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Believe and BE SAVED

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Or, Around the Wicket Gate

CHARLES H. SPURGEON

UPDATED & ANNOTATED

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Believe and Be Saved – Charles H. Spurgeon

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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	vii
Ch. 1: Wake Up.....	1
Ch. 2: Jesus Only	9
Ch. 3: Faith in the Lord Jesus	17
Ch. 4: Simple Faith.....	27
Ch. 5: Afraid to Believe	41
Ch. 6: Confusion in How to Believe	51
Ch. 7: By His Stripes We Are Healed.....	59
Ch. 8: Hindrances	67
Ch. 9: Doubters	73
Ch. 10: No Salvation Without Faith	81
Ch. 11: Trusting Completely.....	87
<i>Charles H. Spurgeon – A Brief Biography.....</i>	97
<i>Other Similar Titles</i>	103

Preface

Millions of men are in the outlying regions, far from God and peace; for these we pray, and to these we give warning. But now we need to address a smaller company who are not far from the kingdom but have come right up to the wicket gate which stands at the head of the way of life. One would think that they would hurry to enter, for a free and open invitation is placed over the entrance, and the porter waits to welcome them; this is the only way to eternal life. He that is most burdened seems the most likely to pass through and begin the heavenward journey; but what ails the other men?

This is what I want to find out. Poor fellows, they have come a long way already to get where they are, and the King's highway, which they seek, is right before them. Why don't they take the Pilgrim Road at once?

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

Alas, they have a great many reasons, and foolish as those reasons are, it takes a very wise man to answer them all. I cannot pretend to do so. Only the Lord himself can remove the folly which is bound up in their hearts, and lead them to take the great decisive step. Yet the Lord uses various methods and approaches. I have prepared this little book in the earnest hope that he may use it to lead seekers to an immediate, simple trust in the Lord Jesus.

He who does not take the step of faith and enter upon the road to heaven will perish. It will be an awful thing to die close to, but yet outside the gate of life. Almost saved, but altogether lost! This is the most terrible of positions. A man just outside Noah's ark would have drowned; a murderer close to the wall of the city of refuge, but outside of it, would be slain; and the man who is within a yard of Christ but has not trusted him will be lost.

Therefore, I am in terrible earnest to get my hesitating friends over the threshold. *Come in! Come in!* is my pressing plea. *Why dost thou stand outside?* is my solemn inquiry (Genesis 24:31). May the Holy Spirit render my pleadings effective with many who read these pages! May he cause his own almighty power to create faith in the soul at once.

My reader, if God blesses this book to you, do the

PREFACE

writer this favor – either lend your own copy to someone who is lingering at the gate or buy another and give it away, for his great desire is that this little volume should be of service to many thousands of souls.

To God this book is commended, for without his grace nothing will come of all that is written.

– C. H. Spurgeon

Chapter 1

Wake Up

Many people have no concern about eternal things. They care more about their cats and dogs than about their souls. It is a great act of kindness to be made to think about ourselves and our standing with God and the eternal world. This is often a sign that salvation is coming to us. By nature we do not like the anxiety that spiritual concern causes us, and like sluggards we try to ignore it and sleep again. This is great foolishness, for it is to our peril that we procrastinate when death is so near and judgment is so sure.

If the Lord has given us eternal life, he will not let us return to our slumber. *Of those whom thou gavest me I have lost none* (John 18:9).

If we are sensible, we shall pray that our anxiety

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

about our souls may never end until we are really and truly saved. Let us say from our hearts:

He that suffered in my stead,
Shall my Physician be;
I will not be comforted
Till Jesus comfort me.¹

It would be an awful thing to go dreaming down to hell and then lift our eyes upon a great gulf fixed between us and heaven. It will be equally terrible to be aroused to escape from the wrath to come but then to shake off the warning influence and go back to our apathy.

I notice that those who overcome their convictions and continue in their sins are not as easily moved the next time. Every awakening which is thrown away leaves the soul drowsier than before and less likely to be stirred again to holy feeling. Therefore, our heart should be greatly troubled at the thought of getting rid of its trouble in any other than the right way.

One who had the gout was cured by a quack medicine, but it drove the disease within, and the patient died. To be cured of distress of mind by a false hope would be a terrible treatment; the remedy would be worse than the disease. Better by far if our tenderness

1 Augustus M. Toplady, "Christ or Nothing," 1759.

WAKE UP

of conscience should cause us long years of anguish than if we should lose it and perish in the hardness of our hearts.

Yet awakening and awareness of our need is not a thing to rest in or to desire to have prolonged month after month. If I wake up in a fright and find my house on fire, I do not sit at the edge of the bed and say to myself, "I hope I am truly awakened! Indeed, I am deeply grateful that I am not still asleep!" No, I want to escape from threatened death, so I hurry to the door or to the window to get out and not perish where I am. It would be a questionable favor to be aroused but not escape from the danger.

Remember, awakening is not salvation. A man may know that he is lost, but he may never be saved. He may be made thoughtful, but he may die in his sins. If you discover that you are bankrupt, the consideration of your debts will not pay them. A man may examine his wounds all year long, and they will not be closer to being healed because he feels the pain and notes their extent. One trick of the devil is to tempt a man to be satisfied with a sense of sin; another trick is to insinuate that the sinner might not be able to trust Christ unless he can bring a certain measure of despair to add to the Savior's finished work.

Our awakenings, our recognition of our sins, are not

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

to help the Savior but to help us *to* the Savior. To imagine that my feeling of sin is to assist in the removal of the sin is absurd. It is as though I said that water could not cleanse my face unless I had looked longer in the mirror and had counted the smudges on my forehead. A sense of need of salvation by grace is a very healthy sign, but one needs wisdom to use it right and not to make an idol of it.

Some seem to have fallen in love with their doubts and fears and distresses. You cannot get them away from their terrors – they seem wedded to them. It is said that the worst trouble with horses when their stables are on fire is that you cannot get them to come out of their stalls. If they would just follow your lead, they might escape the flames, but they seem to be paralyzed with fear. So the fear of the fire prevents their escaping the fire. Reader, will your fear of the wrath to come prevent your escaping from it? We hope not.

One person who had been in prison a long time was not willing to come out. The door was open, but he pleaded even with tears to be allowed to stay where he was. Fond of prison! Wedded to the iron bolts and the prison fare! Surely the prisoner must have been a little touched in the head! Are you willing to remain simply awakened and nothing more? Aren't you eager

WAKE UP

to be forgiven at once? If you would wait in anguish and dread, surely you too must be a little out of your mind.

If peace is to be had, have it at once! Why wait in the darkness of the pit where your feet sink in the miry clay? There is light to be had – marvelous and heavenly light. Why lie in the gloom and die in anguish? You do not know how near salvation is to you. If you did, you would surely stretch out your hand and take it, for there it is, and it is yours for the taking; *for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is past, and the day is come; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us clothe ourselves with the weapons of light* (Romans 13:11-12).

Do not think that feelings of despair will fit you for mercy. When the pilgrim was on his way to the Wicket Gate, he tumbled into the Slough of Despond.² Do you think that when the foul mire of that slough stuck to his garments it was told to him that it would get him an easier admission to the way? It is not so. The pilgrim did not think so by any means; neither should you. It is not what you feel that will save you, but what Jesus felt. *And when he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them because they*

² The Wicket Gate in *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan represents the narrow road to salvation as described in Matthew 7:13-14. The Slough of Despond is the deep bog that Christian sinks into under the weight of sin and guilt.

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd (Matthew 9:36).

Even if there were some healing value in feelings, the feelings would have to be good ones. The feeling which makes us doubt the power of Christ to save and prevents us from finding salvation in him is by no means a good one, but a cruel wrong to the love of Jesus.

Our friend has come to see us and has traveled through our crowded London by rail, or tram, or omnibus. All of a sudden he turns pale. We ask him what is the matter, and he answers, “I have lost my pocketbook, and it contained all the money I have in the world.” He recites the amount to a penny and describes the checks, bills, notes, and coins. We tell him that it must be a great consolation to him to be so precise about the extent of his loss. He does not seem to see the worth of our consolation. We assure him that he ought to be grateful that he has so clear a sense of his loss, for many people might have lost their pocketbooks and been quite unable to know the extent of their losses. Our friend is not, however, cheered in the least. “No,” says he, “to know my loss does not help me to recover it. Tell me where I can find my property, and you have done me real service, but merely to recognize my loss is no comfort whatever.”

Even so, to believe that you have sinned and that

WAKE UP

your soul is subject to the justice of God is a very proper thing, but that knowledge will not save.

Salvation is not by our knowing our own ruin but by fully grasping the deliverance provided in Christ Jesus. A person who refuses to look to the Lord Jesus, but persists in dwelling on his sin and ruin, reminds us of a boy who dropped a shilling down an open grate of a London sewer and lingered there for hours, finding comfort in saying, "It rolled in right there! Just between those two iron bars I saw it go down." Poor soul. He might remember the details of his loss for a long time before he would get a single penny back into his pocket to buy himself a piece of bread. You can see the drift of the parable; profit by it.



Chapter 2

Jesus Only

We cannot too often or too plainly tell the seeking soul that his only hope for salvation lies in the Lord Jesus Christ. It lies in him completely, only, and alone. Jesus is all sufficient to save us from guilt and the power of sin. His name is called Jesus, because *he shall save his people from their sins* (Matthew 1:21). *The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins* (Matthew 9:6). He is exalted on high *to give repentance . . . and forgiveness of sins* (Acts 5:31).

It pleased God from the beginning to devise a method of salvation that should be contained in his only begotten Son. The Lord Jesus became man to work out this salvation and *being found in fashion as a man, . . . became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross* (Philippians 2:8). If another way of deliverance

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

had been possible, the cup of bitterness would have passed from him (Matthew 26:39). It stands to reason that the darling of heaven would not have died to save us if we could have been rescued at less expense.

Infinite grace provided the great sacrifice; infinite love submitted to death for our sakes. How can we dream that there can be another way than the way that God has provided at such a cost and set forth in Holy Scripture so simply and so urgently? Surely it is true that *neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men in which we can be saved* (Acts 4:12).

To suppose that the Lord Jesus has only somewhat saved men, and that some work or feeling of our own is needed to finish his work, is wicked. What is there of ours that could be added to his blood and righteousness? *All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags* (Isaiah 64:6). Can these be patched onto the costly fabric of his divine righteousness? Rags and fine white linen? Our dross and his pure gold? It is an insult to the Savior to dream of such a thing. We have sinned enough without adding this to all our other offenses.

Even if we had any righteousness in which we could boast, if our fig leaves were broader than usual and not so utterly fading, it would be wise to put them away and accept that righteousness which is far more pleasing

JESUS ONLY

to God than anything of our own. The Lord sees more that is acceptable in his Son than in the best of us. *The best of us* – those words seem satirical, though they are not intended that way. What best is there about any of us? *There is none righteous, no, not one* (Romans 3:10).

I write these lines and most freely confess that I have not a thread of goodness of my own. I could not make up so much as a rag or a piece of a rag. I am utterly destitute. But if I had the fairest suit of good works that pride could imagine, I would tear it up so I could put on nothing but the garments of salvation, which are freely given by the Lord Jesus out of the heavenly wardrobe of his own merits.

It is most glorifying to our Lord Jesus Christ that we should hope for every good thing from him alone. This is to treat him as he deserves to be treated; for since he is God, and beside him there is none else, we are bound to look unto him to be saved.

This is to treat him as he loves to be treated, for he bids all to *come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest* (Matthew 11:28). To imagine that he cannot save to the uttermost is to limit the Holy One of Israel and disparage his power; it slanders the loving heart of the Friend of sinners and casts doubt upon his love. In each case, we'd commit a cruel and wanton sin against the tenderest points of

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

his honor, which are his ability and willingness to save all who come unto God by him.

The child in danger of the fire clings to the fireman and trusts him alone. She raises no question about the strength of his arms to carry her or the zeal of his heart to rescue her, but she clings. The heat is terrible, the smoke is blinding, but she clings; and her deliverer quickly carries her to safety. Cling to Jesus with that same childlike confidence; he can and will carry you from the danger of the flames of sin.



