

TRUTH ABOUT FAITH

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

I shall not attempt a definition of faith. This only let me say in a few words, that the faith which goes no farther than the intellect can neither save nor sanctify. It is no faith at all. It is unbelief. No faith is saving but that which links us to the Person of a living Saviour. Whatever falls short of this is not faith in Christ. Hence, while salvation is described sometimes in Scripture as a “coming to the knowledge of the truth;” it is more commonly represented as a “coming to Christ Himself.” “Ye will not come to me that ye might have life”; “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (Joh 5:40; 6:37).

But whatever view of faith we take, one thing is obvious, that it is from first to last “the gift of God” (Rom 6:23). Make it as simple as you please, still it is the result of the Holy Spirit’s direct, immediate, all-quicken power. (Never attempt, I beseech you, my dear friend, to make faith simple, with the view of getting rid of the Spirit to produce it.)

This, I believe, is one of the wretched devices of Satan in the present evil day. By all means correct every mistake in regard to faith by which hindrances are thrown in the sinner’s way, or darkness thrown around the soul. Show him that it is with the object of faith, even with Christ and His cross, that he has to do, not with his own actings of faith; that it is not the virtue of merit that is in his faith that saves him, but the virtue and merit that are in Christ Jesus alone. Tell him to look outward not inward for his peace. Beat him off from his self-righteous efforts to get up a peculiar kind of faith or peculiar acts of faith in order to obtain something in himself—something short of Christ, to rest upon. Simplify, explain, and illustrate faith to such a one; but never imagine that thereby you are to make the Spirit’s help less than absolutely necessary.

This, I believe, is the aim of the propagators of the new theology. Their object in simplifying faith is to bring it within the reach of the un-renewed man, so that by performing this very simple act he may become a renewed man. In other words, their object is to make man the beginner of his own salvation. He takes the first step, and God does the rest! He believes, and then God comes in and saves him!

This is nothing short of a flat and bold denial of the Spirit’s work altogether. If at any time more than another the sinner needs the Spirit’s power, it is at the beginning. And he who denies the need of the Spirit at the beginning cannot believe in it at the after stages—nay, cannot believe in the need of the Spirit’s work at all. The mightiest and most insuperable difficulty lies at the beginning. If the sinner can get over that without the Spirit, he will easily get over the rest. If he does not need the Spirit to enable him to believe, he will not need Him to enable him to love. If when a true object is presented to me, I can believe without the Spirit; then when a lovable object is presented I can love without the Spirit. In short, what is there in the whole Christian life, which I cannot do of myself, if I can begin this career without help from God? The denial of the Spirit’s di-

rect agency in faith and conversion is the denial of His whole work in the soul—both of the saint and the sinner!



© Copyright 1995 Chapel Library: annotations. Permission is expressly granted to reproduce this material by any means, provided 1) you do not charge beyond a nominal sum for cost of duplication; 2) this copyright notice and all the text on this page are included.

Chapel Library is a faith ministry that relies entirely upon God's faithfulness. We therefore do not solicit donations, but we gratefully receive support from those who freely desire to give. Chapel Library does not necessarily agree with all the doctrinal positions of the authors it publishes.

Worldwide, please download material without charge from our website, or contact the international distributor as listed there for your country. In **North America**, for additional copies of this booklet or other Christ-centered materials from prior centuries, please contact

CHAPEL LIBRARY
2603 West Wright Street
Pensacola, Florida 32505 USA

Phone: (850) 438-6666 • Fax: (850) 438-0227
chapel@mountzion.org • www.chapellibrary.org