

have not called miracles causes of faith, for they do not cause it, although they may lead up to it. What Sergius Paulus saw did not make him believe, but it helped him to believe. What did he see, then?

*He saw the great courage of Paul.* In another case boldness struck a blow at unbelief, for when the rulers saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled. In this case the effect would be the same. Saul fixed his eyes on Elymas as though he were perfectly master of the situation - as indeed he was; and without hesitation or apology addressed him: "O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" Intense conviction in the mind of Paul led him to speak thus plainly, sternly, and even indignantly; but it was not the heat of his own spirit, for we read that he was filled with the Holy Ghost. Let every teacher of Christ be thus filled, and then let him speak boldly, as he ought to speak. Come not forward with your "ifs" and "buts" and "peradventures" to prove God's Word. Tell out the message God hath told thee, as from Him, and not as thine own opinion!

*God's judgments are aids to faith.* If Sergius Paul was deeply impressed with Paul's boldness, he was still more deeply moved when he saw Elymas stricken with blindness. If God's wonders and judgments are aids to faith, *what shall I say of His wonders of mercy?* Conversions are the standing miracles of the Gospel, the best attesting seals the truth can have. I knew a man who was of a fierce temper, a troubler to his own household; he was so passionate at times that I should not like to tell all the wild things which he would do. I have seen that man since his conversion, and he has had things to test him which might, as we say, have provoked a saint, but he bore them patiently, and in a manner which I desire to imitate. The lion has become a lamb; he is gen-

tle and tender; no one could think that he was the same man; indeed he is not, for grace has made him a new man in Christ Jesus. We have seen persons reveling in licentiousness who sinned greedily, who could not be satisfied with any common sin; but they have heard the Gospel, and become chaste and even delicate in purity, so that the very mention of their former crimes has shocked them and made them weep. Such persons have manifested a watchful care against the fault in which they once delighted. They have been afraid to go near their old haunts, or to mix with their old companions. What has wrought this? What teaching must that be which accomplishes such marvels?

III. Lastly, let us observe *the source of faith.* "Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." *It is doctrine, then, or faithful teaching, which brings men to Christ.* Let those who despise doctrine mind what they are doing, for the doctrine of the cross is only foolishness to them who perish. Under the influence of the Holy Ghost, the plain teaching of the Word of the Lord leads men to believe in Jesus. I do not think it is any great good for a preacher to stand up and cry, "Believe, believe, believe," if he never tells you what is to be believed. There is plenty of this kind of preaching about, and the result is sadly transient and superficial. Poor souls say: "We are ready to believe, but tell us what to believe; we are ready to trust, but tell us what to trust in." If we do not preach the great doctrine of the atoning sacrifice, if we do not lift up Christ as suffering chastisement in man's place and stead, we have not put before them the basis on which their faith is to be built. Justification by faith and regeneration by the Spirit must be taught continually. The proconsul was, no doubt, astonished to see Elymas blinded, but he was a great deal more astonished at the doctrine which Paul preached when he began to tell him that salvation was not by the works of the law, but by