kind of absolute proof that some people demand before believing in Christ.

Have you ever proved that you exist? Have you ever tried to? If you've ever been on a university campus, and you've talked to a philosophy major or (heaven forbid) an unbelieving philosophy professor, I mean, they can get your mind so messed up that you're not even sure you do exist when they ask you to prove it. So what you can always say is that, "I cannot prove as a math problem or as a scientific experiment that the Bible is true – that Christ rose from the dead, and that God's offer of salvation is true. However, I can show you that it is totally compatible with reason."

Remember when we started this series, we saw in Isaiah 46:9-10, and in other Scriptures, where our God is an apologetical God. In Isaiah 46:9-10, He said, "These idols that you worship – I'll tell you one thing they can't do. They cannot predict the future. But I'll tell you what I'll do. I write history in advance. I will predict the future." And the Bible does so. You can point out these things to them. You can point out the uniqueness of the Bible, and how the Bible changes lives. The Bible is a powerful book. The more people have tried to do away with the Bible throughout history, the stronger it becomes. You can show fulfilled prophecy in the Word of God. You can especially show the prophecies concerning Christ: the place where He was born; His ancestry; His virgin birth; and, so on. You can show the uniqueness of the person of Christ; the character of Christ; and, the claims of Christ. You can show them that it's very unreasonable to deny that the Bible is the truth, and that God exists, and that Jesus is His Son. The gospel is perfectly compatible with reason.

**The Purpose of Apologetics**

Now we get to the very purpose of apologetics and that is to remove objections so that you can provide a climate for faith to strive. In other words, you've destroyed the strongholds (the objections to the truth of the gospel), and now you've led the unbeliever right up to the door of faith, but you can't push him through. You can't lead him through that door. He has to take that step himself.

There is a term that some people use a lot, and that is "a leap of faith," because faith is what bridges the gap between what can be proved (the evidence and the reasonableness of Christianity) and what cannot be proved. I don't have any trouble with that term "the leap of faith" or "a step of faith," as long as we understand what is meant by it. That's exactly what I mean by it. Faith bridges the gap between the evidence and the claiming of God's promises – what you cannot prove beyond a doubt.

Some people will use the term "a leap of faith" to mean that, "Hey, you just believe. It's all a matter of feeling. It's all intuition. Whatever you want to believe, you just take that leap of faith, and you believe it, and everything will be all right." That is not biblical faith. In Hebrews 11:1, faith is the assurance. It's the assurance of things hoped for. Remember that, in the New Testament, hope means a confident expectation. Faith is the assurance of things that you're confidently expecting to happen – the conviction of things not seen. So faith is not an intuitive feeling.

A local lady, who lives in the DFW Metroplex, wrote a book a few years ago called Faith is Not a Feeling. If you ever see this book, it is a good one. I highly recommend it. Faith is not a feeling. Faith is based on knowledge. It is a firm conviction that certain things are true. It's based on evidence, on reason, and on logic.

**What is Faith?**

We're going to define faith, because faith is so important. Let me remind you of something. Galatians 3:22 says, "The Scripture has shut up everyone under sin so that the promise, by faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe." So all the promises that are in Jesus Christ are appropriated to whom? To those who believe. All the promises, including eternal life, are appropriated to those who believe, and they're appropriated by faith. So faith is ultimately extremely important. So we're going to spend the rest of the time here defining just what we mean when we say "faith."

Some people seem to have the idea in our society that if you just have faith, everything will be OK. I have heard Bible teachers actually tell people, "Have faith in your faith." That is utterly ridiculous. Faith is not a virtue. Faith in itself is non-meritorious. It is the object of faith that makes it powerful and that makes it work. Faith in itself is not a virtue. It all depends on the object of faith.

Let me give you a few quick examples. James 2:19 is a passage that we're all familiar with: "If you believe that God is one (or you believe that there is one God), you do well, but the demons also believe and shudder." So just to believe that there is a God, or just to be a monotheist instead of a polytheist, that there is one God, that's a step in the right direction, but, in itself, it's not going to do anything for you. It's not going to save you. In Mark 11:22, Jesus said, "Have faith in God." He never said just have faith (just believe and everything will be OK). He said, "Have faith in God."