JESUS ONLY

The nature of the Lord Jesus should inspire us with the fullest confidence. Because he is God, he is almighty to save; because he is man, he is filled with all fullness to bless; because he is God and man in one Majestic Person, he meets man in his creatureship and God in his holiness. The ladder is long enough to reach from Jacob, prostrate on the earth, to Jehovah reigning in heaven.

To bring another ladder indicates that he failed to bridge the distance, and this would grievously dishonor him. If adding to his words is to draw a curse upon ourselves, what is it to pretend to add to himself? Remember that he is the Way, and to suppose that we must add to the divine road is to be arrogant enough to think of adding to him. Away with such a notion! Loathe it as you would blasphemy, for in essence it is the worst of blasphemy against the Lord of love. Jesus said, *I AM the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me* (John 14:6).

To come to Jesus with a price in our hand would be insufferable pride, even if we had any price that we could bring. What does he need from us? What could we bring if he did need it? Would he sell the priceless blessings of his redemption? Would he barter with that which he wrought out in his heart's blood for our tears and vows, or for ceremonial observances and feelings

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

and works? He will not be reduced to make a market of himself; he will give freely according to his royal love.

He who offers a price to him doesn't know with whom he is dealing or how grievously he distresses his free Spirit. Empty-handed sinners may have what they will. All that they can possibly need is in Jesus, and he gives it for the asking; but we must believe that he is all in all. We must not dare to breathe a word about completing what he has finished or fitting ourselves for what he gives to us as undeserving sinners.

The reason we may hope for forgiveness of sin and life eternal by faith in the Lord Jesus is that God has determined it. He has pledged himself in the gospel to save all who truly trust in the Lord Jesus, and he will never run back from his promise. He is so pleased with his only begotten Son that he takes pleasure in all who claim him as their one and only hope. The great God himself has taken hold of him who has taken hold of his Son. He works salvation for all who look for that salvation in the once-slain Redeemer.

For the honor of his Son, he will not suffer the man who trusts in him to be ashamed. *e that believes in the Son has eternal life* (John 3:36), for the ever-living God has taken him unto himself and has made him a partaker of his life. If Jesus is your only trust, you don't

JESUS ONLY

need to fear for your effectual salvation, both now and in the day of his appearing.

When a man trusts, there is a point of union between him and God, and that union guarantees blessing. Faith saves us because it causes us to identify with Christ Jesus, and he is one with God and thus brings us into connection with God.

I am told that years ago above Niagara Falls a boat flipped over, and two men were carried down by the current. When people on the shore managed to float a rope to them, both of them seized the rope. One of them held fast and was safely drawn to the bank. The other, seeing a great log come floating by, unwisely let go of the rope and clung to the great piece of timber, for it was bigger than the rope and apparently better to cling to. Alas, the timber, with the man on it, went right over the vast abyss, because there was no union between the wood and the shore. The size of the log was no benefit to the man who grasped it; it needed a connection with the shore to produce safety.

So, when a man trusts his works, or his prayers, or almsgivings, or sacraments, or anything of that sort, he will not be saved, because there is no junction between him and God through Christ Jesus.

But faith, though it may seem like a slender cord, is in the hand of the great God on the shore side; infinite

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

power pulls in the connecting line and draws the man from destruction. Oh, the blessedness of faith, because it unites us to God by the Savior whom he has appointed, even Jesus Christ! Oh reader, isn't there common sense in this matter? Think it over, and may there soon be a union between you and God through your faith in Christ Jesus!

Chapter 3

Faith in the Lord Jesus

There is a wretched tendency among men to leave Christ out of the gospel. They might as well leave flour out of bread. Men hear the way of salvation explained and consent to it as being scriptural. In every way it suits their case, but they forget that a plan is of no use unless it is carried out; in the matter of salvation, their own personal faith in the Lord Jesus is essential. A road to York will not take me there; I must travel it for myself. All the sound doctrine that ever was will never save a man unless he puts his trust in the Lord Jesus for himself.

Mr. MacDonald asked the inhabitants of the island of St. Kilda how a man can be saved. An old man replied, “We shall be saved if we repent and forsake our sins and turn to God.”

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

“Yes,” said a middle-aged female, “and with a true heart too.”

“Aye,” rejoined a third, “and with prayer.”

A fourth added, “It must be the prayer of the heart.”

“And we must be diligent too,” said a fifth, “in keeping the commandments.”

Thus, each contributed his bit and felt they had made up a very decent creed; they all looked and listened for the preacher’s approval, but they had aroused his deepest pity. He had to begin at the beginning and preach Christ to them. The carnal mind always maps out for itself a way in which self can work and become great, but the Lord’s way is quite the reverse. In Mark 16:16 the Lord Jesus says, *He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be condemned.* Believing and being baptized are no matters of merit to be gloried in; they are so simple that boasting is excluded, and free grace does the work. This way of salvation is chosen that it might be seen to be of grace alone.

It may be that the reader is unsaved: What is the reason? Do you think the way of salvation, as laid down in the text we have quoted, is uncertain? Do you fear that you would not be saved if you followed it? How can that be when God has pledged his own word for its certainty? How can what God prescribes

FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS

and promises fail? Don't you think it is easy? Why then don't you believe?

The ease of salvation leaves those who neglect it without excuse. If you've done some great thing, don't be so foolish as to neglect the little thing. To believe is to trust or lean upon Christ Jesus – in other words, to give up self-reliance and to rely upon the Lord Jesus. To be baptized is to submit to the ordinance which our Lord fulfilled at the Jordan, to which the converted ones submitted at Pentecost, and which the jailer obeyed on the very night of his conversion. It is the outward confession, which should always go with inward faith. The outward sign does not save, but it pictures our death, burial, and resurrection with Jesus, and like the Lord's Supper, it is not to be neglected.

The great point is to believe in Jesus and confess your faith. Do you believe in Jesus? Then, dear friend, dismiss your fears; you shall be saved. Are you still an unbeliever? Then remember, there is but one door, and if you will not enter by it, you will perish in your sins. Jesus said, *I AM the door; whosoever enters in by me shall be saved* (John 10:9). The door is there, but unless you enter by it, what use is it to you?

You must obey the gospel; nothing can save you if you do not hear the voice of Jesus and do his bidding. Thinking and resolving will not accomplish the purpose;

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

you must come to real business, for only as you actually believe will you truly live unto God.

I heard of a friend who desired to be the means of the conversion of a young man. Another man said to him, "You may go to him and talk to him, but you can get him no further, for he is exceedingly well acquainted with the plan of salvation."

It was notably so, and therefore, when our friend spoke with the young man, his answer was, "I am much obliged to you, but you cannot tell me much, for I have long known and admired the plan of salvation by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ."



Alas, he was resting in the plan, but he had not believed in the Person. The plan of salvation is most blessed, but it does us no good unless we personally believe in

FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS

the Lord Jesus Christ himself. What is the comfort of a house plan if you do not enter the house itself? The man in our neighborhood who is sitting out in the rain is not deriving much comfort from the house plans which are spread out before him.

What is the good of a pattern for clothing if you don't have a rag to cover you? Have you never heard of the Arab chief at Cairo who was very ill and went to the missionary, and the missionary said he could give him a prescription? He did so, and a week later he found the Arab no better. "Did you take my prescription?" he asked.

"Yes, I ate every morsel of the paper."

He thought that he was going to be cured by devouring the physician's writing, which I may call the plan of the medicine. He should have had the prescription filled; it might have made him well, if he had taken the dosage. It could do him no good to swallow the recipe. So it is with salvation: it is not the plan of salvation that can save but the carrying out of that plan by the Lord Jesus in his death on our behalf and our acceptance of the same.

Under the Jewish law, the offerer brought a bullock and laid his hands upon it. It was no dream, or theory, or plan. He found something tangible in the victim for sacrifice, which he could handle and touch; even so we

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

lean upon the real and true work of Jesus, the most substantial thing under heaven. We come to the Lord Jesus by faith and say, "God has provided an atonement here, and I accept it. I believe in the fact accomplished on the cross; I am confident that sin was put away by Christ, and I rest on him."

If you want to be saved, you must get beyond the acceptance of plans and doctrines to resting in the divine person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Dear reader, will you have Christ now?

Jesus invites all those who labor and are heavy laden to come to him, and he will give them rest (Matthew 11:28). He does not promise this by them merely thinking about him. They must come, and they must come to him and not merely to the church, to baptism, or to the orthodox faith, or to anything except his divine person.

When the brazen serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, the people were not to look to Moses, nor to the tabernacle, nor to the pillar of cloud, but to the brazen serpent itself. Looking was not enough unless they looked on the right object, and the right object was not enough unless they looked. It was not enough for them to know about the serpent of brass; they each had to look at it for himself (Numbers 21:8-9).

When a man is ill, he may have a good knowledge of medicine, but he might die if he does not actually

FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS

take the healing dosage of medicine. We must receive Jesus, for *as many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God* (John 1:12). Look at the emphasis on two words: We must receive HIM, and we must RECEIVE him. We must open wide the door and take Christ Jesus in, for *Christ in you, [is] the hope of glory* (Colossians 1:27). Christ must not be a myth, a dream, or a phantom to us but a real man and truly God. Our reception of him must not be a forced and fictitious acceptance, but the hearty, happy assent and consent of the soul that he shall be the all-in-all of our salvation. Won't we come to him at once and make him our sole trust?

The dove is hunted by the hawk and finds no security from its restless enemy. It has learned that there is shelter for it in the cleft of the rock, and it rushes there with joyful wings. Once wholly sheltered within its refuge, it fears no bird of prey. But if it did not hide itself in the rock, it would be seized upon by its adversary. The rock would be of no use to the dove if the dove did not enter its cleft. The whole body must be hidden in the rock. What if ten thousand other birds found a fortress there? That fact would not save the one dove that is now pursued by the hawk. It must put its whole self into the shelter and bury itself within its refuge, or its life will be forfeited to the destroyer.

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED



What a picture of faith is this! It is entering into Jesus and hiding in his wounds.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.³

The dove is out of sight; only the rock is seen. So does the guilty soul dart into the riven (split) side of Jesus by faith, and is buried in him out of sight of avenging justice. But there must be this personal application to Jesus for shelter, and this is what so many put off from day to day, until it is feared that they will die in their sins. What an awful message that is. It is what our Lord said to the unbelieving Jews, and he says the same to us at this hour: *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins* (John 8:24). It makes one's heart quiver

³ Augustus Toplady, "Rock of Ages," 1763.

FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS

to think that someone who reads these lines may still be of the miserable company who will perish. May the Lord prevent it with his great grace!

The other day I saw a remarkable picture that I shall use as an illustration of the way of salvation by faith in Jesus. An offender had committed a crime for which he had to die, but it was in olden times when churches were considered sanctuaries where criminals could hide and escape from death. The transgressor rushes towards the church, but the guards pursue him with their swords drawn, thirsty for his blood! They follow him right to the church door. He rushes up the steps, and just as they are about to overtake him and hack him to pieces on the threshold of the church, out comes the bishop who holds up the cross.

He cries, “Back! Back! Stain not the precincts of God’s house with blood! Stand back!” The fierce soldiers at once respect the emblem and retire, while the poor fugitive hides himself behind the robes of the bishop.

This is how it is with Christ. The guilty sinner flies straight away to Jesus, and though justice pursues him, Christ lifts up his wounded hands and cries, “Stand back! I shelter this sinner; in the secret place of my tabernacle I hide him; I will not suffer him to perish, for he puts his trust in me.”

Sinner, fly to Christ! But you answer, “I am too

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

vile." The viler you are, the more you will honor him by believing that he is able to save even you.

"But I am so great a sinner," you say. Then more honor shall be given to him if you have faith to trust in him, great sinner though you have been.

If you have a little sickness and you tell your physician, "Sir, I am quite confident in your skill to heal," there is no great compliment in your declaration. Anybody can cure an aching finger or a trifling sickness. But if you are sick with a complication of diseases that grievously torments you, and you say, "Sir, I seek no better physician; I will ask no other advice but yours. I entrust myself joyfully to you," what an honor you have conferred on him that you trust your life to his hands while it is in extreme and immediate danger!

Do the same with Christ; put your soul into his care; do it deliberately and without a doubt. Dare to quit all other hopes; venture all on Jesus. I say *venture*, though there is nothing really venturesome in it, for he is abundantly able to save. Cast yourself simply on Jesus; let nothing but faith be in your soul towards Jesus; believe him and trust in him, and you shall never be made ashamed of your confidence. *He that believeth on him shall not be confounded* (1 Peter 2:6).

