

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY Part 1: The Christian's Beginning Chapter 1 SAVING FAITH

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Transcript

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

Part 1: The Christian's Beginning

Chapter 1

SAVING FAITH

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). These are the words of Christ, the risen Christ, and are the last that He uttered ere He left this earth. None more important were ever spoken to the sons of men. They call for our most diligent attention. They are of the greatest possible consequence, for in them are set forth the terms of eternal happiness or misery: life and death, and the conditions of both. Faith is the principal saving grace, and unbelief the chief damning sin. The law which threatens death for every sin has already passed sentence of condemnation upon all, because all have sinned. This sentence is so peremptory that it admits of but one exception—all shall be executed if they believe not. The condition of life as made known by Christ in Mark 16:16, is double: the principal one, faith; the accessory one, baptism; we term it accessory because it is not absolutely necessary to life, as faith is. Proof of this is found in the fact of the omission in the second half of the verse: it is not "he that is not baptized shall be damned," but "he that believeth not." Faith is so indispensable that, though one be baptized, yet believeth not, he shall be damned. As we have said above, the sinner is already condemned; the sword of Divine justice is drawn even now, and waits only to strike the fatal blow. Nothing can divert it but saving faith in Christ. My reader, continuance in unbelief makes hell as certain as though you were already in it. While you remain in unbelief, you have no hope and are "without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). Now if believing be so necessary, and unbelief so dangerous and fatal, it deeply concerns us to know what it is to believe. It behooves each of us to make the most diligent and thorough inquiry as to the nature of saving faith. The more so because all faith in Christ does not save; yea, all faith in Christ does not save. Multitudes are deceived upon this vital matter. Thousands of those who sincerely believe that they have received Christ as their personal Saviour, and are resting on His finished work, are building upon a foundation of sand. Vast numbers who have not a doubt that God has accepted them in the Beloved, and that they are eternally secure in Christ, will only be

awakened from their pleasant dreamings when the cold hand of death lays hold of them; and then it will be too late. Unspeakably solemn is this, Reader, will that be your fate? Others just as sure that they were saved as you are, are now in hell. 1. Its Counterfeits There are those who have a faith which is so like to that which is saving that they themselves may take it to be the very same, and others too may deem it sufficient, yea, even others who have the spirit of discernment. Simon Magus is a case in point. Of him it is written, "Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip" (Acts 8:13). Such a faith had he, and so expressed it, that Philip took him to be a Christian, and admitted him to those privileges which are peculiar to them. Yet, a little later, the apostle Peter said to him, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God . . . I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:21, 23). A man may believe all the truth contained in Scripture so far as he is acquainted with it, and he may be familiar with far more than are many genuine Christians. He may have studied the Bible for a longer time, and so his faith may grasp much which they have not yet reached. As his knowledge may be more extensive, so his faith may be more comprehensive. In this kind of faith he may go as far as the apostle Paul did when he said, "This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" (Acts 24:14). But this is no proof that his faith is saving. An example to the contrary is seen in Agrippa: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest" (Acts 26:27). Call the above a mere historical faith if you will, yet Scripture also teaches that people may possess a faith which is more than the product of mere nature, which is of the Holy Spirit, and yet which is a non-saving one. This faith which we now allude to has two ingredients which neither education nor self-effort can produce: spiritual light and a Divine power moving the mind to assent. Now a man may have both illumination and inclination from heaven, and yet not be regenerated. We have a solemn proof of this in Hebrews 6:4. There we read of a company of apostates, concerning whom it is said, "It is impossible . . . to renew them again unto repentance." Yet of these we are told that they were "enlightened," which means that they not only perceived it, but were inclined toward and embraced it; and both because they were "partakers of the Holy Spirit." People may have Divine faith, not only in its originating power, but also in its foundation. The ground of their faith may be the Divine testimony, upon which they rest with unshaken confidence. They may give credit to what they believe not only because it appears reasonable or even certain, but because they are fully persuaded it is the Word of Him who cannot lie. To believe the Scriptures on the ground of their being God's Word is a Divine faith. Such a faith had the nation of Israel after their wondrous exodus from Egypt and deliverance from the Red Sea. Of them it is recorded, "The people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and His servant Moses" (Exodus 14:31), yet of the great majority of them it is said that their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and He swore that they should not enter into His rest (Heb. 3:17, 18). It is indeed searching and solemn to make a close study of Scripture upon this point and discover how much is said of unsaved people in a way of having faith in the Lord. In Jeremiah 13:11, we find God saying, "For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto Me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the Lord," and to "cleave" unto God is the same as to "trust" Him: see 2 Kings 18:5,6. Yet of that very same generation God said, "This evil people, which refuse to hear My words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing" (Jer. 13:10). The term "stay" is another word denoting firm trust. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them, but shall stay upon the Lord" (Isa. 10:20); "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon Thee" (Isa. 26:3). And yet we find a class of whom it is recorded, "They call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel" (Isa. 48:2). Who would doubt that

