

# 50 Articles of War

GEORGE SCOTT RAILTON

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## ABOUT FAITH

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What is the use of writing on a subject that everybody preaches or writes about?

We might reply, What is the use of opening a new shop for the sale of bread?

If anyone who has not had faith yet can be induced to get it, or if anyone who has got some can be led to get more, perhaps it will not be such a bad idea after all to write about so common place a theme.

Probably there is no British subject who knows anything at all, and who does not know what bread is; and yet, alas, even in this great London where one cannot go along the streets without passing some baker's window every few minutes, men and women are starved for want of it, and untold thousands live all their life through without having enough of it to arrive at a vigorous and hearty vitality.

Ah yes, and, depend upon it, in every Protestant congregation, and in every community of Christian people, there are those who live year after year a deathly life, in sight of faith but without it. Starved gospel-hearing souls are dropping into hell while we write and you read, because they never had the faith they heard and thought so much about.

And the hosts of the Christian Church are feeble and comparatively useless to their Master, because they have just enough faith to keep their souls united to the body of Christ, and not enough to draw from Him the love and power and wisdom which dwell so fully in Him.

### 1. HAS THE PRICE OF FAITH RISEN?

People used to have a great deal of faith in God once, as it appears to us, a great deal more than God's people have now-a-days.



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- ◆ Before there was a Bible, men lived and ordered all their living in accordance with God's will, in simple trust on His word of promise given to them privately.
- ◆ Before there was such an organization as a Protestant, salvation-by-faith Church known, men not only believed in God themselves but stood up for His faithfulness, and laughed at the laughing world when the world seemed to have every reason to laugh at them.
- ◆ Before faith became a fashionable idea, men believed so much in God that they gave up every "certainty for uncertainty," as the world looked upon it.
- ◆ Before any treatise had been written on the power of faith, Christians got so much of it that they went and healed disease, raised the dead, and passed through fire and water, and got power to live without sin, to stop the mouths of adversaries, and to subdue the people under the yoke of Jesus.
- ◆ Surely faith must have got up in price very much since then.

Can it be true that faith costs nothing, but is the gift of God? The Book we call the only true rule of faith says it is.

And yet have not you and I, my dear brother, been inclined to say, many a time, as we have felt our weakness, "Oh, what would I give for more faith."

He is a bad father that can give his child enough bread and won't; and if we are to live by faith, will our heavenly Father deny us plenty of it?

Ah! my brother, those grand men who had so much faith were not ashamed to say, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief."

They felt the supreme importance of faith, and their whole being cried aloud, "Lord, increase our faith;" and He did increase it, and He will increase ours for nothing whenever we like.

Oh yes, that may be all very well, but –



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## 2. IT IS NOTHING FOR NOTHING IN THIS WORLD

Even bread, when it is the cheapest article of food, must cost something. True, and we cannot deny that to get faith, and to get much faith, we must give up something, and give up much. If a man is to begin to live a life of faith on the Son of God, he must give up living by sight, and that is a hard thing to part with. It is so nice to look at our prayers, and Bible-reading, and attendance at the means of grace, our general good conduct, and abstention from open, outrageous sin, and think how well our life looks.

It is so hard to see that all this put together must go into God's rag-bag if we are ever to be clothed with righteousness, and that if we cling to it all it will only help to sink and drown us in the waves of everlasting perdition.

The man who rejoices in the pardoning love of God likes to see how temptation after temptation is successfully resisted, and how duty after duty is performed. He thinks he is trying to do his best, and can't see how he can do better. He feels the old evil nature within still struggling for the mastery; but he has enough faith to keep his head above water, and he likes to feel that he is, by grace, master.

To give up the keys of his soul to Jesus altogether – to confess he cannot get his heart thoroughly cleansed or keep his life thoroughly pure, and needs the stronger than the strong man armed to destroy the old Adam within, and to help him to live without sinning – it is to say that he still needs a Savior who can “save His people from their sins.”