Chapter 4

Simple Faith

To many, faith seems a hard thing. The truth is – *it is only hard because it is easy*. Naaman thought it hard that he should have to wash in the Jordan, but if it had been some great thing, he would have done it cheerfully (2 Kings 5:13-14). People think that salvation must be the result of some act or feeling that is very mysterious and very difficult, but God says, *My thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways as my ways* (Isaiah 55:8).

In order that the feeblest and the most ignorant may be saved, he has made the way of salvation as easy as the ABC's. No part of it should puzzle anyone, but because everybody expects to be puzzled, many are quite bewildered when they find it so exceedingly simple.

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

The fact is simply that we do not believe God means what he is saying, so we act as if it could not be true.

I heard of a Sunday school teacher who performed an experiment, which I shall never try with children, for it might turn out to be a very expensive one. Indeed, the result in my case would be different from what I now describe. This teacher had been trying to illustrate what faith was, and because he could not get it into the minds of his boys, he took his watch and said, "Now, I will give you this watch, John. Will you take it?" John thought about what the teacher could mean and did not seize the treasure but made no answer.



The teacher said to the next boy, "Henry, here is the watch. Will you take it?"

SIMPLE FAITH

With proper modesty, the boy replied, “No, thank you, sir.”

The teacher tried several of the boys with the same result until at last a youngster, who was not so wise or so thoughtful as the others but rather more believing, said in the most natural way, “Thank you, sir,” and put the watch into his pocket. Then the other boys woke up to a startling fact: their friend had received a watch that they had refused.

One of the boys quickly asked of the teacher, “Is he to keep it?”

“Of course he is,” said the teacher. “I offered it to him, and he accepted it. I would not give a thing and take it back; that would be very foolish. I put the watch before you and said that I gave it to you, but none of you would have it.”

“Oh,” said the boy, “if I had known you meant it, I would have taken it.”

Of course he would. The boy thought he was pretending and nothing more. All the other boys were in a dreadful state of mind to think that they had lost the watch. Each one cried, “Teacher, I did not know you meant it, but I thought . . .” No one took the gift, but everyone thought. Each one had his theory, except the simpleminded boy who believed what he was told, and he got the watch.

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

Now I wish that I could always be such a simple child and literally believe what the Lord says, and take what he puts before me, resting quite content that he is not playing with me, and that I cannot be wrong in accepting what he sets before me in the gospel.

Happy would we be if we trusted and raised no questions of any sort. But alas, we think and doubt. When the Lord lifts his dear Son before a sinner, that sinner should take him without hesitation. If you take him, you have him, and none can take him from you. *Therefore I am certain that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any creature shall be able to separate us from the charity of God, which is in Christ, Jesus our Lord* (Romans 8:38-39). Out with your hand, man, and take him at once.

When inquirers accept the Bible as literally true and see that Jesus is really given to all who trust him, all the difficulty about understanding the way of salvation vanishes like the morning's frost at the rising of the sun.

Two inquiring people came to me in my vestry. They had been hearing the gospel from me for only a short time, and they had been deeply impressed by it. They expressed their regret that they were about to move far away, but they expressed their gratitude that they had heard me at all.

SIMPLE FAITH

I was encouraged by their kind thanks but felt anxious that a more effective work could be accomplished in them; therefore, I asked them, “Have you completely believed in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you saved?”

One of them replied, “I have been trying hard to believe.”

I have often heard this statement, but I will never let it go unchallenged. “No,” I said, “that will not do. Did you ever tell your father that you tried to believe him?” After I had dwelt a while upon the matter, they admitted that such language would have been an insult to their father. I then set the gospel very plainly before them in as simple language as I could, and I begged them to believe Jesus, who is more worthy of faith than the best of fathers.

One of them replied, “I cannot comprehend it; I cannot grasp that I am saved.”

Then I went on to say, “God bears testimony to his Son, that whosoever trusts in his Son is saved. Will you make him a liar now, or will you believe his Word?”

While I spoke, one of them flinched as if astonished, and she startled us as she cried, “Oh sir, I see it all; I am saved! Oh, do bless Jesus for me; he has shown me the way, and he has saved me! I see it all.” The esteemed sister who had brought these young friends to me knelt

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

down with them while, with all our hearts, we blessed and magnified the Lord for a soul brought into light.

One of the two sisters, however, could not see the gospel as the other had done, though I feel sure she will do so before long. Doesn't it seem strange that both heard the same words, and one came into clear light, but the other remained in the dark? The change that comes over the heart when the individual understands and grasps the gospel is often reflected in the face and shines like the light of heaven.

Such newly enlightened souls often exclaim, "Why, sir, it is so plain; how is it I have not seen it before? I understand all I have read in the Bible now, though I could not make it out before. It has all come in a minute, and now I see what I could never understand before."

The fact is that the truth was always plain, but they were looking for signs and wonders, and therefore they did not see what was near them. It is commonly observed that we fail to see that which is right in front of us; old men often look for their spectacles when they are on their foreheads. Christ Jesus is before our faces, and we only have to look to him and live, but we create all forms of bewilderment about him and manufacture a maze out of that which is as plain as day.

The little incident about the two sisters reminds me of another. An esteemed friend came to me one

SIMPLE FAITH

Sunday morning after the service to shake hands with me. "For," she said, "I was fifty years old on the same day as you. I am like you in that one thing, sir, but I am the very opposite of you in better things."

I remarked, "Then you must be a very good woman, for in many things I wish I also could be the opposite of what I am."

"No, no," she said, "I did not mean anything of that sort; I am not right at all."

"What!" I cried. "Are you not a believer in the Lord Jesus?"

"Well," she said with much emotion, "I . . . I will try to be."

I took her hand and said, "My dear soul, you are not going to tell me that you will try to believe my Lord Jesus! I cannot have such talk from you. It means complete unbelief. What has he done that you should talk of him in that way? Would you tell me that you would try to believe me? I know you would not treat me so rudely. You think I am a true man, so you believe me at once; surely you cannot do less with my Lord Jesus."

Then with tears she exclaimed, "Oh sir, do pray for me!"

To this I replied, "I do not feel that I can do anything of the kind. What can I ask the Lord Jesus to do for someone who will not trust him? I see nothing to pray

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

about. If you will believe him, you shall be saved; and if you will not believe him, I cannot ask him to invent a new way to gratify your unbelief.”

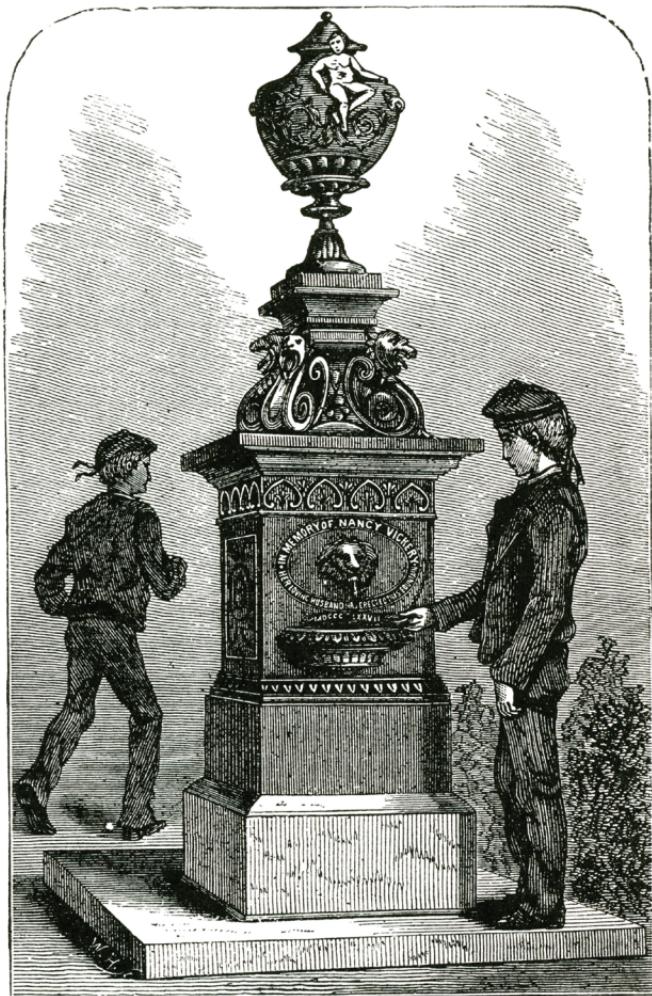
Then she said again, “I will try to believe.”

I told her solemnly I would have none of her trying, for the message from the Lord did not mention trying, but instead said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved* (Acts 16:31). I pressed upon her the great truth, that *he that believeth on the Son has eternal life* (John 3:36), and its terrible opposite – *he that does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God* (John 3:18). I urged her to believe in the once crucified but now ascended Lord, and the Holy Spirit immediately enabled her to trust.

She most tenderly said, “Oh sir, I have been looking to my feelings, and this has been my mistake! Now I trust my soul with Jesus, and I am saved.” She found immediate peace through believing. There is no other way.

God has been pleased to make the necessities of life very simple matters. We must eat, and even a blind man can find the way to his mouth. We must drink, and even the tiniest babe knows how to do this without instruction.

SIMPLE FAITH



We have a fountain on the grounds of the Stockwell Orphanage, and when it is running in the hot weather, the boys go to it naturally. We have no class for fountain drill. Many poor boys have come to the orphanage but

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

never one who was so ignorant that he did not know how to drink.

Now faith is in spiritual things what eating and drinking are in temporal things. By the mouth of faith, we take the blessings of grace into our spiritual nature, and they are ours. Oh, you who would believe but think you cannot, don't you see that as one can drink without strength, eat without strength, and get strength by eating, so we may receive Jesus without effort, and by accepting him we receive power for further work that we may be called on to do?

Faith is so simple a matter that whenever I try to explain it, I am fearful that I might confuse its simplicity. When Thomas Scott had printed his notes on *The Pilgrim's Progress*, he asked one of his parishioners whether she understood the book. "Oh yes, sir," she said. "I understand Mr. Bunyan well enough, and I am hoping that one day, by divine grace, I may understand your explanations." Shouldn't I be mortified if my reader should know what faith is but get confused by my explanation? I will, however, make one try and pray the Lord will make it clear.

I am told that on a certain highland road there was a disputed right of way. The owner wished to preserve his authority, and at the same time, he did not wish

SIMPLE FAITH

to inconvenience the public. So, an arrangement was made that caused the following incident.



Seeing a sweet country girl standing at the gate, a tourist went up to her and offered her a shilling to permit him to pass. "No, no," said the child, "I must not take anything from you, but you need to say, 'Please allow me to pass.' Then you may pass through – and welcome." Permission was needed, but it had to be asked for. Likewise, eternal life is free, and it can be obtained. Yes, it will be secured at once by trusting in the word of him who cannot lie. Trust Christ, and by that trust you can grasp salvation and eternal life. Do not philosophize. Do not sit down and bother your poor brain. Just believe Jesus as you would believe your father. Trust him as you trust your money with a banker or your

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

health with a doctor. Faith will not seem difficult to you for long, nor should it, for it is simple.

Faith is trusting – totally trusting the person, work, merit, and power of the Son of God. Some think this trusting is a romantic business, but indeed it is the simplest thing that can possibly be. To some of us, truths that were once hard to believe are now matters of fact that we would find hard to doubt.

If one of our great-grandfathers were to rise from the dead and come into the present day, what a great deal of trusting he would have to do! He would say tomorrow morning, “Where are the flint and steel? I want a light.” We would give him a little box with tiny pieces of wood and tell him to strike one of them on the box. He would have to trust a good deal before he would believe that fire would thus be produced.

We would then say to him, “Now that you have a light, turn that tap, and light the gas.”

He sees nothing. How can light come through an invisible vapor? And yet it does. “Come with us, Grandfather. Sit in that chair. Look at that box in front of you. You will have your picture soon.”

“No, child,” he would say, “it is ridiculous. The sun take my portrait? I cannot believe it.”

“Yes, and you will ride fifty miles in an hour without horses.” He will not believe it until we get him into

SIMPLE FAITH

the train. "My dear sir, you will speak to your son in New York, and he will answer you in a few minutes." Wouldn't we astonish the old gentleman? Wouldn't he want all his faith?