this was a saving faith? Ah, let us not be too hasty in jumping to conclusions: of this same people God said, "Thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass" (Isa. 48:4). Again, the term "lean" is used to denote not only trust, but dependence on the Lord. Of the spouse it is said, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" (Song of Sol. 8:5). Can it be possible that such an expression as this is applied to those who are unsaved? Yes, it is, and by none other than God Himself: "Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity . . . The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us" (Micah 3:9, 11). So thousands of carnal and worldly people are leaning upon Christ to uphold them, so that they cannot fall into hell, and are confident that no such "evil" can befall them. Yet is their confidence a horrible presumption. To rest upon a Divine promise with implicit confidence, and that in the face of great discouragement and danger, is surely something which we would not expect to find predicated of a people who were unsaved. Ah, truth is stranger than fiction. This very thing is depicted in God's unerring Word. When Sennacherib and his great army besieged the cities of Judah, Hezekiah said, "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God" (2 Chron. 32:7, 8); and we are told that "the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah." Hezekiah had spoken the words of God, and for the people to rest upon them was to rest on God Himself. Yet less than fifteen years after, this same people did "worse than the heathen" (2 Chron. 33:9). Thus, resting upon a promise of God is not, of itself, any proof of regeneration. To rely upon God on the ground of His "covenant" was far more than resting upon a Divine promise; yet unregenerate men may do even this. A case in point is found in Abijah, king of Judah. It is indeed striking to read and weigh what he said in 2 Chronicles 13 when Jeroboam and his hosts came against him. First, he reminded all Israel that the Lord God had given the kingdom to David and his sons for ever "by a covenant of salt" (verse 5). Next, he denounced the sins of his adversary (verses 6-9). Then he affirmed the Lord to be "our God" and that He was with him and his people (verses 10-12). But Jeroboam heeded not, but forced the battle upon them. "Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter" (verse 17), "because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers" (verse 18). Yet of this same Abijah it is said, "he walked in all the sins of his father," etc. (1 Kings 15:3). Unregenerate men may rely upon Christ, rest on His promise, and plead His covenant. "The people of Nineveh [who were heathen] believed God" (Jonah 3:5). This is striking, for the God of heaven was a stranger to them, and His prophet a man whom they knew not—why then should they trust his message? Moreover, it was not a promise, but a threatening, which they believed. How much easier, then, is it for a people now living under the Gospel to apply to themselves a promise, than the heathen a terrible threat! "In applying a threatening we are like to meet with more opposition, both from within and from without. From within, for a threatening is like a bitter pill, the bitterness of death is in it; no wonder if that hardly goes down. From without, too, for Satan will be ready to raise opposition: he is afraid to see men startled, lest the sense of their misery denounced in the threatening should rouse them up to seek how they may make an escape. He is more sure of them while they are secure, and will labour to keep them off the threatening, lest it should awaken them from dreams of peace and happiness, while they are sleeping in his very jaws. "But now, in applying a promise, an unregenerate man ordinarily meets no opposition. Not from within, for the promise is all sweetness; the promise of pardon and life is the very marrow, the quintessence, of the Gospel. No wonder if they be ready to swallow it down greedily. And Satan will be so far from opposing, that he will rather encourage and assist one who has no interest in the promise to apply it; for this he knows will be the way to fix and settle them in their natural condition. A promise misapplied will be a seal upon the sepulchre,

making them sure in the grave of sin, wherein they lay dead and rotting. Therefore if unregenerate men may apply a threatening, which is in these respects more difficult, as appears may be the case of the Ninevites, why may they not be apt to apply [appropriate] a Gospel promise when they are not like to meet with such difficulty and opposition?" (David Clarkson, 1680, for some time co-pastor with J. Owen; to whom we are indebted for much of the above). Another most solemn example of those having faith, but not a saving one, is seen in the stony-ground hearers, of whom Christ said, "which for a while believed" (Luke 8:14). Concerning this class the Lord declared that they hear the Word and with joy receive it (Matt. 13:20). How many such have we met and known: happy souls with radiant faces, exuberant spirits, full of zeal that others too may enter into the bliss which they have found. How difficult it is to distinguish such from genuine Christians—the good-ground hearts. The difference is not apparent; no, it lies beneath the surface—they have no root in themselves (Matt. 13:21): deep digging has to be done to discover this fact! Have you searched yourself narrowly, my reader, to ascertain whether or not "the root of the matter" (Job 19:28) be in you? But let us refer now to another case which seems still more incredible. There are those who are willing to take Christ as their Saviour, yet who are most reluctant to submit to Him as their Lord, to be at His command, to be governed by His laws. Yet there are some unregenerate persons who acknowledge Christ as their Lord. Here is the scriptural proof for our assertion: "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22, 23). There is a large class ("many") who profess subjection to Christ as Lord, and who do many mighty works in His name: thus a people who can show you their faith by their works, and yet it is not a saving one! It is impossible to say how far a non-saving faith may go, and how very closely it may resemble that faith which is saving. Saving faith has Christ for its object; so has a non-saving faith (John 2:23, 24). Saving faith is wrought by the Holy Spirit; so also is a non-saving faith (Heb. 6:4). Saving faith is produced by the Word of God; so also is a non-saving faith (Matt. 13:20, 21). Saving faith will make a man prepare for the coming of the Lord; so also will a non-saving faith: of both the foolish and wise virgins it is written, "Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps" (Matt. 25:7). Saving faith is accompanied with joy; so also is a non-saving faith (Matt. 13:20). Perhaps some readers are ready to say that all of this is very unsettling and, if really heeded, most distressing. May God in His mercy grant that this article may have just those very effects on many who read it. If you value your soul, dismiss it not lightly. If there be such a thing (and there is) as a faith in Christ which does not save, then how easy it is to be deceived about my faith! It is not without reason that the Holy Spirit has so plainly cautioned us at this very point. "A deceived heart hath turned him aside" (Isa. 44:20). "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee" (Obad. 3). "Take heed that ye be not deceived" (Luke 2 1:8). "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal. 6:3). At no point does Satan use this cunning and power more tenaciously, and more successfully, than in getting people to believe that they have a saving faith when they have not. The Devil deceives more souls by this one thing than by all his other devices put together. Take this present discourse as an illustration. How many a Satan-blinded soul will read it and then say, It does not apply to me; I know that my faith is a saving one! It is in this way that the Devil turns aside the sharp point of God's convicting Word, and secures his captives in their unbelief. He works in them a false sense of security, by persuading them that they are safe within the ark, and induces them to ignore the threatenings of the Word and appropriate only its comforting promises. He dissuades them from heeding that most salutary exhortation, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Cor. 13:5). Oh, my reader, heed that word now. In closing this first section we will endeavour to point out some of the particulars in which this non-saving faith is defective, and wherein it comes short of a faith which does save. First, with many it is because they are willing for Christ

