

"Believe, Only Believe"

From the pulpits of today the words are uttered: "Believe, only believe. Have faith in Christ; you have nothing to do with the old law, only trust in Christ." How different is this from the words of the apostle who declares that faith without works is dead. He says, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). We must have that faith that works by love and *purifies the soul. Many seek to substitute a superficial faith for uprightness of life and think through this to obtain salvation.* {FW 89.2}

Faith is the medium through which truth or error finds a lodging place in the mind. It is by the same act of mind that truth or error is received, but it makes a decided difference whether we believe the Word of God or the sayings of men. When Christ revealed Himself to Paul, and he was convinced that he was persecuting Jesus in the person of His saints, he accepted the truth as it is in Jesus. A transforming power was manifested on mind and character, and he became a new man in Christ Jesus. He received the truth so fully that neither earth nor hell could shake his faith. {1SM 346.3}

There are many who cry, "Believe, only believe." Ask them what you are to believe. Are you to believe the lies forged by Satan against God's holy, just, and good law? God does not use His great and precious grace to make of none effect His law, but to establish His law. What is the decision of Paul? He says: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law. . . . For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and {the commandment then ended?--No.} I {Paul} died. . . . Wherefore the law is {standing directly in the way of my having liberty and peace?--No.} holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:7-12). {1SM 347.1}

"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:24- 26). It is essential to have faith in Jesus, and to believe you are saved through Him; but there is danger in taking the position that many do take in saying, "I am saved." Many have said: "You must do good works, and you will live"; but apart from Christ no one can do good works. Many at the present day say, "Believe, only believe, and live." Faith and works go together, believing and doing are blended. *The Lord requires no less of the soul now, than He required of Adam in Paradise before he fell-- perfect obedience, unblemished righteousness.* The requirement of God under the covenant of grace is just as broad as the requirement He made in Paradise--harmony with His law, which is holy, and just, and good. The gospel does not weaken the claims of the law; it exalts the law and makes it honorable. Under the New Testament, no less is required than was required under the Old Testament. *Let no one take up with the delusion so pleasant to the natural heart, that God will accept of sincerity, no matter what may be the faith, no matter how imperfect may be the life. God requires of His child perfect obedience.* {1SM 373.1}

In order to meet the requirements of the law, our faith must grasp the righteousness of Christ, accepting it as our righteousness. Through union with Christ, through acceptance of His righteousness by faith, we may be qualified to work the works of God, to be collaborators with Christ. If you are willing to drift along with the current of evil, and do not cooperate with the heavenly agencies in restraining transgression in your family, and in the church, in order that

everlasting righteousness may be brought in, **you do not have faith.** Faith works by love and *purifies the soul.* Through faith the Holy Spirit works in the heart to create holiness therein; but *this cannot be done unless the human agent will work* with Christ. We can be fitted for heaven only through the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart; for we must have Christ's righteousness as our credentials if we would find access to the Father. In order that we may have the righteousness of Christ, we need daily to be *transformed* by the influence of the Spirit, to be a partaker of the divine nature. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to elevate the taste, to sanctify the heart, to ennoble the whole man. {1SM 374.1}

There are many who view themselves as defective in character when they look into God's moral mirror, his law; but they have heard so much of "*All you have to do is to believe, only believe that Jesus has done it all, and you have nothing to do in the matter,*" that after venturing to look into the mirror they straightway go from it retaining all their defects, with the words on their lips, "Jesus has done it all." These are represented by the figure that James has marked out--the man beholding himself and going away and forgetting what manner of man he was. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." James has told what is to be done: "*Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness,* and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." Faith and works are the two oars that must be used to urge the bark against the current of worldliness, pride, and vanity; and *if these are not used,* the boat will drift with the current downward to perdition. God help us to take care of the inward adorning; to set the heart in order as carefully as we arrange the outward apparel. {RH, October 11, 1887 par. 14}

How many cry, "Believe, only believe. Peace, peace," and fail to arouse conviction, or to convert men from the *error* of their way, because of their superficial knowledge of the claims of God's law. Men in this condition make a claim of perfection, but such perfection is simply ignorance of imperfection, *lack of perception* as to what is required by the law of Jehovah. The peace that may come from such self-satisfaction is a false peace. *When the truth comes in contact with such persons, their peace is disturbed, and they make it manifest that they have not the peace of Christ.* {RH, November 18, 1890 par. 2}

There are many whose religion consists in theory. To them a happy emotion is godliness. They say, "Come to Jesus, and believe in him. It makes no difference what you believe so long as you are honest in your belief." They do not seek to make the sinner understand the true character of sin. He is not urged to search the Scriptures on bended knees that he may know what is truth, or to pray that his eyes may be anointed with eyesalve that he may see the grace of Christ. When the lawyer came to Christ, saying, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" the *Saviour did not say, Believe, only believe, and you will be saved.* "What is written in the law?" he said; "how readest thou?" The lawyer answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Christ said, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." *Here the false doctrine that man has nothing to do but believe is swept away. Eternal life is given to us on the condition that we obey the commandments of God.* {RH, June 26, 1900 par. 4}

The position that it is of *no consequence* what men believe is one of Satan's most successful deceptions. He knows that *the truth, received in the love of it, sanctifies the soul of the receiver;* therefore he is constantly seeking to substitute *false theories, fables, another gospel.* *From the beginning* the servants of God have contended against false teachers, not merely as vicious men, but as *inculcators* of falsehoods that were fatal to the soul. Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, firmly and fearlessly opposed those who were turning men from the word of God. *That liberality which regards a correct* religious faith *as unimportant* found no favor with these holy defenders of the truth. {GC 520.2}{GC 597.2}

The *truth* and the glory of God are inseparable; *it is impossible for us, with the Bible within our reach, to honor God by erroneous opinions. Many claim that it matters not what one believes, if his life is only right. But the life is molded by the faith. If light and truth is within our reach, and we neglect to improve the privilege of hearing and seeing it, we virtually reject it; we are choosing darkness rather than light.* {GC 597.2}