Yet these things are believed by us without effort, because experience has made us familiar with them. Faith is greatly needed by you who are strangers to spiritual things; you seem lost while we are talking about them. But oh, how simple it is to us who have the new life and have communion with spiritual realities. We have a Father to whom we speak, and he hears us. We have a blessed Savior who hears our heart's longings and helps us in our struggles against sin. It is all plain to him who understands. May it now be plain to you.

Chapter 5

Afraid to Believe

It is an odd product of our unhealthy nature – the fear to believe. Yet I have met it often – so often that I never want to see it again. It looks like humility and tries to pass itself off as the very soul of modesty, and yet it is an infamously proud thing; in fact, it is presumption playing the hypocrite. If men were afraid not to believe, there would be good reason to fear. But to be afraid to trust their God is at best an absurdity, and in every way it is a deceitful way to refuse to honor the Lord's faithfulness and truth.

How unprofitable is the diligence that busies itself in discovering reasons why our faith is not saving faith! We have God's word that *whosoever* believes in Jesus shall not perish, yet we search for arguments why we should perish if we did believe. If anyone gave me an

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

estate, I certainly would not start raising questions about the title. What is the use of inventing reasons why I should not have my own house or possess any other piece of property that I enjoy? If the Lord is satisfied to save me through the merits of his dear Son, surely I will be satisfied to be saved that way. If I take God at his word, the responsibility of fulfilling his promise does not lie with me but with God who made the promise.

But you fear that you may not be one of those for whom the promise is intended. Do not be alarmed by that idle suspicion. No soul ever came to Jesus wrongly. No one can come unless the Father draws him, and Jesus has said, *he that comes to me I will in no wise cast out* (John 6:37). No soul ever receives Christ by way of robbery; he that has him has him by faith, for the Lord's giving of himself for us and to us is so free that every soul that takes him has a grace-given right to do so. If you hold onto Jesus by the hem of his garment, virtue will flow from him to you as surely as if he had called you out by name and asked you to trust him. Dismiss all fear when you trust the Savior. *In charity there is no fear; but charity that is perfect casts out fear; because fear has torment; from which he that fears is not complete in charity. We love him, because he first loved us* (1 John 4:18-19). Take him and welcome him. He that believes in Jesus is one of God's elect.

AFRAID TO BELIEVE

Did you suggest that it would be a horrible thing if you were to trust in Jesus but still perish? It would be so. But since you must perish only if you do not trust, the risk at the worst is not very great.

I can but perish if I go,
I am resolved to try:
For if I stay away, I know
I must forever die.⁴



Surely, it would be better to die struggling along the King's highway towards the Celestial City than sinking deeper and deeper in the mire and filth of dark, distrustful thoughts! You have nothing to lose, for you

4 Edmund Jones, "The Successful Resolve," 1787.

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

have lost everything already; therefore, make a dash for it and dare to believe in the mercy of God to you – even to you.

But someone moans, “What if I come to Christ and he refuses me?”

My answer is, “Try him.” Cast yourself on the Lord Jesus, and see if he refuses you. You would be the first against whom he has shut the door of hope. Friend, don’t cross that bridge unless you come to it! When Jesus casts you out, it will be time enough to despair; but that time will never come. *This man receiveth sinners*; he has not cast any out (Luke 15:2).

Have you ever heard of the man who lost his way one night and came to the edge of a precipice, and in his own apprehension he fell over the cliff? He clutched at an old tree and hung there, clinging to his frail support with all his might. He was convinced that if he let go of his hold, he would be dashed in pieces on some awful rocks that waited for him below. There he hung with the sweat upon his brow and anguish in every limb. He progressed into a desperate state of fever and faintness, and at last his hands could hold his body no longer. He relaxed his grip. He dropped from his support. He fell – about a foot or so – and settled upon a soft, mossy bank where he lay, altogether unhurt and perfectly safe until morning.

AFRAID TO BELIEVE

Likewise, in the darkness of their ignorance, many think that sure destruction awaits them, even if they confess their sin, quit all hope in self, and resign themselves into the hands of God. They are afraid to let go of the hope they ignorantly cling to. It is an idle fear. Give up your hold upon everything but Christ and drop. Drop from all trust in your works, or prayers, or feelings. Drop at once! Drop now! Soft and safe will be the bank that receives you.

In his love, in the effectiveness of his precious blood, in his perfect righteousness, Jesus Christ will give you immediate rest and peace. Cease from self-confidence. Fall into the arms of Jesus. This is the major part of faith – giving up every other hold and simply falling upon Christ. There is no reason for fear; only ignorance causes your dread of what will be your eternal safety. The death of carnal hope is the life of faith, and the life of faith is life everlasting. Let self die that Christ may live in you.

But the dilemma is that we cannot bring men to Jesus even with the one act of faith. They will adopt any method rather than deny self. They avoid pure belief and fear faith as if it were a monster. Oh, foolish tremblers, who has bewitched you? You fear that which would be the death of all your fear and the beginning of

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

your joy. Why will you perish by perversely preferring other ways to God's own appointed plan of salvation?

Alas, many, many souls say, "We are asked to trust in Jesus, but instead of that we will attend services regularly." Attend public worship by all means, but not as a substitute for faith, or it will become a vain confidence.

The command is "believe and live"; attend to that, whatever else you do.

"Well, I shall take to reading good books; perhaps I shall get good that way."

Read the good books by all means, but that is not the gospel. The gospel is *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved* (Acts 16:31).

Suppose a physician has a patient under his care, and he says to him, "You are to take a bath in the morning; it will be of great service to your disease."

But the man takes a cup of tea in the morning instead of the bath, and he says, "That will do as well, I have no doubt."

What does his physician say when he inquires, "Did you follow my instruction?"

"No, I did not."

"Then you do not expect, of course, that there will be any good result from my visits, since you take no notice of my directions."

Likewise, when we are soul searching, we say to

AFRAID TO BELIEVE

Jesus Christ, “Lord, you asked me to trust you, but I would rather do something else! Lord, I want to have horrible convictions; I want to be shaken over hell’s mouth; I want to be alarmed and distressed!” Yes, you want anything but what Christ prescribes for you, which is that you simply trust him. Whether you feel or do not feel, cast yourself on him that he may save you, and he alone.

“But you do not mean to say that you are against praying and reading good books and so on?”

Not one single word do I speak against any of those things any more than if I were the physician I quoted. Should I speak against the man’s drinking a cup of tea? Let him drink his tea, but not if he drinks it instead of taking the bath which is prescribed for him. So let the man pray – the more the better. Let the man search the Scriptures, but remember that if these things are put in the place of simple faith in Christ, the soul will be ruined. Beware lest it be said of any of you by our Lord, *[Ye] Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are those who testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life* (John 5:39-40).

Come by faith to Jesus, for without him you perish forever. Did you ever notice how a fir tree will grow among rocks where it seems to have no soil? It sends a

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

rootlet into any little crack that opens; it clutches even the bare rock as though it were a huge bird's claw; it holds fast and binds itself to earth with a hundred anchors.



That little picture is very accurate. We have often seen trees thus rooted upon detached masses of bare rock. Now, let this be a picture of yourself. Grip the Rock of Ages. With the rootlet of a little faith, hold onto him. Let that tiny feeler grow, and send out another to take a new grasp of the same Rock. Lay hold on Jesus and

AFRAID TO BELIEVE

keep holding on. Grow up into him. Twist the roots of your nature and the fibers of your heart around him. He is as free to you as the rocks are to the fir tree; be as firmly lashed to him as the pine is to the mountain's side.

Chapter 6

Confusion in How to Believe

It may be that the reader finds it difficult to believe. Let him consider. We cannot believe by an immediate act. The state of mind that we describe as believing is a result that follows other states. We come to faith by degrees. There may be such a thing as faith at first sight, but usually we reach faith by stages; we become interested, we consider, we hear evidence, we are convinced, and then we are led to believe.

If, then, I wish to believe, but for some reason or other find that I cannot make that step of faith, what shall I do? Shall I stand like a cow staring at a new gate; or like an intelligent being, shall I use the proper means? If I want to believe anything, what should I do? The answer lies in the rules of common sense.

If I were told that the sultan of Zanzibar was a good

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

man, and this happened to be a matter of interest to me, I doubt I would have any difficulty in believing it. But if for some reason I had a doubt about it but still wanted to believe the news, what should I do? Wouldn't I hunt up all the available information about his majesty and, by study of the newspapers and other documents, try to arrive at the truth? Better still, if he happened to be in this country and agreed to see me, I could converse with him and with members of his court and citizens of his country. These sources of information would greatly help me to arrive at a decision.

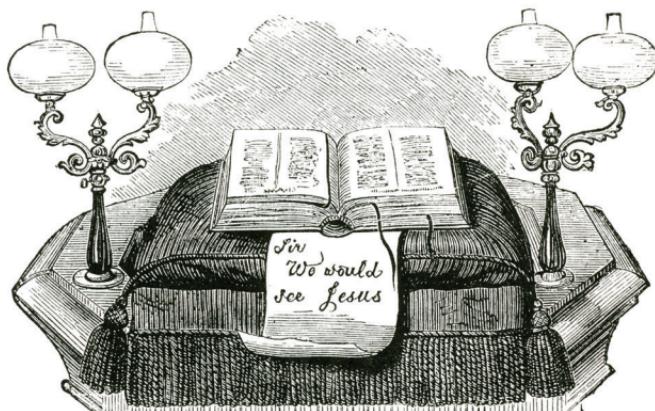
Evidence weighed and knowledge obtained lead to faith. It is true that faith in Jesus is the gift of God (1 Corinthians 12:9), but he usually reveals it in accordance with the laws of the mind, and hence we are told that *faith comes by hearing, and the ear to hear by the word of God* (Romans 10:17). If you want to believe in Jesus, you need to hear about him, read about him, think about him, know about him. You will find faith springing up in your heart like the wheat that comes up through the moisture and the heat working on the seed that has been sown.

If I wanted to have faith in a certain physician, I would ask for testimonials from his cured patients. I would want to see the diplomas that certified his professional knowledge, and I would also like to hear

CONFUSION IN HOW TO BELIEVE

what he has to say about certain complicated cases. In fact, I would use resources to learn, in order to believe in his ability.

Listen to much about Jesus. Souls by the hundreds come to faith in Jesus under a ministry that sets him forth clearly and constantly. Few remain in unbelief under a preacher whose great subject is Christ crucified. Listen to no minister who preaches otherwise. There are some. I have heard of one who found a paper in his pulpit Bible bearing these words: "Sir, we want to see Jesus." Go to the place of worship to see Jesus, and if you don't even hear his name, take yourself off to another place where he is thought of more and therefore more likely to be present.



Read much about the Lord Jesus. The books of Scripture are the lilies among which he feeds. The Bible is the

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

window through which we may look and see our Lord. Read the story of his sufferings and death (Mark 15) with devout attention, and before long, faith will enter your soul. The cross of Christ not only rewards faith but also begets faith. Many a believer can say –

When I view thee, wounded, grieving,
Breathless, on the cursed tree,
Soon I feel my heart believing
Thou hast suffered thus for me.⁵

If hearing and reading are not enough, then deliberately set your mind to work to examine the matter and settle it. Either believe, or know why you do not believe. Finish the research to the utmost of your ability, and pray for God to help you make a thorough investigation to come to an honest decision one way or the other. Consider who Jesus was and whether the quality of his person does not entitle him to have your confidence. Consider what he did and whether his deeds also are grounds for trust. Consider him as he died, rose from the dead, ascended, and lives to intercede for transgressors; see if this doesn't entitle him to be trusted by you. Then cry to him and see if he doesn't hear you.

When Usher wanted to know whether Rutherford

⁵ Author unknown, from *The Sabbath Hymn Book*, 1858.

CONFUSION IN HOW TO BELIEVE

was as holy a man as he was said to be, he went to his house as a beggar, received lodging, and heard the man of God pouring his heart out before the Lord in the night. If you want to know Jesus, get as near to him as you can by studying his character and appealing to his love.

At one time I might have needed evidence to make me believe in the Lord Jesus, but now I know him so well by proving him in my life that I would need a great deal of evidence to make me doubt him. It is now more natural for me to trust than to disbelieve; this is the new nature triumphing, for it was not so at the beginning. The novelty of faith is that in the beginning it is difficult, but act after act of trusting turns faith into a habit. Experience brings strong confirmation to faith.