to save them from hell, but are not willing for Him to save them from self. They want to be delivered from the wrath to come, but they wish to retain their self-will and self-pleasing. But He will not be dictated unto: you must be saved on His terms, or not at all. When Christ saves, He saves from sin—from its power and pollution, and therefore from its guilt. And the very essence of sin is the determination to have my own way (Isa. 53:6). Where Christ saves, He subdues this spirit of self-will, and implants a genuine, a powerful, a lasting, desire and determination to please Him. Again, many are never saved because they wish to divide Christ; they want to take Him as Saviour, but are unwilling to subject themselves unto Him as their Lord. Or if they are prepared to own Him as Lord, it is not as an absolute Lord. But this cannot be: Christ will either be Lord of all or He will not be Lord at all. But the vast majority of professing Christians would have Christ's sovereignty limited at certain points; it must not encroach too far upon the liberty which some worldly lust or carnal interest demands. His peace they covet, but His "yoke" is unwelcome. Of all such Christ will yet say, "But these Mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me" (Luke 19:27). Again, there are multitudes who are quite ready for Christ to justify them, but not to sanctify. Some kind, some degree, of sanctification they will tolerate, but to be sanctified wholly, their "whole spirit and soul and body" (1 Thess. 5:23), they have no relish for. For their hearts to be sanctified, for pride and covetousness to be subdued, would be too much like the plucking out of a right eye. For the constant mortification of all their members they have no taste. For Christ to come to them as Refiner, to burn up their lusts, consume their dross, to dissolve utterly their old frame of nature, to melt their souls, so as to make them run in a new mould, they like not. To deny self utterly, and take up their cross daily, is a task from which they shrink with abhorrence. Again, many are willing for Christ to officiate as their Priest, but not for Him to legislate as their King. Ask them, in a general way, if they are ready to do whatsoever Christ requires of them, and they will answer in the affirmative, emphatically and with confidence. But come to particulars: apply to each one of them those specific commandments and precepts of the Lord which they are ignoring, and they will at once cry out "Legalism"! or "We cannot be perfect in everything." Name nine duties and perhaps they are performing them, but mention a tenth and it at once makes them angry, for you have come too close home to their case. After much persuasion, Naaman was induced to bathe in the Jordan, but he was unwilling to abandon the house of Rimmon (2 Kings 5:18). Herod heard John gladly and did "many things" (Mark 6:20), but when John referred to Herodias it touched him to the quick. Many are willing to give up their theatre-going, and card-parties, who refuse to go forth unto Christ outside the camp. Others are willing to go outside the camp, yet refuse to deny their fleshly and worldly lusts. Reader, if there is a reserve in your obedience, you are on the way to hell.

2. Its Nature "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" (Prov. 30:12). A great many suppose that such a verse as this applies only to those who are trusting in something other than Christ for their acceptance before God, such as people who are relying upon baptism, church membership or their own moral and religious performances. But it is a great mistake to limit such scriptures unto the class just mentioned. Such a verse as "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12) has a far wider application than merely to those who are resting on something of or from themselves to secure a title to everlasting bliss. Equally wrong is it to imagine that the only deceived souls are they who have no faith in Christ. There is in Christendom today a very large number of people who have been taught that nothing the sinner can do will ever merit the esteem of God. They have been informed, and rightly so, that the highest moral achievements of the natural man are only "filthy rags" in the sight of the thrice holy God. They have heard quoted so often such passages as, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9), and "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5), that they have become

thoroughly convinced that heaven cannot be attained by any doing of the creature. Further, they have been told so often that Christ alone can save any sinner that this has become a settled article in their creed, from which neither man nor devil can shake them. So far, so good. That large company to whom we are now referring have also been taught that while Christ is the only way unto the Father, yet He becomes so only as faith is personally exercised in and upon Him: that He becomes our Saviour only when we believe on Him. During the last twenty-five years, almost the whole emphasis of "gospel preaching" has been thrown upon faith in Christ, and evangelistic efforts have been almost entirely confined to getting people to "believe" on the Lord Jesus. Apparently there has been great success; thousands upon thousands have responded; have, as they suppose, accepted Christ as their own personal Saviour. Yet we wish to point out here that it is as serious an error to suppose that all who "believe in Christ" are saved as it is to conclude that only those are deceived (and are described in Proverbs 14:12, and 30:12) who have no faith in Christ. No one can read the New Testament attentively without discovering that there is a "believing" in Christ which does not save. In John 8:30, we are told, "As He spake these words, many believed on Him." Mark carefully, it is not said many believe in Him," but "many believed on Him." Nevertheless one does not have to read much farther on in the chapter to discover that those very people were unregenerate and unsaved souls. In verse 44 we find the Lord telling these very "believers" that they were of their father the Devil; and in verse 59 we find them taking up stones to cast at Him. This has presented a difficulty unto some; yet it ought not. They created their own difficulty, by supposing that all faith in Christ necessarily saves. It does not. There is a faith in Christ which saves, and there is also a faith in Christ which does not save. "Among the chief rulers also many believed on Him." Were, then, those men saved? Many preachers and evangelists, as well as tens of thousands of their blinded dupes, would answer, "Most assuredly." But let us note what immediately follows here: "but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42, 43). Will any of our readers now say that those men were saved? If so, it is clear proof that you are utter strangers to any saving work of God in your own souls. Men who are afraid to hazard for Christ's sake the loss of their worldly positions, temporal interests, personal reputations, or anything else that is dear to them, are yet in their sins—no matter how they may be trusting in Christ's finished work to take them to heaven. Probably most of our readers have been brought up under the teaching that there are only two classes of people in this world, believers and unbelievers. But such a classification is most misleading, and is utterly erroneous. God's Word divides earth's inhabitants into three classes: "Give none offence, neither to [1] the Jews, nor [2] to the Gentiles, nor [3] to the church of God" (1 Cor. 10:32). It was so during Old Testament times, more noticeably so from the days of Moses onwards. There were first the "gentile" or heathen nations, outside the commonwealth of Israel, which formed by far the largest class. Corresponding with that class today are the countless millions of modern heathen, who are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." Second, there was the nation of Israel, which has to be subdivided into two groups, for, as Romans 9:6, declares, "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel." By far the larger portion of the nation of Israel were only the nominal people of God, in outward relation to Him: corresponding with this class is the great mass of professors bearing the name of Christ. Third, there was the spiritual remnant of Israel, whose calling, hope and inheritance were heavenly: corresponding to them this day are the genuine Christians, God's "little flock" (Luke 12:32). The same threefold division among men is plainly discernible throughout John's Gospel. First, there were the hardened leaders of the nation, the scribes and Pharisees, priests and elders. From start to finish they were openly opposed to Christ, and neither His blessed teaching nor His wondrous works had any melting effects upon them. Second, there were the common people who "heard Him gladly" (Mark 12:37), a great many of whom are said to have "believed on Him" (see John 2:23; 7:31;

