



# 1

## THE OBJECT OF FAITH;

OR,

*To what faith looks*



I am told in the Word of God to believe – What am I to believe? I am bidden to look – to what am I to look? What is to be the object of my hope, belief and confidence? – The reply is simple. The object of Faith to a sinner is *Christ Jesus*. How many make a mistake about this and think that they are to believe on *God the Father*! Now belief in God is an after-result of faith in Jesus. We come to believe in the eternal love of the Father as the result of trusting the precious blood of the Son.

Many men say, 'I would believe in Christ if I knew that I were elect.' This is coming to the Father, and no man can come to the Father except by Christ. It is the Father's work to elect; you cannot come directly to him, therefore you





cannot know your election until first you have believed on Christ the Redeemer, and then through redemption you can approach to the Father, and know your election.

Some, too, make the mistake of looking to the work of God *the Holy Spirit*. They look within to see if they have certain feelings, and if they find them, their faith is strong; but if their feelings have departed from them, then their faith is weak, so that they look to the work of the Spirit, which is not the object of a sinner's faith. Both the Father and the Spirit must be trusted, in order to complete redemption, but for the particular mercy of justification and pardon the blood of the Mediator is the only plea. *Christians* have to trust the Spirit after conversion, but the sinner's business, if he would be saved, is not with trusting the Spirit nor with looking to the Spirit, but looking to Christ Jesus, and to him alone. I know your salvation depends on the whole Trinity, but yet the first and immediate object of a sinner's justifying faith is neither God the Father, nor God the Holy Ghost, but God the Son, incarnate in human flesh, and offering atonement for sinners.

Hast thou the eye of faith? Then, soul, look thou to *Christ as God*. If thou wouldst be saved, believe him to be God over all, blessed for ever. Bow before him, and accept him as being 'Very God of very God', for if thou doest not, thou hast no part in him.

When thou hast believed, believe in him as *man*. Believe the wondrous story of his incarnation; rely upon the testimony of the evangelists, who declare that the



Infinite was robed in the infant, that the Eternal was concealed within the mortal; that he who was King of heaven became a servant of servants and the Son of man. Believe and admire the mystery of his incarnation, for unless thou believe this, thou canst not be saved thereby.

Then specially, if thou wouldst be saved, let thy faith behold Christ in his *perfect righteousness*. See him keeping the law without blemish, obeying his Father without error; preserving his integrity without flaw. All of this thou art to consider as being done on thy behalf. Thou couldst not keep the law; he kept it for thee. Thou couldst not obey God perfectly; lo! his obedience standeth in the stead of thy obedience – by it thou art saved.

But take care that thy faith mainly fixes itself upon Christ *as dying and as dead*. View the Lamb of God as dumb before his shearers; view him as the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; go thou with him to Gethsemane, and behold him sweating drops of blood. Mark, thy faith has nothing to do with anything within thyself; the object of thy faith is nothing within thee, but a something without thee. Believe on him, then, who on yonder tree, with nailed hands and feet, pours out his life for sinners. There is the object of thy faith for justification; not in thyself, nor in anything which the Holy Spirit has done in thee, or anything he has promised to do for thee; but thou art to look to Christ and to Christ Jesus alone.

Then let thy faith behold Christ *as rising from the dead*. See him – he has borne the curse, and now he receives



the justification. He dies to pay the debt; he rises that he may nail the handwriting of that discharged debt to the cross. See him ascending up on high, and behold him this day pleading before the Father's throne. He is there pleading for his people, offering up today his authoritative petition for all that come to God by him. And he, as God, as man, as living, as dying, as rising and as reigning above – he, and he alone, is to be the object of thy faith for the pardon of sin.

On nothing else must thou trust; he is to be the only prop and pillar of thy confidence; and all thou addest thereunto will be a wicked anti-Christ, a rebellion against the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus. But take care if your faith save you, that while you look to Christ in all these matters you view him as being *a substitute*.