I am not perplexed with doubt, because the truth that I believe has worked a miracle in me. By its means I have received and retain a new life to which I was once a stranger, and this is confirmation of the strongest sort. I am like the good man and his wife who had kept a lighthouse for years. A visitor who came to see the lighthouse looked out from the window over the waste of waters and asked the good woman, "Aren't you afraid at night when the storm rages and the big waves dash right over the lantern? Don't you fear that the lighthouse and all that is in it will be carried away?"

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

I am sure I should be afraid in a slender tower in the midst of the great billows."



The woman remarked that the idea never occurred to her now. She had lived there so long that she felt as safe on the lone rock as she ever did when she lived on the mainland. As for her husband, when asked if he didn't feel anxious when the wind blew in a hurricane, he answered, "Yes, I feel anxious to keep the lamps well trimmed and the light burning, so no vessel will be wrecked." As to anxiety about the safety of

CONFUSION IN HOW TO BELIEVE

the lighthouse or his own personal security, he had outlived all that.

It is the same with the full-grown believer. He can humbly say, *I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day* (2 Timothy 1:12). From now on let no man trouble me with doubts and questionings; I bear in my soul the proofs of the Spirit's truth and power, and I will have none of your artful reasonings. The gospel to me is truth; I am content to perish if it is not true. I risk my soul's eternal fate upon the truth of the gospel, and I know that there is no risk in it. My one concern is to keep the lights burning that I may benefit others. Only let the Lord give me oil enough to feed my lamp, so that I may cast a ray across the dark and treacherous sea of life, and I am well content.

Now, troubled seeker, if it is true that your minister and many others in whom you confide have found perfect peace and rest in the gospel, why shouldn't you? Is the Spirit of the Lord restrained? Don't his words do good to those who walk uprightly? Won't you also try their saving virtue?

Most true is the gospel, for God is its Author. Believe it. Most able is the Savior, for he is the Son of God. Trust him. Most powerful is his precious blood. Look

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

to it for pardon. Most loving is his gracious heart. Run to it at once.

Thus would I urge you to seek faith; but if you are not willing, what more can I do? I have brought the horse to the water, but I cannot make him drink. Let this, however, be remembered – unbelief is willful when evidence is brought before a man's way and he refuses to examine it. He that does not desire to know and accept the truth has himself to thank if he dies with a lie in his right hand. It is true that *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*; it is equally true that *he that believes not shall be condemned* (Mark 16:16).

Chapter 7

By His Stripes We Are Healed

To help the seeker to a true faith in Jesus, I would remind him of the work of the Lord Jesus in the room and place on behalf of sinners. *For the Christ, when we were yet weak, in his time died for the ungodly* (Romans 5:6). *He himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree* (1 Peter 2:24). *The LORD transposed in him the iniquity of us all* (Isaiah 53:6). *For the Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God* (1 Peter 3:18).

Let the reader fix his eyes on one declaration of Scripture: *by his stripes healing was provided for us* (Isaiah 53:5). Here God treats sin as a disease, and he sets before us the costly remedy that he has provided.

I ask you very solemnly to accompany me in your meditations for a few minutes, while I remind you

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

of the stripes of the Lord Jesus. The Lord resolved to restore us, and therefore he sent his only begotten Son, “very God of very God,” that he might descend into this world to take upon himself our nature in order to obtain our redemption. He lived as a man among men, and in due time, after thirty years or more of obedience, the time came when he did the greatest service of all – namely, standing in our place and bearing *the chastisement of our peace* (Isaiah 53:5).

He went to Gethsemane, and there at the first taste of our bitter cup, he sweat great drops of blood. He went to Pilate’s hall and Herod’s judgment seat, and there he drank mixtures of pain and scorn in our place. Last of all, they took him to the cross and nailed him there to die – to die in our place. The word *stripes* is used to illustrate his sufferings, both of body and of soul. The whole of Christ was made a sacrifice for us; his whole manhood suffered. As to his body, it shared with his mind a grief that never can be described.

In the beginning of his passion, when he emphatically suffered instead of us, he was in agony, and from his body’s frame a bloody sweat was so copious that it fell to the ground. Very rarely does a man sweat blood. There have been one or two instances of it, and they have been followed by almost immediate death; but our Savior lived; he lived after an agony that would have

BY HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED

proved fatal to anyone else. Before he could cleanse his face from this dreadful crimson, they hurried him to the high priest's hall.

In the dead of night, they bound him and led him away. They took him to Pilate and to Herod. These scourged him, and their soldiers spat in his face, struck him, and put a crown of thorns on his head. Scourging is one of the worst tortures that can be inflicted with an evil intent. It was formerly the disgrace of the British army that the "cat" was used upon the soldier – a brutal infliction of torture. But to the Roman, cruelty was so natural that he made his common punishments worse than brutal. The Roman scourge is said to have been made of the tendons of oxen, twisted into knots, and into these knots were inserted slivers of bone and hip bones of sheep, so that every time the scourge fell upon the bare back, *the plowers . . . made long their furrows* (Psalm 129:3).

Our Savior was called upon to endure the fierce pain of the Roman scourge, and this was not as the end of his punishment, but only a preface to crucifixion. His persecutors struck him and plucked his hair; they spared him no form of pain. In spite of his faintness from bleeding and fasting, they made him carry his cross until another was forced to bear it so their victim would not die on the road.

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

They stripped him, threw him down, and nailed him to the wood. They pierced his hands and his feet. They lifted the tree with him on it and then dashed it down into its place in the ground, so that all his limbs were dislocated, according to the lament of the twenty-second psalm: *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.* He hung in the burning sun until the fever dissolved his strength, and he said, *my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death* (Psalm 22:14-15).

There he hung, a spectacle to God and men. The weight of his body was first sustained by his feet, until the nails tore through the tender nerves; then the painful load began to drag upon his hands and tear those sensitive parts of his frame. A small wound in the hand has brought on lockjaw, but how awful the torment that must have been caused by that dragging iron tearing through the delicate parts of the hands and feet.

Now all bodily pains were centered in his tortured frame. All the while his enemies stood around, pointing at him in scorn, thrusting out their tongues in mockery, jesting at his prayers, and gloating over his sufferings. He cried, *I thirst*, and they gave him vinegar mixed with gall (John 19:28). Then he said, *It is finished* (John

BY HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED

19:30). He had endured the utmost of appointed grief and had made full vindication to divine justice; then, and not until then, he gave up the ghost. Holy men of old have explicitly portrayed the bodily sufferings of our Lord, and I have no hesitation in doing the same, trusting that trembling sinners may see salvation in these painful “stripes” of the Redeemer.

To describe the outward sufferings of our Lord is not easy; I acknowledge that I have failed. But his soul sufferings, which were the soul of his sufferings, who can even conceive, much less express, what they were? I mentioned that he sweat great drops of blood. That was his heart driving its life-floods to the surface through the terrible depression of spirit that was upon him. He said, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death* (Matthew 26:38). The betrayal by Judas and the desertion of the twelve grieved our Lord, but the weight of our sin was the real pressure on his heart. Our guilt was the olive press that forced from him the moisture of his life.

No language can ever describe his agony in anticipation of his passion; how little then can we conceive the passion itself? When nailed to the cross, he endured what no martyr has ever suffered; when they have died, martyrs have been so sustained by God that they have rejoiced amid their pain. But our Redeemer

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

was forsaken by his Father, until he cried, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* (Matthew 27:46). That was the bitterest cry of all, the utmost depth of his unfathomable grief.

Yet it was necessary that he should be deserted, because God must turn his back on sin and consequently upon him who was made sin for us. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him* (2 Corinthians 5:21). The soul of the great Substitute suffered a horror of misery instead of that horror of hell that sinners would have been plunged into had he not taken their sin upon himself and been made a curse for them. It is written, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree* (Galatians 3:13); but who knows what that curse means?

The remedy for your sins and mine is found in the substitutionary sufferings of the Lord Jesus and in these only. These stripes of the Lord Jesus Christ were on our behalf. Do you ask, “Is there anything for us to do to remove the guilt of sin?”

I answer, “There is nothing whatever for you to do. By the stripes of Jesus we are healed. All those stripes he has endured and left not one of them for us to bear.”

“But don’t we need to believe on him?” Yes, certainly. If I say a certain ointment heals, I do not deny that you need a bandage to apply it to the wound. Faith is the

BY HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED

linen that binds the plaster of Christ's reconciliation to the sore of our sin. The linen does not heal; that is the work of the ointment. So faith does not heal; that is the work of the atonement of Christ.

"But we must repent," cries another. Surely we must, and shall, for repentance is the first sign of healing, but the stripes of Jesus heal us and not our repentance. These stripes, when applied to the heart, work repentance in us; we hate sin because it made Jesus suffer.

When you intelligently trust that Jesus suffered for you, then you discover the fact that God will never punish you for the same offense for which Jesus died. His justice will not permit him to see the debt paid twice – first by the Surety, and second by the debtor. Justice cannot demand a recompense twice; if my bleeding Surety has borne my guilt, then I cannot bear it.

Accepting Christ Jesus as suffering for me, I have accepted a complete freedom from judicial liability. I have been condemned in Christ, and there is therefore now no condemnation to me anymore (Romans 8:1). This is the groundwork of the security of the sinner who believes in Jesus; he lives because Jesus died in his place, and he is acceptable before God because Jesus is accepted. The person for whom Jesus is an accepted Substitute must go free; none can touch him; he is clear. Oh, my hearer, will you have Jesus Christ to be

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

your substitute? If so, you are free. *He that believeth on him is not condemned* (John 3:18). Thus, *by his stripes healing was provided for us* (Isaiah 53:5).

Chapter 8

Hindrances

Although it is no difficult thing to believe him who cannot lie and trust the One who is able to save, yet something may interfere and make this a hard thing to my reader. That hindrance might be a secret, but it might still be real. A door may be closed, not by a great stone that all can see, but by an invisible bolt that shoots into a holdfast⁶ quite out of sight. A man may have good eyes but not be able to see an object, because another substance comes in the way. You could not even see the sun if a handkerchief or a mere piece of rag were tied over your face. Oh, the bandages which men persist in binding over their own eyes!

A sweet sin, harbored in the heart, can prevent a

⁶ A holdfast is a staple or clamp securing an object to a wall or other surface; something to which something else may be firmly secured.

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

soul from securing Christ by faith. The Lord Jesus has come to save us from sinning, but if we are resolved to continue sinning, Christ and our souls will never agree. If a man takes poison, and a doctor is called in to save his life, he may have a sure antidote ready, but if the patient persists in keeping the poison at his lips and continues to swallow the deadly drops, how can the doctor save him? Salvation includes parting the sinner from his sin, so the very nature of salvation would have to be changed before we could speak of a man's being saved when he is loving sin and willfully living in it. A man cannot be made white while he continues in black; he cannot be healed and yet remain sick; neither can anyone be saved and still be a lover of evil.

A drunkard will be saved by believing in Christ – that is to say, he will be saved from being a drunkard. But if he determines to intoxicate himself, he is not saved from it, and he probably has not truly believed in Jesus. By faith a liar can be saved from falsehood, but then he quits lying and is careful to speak the truth. Anyone can see with half an eye that he cannot be saved from being a liar but will continue in his old style of deceit and untruthfulness. A person who is at enmity with another will be saved from that feeling of enmity by believing in the Lord Jesus, but if he vows that he will still cherish the feeling of hate, it is doubtful that he is

HINDRANCES

saved from it. He may not have believed in the Lord Jesus unto salvation.

The great matter is to be delivered from the love of sin; this is the sure effect of trust in the Savior. But if this effect is so far from being desired that it is refused, all talk of trusting in the Savior for salvation is an idle tale.

Suppose a man goes to the shipping office and asks if he can be taken to America. He is assured that a ship is ready, and he only has to board, and he will soon reach New York. "But," says he, "I want to stop at home in England and mind my shop all the time I am crossing the Atlantic." The agent thinks he is talking to a madman and tells him to go about his business and not waste his time by playing the fool. To pretend to trust Christ to save you from sin while you are still determined to continue in it is making a mockery of Christ. I pray you are not guilty of such irreverence; don't even imagine that the holy Jesus will be the patron of iniquity.