8:30; 10:42; 12:11), but concerning whom there is nothing to show that they were saved. They were not outwardly opposed to Christ, but they never yielded their hearts to Him. They were impressed by His Divine credentials, yet were easily offended (John 6:66). Third, there was the insignificant handful who "received Him" (John 1:12) into their hearts and lives; received Him as their Lord and Saviour. The same three classes are clearly discernible (to anointed eyes) in the world today. First, there are the vast multitudes who make no profession at all, who see nothing in Christ that they should desire Him; people who are deaf to every appeal, and who make little attempt to conceal their hatred of the Lord Jesus. Second, there is that large company who are attracted by Christ in a natural way. So far from being openly antagonistic to Him and His cause, they are found among His followers. Having been taught much of the Truth, they "believe in Christ," just as children reared by conscientious Mohammedans believe firmly and devoutly in Mohammed. Having received much of instruction concerning the virtues of Christ's precious blood, they trust in its merits to deliver them from the wrath to come; and yet there is nothing in their daily lives to show that they are new creatures in Christ Jesus! Third, there are the "few" (Matt. 7:13, 14) who deny themselves, take up the cross daily, and follow a despised and rejected Christ in the path of loving and unreserved obedience unto God. Yes, there is a faith in Christ which saves, but there is a faith in Christ which does not save. From this statement probably few will dissent, yet many will be inclined to weaken it by saying that the faith in Christ which does not save is merely a historical faith, or where there is a believing about Christ instead of a believing in Him. Not so. That there are those who mistake a historical faith about Christ for a saving faith in Christ we do not deny; but what we would here emphasize is the solemn fact that there are also some who have more than a historical faith, more than a mere head-knowledge about Him, who yet have a faith which comes short of being a quickening and saving one. Not only are there some with this non-saving faith, but today there are vast numbers of such all around us. They are people who furnish the antitypes of those to which we called attention in the last article: who were represented and illustrated in Old Testament times by those who believed in, rested upon, leaned upon, relied upon the Lord, but who were, nevertheless, unsaved souls. What, then, does saving faith consist of? In seeking to answer this question our present object is to supply not only a scriptural definition, but one which, at the same time, differentiates it from a non-saving faith. Nor is this any easy task, for the two things often have much in common: that faith in Christ which does not save has in it more than one element or ingredient of that faith which does vitally unite the soul to Him. Those pitfalls which the writer must now seek to avoid are undue discouraging of real saints on the one hand by raising the standard higher than Scripture has raised it, and encouraging unregenerate professors on the other hand by so lowering the standards as to include them. We do not wish to withhold from the people of God their legitimate portion; nor do we want to commit the sin of taking the children's bread and casting it to the dogs. May the Holy Spirit Himself deign to guide us into the Truth. Much error would be avoided on this subject if due care were taken to frame a scriptural definition of unbelief. Again and again in Scripture we find believing and not believing placed in antithesis, and we are afforded much help toward arriving at a correct conception of the real nature of saving faith when we obtain a right understanding of the character of unbelief. It will at once be discovered that saving faith is far more than a hearty assenting unto what God's Word sets before us, when we perceive that unbelief is much more than an error or judgment or a failure to assent unto the Truth. Scripture depicts unbelief as a virulent and violent principle of opposition to God. Unbelief has both a passive and active, a negative and positive, side, and therefore the Greek noun is rendered both by "unbelief" (Romans 11:20; Heb. 4:6, 11), and "disobedience" (Eph. 2:2; 5:6) and the verb by "believed not" (Heb. 3:18; 11:30) and "obey not" (1 Peter 3:1; 4:17). A few concrete examples will make this plainer. Take first the case of Adam. There was something more than a mere negative failing to believe God's solemn threat that in the day he should eat of the forbidden fruit he would surely

