

SAVING FAITH

By **I. C. Herendeen (1883-1982)**

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”
Mark 16:16.

THESE words were uttered by Christ Himself after He was risen from the dead. They are His last words uttered before He left this world, and none are of more importance. They call for our diligent attention as they are of the greatest possible consequence since they set forth the terms of eternal life and eternal death. Eternal life and eternal misery are involved in them. Believing faith is the principal condition of life made known by Christ, while baptism is also mentioned, though it is not necessary to life as faith is.

Note exactly how this verse reads, and how it does not read. It reads, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Note the omission in the latter part of the verse — it does not read, “He that is *not* baptized shall be damned.” Rather does it read, “He that believeth not shall be damned.” Faith, or believing, is what is absolutely indispensable to salvation but baptism, though most important, is not. If one does not have faith, saving faith, though he be baptized, ye “he shall be damned.” The unbelieving sinner is “condemned already” (John 3:18). The sword of Divine justice is already drawn and nothing but saving faith in Christ can save the sinner from the fatal blow. Continuance in unbelief makes Hell as sure as though he were already in it. While in unbelief, “we have no hope, and are without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12).

Now if believing be so necessary to salvation, and unbelief so fatal, it is mighty important that we *know* what it means TO believe. We dare not take anything for granted in a matter so serious, or give ourselves the benefit of any doubt. The more so because (surprised as some of you may be to hear this) *all faith does not save!* I am sure there are multitudes who are deceived on this vital matter. They THINK they are saved, they THINK they have savingly believed in Christ, for have they not “take Him for their own personal Saviour”? Are they not “resting on the finished work of Christ”? And yet they are, sad to say, in reality building for eternity on a foundation of sand. This is unspeakably solemn. I trust this will not be the fate of any of you who hear me. Let us heed the demand of God’s Word to “make our calling and election sure,” sure to ourselves and sure to others.

I have just said that all faith does not save. In James 1:18 we read that “the devils also believe and tremble.” Surely they are not saved. Another case in point is that of Simon Magus. In Acts 8:13 we read, “Simon himself also believed ... he was baptized.” Philip was deceived in him, took him for a real believer and baptized him. But he soon came out in his true colors and revealed what he really was, and the apostle Peter said unto him, “thy money perish with thee ... thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.”

Take another example. The people of Nineveh (heathen) “believed God” (Jonah 3:5), and yet they were not saved for the God of Heaven was a stranger to them, neither did they know His prophet.

Another solemn instance of those having faith, but not saving faith, is seen in the thorny-ground hearers of Luke 8:13, of whom Christ said, “Which *for a while* believe, and in time of temptation fall away” even though they had “received the word with joy.” Even so, Christ said of

them that they “have no root in themselves, but dureth (only) *for a while*.” In the light of these examples how seriously we need to search our hearts to make certain that “the root of the matter” be in us! We see in these instances that their faith was a counterfeit faith, a faith which does not save the soul. Which is yours?

THE NATURE OF SAVING FAITH

As we have stated above, there is a faith which does not save, and therefore it is a *serious error* to suppose that all who “believe in Christ” are saved. In John 8:30 we read, “As he spake these words *many believed on Him*,” but in verse 44 we also read of the Lord telling these very “believers” that *their* “father” was the Devil, and in verse 59 that they “took up stones to stone Him.” So we see there is a faith that saves, and also a faith which does not save. Which is yours, my friend? We will deal with this point further a bit later.

