

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BELIEF AND FAITH

by the Rev. Morley D. Rich

Would you say that faith is believing in something? Do you think that if a person only believes in God, he or she will be all right, will be saved for heaven? Many people do think this.

If we look more closely at the teachings of the Lord's Word, we shall find that these thoughts are true *when rightly understood*, but that they are only a small part of the truth. Let us add some further truths, which will help to improve our sight of this matter.

When we are children, we are taught that the Lord gives us many good feelings toward Him, toward our parents, for the stories of His Word, and for our friends and companions..

Because of these feelings or affections, we believe the truths we are taught. And, when we grow up, we want to obey the Lord's commandments.

Now, is our childhood belief a true faith? No, it is not yet, though it may be the beginning of it.

True faith, it is written, comes from charity, and charity, or love toward the neighbor, is given to us by the Lord when we try to carry out—to obey—what we believe *in our acts and words*.

When we tell the truth, when we obey the laws and rules, when we try to be kind and do things for others—these are the things by which the Lord can bring love and charity into our hearts. And, as this happens, we begin to have real faith. We begin to see the true meaning of the Lord's commandments and teachings.

Our belief then becomes like a rock, like the meaning of the name of Peter, the Lord's disciple. We may remember that the Lord said to him, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church" (Matthew 16:18).

So we can see that just believing is not faith; nor will it bring us faith unless we try to do what the Lord teaches us in His Word. This is why He said, "If you know these things, blessed are you if you *do* them" (John 13:17, emphasis added). The faith which can come to us then is like a "grain of mustard seed." And the Lord said, "if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you'" (Matthew 17:20).