die: by one man's disobedience many were made sinners (Romans 5:12). Nor did the heinousness of our first parent's sin consist in listening to the lie of the serpent, for 1 Timothy 2:14, expressly declares "Adam was not deceived." No, he was determined to have his own way, no matter what God had prohibited and threatened. Thus, the very first case of unbelief in human history consisted not only in negatively failing to take to heart what God has so clearly and so solemnly said, but also in a deliberate defiance of and rebellion against Him. Take the case of Israel in the wilderness. Concerning them it is said, "They could not enter in [the promised land] because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:19). Now exactly what do those words signify? Do they mean that Canaan was missed by them because of their failure to appropriate the promise of God? Yes, for a "promise" of entering in was "left" them, but it was not "mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb. 4:1, 2)—God had declared that the seed of Abraham should inherit that land which flowed with milk and honey, and it was the privilege of that generation which was delivered from Egypt to lay hold of and apply that promise to themselves. But they did not. Yet that is not all! There was something far worse: there was another element in their unbelief which is usually lost sight of nowadays—they were openly disobedient against God. When the spies brought back a sample of the goodly grapes, and Joshua urged them to go up and possess the land, they would not. Accordingly Moses declared, "notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God" (Deut. 1:26). Ah, there is the positive side of their unbelief; they were self-willed, disobedient, defiant. Consider now the case of that generation of Israel which was in Palestine when the Lord Jesus appeared among them as "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God" (Romans 15:8). John 1:11, informs us, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not," which the next verse defines as "they believed" Him not. But is that all? Were they guilty of nothing more than a failure to assent to His teaching and trust to His person? Nay, verily, that was merely the negative side of their unbelief. Positively, they "hated" Him (John 15:25), and would "not come to" Him (John 5:40). His holy demands suited not their fleshly desires, and therefore they said, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). Thus their unbelief, too, consisted in the spirit of self-will and open defiance, a determination to please themselves at all costs. Unbelief is not simply an infirmity of fallen human nature, it is a heinous crime. Scripture everywhere attributes it to love of sin, obstinacy of will, hardness of heart. Unbelief has its root in a depraved nature, in a mind which is enmity against God. Love of sin is the immediate cause of unbelief: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). "The light of the Gospel is brought unto a place or people: they come so near it as to discover its end or tendency; but as soon as they find that it aims to part them and their sins, they will have no more to do with it. They like not the terms of the Gospel, and so perish in and for their iniquities" (John Owen). If the Gospel were more clearly and faithfully preached, fewer would profess to believe it! Saving faith, then, is the opposite of damning belief. Both issue from the heart that is alienated from God, which is in a state of rebellion against Him; saving faith from a heart which is reconciled to Him and so has ceased to fight against Him. Thus an essential element or ingredient in saving faith is a yielding to the authority of God, a submitting of myself to His rule. It is very much more than my understanding assenting and my will consenting to the fact that Christ is a Saviour for sinners, and that He stands ready to receive all who trust Him. To be received by Christ I must not only come to Him renouncing all my own righteousness (Romans 10:3), as an empty-handed beggar (Matt. 19:21), but I must also forsake my self-will and rebellion against Him (Ps. 12:11, 12; Prov. 28:13). Should an insurrectionist and seditious come to an earthly king seeking his sovereign favour and pardon, then, obviously, the very law of his coming to him for forgiveness requires that he should come on his knees, laying aside his hostility. So it is with a sinner who really comes savingly to Christ for pardon; it is against the law of faith to do otherwise. Saving faith is a genuine coming to Christ (Matt. 11:28; John 6:37, etc.). But let us take care that we do not miss the clear and

inevitable implication of this term. If I say "I come to the U.S.A." then I necessarily indicate that I left some other country to get here. Thus it is in "coming" to Christ; something has to be left. Coming to Christ not only involves the abandoning of every false object of confidence, it also includes and entails the forsaking of all other competitors for my heart. "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls (1 Peter 2:25). And what is meant by "ye were [note the past tense—they are no longer doing so] as sheep going astray"? Isaiah 53:6, tells us: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to His own way." Ah, that is what must be forsaken before we can truly "come" to Christ—that course of self-will must be abandoned. The prodigal son could not come to his Father while he remained in the far country. Dear reader, if you are still following a course of self-pleasing, you are only deceiving yourself if you think you have come to Christ. Nor is the brief definition which we have given above of what it means really to "come" to Christ any forced or novel one of our own. In his book *Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ*, John Bunyan wrote: "Coming to Christ is attended with an honest and sincere forsaking all for Him [here he quotes Luke 14:26, 27]. By these and like expressions elsewhere, Christ describeth the true comer: he is one that casteth all behind his back. There are a great many pretended comers to Jesus Christ in the world. They are much like the man you read of in Matthew 21:30, that said to his father's bidding, 'I go, sir: and went not.' When Christ calls by His Gospel, they say, 'I come, Sir,' but they still abide by their pleasure and carnal delights." C. H. Spurgeon, in his sermon on John 6:44, said, "Coming to Christ embraces in it repentance, self-abnegation, and faith in the Lord Jesus, and so sums within itself all those things which are the necessary attendants of those great steps of heart, such as the belief of the truth, earnest prayers to God, the submission of the soul to the precepts of His Gospel." In his sermon on John 6:37, he says, "To come to Christ signifies to turn from sin and to trust in Him. Coming to Christ is a leaving of all false confidences, a renouncing of all love to sin and a looking to Jesus as the solitary pillar of our confidence and hope." Saving faith consists of the complete surrender of my whole being and life to the claims of God upon me: "But first gave their own selves to the Lord" (2 Cor. 8:5). It is the unreserved acceptance of Christ as my absolute Lord, bowing to His will and receiving His yoke. Possibly someone may object, Then why are Christians exhorted as they are in Romans 12:1? We answer, All such exhortations are simply a calling on them to continue as they began: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (Col. 2:6). Yes, mark it well that Christ is "received" as Lord. Oh, how far, far below the New Testament standard is this modern way of begging sinners to receive Christ as their own personal "Saviour." If the reader will consult his concordance, he will find that in every passage where the two titles are found together it is always "Lord and Saviour, and never vice versa: see Luke 1:46, 47; 2 Peter 1:11; 2:20; 3:18. Until the ungodly are sensible of the exceeding sinfulness of their vile course of self-will and self-pleasing, until they are genuinely broken down and penitent over it before God, until they are willing to forsake the world for Christ, until they have resolved to come under His government, for such to depend upon Him for pardon and life is not faith, but blatant presumption, it is but to add insult to injury. And for any such to take His holy name upon their polluted lips and profess to be His followers is the most terribly blasphemy, and comes perilously nigh to committing that sin for which there is no forgiveness. Alas, alas, that modern evangelism is encouraging and producing just such hideous and Christ-dishonoring monstrosities. Saving faith is a believing on Christ with the heart: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Romans 10:9, 10). There is no such thing as a saving faith in Christ where there is no real love for Him, and by "real love" we mean a love which is evidenced by obedience. Christ acknowledges none to be His friends save those who do whatsoever He commands them (John 15:14). As unbelief is a species of rebellion, so saving faith is a complete subjection to God: Hence we read of "the obedience of faith"

