

Reader, I call upon you to let nothing move you from this strong ground, that *faith in Christ is the only thing needed for your justification*. Stand firm here, if you value your soul's peace. I see many walking in darkness and having no light, from confused notions as to what faith is. They hear that saving faith will work by love and produce holiness, and not finding all this at once in themselves, they think they have no faith at all. They forget that these things are the fruits of faith, and not faith itself, and that to doubt whether we have faith because we do not see them at once, is like doubting whether a tree be alive, because it does not bear fruit the very day we plant it in the ground. I charge you to settle it firmly in your mind that in the matter of your forgiveness and justification there is but one thing required, and that is simple faith in Christ.

I know well that the natural heart dislikes this doctrine. It runs counter to man's notions of religion. It leaves him no room to boast. Man's idea is to come to Christ with a price in his hand, his regularity, his morality, his repentance, his goodness, and so, as it were, to buy his pardon and justification. The Spirit's teaching is quite different; it is, first of all to believe. Whosoever *believeth* shall not perish. (John iii. 16.)

Some say, such doctrine cannot be right, because it makes the way to heaven too easy. I fear that many such persons, if the truth were spoken, find it too hard. I believe in reality it is easier to give a fortune in building a cathedral like York minster, or to go to the stake and be burned, than thoroughly to receive justification by faith without the deeds of the law, and to enter heaven as a sinner saved by grace.

Some say this doctrine is foolishness and enthusiasm. I answer, this is just what was said of it 1800 years ago, and is a vain cavil now, as it was then. So far from the charge being true, a thousand facts can prove this doctrine to be from God. No doctrine certainly has produced such mighty effects in the world, as the simple proclamation of free forgiveness through faith in Christ.