Note this. *Saving faith is the opposite of unbelief*, and we will find much help in arriving at a right understanding of the character of true faith if we have a right understanding of the character of unbelief. We need to realize that unbelief *is more than an error in judgment, or a failure to believe the truth*. Scripture sets forth unbelief as a principle of violent *opposition* to God. The Greek word for unbelief is rendered “unbelief” in Rom. 11:20, etc. It is rendered “disobedience” in Eph. 2:2, and 5:6, and the verb by “believed not” in Heb. 3:18, and “obey not” in 1 Pet. 3:1. Adam did more than merely fail negatively to believe God’s solemn threat that in the day he ate of the forbidden fruit he would surely die. Rom. 5:12 says of this, “By one man’s (Adam’s) *disobedience* many were made sinners.” Adam was not deceived by the serpent, according to 1 Tim. 2:14. No, he was determined to have his own way no matter what the consequences. This was the very first case of unbelief in human history, and consisted in a deliberate *defiance* of and *rebellion against God*. Unbelief comes from a depraved nature, from a mind which is “*enmity against God*.” Love of sin is the immediate cause of unbelief. “Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

Saving faith then is the opposite of unbelief which damns. Both issue from a heart of unbelief, but unbelief from a heart alienated from God, a heart in a state of rebellion against Him. From this we see that saving faith is a *yielding to the authority* of God, a *submitting* of ourselves to His rule over us. If we would have Christ save us we must renounce all our own righteousness (Rom. 10:3), and forsake our self-will and rebellion against Him. John Bunyan, in his book, “*Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ*,” wrote, “Coming to Christ is attended with an honest and sincere forsaking of ALL for Him.”

C. H. Spurgeon, in his sermon on John 6:44, said, “Coming to Christ embraces in it repentance, self-abnegation and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” In his sermon on John 6:37, Spurgeon says, “To come to Christ signifies to turn *from* sin and to trust in Him. Coming to Christ is a leaving of all false confidences, a renouncing of all love to sin.”

Saving faith is very much more than “receiving Christ as your personal Saviour,” it is the *unreserved* acceptance of Christ as absolute *LORD*. We *must* take His “yoke” upon us and humbly bow to His will. Unless Christ is our LORD He is not our Saviour, for Christ does not save rebels in their rebellion against Him (Mat. 1:21). If we have *real* love for Him we will evidence it by obedience to Him. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 15:14). Saving faith is the *complete subjection* of our life to God.

THE DIFFICULTY OF SAVING FAITH

Perhaps it will surprise you to hear that there are any difficulties in saving faith. We are so used to hearing on all sides about “simple faith.” We are told time and again that all that is necessary is to “take Christ as your personal Saviour.” My friends, such a faith is a merely *natural* faith such as one man has in another, but it is not the faith we are speaking of. Saving faith is the product of the working of the Holy Spirit; it is a miracle of grace which He performs when He moves upon a human heart, which by nature is “enmity against God” and in stubborn rebellion against Him. It is to truly and abjectly surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. Saving faith is a miraculous thing. Few today seem to be aware of this; they think it is something which any man is capable of performing. But not so, it is a *Divine creation* within the sinner. As we sing in one of our hymns, it is the Holy Spirit “creating faith within.”

James 4:8 says, “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.” There are many who seem to think it is as easy to do this as to wash your hands; that it is as easy to turn from the world to Christ, from sin to holiness, as it is to turn on the light. But a little serious reflection would convince them that to mortify the lusts of the flesh, to be crucified unto the world, to overcome the Devil, to die daily unto sin and live unto righteousness, to be faithful and uncompromising, in a word, to be *Christ-like*, is a task far beyond the powers of fallen human nature to perform.

We need to see that saving faith is something far, far more than believing that Christ died for me; that it involves the complete surrender of my heart and life to the government of God. God’s salvation not only justifies but regenerates and *sanctifies* (2 Tim. 3:5; 1 John 3:3). Christ Jesus came into the world not only to save His people from Hell, but from *sin* and *self-will* and *self-pleasing*. To be a *real* Christian is not at all the easy matter it is represented to be. It is easy to be a mere professing Christian, but the only path which leads to Heaven is a hard and difficult one. “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). If we would get to Heaven we must “STRIVE to enter in at the strait gate” (Luke 13:24).