(Romans 16:26). Saving faith is to the soul what health is to the body: it is a mighty principle of operation, full of life, ever working, bringing forth fruit after its own kind. 3. Its Difficulty Some of our readers will probably be surprised to hear about the difficulty of saving faith. On almost every side today it is being taught, even by men styled orthodox and "fundamentalists," that getting saved is an exceedingly simple affair. So long as a person believes John 3:16, and "rests on it," or "accepts Christ as his personal Saviour," that is all that is needed. It is often said that there is nothing left for the sinner to do but direct his faith toward the right object: just as a man trusts his bank or a wife her husband, let him exercise the same faculty of faith and trust in Christ. So widely has this idea been received that for anyone now to condemn it is to court being branded as a heretic. Notwithstanding, the writer here unhesitatingly denounces it as a most God-insulting lie of the Devil. A natural faith is sufficient for trusting a human object; but a supernatural faith is required to trust savingly in a Divine object. While observing the methods employed by present-day "evangelists" and "personal workers," we are made to wonder what place the Holy Spirit has in their thoughts; certainly they entertain the most degrading conception of that miracle of grace which He performs when He moves a human heart to surrender truly unto the Lord Jesus. Alas, in these degenerate times few have any idea that saving faith is a miraculous thing. Instead, it is now almost universally supposed that saving faith is nothing more than an act of the human will, which any man is capable of performing: all that is needed is to bring before a sinner a few verses of Scripture which describe his lost condition, one or two which contain the word "believe," and then a little persuasion, for him to "accept Christ," and the thing is done. And the awful thing is that so very, very few see anything wrong with this—blind to the fact that such a process is only the Devil's drug to lull thousands into a false peace. So many have been argued into believing that they are saved. In reality, their "faith" sprang from nothing better than a superficial process of logic. Some "personal worker" addresses a man who has no concern whatever for the glory of God and no realization of his terrible hostility against Him. Anxious to "win another soul to Christ," he pulls out his New Testament and reads to him 1 Timothy 1:15. The worker says, "You are a sinner," and his man assenting he is at-once informed, "Then that verse includes you." Next John 3:16, is read, and the question is asked, "Whom does the word 'whosoever' include?" The question is repeated until the poor victim answers, "You, me, and everybody." Then he is asked, "Will you believe it; believe that God loves you, that Christ died for you?" If the answer is "Yes," he is at once assured that he is now saved. Ah, my reader, if this is how you were "saved," then it was with "enticing words of man's wisdom" and your "faith" stands only "in the wisdom of men" (1 Cor. 2:4, 5), and not in the power of God! Multitudes seem to think that it is about as easy for a sinner to purify his heart (James 4:8) as it is to wash his hands; to admit the searching and flesh-withering light of Divine truth into the soul as the morning sun into his room by pulling up the blinds; to turn from idols to God, from the world to Christ, from sin to holiness, as to turn a ship right round by the help of her helm. Oh, my reader, be not deceived on this vital matter; to mortify the lusts of the flesh, to be crucified unto the world, to overcome the Devil, to die daily unto sin and live unto righteousness, to be meek and lowly in heart, trustful and obedient, pious and patient, faithful and uncompromising, loving and gentle; in a word, to be a Christian, to be Christ-like, is a task far, far beyond the poor resources of fallen human nature. It is because a generation has arisen which is ignorant of the real nature of saving faith that they deem it such a simple thing. It is because so very few have any scriptural conception of the character of God's great salvation that the delusions referred to above are so widely received. It is because so very few realize what they need saving from that the popular "evangel" (?) of the hour is so eagerly accepted. Once it is seen that saving faith consists of very much more than believing that "Christ died for me," that it involves and entails the complete surrender of my heart and life to His government, few will imagine that they possess it. Once it is seen that God's salvation is not only a legal but also an experimental thing, that it not only justifies but regenerates and

sanctifies, fewer will suppose they are its participants. Once it is seen that Christ came here to save His people not only from hell, but from sin, from self-will and self-pleasing, then fewer will desire His salvation. The Lord Jesus did not teach that saving faith was a simple matter. Far from it. Instead of declaring that the saving of the soul was an easy thing, which many would participate in, He said: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14). The only path which leads to heaven is a hard and laborious one. "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22): an entrance into that path calls for the utmost endeavours of soul—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate" (Luke 13:24). After the young ruler had departed from Christ, sorrowing, the Lord turned to His disciples and said, "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:24, 25). What place is given to such a passage as this in the theology (if "theology" it is fit to be called) which is being taught in the "Bible institutes" to those seeking to qualify for evangelistic and personal work? None at all. According to their views, it is just as easy for a millionaire to be saved as it is for a pauper, since all that either has to do is "rest on the finished work of Christ." But those who are wallowing in wealth think not of God: "According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart exalted; therefore have they forgotten Me!" (Hosea 13:6). When the disciples heard these words of Christ's "they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?" Had our moderns heard them, they had soon set their fears at rest, and assured them that anybody and everybody could be saved if they believed on the Lord Jesus. But not so did Christ reassure them. Instead, He immediately added, "With men it is impossible, but not with God" (Mark 10:27). Of himself, the fallen sinner can no more repent evangelically, believe in Christ savingly, come to Him effectually, than he can create a world. "With men it is impossible" rules out of court all special pleading for the power of man's will. Nothing but a miracle of grace can lead to the saving of any sinner. And why is it impossible for the natural man to exercise saving faith? Let the answer be drawn from the case of this young ruler. He departed from Christ sorrowing, "for he had great possessions." He was wrapped up in them. They were his idols. His heart was chained to the things of earth. The demands of Christ were too exacting: to part with all and follow Him was more than flesh and blood could endure. Reader, what are your idols? To him the Lord said, "One thing thou lackest." What was it? A yielding to the imperative requirements of Christ; a heart surrendered to God. When the soul is stuffed with the dregs of earth, there is no room for the impressions of heaven. When a man is satisfied with carnal riches, he has no desire for spiritual riches. The same sad truth is brought out again in Christ's parable of the "great supper." The feast of Divine grace is spread, and through the Gospel a general call is given for men to come and partake of it. And what is the response? This: "They all with one consent began to make excuse" (Luke 14:18). And why should they? Because they were more interested in other things. Their hearts were set upon land (verse 18), oxen (verse 19), domestic comforts (verse 20). People are willing to "accept Christ" on their own terms, but not on His. What His terms are is made known in the same chapter: giving Him the supreme place in our affections (verse 26), the crucifixion of self (verse 27), the abandonment of every idol (verse 33). Therefore did He ask, "which of you, intending to build a tower [figure of a hard task of setting the affections on things above], sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost?" (Luke 14:28). "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44). Do these words picture the exercise of saving faith as the simple matter which so many deem it? The word "honour" here signifies approbation or praise. While those Jews were making it their chief aim to win and hold the good opinion of each other, and were indifferent to the approval of God, it was impossible that they should come to Christ. It is the same now: "Whomsoever therefore will be [desires and is determined to be] a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). To come to Christ effectually, to