There is another one in 1 Corinthians 2:5. Remember that Paul was reviewing with the Christians at Corinth about the time that he had spent with them. And he said that he wasn't a great preacher, and he wasn't a great intellectual. He didn't use great rhetoric when dealing with them. Verse 5: "So that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God."

Then 1 Peter 1:21: "Who through Him are believers in God who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." The beginning and the end of the verse focus on the fact that your faith has got to be in God. It's not just faith in itself. You can have faith in anything. You can have faith in the great tennis ball. You could tell people that you have a tennis ball here, and if you place your faith in that tennis ball, you can have eternal life. Or, you can have faith in the great pumpkin like Charlie Brown does. The object of faith is what makes it valid. Your faith has to be in the God who reveals Himself in the Bible.

In the New Testament, the words "faith" and "believe" (or "belief") are the same. "Pisteuo" is the verb. "Pistis" is the noun. We don't have a verb in English that means "to faith." We say we believe something. But in Greek, you would say, "You faith it." That means, "You believe it." It means the same thing. So we're going to look at a few passages here.

**The Elements of Faith**

There are three elements of faith that we're going to review. We've talked about these before. When we say the word "faith," or "believe" (which mean the same thing), we're referring to all three of these elements.

1. **Content**

The first one is content, or knowledge. You've got to know some truth before you can put your faith in anything. You've got to believe *that* before you can believe *in*. You have to believe *that* there was a man named Jesus, who was the Son of God, before you can believe *in* that Jesus. So knowledge (or content) is the first element of faith. Sometimes the Bible uses content synonymously with faith.

For example, in Jude 3, Jude said, "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you, appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once-for-all handed down to the saints. This is Bible doctrine. The content of the Word of God is sometimes referred to as "the faith."

Another example is in Acts 6:7: "The Word of God kept on spreading, and the numbers of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem. And a great many of the priests (the Jewish priests who worked at the temple) were becoming obedient to the faith." Their eyes were opened. They started listening to the apostles, and they began believing and applying the content of the message of Christ, which here is called "the faith." So the number one element of faith is content or knowledge.

1. **Assent**

Then secondly, there's assent. Another word for "assent" would be persuasion that something is true, or a conviction that the content is the truth – or agreement. You look at the content, the knowledge about something, and you think about it, and you weigh the evidence, and you find yourself being convinced that it is correct and it is the truth, so you assent to it. You agree with it. You say, "Yes, I believe that's true."

In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, the apostle Paul says he wants the Thessalonians to live in a way that is honoring to God: "For this reason, we also constantly thank God that when you receive the Word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of man, but for what it really is, the Word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe it." So these Thessalonians had believed the content of Bible doctrine.

Another example is John 2:22: "So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this, and they believed the Scripture and the Word which Jesus had spoken." He had given them some content. It took a while, but about three years after He gave it to them, they said, "Aha, this is what He was saying. And yes, I believe that. I believe the content, the message of what He told us."

1. **Trust**

So we've got content, and we've got agreement with the content, which we call assent, and then we have trust, or confidence. You can believe that something is true. You can have confidence in this. You can believe that the price of silver is going to go up so much that you take all your savings and buy silver with it. You have confidence in your knowledge. You may have confidence in someone as an automobile mechanic or as a pilot. You trust that person. You believe that that person will live up to their reputation, that they are who and what they say they are.

Another word for this is credibility. "Credibility" comes from the Latin word for believing. "Credo" in Latin means, "I believe." If you believe that someone will live up to what they say they will do, then that person has credibility. You might even want to give them credit because you have confidence in them.

We have a word in the English language called "fiduciary." That means that a person is a professional; he claims to be an expert in a field; and, you have confidence in him. This is called fiduciary trust. It's a legal term. If you are a professional; you claim to be an expert in something; and, you have the credentials, then you have a fiduciary responsibility to do certain things, and to refrain from doing other things because people have confidence in you. So personal trust, or confidence, is another element of faith.

