

Such faith is natural to man, indigenous to the human heart, and in no sense the outcome of the saving grace of God. It is quite compatible with the utmost contempt for the person and work of Jesus Christ, and is useless to deliver men from the power the pollution and penalty of sin and to fit them for eternal blessedness.

No scriptural definition of saving faith can be framed which ignores the Incarnation of the Son of God—the fundamental miracle of Christianity—and His vicarious obedience and sacrifice as the ground of a sinner's justification before God. "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

Faith, in one sense, is persuasion of the truth. In this form it terminates on propositions, and is usually spoken of as the assent of the understanding. This faith does not save. We are not saved by propositions or creeds, but by a divine Christ. The acceptance of biblical facts and of the facts of science and secular enterprises is not sufficient for salvation. Men are constantly deceiving themselves in this respect. Demons believe in this sense, but are lost notwithstanding. They are not ignorant of Christ's redemptive work. The devil and his angels saw much of Jesus during his sojourn among men; and the Apostle James says (II-19) that their faith in the existence of God makes them shudder, but it does not restrain them from the most malignant and persistent opposition to Christ and His kingdom. The mere intellectual acknowledgment of the possibility of miracles, or the acceptance of the truth of the Gospel narratives comes far short of real Christian faith.

The faith that saves and that is antagonized by current unbelief, is distinctively trust in Christ, and this trust is not natural to the carnal mind. It is begotten by the Spirit of God in connection with the truth, and worketh by love and purifieth the heart. This is the only kind of faith that overcometh the world, and the unbelief which is antithetical and hostile to it is that with which we are concerned. In other words, the unbelief which consists in withholding confidence from God as having undertaken and accomplished human redemption, and which seeks to undermine and overthrow the kingdom of grace in the hearts of men.

Now this unbelief is current in many forms, and it may be difficult or impossible to say how much of it is in the Church and in the world. These two communities suffer from it, and they are so closely allied and so much intermingled of late that the same modes of thought and courses of conduct are found in both. So much is this the case that persons of pessimistic tendencies have abandoned the task of drawing a line of demarcation between them. Church people, they allege, are swallowed up of the world, they