believe on Him savingly, involves turning our backs upon the world, alienating ourselves from the esteem of our godless (or religious) fellows, and identifying ourselves with the despised and rejected One. It involves bowing to His yoke, surrendering to His lordship, and living henceforth for His glory. And that is no small task. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you" (John 6:27). Does this language imply that the obtaining of eternal life is a simple matter? It does not; far from it. It denotes that a man must be in deadly earnest, subordinating all other interests in his quest for it, and be prepared to put forth strenuous endeavours and overcome formidable difficulties. Then does this verse teach salvation by works, by self-efforts? No, and yes. No in the sense that anything we do can merit salvation—eternal life is a "gift." Yes in the sense that wholehearted seeking after salvation and a diligent use of the prescribed means of grace are demanded of us. Nowhere in Scripture is there any promise to the dilatory. (Compare Hebrews 4:11). "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John 6:44). Plainly does this language give the lie to the popular theory of the day, that it lies within the power of man's will to be saved any time he chooses to be. Flatly does this verse contradict the flesh-pleasing and creature-honouring idea that anyone can receive Christ as his Saviour the moment he decides to do so. The reason why the natural man cannot come to Christ till the Father "draw" him is because he is the bondslave of sin (John 8:34), serving divers lusts (Titus 3:3), the captive of the Devil (2 Tim. 2:26). Almighty power must break his chains and open the prison doors (Luke 4:18) ere he can come to Christ. Can one who loves darkness and hates the light reverse the process? No, no more than a man who has a diseased foot or poisoned hand can heal it by an effort of will. Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? No more can they do good who are accustomed to do evil (Jer. 13:23). "And if the righteous with difficulty is saved, the ungodly and sinner where shall they appear?" (1 Peter 4: 18, Bag. Int.). Matthew Henry said, "It is as much as the best can do to secure the salvation of their souls; there are so many sufferings, temptations, and difficulties to be overcome; so many sins to be mortified; the gate is so strait, and the way so narrow, that it is as much as the righteous man can do to be saved. Let the absolute necessity of salvation balance the difficulty of it. Consider your difficulties are the greatest at first: God offers His grace and help; the contest will not last long. Be but faithful to the death and God will give you the crown of life (Rev. 2:10)." So also John Lillie, "After all that God has done by sending His Son, and the Son by the Holy Spirit, it is only with difficulty, exceeding difficulty, that the work of saving the righteous advances to its consummation. The entrance into the kingdom lies through much tribulation—through fightings without and fears within—through the world's seductions, and its frowns—through the utter weakness and continual failures of the flesh, and the many fiery darts of Satan." Here then are the reasons why saving faith is so difficult to put forth. (1) By nature men are entirely ignorant of its real character, and therefore are easily deceived by Satan's plausible substitutes for it. But even when they are scripturally informed thereon, they either sorrowfully turn their backs on Christ, as did the rich young ruler when he learned His terms of discipleship, or they hypocritically profess what they do not possess. (2) The power of self-love reigns supreme within, and to deny self is too great a demand upon the unregenerate. (3) The love of the world and the approbation of their friends stands in the way of a complete surrender to Christ. (4) The demands of God that He should be loved with all the heart and that we should be "holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Peter 1:15) repels the carnal. (5) Bearing the reproach of Christ, being hated by the religious world (John 15:18), suffering persecution for righteousness' sake, is something which mere flesh and blood shrinks from. (6) The humbling of ourselves before God, penitently confessing all our self-will, is something which an unbroken heart revolts against. (7) To fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12) and overcome the Devil (1 John 2:13) is too arduous an undertaking for those who love their own ease. Multitudes desire to be saved from hell (the natural instinct of self-preservation) who are quite unwilling to

be saved from sin. Yes, there are tens of thousands who have been deluded into thinking that they have "accepted Christ as their Saviour," whose lives show plainly that they reject Him as their Lord. For a sinner to obtain the pardon of God he must "forsake his way" (Isa. 55:7). No man can turn to God until he turns from idols (1 Thess. 1:9). Thus insisted the Lord Jesus, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:33). The terrible thing is that so many preachers today, under the pretence of magnifying the grace of God, have represented Christ as the Minister of sin; as One who has, through His atoning sacrifice, procured an indulgence for men to continue gratifying their fleshly and worldly lusts. Provided a man professes to believe in the virgin birth and vicarious death of Christ, and claims to be resting upon Him alone for salvation, he may pass for a real Christian almost anywhere today, even though his daily life may be no different from that of the moral worldling who makes no profession at all. The Devil is chloroforming thousands into hell by this very delusion. The Lord Jesus asks, "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46); and insists, "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). The hardest task before most of us is not to learn, but to unlearn. Many of God's own children have drunk so deeply of the sweetened poison of Satan that it is by no means easy to get it out of their systems; and while it remains in them it stupefies their understanding. So much is this the case that the first time one of them reads an article like this it is apt to strike him as an open attack upon the sufficiency of Christ's finished 'work, as though we were here teaching that the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb needed to be plussed by something from the creature. Not so. Nothing but, the merits of Immanuel can ever give any sinner title to stand before the ineffably holy God. But what we are now contending for is, When does God impute to any sinner the righteousness of Christ? Certainly not while he is opposed to Him. Moreover, we do not honour the work of Christ until we correctly define what that work was designed to effect. The Lord of glory did not come here and die to procure the pardon of our sins, and take us to heaven while our hearts still remain cleaving to the earth. No, He came here to prepare a way to heaven (John 10:4; 14:4; Heb. 10:20-22; 1 Peter 2:21), to call men into that way, that by His precepts and promises, His example and spirit, He might form and fashion their souls to that glorious state, and make them willing to abandon all things for it. He lived and died so that His Spirit should come and quicken the dead sinners into newness of life, make them new creatures in Himself, and cause them to sojourn in this world as those who are not of it, as those whose hearts have already departed from it. Christ did not come here to render a change of heart, repentance, faith, personal holiness, loving God supremely and obeying Him unreservedly, as unnecessary, or salvation as possible without them. How passing strange that any suppose He did! Ah, my reader, it becomes a searching test for each of our hearts to face honestly the question, Is this what I really long for? As Bunyan asked (in his *The Jerusalem Sinner Saved*), "What are thy desires? Wouldest thou be saved? Wouldest thou be saved with a thorough salvation? Wouldest thou be saved from guilt, and from filth too? Wouldest thou be the servant of the Saviour? Art thou indeed weary of the service of thy old master, the Devil, sin, and the world? And have these desires put thy soul to flight? Dost thou fly to Him that is a Saviour from the wrath to come, for life? If these be thy desires, and if they be' unfeigned, fear not." "Many people think that when we preach salvation, we mean salvation from going to hell. We do mean that, but we mean a great deal more: we preach salvation from sin; we say that Christ is able to save a man; and we mean by that that He is able to save him from sin and to make him holy; to make him a new man. No person has any right to say 'I am saved,' while he continues in sin as he did before. How can you be saved from sin while you are living in it? A man that is drowning cannot say he is saved from the water while he is sinking in it; a man that is frost-bitten cannot say, with any truth, that he is saved from the cold while he is stiffened in the wintry blast. No, man, Christ did not come to save thee in thy sins, but to save thee from thy sins, not to make the disease so that it should not kill thee, but to