I may tell you I'll mow your lawn for $10. You say, "OK, that sounds like a pretty good deal. If you mow my lawn, I'll pay you $10. I'll tell you what. I'm going to be gone after while, so you go ahead and mow the lawn, and then you come back tomorrow, and I'll give you your $10." I might say, "Well, now listen, I really need the money now. So would you go ahead and pay me, and then you leave, and I'll mow your lawn?" Well, if you have fiduciary trust in me, if you have confidence in me, if I'm a credible person to you, then you'll go ahead and pay me because you have confidence in me.

Let me show you a few places in the Scriptures where this element of faith is focused on. First of all, the passage that we're all familiar with is John 1:12: "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believed in His name." In the bible, "name" means all that a person is. So these are those who have confidence, those who have trust in Jesus, that He is who and what He says He is.

John 2:11: "This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him." They saw Him work a few miracles, and they said, "Wow, I trust in Him. I have confidence in Him."

John 3:16, of course: "Whosoever believes in Him" (whoever trusts in Him). And remember to trust in Him, you have to know who He is and who He claims to be. You have to know *that* He is, and then you trust *in* who He is.

John 3:36: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life." He who trusts in (has confidence in) the Son.

Then we'll read just one in Romans. There are many in Romans. We'll touch on some later. Romans 4:5: "But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness."

So the third area of faith is trust – personal confidence and trust. And this leads to a mental mindset of trust – a mental attitude of trust and goodwill. We have a term in English: "good faith." When you make an agreement with someone in good faith (you make a good faith agreement), you're not calling that person a liar. You're saying, "I may not understand everything that you're saying, but I have confidence in you, and you're credible to me." And I'm going to give you the credibility that what you're saying is true."

You go to work for your employer, and they tell you when you when you're hired, "You have to work here three weeks before you get a paycheck." Most of you go ahead and work those three weeks because they have credibility. You believe in them. You have faith. You trust that they are going to do what they say they're going to do. You're not going to say, "Well, I'm not going to waste my time working for you. You probably wouldn't pay me anyway."

This area is referred to in Titus 2:10. Paul is instructing Titus what to teach the people to live out their Christian convictions. He's telling them how a slave should act. So in verse 10, he says, "Not pilfering, but showing all good faith." You keep your end of the bargain, believing that the other person is going to keep his. That's known as good faith.

This is referred to again in 2 Timothy 2:22: "Flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with all those who call on the Lord from a pure heart." This is righteousness, faith (a good faith relationship with God and with other believers), love, and peace.

How do you have good faith with somebody? Someone earns your credibility; they tell you the truth; it's compatible with reason; and, you have no reason to doubt them. There may be a little area there that you can't be absolutely sure of. I can't prove to you 100% that once you get out of sight, I'm not going to stop the lawnmower; put your $10 in my pocket; and, drive home. But you're going to have faith in me that I'm not going to do that. How do you come up with that kind of faith? Well, it's an act of will. You make a decision. And this is involved in the mental attitude of trust. You decide whether or not you're going to trust someone.

Sometimes we hear evangelists say that so many decisions for Christ were made at a campaign. As we know, many times this is just meaningless. But it's not a bad term, because making a decision to believe is believing. It involves the human mind, the rational intellectual capacity, and it involves the human will. It also involves the emotions, but that will probably come later. You may not feel many emotions at the time that you trust Christ. You first have faith in the fact (in the truth), and then feeling comes.

So I made it really simple. All you have to do is remove objections; give somebody the gospel; and, they became born again, right? Well, it's really not quite that simple. I'll tell you why. We can't give anybody faith. We can point the way; we can show them the truth; we can remove objections; and, we can answer their questions, but we lead them to the door of faith, and they have to walk through. But they're never going to walk through until the Holy Spirit enables them to.

In Luke 18:25, Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." There is a lot in this passage. A camel was one of the biggest animals that the people that Jesus was talking to had ever seen. It was one of the biggest things they had any kind of experimental relationship with. And the eye of a needle was one of the smallest things. So Jesus was saying, "You take the biggest thing that you know anything about, and make it go through the smallest thing that you know anything about, and that's what it's like for a rich person to be saved and to be born again."