The Lord Jesus did not picture saving faith to be a simple matter. Far from it. Instead of saying the saving of the soul is an easy matter, He said “*S-t-r-a-i-t* is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it” (Mat. 7:14). Of himself the sinner can no more repent evangelically, believe in Christ savingly, than he can create a world. “With men this is impossible” (Mark 10:27). “Salvation is of the LORD” (Jonah 2:9). Nothing but the miracle of God’s life-giving, life-transforming grace can save a sinner.

“No man CAN come to me except the Father ... draw him” (John 6:44). Only Almighty Power can break the sinner’s will and enable him to come to Christ. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?” (Jer. 13:23). **Matthew Henry** said, “It is as much as the best can do to secure the salvation of their souls.” Saving faith makes the sinner cry out to God for His salvation with a real *soul-hunger* for the Bread of life, and with a *soul-thirst* for the Water of life. “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).

SOME EVIDENCES OF SAVING FAITH

When God imparts saving faith to a soul, radical and real effects follow. One cannot be subject of a miracle of grace being in the heart without a noticeable change being apparent to all. Where a supernatural root has been planted, supernatural fruit must issue therefrom. Sinless

perfection is not attained but there is now a yearning after perfection, a resisting the flesh and a striving against sin.

“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness” (Rom. 10:10). Thus it is the heart we must first examine in order to discover the evidences of saving faith (Acts 15:9). A heart that is being purified by faith is one that has turned from all impure idols and is fixed upon a pure Object. It loathes all that is foul and filthy spiritually and morally, yea, hates the very garment spotted by the flesh, and loves all that is holy, lovely and Christ-like.

“The pure in heart shall see God” (Mat. 5:8). “Purifying the heart by faith” consists among other things, of purifying the will from self-seeking and self-will; and the purifying of the affections so as to cleanse them from the love of all that is evil. A deliberate purpose to continue in any one sin cannot consist with a pure heart.

Saving faith is always evidenced by a *humble* heart. Faith lays the soul low, for it discovers its vileness, emptiness and impotency. It realizes its former sinfulness and present unworthiness. Nothing more exalts Christ than faith, and nothing more debases man. Faith empties a man of self-conceit, self-confidence and self-righteousness, and makes him seem nothing that Christ may be all in all. The strongest faith is always accompanied by the greatest humility, accounting self the greatest of sinners and unworthy of the least favor.

Saving faith is always found in a tender heart. “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ... and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezek. 36:26). An unregenerate heart is as hard as stone, but a “new heart” is melted before God, heart-broken with anguish over sinning against and grieving *such* a Saviour.

Where saving faith is rooted in the heart, it makes its possessor act for God and breathe after God, evidencing that it is a living thing and not merely a lifeless theory. Saving faith is ever accompanied by an obedient walk. “Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3-4). Christ acknowledges none to be His disciples save them who do homage to Him as their Lord.

A genuine Christian fears no test: he is willing, yea wishes to be tried by God Himself. He cries, “Examine me, O Lord, and prove me: try my reins and my heart” (Psalm 26:2). That preaching pleases him best which is most searching and discriminating. He is loath to be deluded with vain hopes, and so little does the world attract the child of God that he longs for the time to come when God shall take him out of it.

Charles Hodge wrote, “He only is a Christian who *lives for Christ.*” Jonathan Edwards said, “Do not deceive yourselves with an expectation of reaping life everlasting hereafter if you do not sow to the Spirit here; it is vain for you to think that God will be made a fool of by you.” Christ requires His disciples to magnify HIM in this world by living holily to Him and by suffering patiently for Him. — **Irwin C. Herendeen** (with some thoughts gleaned from **A. W. Pink**)

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Accepting Christ

I. C. Herendeen

In an effort to get sinners saved we often hear them exhorted to “Accept Christ as their personal Saviour” as though those who are slaves of Satan and captives of the Devil could do so and be saved if they did so. But this is utterly foreign to Holy Scripture; there is no foundation in Holy writ for it. It presents a false way of salvation, and therefore should be discarded along with other similar expressions such as “Give your heart to Jesus,” “Take Jesus as your Saviour,” “Let Jesus into your heart” etc. Such expressions fail to take into consideration the plain and sad fact that man is a fallen creature (Rom. 3:24) — “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God” (Eph. 4:18) with a heart stubbornly steeled against Him so that he “will not” come to Christ (John 5:40) unless and until Divine power overcomes his innate enmity and makes him willing to come that he “might have life” (John 10:10). By nature the sinner’s “carnal mind” is “enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7) so that nothing but Divine power operating within him can overcome this enmity. The salvation of any sinner is a matter of “the operation of God” (Col. 2:12).