Consider a picture of a tree. The ivy has grown all over it and is strangling the tree, sucking its life out and killing it. Can that tree be saved? The gardener thinks it can be. He is willing to do his best. But before he begins to use his ax and his knife, he is told that he must not cut away the ivy. "Ah, then," he says, "it is impossible. It is the ivy that is killing the tree, and

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

if you want the tree saved, you cannot save the ivy. If you trust me to preserve the tree, you must let me get the deadly climber away from it." Isn't that common sense? You don't trust the tree to the gardener unless you trust him to cut away that which is deadly to it. If the sinner will keep his sin, he must die in it; if he is willing to be rescued from his sin, the Lord Jesus is able to do it – and will do it if he submits his life to his care.



What, then, is your darling sin? Is it any gross wrong-doing? Then shame should make you cease from it. Is it love of the world, or fear of men, or longing for evil gains? Surely, none of these things should cause you to live in enmity with God and beneath his frown. Is it a human love that is eating like a canker into the heart?

HINDRANCES

Can any creature rival the Lord Jesus? Isn't it idolatry to allow any earthly thing to compare with the Lord God?

"Well," someone said, "for me to give up the particular sin would bring serious injury to my business, ruin my prospects, and lessen my usefulness in many ways."

If that is so, remember the words of the Lord Jesus who bids you to pluck out your eye, cut off your hand or foot, and cast it from you, rather than be cast into hell. It is better to enter into life with one eye and the poorest prospects of wealth than to keep all your earthly hopes and be without Christ. Better to be a lame believer than a leaping sinner. Better to be in the rear for life in the army of Christ than lead the van and be a chief officer under the command of Satan. If you win Christ, it will matter little what you lose. No doubt many have had to suffer that which has maimed and lamed them for this life, but if they have entered into eternal life by so doing, they have been great gainers.

It comes to this, my friend, as it did with John Bunyan: a voice now speaks to you and says, "Wilt thou keep thy sin and go to hell? Or leave thy sin and go to heaven?"

The point should be decided before you move. In the name of God, I ask you, "Which shall it be – Christ and salvation, or the favorite sin and damnation?" There is no middle course. Waiting or refusing to decide

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

will practically be a sure decision for the Evil One. He that stands questioning whether he will be honest or not is already off the straight course; he that does not know whether he wishes to be cleansed from sin gives evidence of a foul heart.

If you are anxious to give up every evil way, our Lord Jesus will enable you to do so at once. His grace has already changed the direction of your desires; in fact, your heart is renewed. Therefore, rest on him to strengthen you to battle temptations as they arise and to fulfill the Lord's commands from day to day. The Lord Jesus can make the lame man to leap like a deer and enable those who are sick of the palsy to take up their bed and walk.

He will make you able to conquer the evil habit. He can even cast the devil out of you. Yes, if you had seven devils, he could drive them out at once; there is no limit to his power to cleanse and sanctify. Now that you are willing to be made whole, the great difficulty is removed. He that has set the will right can arrange all your other powers and make them move to his praise. You would not have earnestly desired to quit all sin if he had not inclined you in that direction. If you now trust him, it will be clear that he has begun a good work in you, and we feel assured that he will carry it on (Philippians 1:6).

Chapter 9

Doubters

Today, a simple, childlike faith is very rare, but the usual thing is to believe nothing and question everything. Doubts are as plentiful as blackberries, and all hands and lips are stained with them. It seems strange that men should hunt for objections to their own salvation. If I were doomed to die, and I found a hint of mercy, I am sure I would not set my wits to work to discover reasons why I should not be pardoned. I would let my enemies do that; I would determine a very different direction.

To reason against one's own life is a sort of constructive suicide that only a drunken man would pursue. To argue against your only hope is like a foolish man sitting on a bough and chopping it away to let himself down. Who but an idiot would do that?

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED



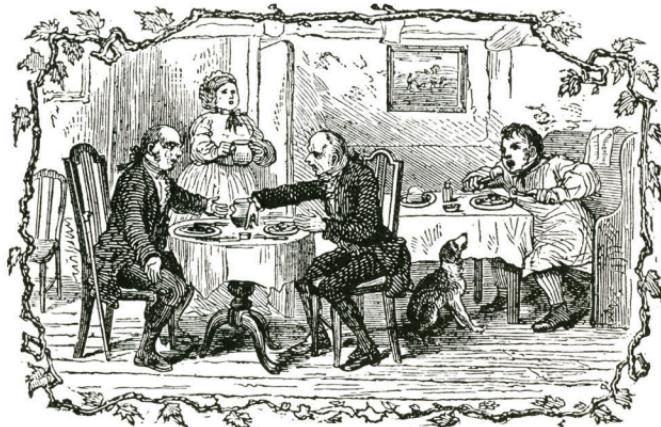
Yet many appear to be special pleaders for their own ruin. They search their Bibles throughout for threatening texts, and then they turn to reason, and philosophy, and skepticism in order to shut the door in their own faces. Surely, this is poor application for a sensible man.

Many today who cannot refrain from religious thought are able to stave off the inconvenient pressure of conscience by quibbling over the great truths of revelation. Great mysteries are in the Book of God, for how can the infinite God speak in such a way that all his thoughts can be grasped by finite man? But it is the height of folly to wrangle over these deep things but suspend talk of plain, soul-saving truths.

It reminds one of the two philosophers who debated about food; they left the table hungry, while the common countryman in the corner asked no question

DOUBTERS

but used his knife and fork with great diligence and went on his way rejoicing. Thousands are now happy in the Lord by receiving the gospel like little children, while others who can always see difficulties, or invent them, are as far as ever from any comfortable hope of salvation. I know many decent people who seem to have resolved to never come to Christ until they can understand how the doctrine of election is consistent with the free invitations of the gospel. I might just as well determine never to eat a morsel of bread until it has been explained to me how it is that God keeps me alive, and yet I must eat to live. The fact is that most of us know quite enough already, and our real need is not light in the head but truth in the heart – not help over difficulties but grace to make us hate sin and seek reconciliation.



BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

Let me add a warning here against tampering with the Word of God. No habit can be more ruinous to the soul. It is cool, contemptuous conceit to sit down and correct your Maker, and it tends to make the heart harder than a millstone. We remember a man who used a penknife on his Bible; before long he had given up all his former beliefs. The spirit of reverence is healthy, but the audacity of criticizing the inspired Word is destructive of all proper feeling towards God.

If a man ever feels his need of a Savior after treating Scripture with a proud, critical spirit, he is apt to find his conscience standing in the way and hindering him from comfort by reminding him of his ill treatment of the sacred Word. He struggles to draw consolation out of passages of the Bible that he has treated with disdain or even set aside altogether as unworthy of consideration. In his distress the sacred texts seem to laugh at his calamity. When the time of need comes, the wells that he stopped with stones yield no water for his thirst. Beware when you despise a Scripture, or you may cast away the only friend that can help you in the hour of agony.

A certain German duke was accustomed to calling upon his servant to read a chapter of the Bible to him every morning. When anything did not square with his judgment, he would sternly cry, "Hans, strike that

DOUBTERS

out." Eventually, Hans was slow in beginning to read. He fumbled over the Book until his master called out, "Hans, why don't you read?"

Then Hans answered, "Sir, there is hardly anything left. It is all struck out!"

One day his master's objections had run one way, and another day they had taken another turn and another set of passages had been blotted, until nothing was left to instruct or comfort him.



Let us not destroy our own mercies with our faultfinding criticism. We may need those promises that appear needless, and those portions of Holy Scripture that have been most assailed by sceptics may prove essential to our very life. Therefore, let us guard the priceless treasure

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

of the Bible and determine never to strike a single line of it. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness* (2 Timothy 3:16).

What use are obscure questions while our souls are in peril? The way to escape from sin is plain enough. The wayfaring man, though a fool, does not need to err here. God has not mocked us with a salvation that we cannot understand. “Believe and live” is a command that a babe may comprehend and obey.

Doubt no more, but now believe

Question not, but just receive.

Artful doubts and reasonings be

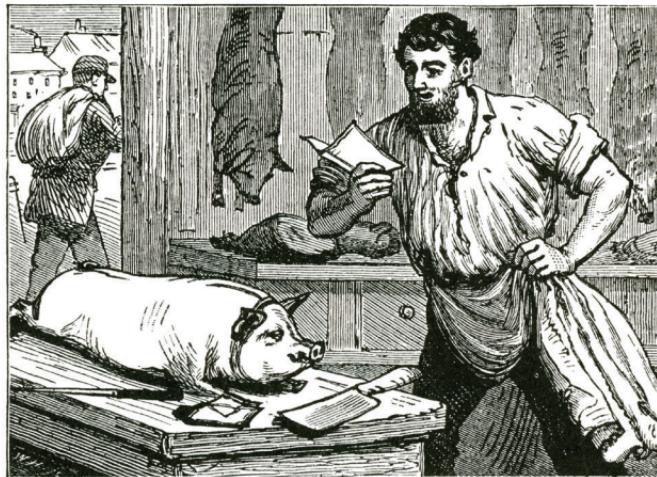
Nailed with Jesus to the tree.

Instead of finding fault with Scripture, the man who is led by the Spirit of God will embrace the Lord Jesus at once. Seeing that thousands of decent, common-sense people – even people of the best character – are trusting everything to Jesus, he will do the same for this man. Then he can begin a life worth living, and he can eliminate any further fear. He may at once advance to that higher and better way of living that grows out of love for Jesus, the Savior. Why shouldn’t the reader do so at once? Oh, that he would!

DOUBTERS

A Newark, New Jersey, butcher received a letter from his old home in Germany that notified him that due to the death of a relative, he was heir to a considerable amount of money. He was cutting up a pig at the time. After reading the letter, he hastily tore off his dirty apron and did not stop to finish making sausages but left the shop to prepare to go to Germany. Do you blame him, or would you have had him stay in Newark with his block and his cleaver?

See here the operation of faith. The butcher believed what was told him and acted on it at once. Sensible fellow, too!



God has sent his messages to man, telling him the good news of salvation. When a man believes the good news

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

to be true, he accepts the blessing and hurries to receive it. If he truly believes, he will at once accept Christ with all he has to bestow, turn from his present evil ways, and set out for the Heavenly City, where the full blessing is to be enjoyed. He cannot quit his ways of sin or be holy too soon. If a man could really see what sin is, he would flee from it as from a deadly serpent and rejoice to be freed by Christ Jesus. *O man of God, flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, charity, tolerance, meekness* (1 Timothy 6:11).

Chapter 10

No Salvation Without Faith

Some think it's hard that there should be nothing but ruin for them if they will not believe in Jesus Christ; but if you think for a minute, you will see that it is just and reasonable. There is no way for a man to keep his strength up except by eating. If you were to say, "I will not eat again; I despise such animalism," you might go to Madeira or travel in all lands (assuming you lived long enough), but you would find no climate and no exercise to keep you alive if you refused food.

Would you then complain, "It is a hard thing that I should die because I do not believe in eating"? It is not an unjust thing for you to die if you are so foolish as not to eat. It is the same with believing. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved* (Acts 16:31). If you will not believe, it is not a hard or unjust thing

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

that you should be lost. It would be strange indeed if that were not the case.

A thirsty man stands before a fountain. “No,” he says, “I will never touch a drop of moisture as long as I live. Can’t I get my thirst quenched in my own way?” We tell him no; he must drink or die. He says, “I will never drink, but it is a hard thing that I must die. It is a bigoted, cruel thing to tell me so.”

He is wrong. His thirst is the inevitable result of neglecting a law of nature. You too must believe or die. Why refuse to obey the command? Drink, man, drink! Take Christ and live. He is the way of salvation, and to enter you must trust him; but there is nothing hard in the fact that you must perish if you refuse to trust the Savior.

Consider a man at sea. He has a chart and a compass, and if he studies them well, they will guide him to his journey’s end. The North Star gleams through the cloud rifts, which also helps him. “No,” says he, “I will have nothing to do with your stars; I do not believe in the North Pole. I shall not attend to that little thing inside the box; one needle is as good as another needle. I have no faith in your chart, and I will have nothing to do with it. The art of navigation is only a lot of nonsense made up by people to make money, and I will not be

NO SALVATION WITHOUT FAITH

deceived by it." The man never reaches port, and he says it is a hard thing – a very hard thing. I do not think so.