Now, who is a rich person? Well, I think we're rich compared to most of the world. All Americans are rich. Compared to many around the world who are making $100 a month, people like us are fairly well-off. So rich is relative. So who's rich? Everybody's rich. And it's as easy for a rich person to be born again as it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Then the next logical question is verse 26: "They who heard it said, 'Then who can be saved?'" It sounds like nobody, doesn't it? If you're rich compared to some people, it's impossible for a rich person to be saved, because as long as you've got something to trust in, you're not going to trust God. The human mind is wanting to pay its own way. So you're going to be looking for something that you can trust besides God. So we might as well just close the book and go home, right? Because nobody can be saved.

Verse 27: "But He said, 'The things that are impossible with people are possible with God.'" So who can be saved? Nobody – on your own. It takes a supernatural act. We can do all we can do. We can lead them to water; we can tell them how good the water is; how it's nourishing and health-giving; and, that it will keep them from dying. But there's the supernatural element that has to be there.

Ephesians 2:8-9: "You were dead in transgresses and sins." Now you weren't sick. I've heard this illustration used, and it's a good one. When you're lying in the hospital, and you're about to die, and someone comes in and says, "I've got this medicine that will save your life and heal you. All you have to do is have faith in it." You reach out and you consume it and you're healed. That's a good illustration, but there's a problem with it, because you're not sick – you're dead. You start to reach out to take the medicine and you find you can't move. You're paralyzed. So God says, "OK, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you life so that you can believe. You can take the medicine."

Now, how does this work? I don't know. I can't tell you. Theologians have argued about this for centuries. I can just tell you that you have to believe. You have to exercise saving faith in order to be born again. You're not going to exercise that saving faith until God the Holy Spirit enlightens your spiritual mind and enables you to believe. Everyone who is ever saved is saved because of a supernatural act.

So here we are. The purpose of apologetics is to lead people to the door of faith. And then God the Holy Spirit takes over, but He's been there all the time. He's been the one leading the apologist – the evangelist leading the lost person. So He enables them, at that point, to exercise saving faith.

Now, when you are a believer, the job of faith is not finished. Hebrews 11:3 says, "It is by faith that we understand that the worlds were prepared by the Word of God so that what is seen is not made out of things which are visible." Things are not as they seem. There is spiritual phenomena behind the physical realities that you see. You have to understand that because of faith. You trust in God that He's telling the truth. You trust that the Holy Spirit will enlighten your mind. So faith becomes the conductor of spiritual knowledge. Your faith in God makes it possible for you to obtain spiritual knowledge, and to grow spiritually.

I'll give me some examples of this. In John 6:69, Simon Peter told Jesus, "We have believed and have come to know that You are the holy one of God." We know because we first believed. We exercised faith in You – sound reasonable faith based on the evidence, and as a result, we came to know.

In John 10:38, Jesus said, "If I do them (the mighty works that He did), though you do not believe Me, believe the works so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." If you know somebody who says they really want to understand spiritual things, it all starts with faith – faith, knowledge and understanding.

Then in Philippians 1:25, Paul says that he is convinced of this: "I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith." Here is the sum of the Christian life: Bible doctrine; learning Bible doctrine; applying it; and, even your Christian experience. You can look back when you have a crisis and you can say, "I know God's going to see me through this crisis. First of all, because He said He would in His Word. And secondly, this has been confirmed in every crisis I've ever had. He said He would be with me; He has always been with me; and, He will be with me." So we make progress and joy in the faith.

There was a time when you were in kindergarten or the first grade and your teacher drew a three-sided figure and said, "This is a triangle." So you learned what a triangle was. Now, if someone had told you that some triangles are circles, or some triangles are rectangles, you might, at that point, had a little bit of a problem understanding that or refuting it. But today, you've grown enough in mathematics that you know that no rectangle is a triangle. All triangles have three sides. No triangle is a rectangle. No triangle is a circle. You can reach such assurance and such stability in your spiritual life, as many of you have, that you can promise the inquiring unbeliever this assurance, but it all starts and it ends in faith.

Leon Adkins, 2003

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