



Will we not at once come to Him, 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 hastens there with gladsome wing. 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, yet that fact would not save the one dove which 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.

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

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

The dove is out of sight: the rock alone is seen. So does the guilty soul dart into the riven 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 it is that so many put off from day to day, till it is to be feared that they will 'die in their sins' (see Ezek. 3:19). What an awful word is that! 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 to quiver to think that even one who shall read these lines may yet be of the miserable company who will thus perish. The Lord prevent it of His great grace!

I saw, the other day, a remarkable picture, which I shall use as an illustration of the way of salvation by faith in Jesus. An offender had committed a crime for which he must die, but it was in the olden time, when churches were considered to be sanctuaries in which criminals might hide themselves, and so escape from death. See the transgressor! He rushes towards the church, the guards pursue him with their drawn swords, athirst for his blood! They follow him even to the church door. He rushes up the steps, and just as they are about to overtake him, and hew him in pieces on the threshold of the church, out comes the Bishop, and holding 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. It is even so with Christ. The guilty sinner flies straight away to Jesus; and though Justice pursues him, Christ lifts up His wounded hands, and cries to Justice, 'Stand back! I shelter this sinner; in the secret place of my tabernacle do 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 vile'. The viler you are, the more will you honour Him by believing that He is able to protect even you. 'But I am so great a sinner.' Then the more honour shall be given to Him if you have faith to confide in Him, great sinner though you are. If you have a little sickness, and you tell your physician – 'Sir, I am quite confident in your skill to heal,' there is no compliment in your declaration. Anybody can cure a finger-ache, or a trifling sickness. But if you are sore sick with a complication of diseases which grievously torment you, and you say – 'Sir, I seek no better physician; I will ask no other advice but yours; I trust myself joyfully with you', what an honour have you conferred on him, that you can trust your life in his hands while it is in extreme and immediate danger! Do the like 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 Pet. 2:6).

# 4

## FAITH VERY SIMPLE

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 Jordan; but if it had been some great thing, he would have done it right cheerfully. People think that salvation must be the result of some act or feeling, very mysterious, and very difficult; but God's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are His ways our ways. In order that the feeblest and the most ignorant may be saved, He has made the way of salvation as easy as the A, B, C. There is nothing about it to puzzle anyone; only, as everybody expects to be puzzled by it, many are quite bewildered when they find it to be so exceedingly simple.

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

I have heard of a Sunday-school teacher who performed an experiment which I do not think I shall ever try with children, for it might turn out to be a very expensive one. Indeed, I feel sure that the result in my case would be very different from what I now describe. This teacher had been trying to illustrate what faith was, and, as 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 have it?' John fell thinking what the teacher could mean, and did not seize the treasure, but made no answer. The teach-



er said to the next boy, 'Henry, here is the watch. Will you have it?' The boy, with a very proper modesty, replied, 'No, thank you, sir'. The teacher tried several of the boys with the same result; till 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 companion had received a watch which 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 a thing: 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 had it.' Of course he would. He thought it was a piece of acting, 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 every one *thought*. Each one had his theory, except the simple-minded boy who believed what he was told, and got the watch. Now I wish that I could always be such a simple child as literally to 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 should we be if we would trust, and raise no questions of any sort. But, alas! we will get thinking and doubting. When the Lord uplifts 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. Out with your hand, man, and take Him at once!

When enquirers 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 enquiring ones came to me in my vestry. They had been hearing the gospel from me for only a short season, but they had been deeply impressed by it. They expressed their regret that they were about to remove far away, but they added their gratitude that they had heard me at all. I was cheered by their kind thanks, but felt anxious that a more effectual work should be wrought in them, and therefore I asked them, 'Have you in very deed believed in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you saved?' One of them replied, 'I have been trying hard to believe.' This statement I have often heard, but I will never let it go by