Some of you say, "I am not going to read the Scriptures; I am not going to listen to your talk about Jesus Christ; I do not believe in such things."

Then Jesus says, *he that believes not shall be condemned* (Mark 16:16).

"That's very hard," you say. But it is not. It is not harder than the fact that if you reject the compass and the North Star, you will not reach your port. There is no other way; it must be so.

You say you will have nothing to do with Jesus and his blood, and you pooh-pooh all religion. You will find it hard to laugh about these matters when you face death, when the clammy sweat must be wiped from your brow, and your heart beats against your ribs as if it wanted to leap out and fly away from God. Then you will find that those Sundays, and those services, and this old Book are something more and better than you thought they were. You will wonder why you were so simple as to neglect any true help to salvation. Above all, what a grievous thing it will be to have neglected Christ, that North Star that can guide the mariner to the haven of rest!

Where do you live?

Maybe you live on the other side of the river, and

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

you have to cross a bridge to get home. You are so silly that you do not believe in bridges, or in boats, or in the existence of water. You say, "I am not going over any of your bridges, and I shall not get into any of your boats. I do not believe that there is a river, or that there is any such stuff as water." You are going home, and soon you come to the old bridge, but you will not cross it. Yonder is a boat, but you are determined that you will not get into it. There is the river, and you resolve that you will not cross it in the usual way; yet you think it is a hard thing that you cannot get home.

Surely, something has destroyed your reasoning powers, for you would not think it so hard if you were thinking clearly. If a man will not do the thing that is necessary to reach a certain end, how can he expect to gain that end? Assume you have taken poison, and the physician brings an antidote and says, "Take it quickly, or you will die; but if you take it quickly, I guarantee that the poison will be neutralized."

But you say, "No, doctor, I do not believe in antidotes. Let everything take its course; let every tub stand on its own bottom; I will have nothing to do with your remedy. Besides, I do not believe that there is any remedy for the poison I have taken, and, what is more, I don't care whether there is or not."

Well, sir, you will die; and when the coroner's inquest

NO SALVATION WITHOUT FAITH

is held on your body, the verdict will be “Served him right!”

So it will be with you if, having heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, you say, “I am too educated to have anything to do with that old-fashioned notion of substitution. I’m not going to attend the preacher’s sermon about sacrifice and shedding of blood.”

Then, when you perish, the verdict given by your conscience, which will sit upon the King’s quest at last, will say, “Suicide: he destroyed his own soul.”

So says the Book – *O Israel, thou hast caused thyself to become lost* (Hosea 13:9). Reader, I implore you, do not do likewise.

Chapter 11

Trusting Completely

Friends, if you have begun to trust the Lord, trust him completely. Let your faith be the most real and practical thing in your whole life. Don't trust the Lord in mere sentiment about a few great spiritual things, but trust him for everything, forever, for time and eternity, for body and soul. See how the Lord hangs the world upon nothing but his own word! It has neither prop nor pillar. The great arch of heaven stands without a buttress or a wooden center.

He stretches out the north wind over the empty place and hangs the earth upon nothing. He binds up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them. The pillars of heaven tremble and are

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

astonished at his reproof. He divides the sea with his power, and by his intelligence he smites its pride. (Job 26:7-8, 11-12)

The Lord can and will bear all the strain that faith can ever put upon him. The greatest troubles are easy for his power, and the darkest mysteries are clear to his wisdom.

Trust God to the hilt. Lean, and lean hard; yes, lean all your weight and every other weight upon the mighty God of Jacob.

You can safely leave the future with the Lord who lives and never changes – *Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and for the ages* (Hebrews 13:8). The past is now in your Savior's hand, and you will never be condemned for it, whatever it may have been, for the Lord has cast your iniquities into the midst of the sea. Believe at this moment in your present privileges, for he has *blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ* (Ephesians 1:3). You are saved. If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus, you have passed from death unto life, and you are saved.

During the slave days, a lady brought her black servant on board an English ship, and she laughingly said to the captain, “I suppose if Aunt Chloe and I were to go to England, she would be free?”

TRUSTING COMPLETELY

“Madam,” said the captain, “she is free now. The moment she came on board a British vessel, she was free.”

When the Negro woman knew this, she did not leave the ship – not she. It was not the *hope* of liberty that made her bold but the *fact* of liberty. Likewise, you are not now merely hoping for eternal life, but *he that believes in the Son has eternal life* (John 3:36). Accept this as a fact revealed in the sacred Word, and rejoice accordingly. Don’t reason about it or question it; believe it and leap for joy.

I want my reader, upon believing in the Lord Jesus, to believe for eternal salvation. Do not be content with the notion that you can receive a new birth that will die out, a heavenly life that will expire, or a pardon that will be recalled. The Lord Jesus gives to his sheep eternal life. Do not rest until you have it. Now, if it is eternal, how can it die out? Be saved for eternity.

The apostle Peter says we should be *born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever* (1 Peter 1:23); do not settle for a temporary change, a sort of grace that only blooms, then fades. You are now on the railway of grace – take a ticket for the whole trip. I am not commissioned to preach salvation for a time; the gospel I set before you is: *He that believes and is baptized shall*

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

be saved, but he that believes not shall be condemned
(Mark 16:16).

He shall be saved from sin, from going back to sin, from turning aside to the broad road. May the Holy Spirit lead you to believe for nothing less than that.

“Do you mean,” someone asks, “that I am to believe that if I once trust Christ, I shall be saved whatever sin I may choose to commit?”

I have never said anything of the kind. I have described true salvation as a thorough change of heart that will alter your tastes and desires. I contend that if you have such a change, and you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, that change will be permanent. The Lord’s work is not like the cheap work of the present day, which soon goes to pieces. Trust the Lord to keep you, however long you may live and however much you may be tempted. Believe in Jesus for everlasting life.

Oh, that you may also trust the Lord for all the sufferings of this present time! In the world you will have tribulation; learn by faith to know that all things work together for good. Submit yourself to the will of God; self-will and repining cause us a hundred times more grief than our afflictions themselves. So believe your Lord’s will must be far better than yours, and therefore you not only submit to it but also even rejoice in it.

Look at the sheep when it is being shorn. If it lies quite

TRUSTING COMPLETELY

still, the shears will not hurt it; if it struggles, or even shies away, it may be pricked. Submit yourselves under the hand of God, and affliction will lose its sharpness.



Trust the Lord Jesus in the matter of sanctification. Certain friends appear to think that the Lord Jesus cannot sanctify them wholly – spirit, soul, and body.

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

Hence they willingly give way to sins under the notion that there is no help to avoid them, but that they must pay tribute to the devil as long as they live in this body. Don't bow your head in bondage to any sin, but strike hard for liberty. Whether it is anger, or unbelief, or sloth, or any other form of iniquity, we are able by divine grace to drive out the Canaanite; what is more, we *must* drive him out. No virtue is impossible to him who believes in Jesus, and no sin need have victory over him. Indeed, it is written, *Neither present your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but present yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. So that sin shall have no dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace* (Romans 6:14). Believe for high degrees of joy in the Lord and likeness to Jesus; advance to take full possession of these precious things, for as you believe, so shall it be unto you.

All things are possible to him that believes (Mark 9:23); and he who is the chief of sinners is not a whit behind the greatest of saints.

Experience the joy of heaven. This is grand faith, but it is not more than we ought to have. Within a very short time, the man who believes in the Lord Jesus will be with him where he is. This head will wear a crown; these eyes will see the King in his beauty; these ears

TRUSTING COMPLETELY

will hear his own dear voice; this soul will be in glory; and this poor body will be raised from the dead and joined in incorruption to the perfected soul! Glory, glory, glory! And so near, so sure. Let us at once rehearse the music and anticipate the bliss!

But someone cries, “We are not there yet!”

No, but faith fills us with delight in the blessed prospect, and meanwhile it sustains us on the road. Reader, I long that you may be a firm believer in the Lord alone. I want you to get wholly upon the rock and not keep a foot on the sand. Trust God for all things in this mortal life and trust him alone. This is the way to live. I know it by experience. God’s bare arm is quite enough to lean upon.

I will share with you a bit of the experience of an old laboring man I once knew. He feared God more than many others, and the Spirit taught him in the deep things. This illustration will show you what kind of a man he was – great at hedging and ditching but greater at simple trust. He described his faith this way: “It was a bitter winter, and I had no work and no bread in the house. The children were crying. The snow was deep, and my way was dark. My old master told me I might have a bit of wood when I wanted it, so I thought a bit of fire would warm the poor children; I went out with my chopper to get some fuel. I stood near a deep

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

ditch full of snow with drifts many feet deep – in fact, I did not know how deep. While aiming a blow at a bit of wood, my billhook (cutting tool) slipped out of my hand and went right down into the snow where I could not hope to find it. Standing there with no food, no fire, and the chopper gone, something seemed to say to me, ‘Will Richardson, can you trust God now?’ and my very soul said, ‘That I can.’”

This is true faith – the faith that trusts the Lord when the billhook is gone, the faith that believes God when all outward appearances deny him, the faith that is happy with God alone when all friends turn their backs upon you. Dear reader, may you and I have this precious faith, this real faith, this God-honoring faith! The Lord’s truth deserves it; his love claims it; his faithfulness constrains it. Happy is he who has it! He is the man whom the Lord loves, and the world will know it before all is finished.

After all, the very best faith is an everyday faith – the faith that deals with bread and water, coats and stockings, children and cattle, house rent and weather. The superfine confectionery religion that is only available on Sundays and in drawing-room meetings and Bible readings will never take a soul to heaven until life becomes one long conference and there are seven Sabbaths in a week. Faith is doing her very best as she

TRUSTING COMPLETELY

plods on for many years, month by month, trusting the Lord about the sick husband, the failing daughter, the declining business, the unconverted friend, and such things.

Faith also helps us to use the world but not abuse it. It is good at hard work and at daily duty. It is not an angelic thing for skies and stars, but a human grace at home in kitchens and workshops. It is a sort of maid-of-all-work and is at home with every kind of labor and in every status of life.

Faith is a grace for every day, all the year round. Holy confidence in God is never out of work. Faith's goods are so valued at the heavenly court that she always has one fine piece of work or another on the wheel or in the furnace. Men dream that heroes are only to be made on special occasions, once or twice in a century; but in truth, the finest heroes are homespun and are more often hidden in obscurity than paraded for public observation. Trust in the living God is the treasure out of which heroism is coined. Perseverance in well doing is one of the fields in which faith grows the wheat of her harvest. Plodding on in hard work, bringing up a family on a few shillings a week, bearing constant pain with patience, and so forth – these are the feats of valor through which God is glorified by the rank and file of his believing people.

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

You and I will be of one mind in this – we will not pine to be great, but we will be eager to be good. For this we will rely upon the Lord our God, whose we are and whom we serve. We will ask to be made holy throughout every day of the week. We will pray as much about our daily business as about our soul's salvation. We will trust him concerning our farm, and our turnips, and our cows, as well as our spiritual privileges and our hope of heaven.

The Lord Jehovah is our household God; Jesus is our Savior born for adversity; and the Holy Spirit is our Comforter in every hour of trial. We have an approachable God; *Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of his grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need* (Hebrews 4:16). He hears, he pities, he helps. Let us trust him without a break, without a doubt, without a hesitation. The life of faith is life within God's wicket gate. If before we trembled outside in the wide world of unbelief, may the Holy Spirit enable us now to take the great decisive step and say, once for all, *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief* (Mark 9:24).

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Charles H. Spurgeon – A Brief Biography



Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born on June 19, 1834, in Kelvedon, Essex, England. He was one of seventeen children in his family (nine of whom died in infancy). His father and grandfather were Nonconformist ministers in England. Due to economic difficulties, eighteen-month-old Charles was sent to live with his grandfather, who helped teach Charles the ways of God. Later in life, Charles remembered looking

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

at the pictures in *Pilgrim's Progress* and in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* as a young boy.

Charles did not have much of a formal education and never went to college. He read much throughout his life though, especially books by Puritan authors.

Even with godly parents and grandparents, young Charles resisted giving in to God. It was not until he was fifteen years old that he was born again. He was on his way to his usual church, but when a heavy snowstorm prevented him from getting there, he turned in at a little Primitive Methodist chapel. Though there were only about fifteen people in attendance, the preacher spoke from Isaiah 45:22: *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.* Charles Spurgeon's eyes were opened and the Lord converted his soul.