It is so pleasant to think he is living for God, and living as well as other Christians, and better than most of them. It is so disagreeable to see that God requires him to live an altogether new life, and that, unless he attains it, he is an unbeliever in God's will, or in God's saving power.

It is so natural, so reasonable, ay, and so comfortable to think that man is “the creature of circumstance,” that he really can't help being very much influenced by things around him, and that discouragement under difficulty, vexation under disappointment, impatience, and petulance under the trials and worries of everyday life, vain glory over a good prospect, pride after a victory,

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carelessness and ease in prosperity, are all more or less inevitable attendants on human nature.

It is so satisfactory to account for want of spiritual life, and want of success in God's work by the coldness of people around us, the hardness of heart of everybody but ourselves, and the power of the devil and every unheavenly influence.

It is so awkward for Israel to hear the mighty voice pealing through the ages from Sinai, and saying,

### 3. "THE LORD THY GOD IS ONE LORD."

And yet this one great truth is the basis of all covenant with, and all service to, God. If there are two Lords, then by all means let us please and serve them both. If there is any doubt in our minds whether Jehovah be the One Lord, let us at any rate put up an altar to the unknown God.

Sinner, if your good works will save you, why don't you have two places of worship; one for the one God of heaven, and another for yourself?

Christian brother, if God cannot subdue your evil nature, or any part of it; if He cannot overcome your indisposition to labor for Him, or your wanderings of mind and heart, or your unsteadiness in your Christian course, why do you not have more than one altar?

Come now, how will it look? Let us build fifty tabernacles, if need be:

- ◆ one for Christ
- ◆ one for pride
- ◆ one for ease
- ◆ one for anger
- ◆ one for covetousness
- ◆ one for impatience
- ◆ one for love of men's praise
- ◆ one for worldly ambition
- ◆ one for discontent
- ◆ one for coldness
- ◆ one for unbelief

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◆ and one for the devil

While we continue to worship God, and ask Him to bless us, let us ask all these, Please do not destroy us or hurt us very much!

If these are on a level with God, and He cannot utterly destroy them, let us make a covenant with them, let us give them a lease to expire just in time to enable us to get to heaven; for of course none of them can go there with us. But, men of Israel, "If the Lord be God, follow Him."

When that Holy One stood before the tribunal of man, they were not ashamed to cry, "Away with Him! Away with Him!" Let us not be bashful or slow, then, to send back an answer worthy of our cause and our foe, -

#### **4. AWAY WITH EVERYTHING BUT GOD!**

My sins, you are great and many, but God is my Savior. I will look at you no more; I will only see Him.

My evil heart, you are "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; but you are not a God. The one faithful Creator says He will take you away, and give me a heart of flesh. I can't believe you, but I will, I do believe Him. Hallelujah!

You cold and formal Christians, you seem as if nothing could stir you up, as if nothing could induce you to separate from the glittering, idling bustling, sinning world. You seem as if you would let a ruined world sink without an effort to save any of its people, or as if you would, by the finery, the formality, the stiffness, the coldness of your organizations and instrumentalities, drive away the masses of the people you ought to win. But you are not gods; you are but people. The Mighty God has spoken and called the world. His voice can wake even you, or without you He can reach with the story of His love the multitudes you would leave to perish. He says He will draw all humanity unto Him. I believe Him.

You careless hearers of the word, it seems as though it were but an idle tale to you. It seems as though all our prayers and labors were lost upon you. But you are not gods. You will not clog my soul, and choke my faith. The one God says His word shall not return unto Him voice, and I believe Him.



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And you, you sad, weary wanderers, can no instrumentality reach you? Will you not listen to us, even when we follow you into the streets? Will no word of love melt your heart, no kindly warning check you in your mad career? Will you frustrate God's design, and stop God's saving work? No, you are not gods; you are but people. The God, the Savior is come to seek and to save that which was lost, and I believe He will keep on doing it as long as there are lost ones to be saved.

He has sought me, He has saved me – saved me thoroughly; and I will believe Him, and Him alone, and Him forever.

LORD HELP ME! Amen.