This doctrine of substitution is so essential to the whole plan of salvation that I must explain it here for the thousandth time. God is just, he must punish sin; God is merciful, he wills to pardon those who believe in Jesus. How is this to be done? How can he be just and exact the penalty; merciful, and accept the sinner? He doeth it thus: he taketh the sins of his people and actually lifteth them up from off his people to Christ, so that they stand as innocent as though they had never sinned, and Christ is looked upon by God as though he had been all the sinners in the world rolled into one. The sin of his people was taken from their persons, and really and actually, not typically and metaphorically, but really and actually laid on Christ. Then God came forth



with his fiery sword to meet the sinner and to punish him. He met Christ. Christ was not a sinner himself; but the sins of his people were all imputed to him. Justice, therefore, met Christ as though he had been the sinner – punished Christ for his people’s sins – punished him as far as its rights could go – exacted from him the last atom of the penalty, and left not a dreg in the cup.

And now, he who can see Christ as being his substitute, and puts his trust in him, is thereby delivered from the curse of the law. Soul, when thou seest Christ obeying the law, thy faith is to say, ‘He obeys that for his people.’ When thou seest him dying, thou art to count the purple drops, and say, ‘Thus he took my sins away.’ When thou seest him rising from the dead, thou art to say, ‘He rises as the head and representative of all his elect’; and when thou seest him sitting at the right hand of God, thou art to view him there as the pledge that all for whom he died shall most surely sit at the Father’s right hand. Learn to look on Christ as being in God’s sight as though he were the sinner. ‘In him was no sin.’ He was ‘*the just*’, but he suffered for the unjust. He was the righteous, but he stood in the place of the unrighteous; and all that the unrighteous ought to have endured, Christ has endured once for all, and put away their sins for ever by the sacrifice of himself.

Now this is the great object of faith. I pray you, do not make any mistake about this, for a mistake here will be dangerous, if not fatal. View Christ, by your faith, as being in his life, and death, and sufferings, and



resurrection, the substitute for all whom his Father gave him – the vicarious sacrifice for the sins of all those who will trust him with their souls. Christ, then, thus set forth, is the object of justifying faith.

Now let me further remark that there are some who may read this, no doubt, who will say – ‘Oh, I should believe and I should be saved if’ – If what? If Christ had died? ‘Oh no, sir, my doubt is nothing about Christ.’ I thought so. Then what is the doubt? ‘Why, I should believe *if I felt this, or if I had done that.*’ Just so; but I tell you, you could not believe in Jesus if you felt that, or if you had done that, for then you would believe in yourself, and not in Christ. That is the English of it. If you were so-and-so, or so-and-so, then you could have confidence. Confidence in what? Why, confidence in your feelings, and confidence in your doings, and that is just the clear contrary of confidence in Christ.

Faith is not to infer from something good within me that I shall be saved, but to say in the teeth, and despite of the fact, that I am guilty in the sight of God, and deserve his wrath, yet I do nevertheless believe that the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth me from all sin; and though my present consciousness condemns me, yet my faith overpowers my consciousness, and I do believe that ‘he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him’. To come to Christ as a saint is very easy work; to trust in a doctor to cure you, when you believe you are getting better, is very easy; but to trust your physician when you feel as if the sentence of death were in your



body, to bear up when the disease is rising into the very skin, and when the ulcer is gathering its venom, to believe even then in the efficacy of the medicine – that is faith.

And so, when sin gets the master of thee, when thou feelest that the law condemns thee, then, even then, as a sinner, to trust Christ, this is the most daring feat in all the world; and the faith which shook down the walls of Jericho, the faith which raised the dead, the faith which stopped the mouths of lions, was not greater than that of a poor sinner, when in the teeth of all his sins he dares to trust the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Do this, soul, then thou art saved, whosoever thou mayest be. The object of faith, then, is Christ as the substitute for sinners. God in Christ, but not God apart from Christ, nor any work of the Spirit, but the work of Jesus only must be viewed by you as the foundation of your hope.