let it remain in itself mortal, and, nevertheless, to remove it from thee, and thee from it. Christ Jesus came then to heal us from the plague of sin, to touch us with His hand and say 'I will, be thou clean'"(C. H. Spurgeon, on Matt. 9:12). They who do not yearn after holiness of heart and righteousness of life are only deceiving themselves when they suppose they desire to be saved by Christ. The plain fact is, all that is wanted by so many today is merely a soothing portion of their conscience, which will enable them to go on comfortably in a course of self-pleasing which will permit them to continue their worldly ways without the fear of eternal punishment. Human nature is the same the world over; that wretched instinct which causes multitudes to believe that paying a papist priest a few dollars procures forgiveness of all their past sins, and an "indulgence" for future ones, moves other multitudes to devour greedily the lie that, with an unbroken and impenitent heart, by a mere act of the will, they may "believe in Christ," and thereby obtain not only God's pardon for past sins but an "eternal security," no matter what they do or do not do in the future. Oh, my reader, be not deceived; God frees none from the condemnation but those "which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1), and "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are [not "ought to be"] passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Cor. 5:17). Saving faith makes a sinner come to Christ with a real soul-thirst, that he may drink of the living water, even of His sanctifying Spirit (John 7:38, 39). To love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, to pray for them that despitefully use us, is very far from being easy, yet this is only one part of the task which Christ assigns unto those who would be His disciples. He acted thus, and He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. And His "salvation," in its present application, consists of revealing to our hearts the imperative need for our measuring up to His high and holy standard, with a realization of our own utter powerlessness so to do; and creating within us an intense hunger and thirst after such personal righteousness, and a daily turning unto Him and trustful supplication for needed grace and strength.

4. Its Communication From the human viewpoint, things are now in a bad state in the world. But from the spiritual viewpoint things are in a far worse state in the religious realm. Sad is it to see the anti-Christian cults flourishing on every side; but far more grievous is it, for those who are taught of God, to discover that much of the so-called "Gospel" which is now being preached in many "fundamentalist churches" and "gospel halls" is but a satanic delusion. The Devil knows that his captives are quite secure while the grace of God and the finished work of Christ are "faithfully" proclaimed to them, so long as the only way in which sinners receive the saving virtues of the Atonement is unfaithfully concealed. While God's peremptory and unchanging demand for repentance is left out, while Christ's own terms of discipleship (i.e. how to become a Christian: Acts 11:26) in Luke 14:26, 27, 33, are withheld, and while saving faith is frittered down to a mere act of the will, blind laymen will continue to be led by blind preachers, only for both to fall into the ditch. Things are far, far worse even in the "orthodox" sections of Christendom than the majority of God's own children are aware. Things are rotten even at the very foundation, for with very rare exceptions God's way of salvation is no longer being taught. Tens of thousands are "ever learning" points in prophecy, the meaning of the types, the significance of the numerals, how to divide the "dispensations," who are, nevertheless, "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7) of salvation itself—unable because unwilling to pay the price (Prov. 23:23), which is a full surrender to God Himself. As far as the writer understands the present situation, it seems to him that what is needed today is to press upon the serious attention of professing Christians such questions as: When is it that God applies to a sinner the virtues of Christ's finished work? What is it that I am called upon to do in order to appropriate myself to the efficacy of Christ's atonement? What is it that gives me an actual entrance into the good of His redemption? The questions formulated above are only three different ways of framing the same inquiry. Now the popular answer which is being returned to them is, "Nothing more is required from any sinner than that he simply believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." In the preceding articles of this series we have sought to show that such a reply is

misleading, inadequate, faulty, and that because it ignores all the other scriptures which set forth what God requires from the sinner: it leaves out of account God's demand for repentance (with all that that involves and includes), and Christ's clearly defined terms of discipleship in Luke 14. To restrict ourselves to any one scripture term of a subject, or set of passages using that term, results in an erroneous conception of it. They who limit their ideas of regeneration to the one figure of the new birth lapse into serious error upon it. So they who limit their thoughts on how to be saved to the one word "believe" are easily misled. Diligent care needs to be taken to collect all that Scripture teaches on any subject if we are to have a properly balanced and accurate view thereof. To be more specific. In Romans 10:13, we read, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Now does this mean that all who have, with their lips, cried unto the Lord, who have in the name of Christ besought God to have mercy on them, have been saved by Him? They who reply in the affirmative are only deceived by the mere sound of words, as the deluded R

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