He began attending a Baptist church and teaching Sunday school. He soon preached his first sermon, and then when he was sixteen years old, he became the pastor of a small Baptist church in Cambridge. The church soon grew to over four hundred people, and Charles Spurgeon, at the age of nineteen, moved on to become the pastor of the New Park Street Church in London. The church grew from a few hundred attenders to a few thousand. They built an addition to the church, but still needed more room to accommodate the congregation. The Metropolitan Tabernacle was built in London in

CHARLES H. SPURGEON – A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

1861, seating more than 5,000 people. Pastor Spurgeon preached the simple message of the cross, and thereby attracted many people who wanted to hear God's Word preached in the power of the Holy Spirit.

On January 9, 1856, Charles married Susannah Thompson. They had twin boys, Charles and Thomas. Charles and Susannah loved each other deeply, even amidst the difficulties and troubles that they faced in life, including health problems. They helped each other spiritually, and often together read the writings of Jonathan Edwards, Richard Baxter, and other Puritan writers.

Charles Spurgeon was a friend of all Christians, but he stood firmly on the Scriptures, and it didn't please all who heard him. Spurgeon believed in and preached on the sovereignty of God, heaven and hell, repentance, revival, holiness, salvation through Jesus Christ alone, and the infallibility and necessity of the Word of God. He spoke against worldliness and hypocrisy among Christians, and against Roman Catholicism, ritualism, and modernism.

One of the biggest controversies in his life was known as the "Down-Grade Controversy." Charles Spurgeon believed that some pastors of his time were "downgrading" the faith by compromising with the world or the new ideas of the age. He said that some pastors were

BELIEVE AND BE SAVED

denying the inspiration of the Bible, salvation by faith alone, and the truth of the Bible in other areas, such as creation. Many pastors who believed what Spurgeon condemned were not happy about this, and Spurgeon eventually resigned from the Baptist Union.

Despite some difficulties, Spurgeon became known as the “Prince of Preachers.” He opposed slavery, started a pastors’ college, opened an orphanage, led in helping feed and clothe the poor, had a book fund for pastors who could not afford books, and more.

Charles Spurgeon remains one of the most published preachers in history. His sermons were printed each week (even in the newspapers), and then the sermons for the year were re-issued as a book at the end of the year. The first six volumes, from 1855-1860, are known as *The Park Street Pulpit*, while the next fifty-seven volumes, from 1861-1917 (his sermons continued to be published long after his death), are known as *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. He also oversaw a monthly magazine-type publication called *The Sword and the Trowel*, and Spurgeon wrote many books, including *Lectures to My Students*, *All of Grace*, *Around the Wicket Gate*, *Advice for Seekers*, *John Ploughman’s Talks*, *The Soul Winner*, *Words of Counsel for Christian Workers*, *Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith*, *Morning and Evening*, his autobiography, and more, including

CHARLES H. SPURGEON – A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

some commentaries, such as his twenty-year study on the Psalms – *The Treasury of David*.

Charles Spurgeon often preached ten times a week, preaching to an estimated ten million people during his lifetime. He usually preached from only one page of notes, and often from just an outline. He read about six books each week. During his lifetime, he had read *The Pilgrim's Progress* through more than one hundred times. When he died, his personal library consisted of more than 12,000 books. However, the Bible always remained the most important book to him.

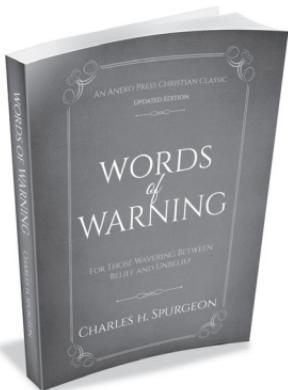
Spurgeon was able to do what he did in the power of God's Holy Spirit because he followed his own advice – he met with God every morning before meeting with others, and he continued in communion with God throughout the day.

Charles Spurgeon suffered from gout, rheumatism, and some depression, among other health problems. He often went to Menton, France, to recuperate and rest. He preached his final sermon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle on June 7, 1891, and died in France on January 31, 1892, at the age of fifty-seven. He was buried in Norwood Cemetery in London.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon lived a life devoted to God. His sermons and writings continue to influence Christians all over the world.

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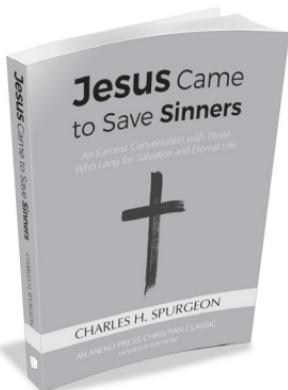




Words of Warning,
by Charles H. Spurgeon

This book, *Words of Warning*, is an analysis of people and the gospel of Christ. Under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Charles H. Spurgeon sheds light on the many ways people may refuse to come to Christ, but he also shines a brilliant light on how we can be saved. Unsaved or wavering individuals will be convicted, and if they allow it, they will be led to Christ. Sincere Christians will be happy and blessed as they consider the great salvation with which they have been saved.

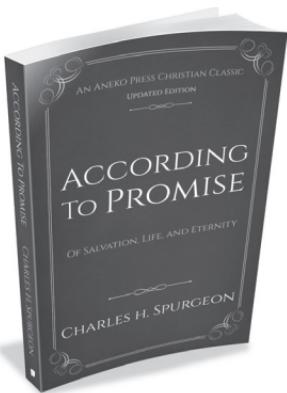
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Jesus Came to Save Sinners,
by Charles H. Spurgeon

This is a heart-level conversation with you, the reader. Every excuse, reason, and roadblock for not coming to Christ is examined and duly dealt with. If you think you may be too bad, or if perhaps you really are bad and you sin either openly or behind closed doors, you will discover that life in Christ is for you too. You can reject the message of salvation by faith, or you can choose to live a life of sin after professing faith in Christ, but you cannot change the truth as it is, either for yourself or for others. As such, it behooves you and your family to embrace truth, claim it for your own, and be genuinely set free for now and eternity. Come and embrace this free gift of God, and live a victorious life for Him.

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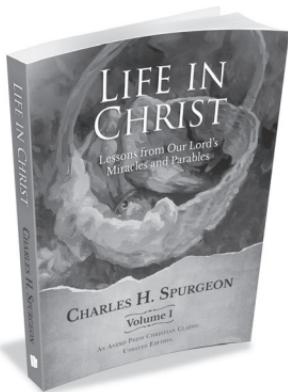


According to Promise,
by Charles H. Spurgeon

The first part of this book is meant to be a sieve to separate the chaff from the wheat. Use it on your own soul. It may be the most profitable and beneficial work you have ever done. He who looked into his accounts and found that his business was losing money was saved from bankruptcy.

The second part of this book examines God's promises to His children. The promises of God not only exceed all precedent, but they also exceed all imitation. No one has been able to compete with God in the language of liberality. The promises of God are as much above all other promises as the heavens are above the earth.

Available where books are sold.

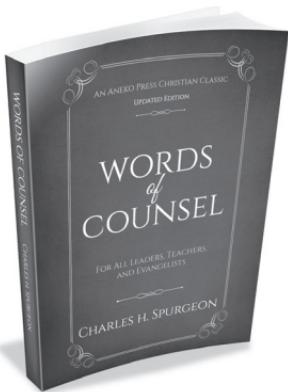


Life in Christ (Vol. 1),
by Charles H. Spurgeon

Men who were led by the hand or groped their way along the wall to reach Jesus were touched by his finger and went home without a guide, rejoicing that Jesus Christ had opened their eyes. Jesus is still able to perform such miracles. And, with the power of the Holy Spirit, his Word will be expounded and we'll watch for the signs to follow, expecting to see them at once. Why shouldn't those who read this be blessed with the light of heaven? This is my heart's inmost desire.

– Charles H. Spurgeon

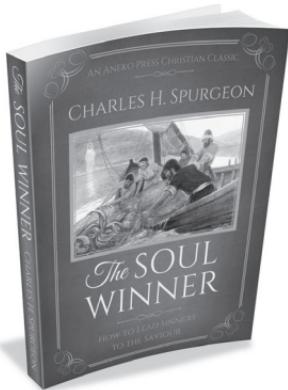
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Words of Counsel, by Charles H. Spurgeon

Is there any occupation as profitable or rewarding as that of winning souls for Christ? It is a desirable employment, and the threshold for entry into this profession is set at a level any Christian may achieve – you must only love the Lord God with all your heart, soul, and mind; and your fellow man as yourself. This work is for all genuine Christians, of all walks of life. This is for you, fellow Christian.

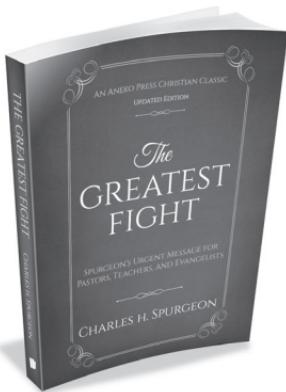
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The Soul Winner, by Charles H. Spurgeon

As Christians, our main business is to win souls. But, in Spurgeon's own words, "like shoeing-smiths, we need to know a great many things. Just as the smith must know about horses and how to make shoes for them, so we must know about souls and how to win them for Christ." Learn about souls, and how to win them, from one of the most acclaimed soul winners of all time.

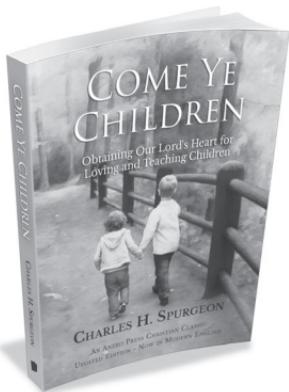
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The Greatest Fight,
by Charles H. Spurgeon

This book examines three things that are of utmost importance in this fight of faith. The first is *our armory*, which is the inspired Word of God. The second is *our army*, the church of the living God, which we must lead under our Lord's command. The third is *our strength*, by which we wear the armor and use the sword.

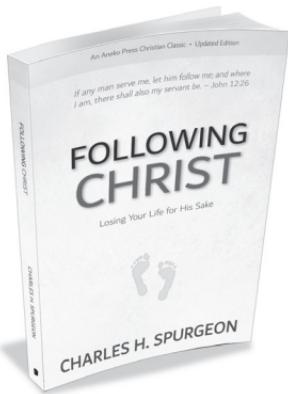
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Come Ye Children, by Charles H. Spurgeon

Teaching children things of the Lord is an honor and a high calling. Children have boundless energy and may appear distracted, but they are capable of understanding biblical truths even adults have a hard time grasping. Children's minds are easily impressed with new thoughts, whether good or bad, and will remember many of their young lessons for the rest of their life. Adults and churches tend to provide entertainment to occupy the children, but children ought to have our undivided attention. Jesus said, let the little children come to me. They were worthy of His time and devotion, and they are worthy of ours.

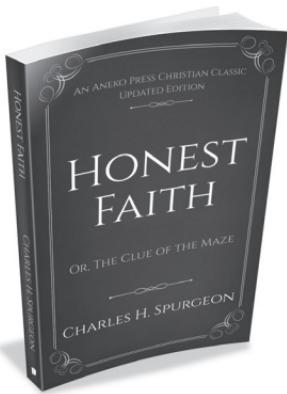
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Following Christ, by Charles H. Spurgeon

You cannot have Christ if you will not serve Him. If you take Christ, you must take Him in all His qualities. You must not simply take Him as a Friend, but you must also take Him as your Master. If you are to become His disciple, you must also become His servant. God-forbid that anyone fights against that truth. It is certainly one of our greatest delights on earth to serve our Lord, and this is to be our joyful vocation even in heaven itself: *His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face* (Revelation 22:3-4).

Available where books are sold.



Honest Faith, by Charles H. Spurgeon

The paragraphs of this little book are not supposed to be an argument. It was not my aim to convince an opponent but to assist a friend. How I have personally threaded the labyrinth of life thus far may be of helpful interest to some other soul who is in a maze. I hope that these pages will assist some true heart to say "he fought his doubts and gather'd strength." Let no man's heart fail him, for the prevalent skepticisms of today are but "spectres of the mind." Face them, and they fly.

Available where books are sold.