A spiritual kingdom requires a spiritual nature, and in order to the acquisition of that the natural man must be regenerated (born again); Divinely regenerated, for the creature can no more quicken himself than he can give himself a natural being. Why not? Because regeneration is no mere outward reformation, process of education, or even religious cultivation. No, it consists of a radical change of heart and transformation of character, the communication of a gracious and holy principle, producing new desires, new capacities, a new life. The new birth is absolutely imperative, but this is the work of the Spirit of God from the very nature of the case. Birth altogether excludes the idea of any effort or work on the part of the one born, hence it is written “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing” (John 6:63).

The new birth is much, very much more than temporary remorse for sin, giving mental assent to the acceptance of Christ as personal Saviour, changing the course of life, or leaving off bad habits and substituting good ones. “It goes infinitely deeper than that . . . it is the inception and reception of a new life. It is radical, revolutionary, lasting, a miracle, the result of the supernatural operation of God.” “Salvation is of the Lord” (Jonah 2:9), of the Lord from beginning to end.

It is no marvel that the natural man needs to be born again, for he is totally depraved, a slave of sin and Satan, devoid of any love to God, and relish for heavenly things, and any ability to perform spiritual acts (including exercising faith in Jesus). The sinner has been totally “ruined by the fall”, is “without strength” (Rom. 5:6), hence it is written in John 6:44, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draw (Greek “drag”) him.” Only those who have been “made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12) and made holy shall enter Heaven which is a “prepared place” for a prepared people (John 14:2). “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14; Matt. 5:8). By his apostasy man lost his holiness, is wholly corrupt and under the dominion of dispositions and lusts which are directly contrary to God. The corruption of man’s being is so great and entire that he will never truly repent unless and until he is supernaturally renewed by the Holy Spirit. In order for any to have Christ as their Saviour they must first have received Him as their “Lord” (Col. 2:6; Acts 2:36), as their King to rule over them, for God saves none in their rebellion against Him. We must cease

our rebellion against Him and His authority and give Him the throne of our hearts as our ruler of He is not our Saviour no matter what our profession.

It seems to be the understanding of so many that if and when Christ is “offered” to man for his acceptance and he “surrenders” and he “gives his heart to Jesus” that the blood of Christ will then avail to wash away his sins. But not so. One might as well offer food to a corpse, for Eph. 2:1-2 tells us that sinners are “dead in trespasses and sins,” and certainly a “dead” man cannot “accept Christ” or cooperate with the Spirit of God. It is a sad delusion indeed that any should think that it lies in the power of the natural man to perform any act of what is naively termed “simple faith” and thus be saved. The truth of the Word of God is that before any man can be saved he must be “born of the Spirit” of God (John 3:8) and surrender to the authority of God else his profession is worthless and his religion vain.

To exhort sinners to be saved by “Accepting Christ as their Saviour” without pressing upon them the imperative necessity of repentance is dishonest, and is to falsify God’s terms of salvation, for “Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 17:3) is the Divine dictum. The sinner must either repent or perish, there is no other alternative. And since “All have sinned” (Rom. 3:23) all therefore need to “repent and believe the Gospel” (Mark 1:15) else they will be “punished with everlasting destruction” (2Thess. 1:9). To delay repentance then is most perilous.

“Repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18) is not a work of nature but a gracious work of the Spirit of God, begun in the heart and manifested in the new birth, continued throughout the entire life of the Christian, and consummated in Heaven. “Accepting Christ as personal Saviour” is a far, far cry from that repentance that God demands from the sinner before he can be saved (see Acts 17:30). For salvation “repentance unto life’ is just as necessary as is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. No sinner was ever pardoned while he remained impenitent, while he remained in rebellion against God and His authority, and without submitting himself whole-heartedly to His Lordship. This involves the realization in his heart, wrought therein by the Holy Spirit, of “the sinfulness of sin” (Rom 7:13), of the awfulness of ignoring the claims of God and of defying His authority. Repentance is a “holy horror and hatred of sin, a deep sorrow for it, a contrite acknowledgment of it before God, and a complete hear forsaking of it.” Peter in Acts 3:19 did not say that all you have to do is to “Accept Christ” as your personal Saviour, but instead he said “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.”

From the above, it is crystal clear that a mental assent to the Gospel will save no one, nor will a mere empty profession of faith in Christ. So many flatter themselves that they are born again because they have been baptized, joined some “church of their choice” received the Lord’s supper who do not have a keen and humbling sense of sin. Professing to be Christians, they are filled with a vain and presumptuous confidence that all is well with their souls, deluding themselves with hopes of mercy while continuing to live in a course of self-will and self-pleasing. But “the spiritual impotency of the natural man is total and entire, irreparable and irremediable so far as all human efforts are concerned. Fallen man is utterly indisposed and disabled, thoroughly opposed to God and His law, wholly inclined unto evil.”

The sinner in his natural state has no power in himself to accept Christ as his personal Saviour, or to “believe to the saving of his soul”, nor has he any real desire or intention of doing so for the reason that, as stated above, his “carnal mind” is “enmity against God” (Rom 8:7). He is “the servant (lit. bondsman) of sin” (Rom. 6:20) and must be made “free from sin” (Rom 6:22) by the almighty “power of God” (Luke 9:43). That he is utterly helpless to save himself is clearly

brought out in Jeremiah 13:23 where we read “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?” When he can do that then “may he also do good, that is accustomed to do evil” The sinner’s spiritual impotency consists in nothing but he depravity of own heart, and his inveterate hatred of God. He is so helpless and hopeless in himself that he cannot take one step toward Christ for salvation.” Hence he is cast upon God “from the womb” (Psa. 22:10) if ever he is to be saved, so to intimate to sinners that they can come to Christ whenever they agree to accept Christ as their personal Saviour is to deceive and bolster them up in a false “way of salvation.” This is an exceedingly serious matter. They need to, “Seek the Lord while He is to be found, and call upon Him while He is near.” (Isa. 55:6).

How we do need to be reminded of the Scriptural injunction to “Hold fast the form of sound words” (2Tim. 1:13), and present the Gospel as far as possible in “words which the Holy Ghost teacheth” and not in “words which man’s wisdom teacheth” (1Cor. 2:13). Selah.

As another has so well said, “The saving work of Christ, that is, the saving of a soul from hell, is only one of His many offices and works that the Saviour does for men. If you heard the preacher say at the wedding: ‘George, do you take Margaret whom you hold by the hand as your lawful wedded cook’ (?), you would sit up in astonishment and wonder at what kind of a marriage is taking place. No preacher calls attention to the work, or the ability, or the service which the bride will bring to her husband. In fact, the husband takes the wife for everything that she can do, and all that she is.

Yet in preaching the Gospel we call attention to one work of the Saviour instead of the Person Himself who does that wonderful work. Let us see how the Scripture reads. Do we find in John 1:12, “But as many as received Him, as their Saviour, to them gave He power to become the sons of God”? No, the words “as their Saviour” are not found in the verse. Do we read in John 3:16, “that whosoever believeth in Him as their own personal Saviour”? No, we do not. These words are not found in the verse. Nor are they found in 1 John 5:12, Matt. 11:28, etc. In fact, the expression never occurs, for the Holy Spirit does not attract the sinner’s attention to one particular work, but always to that wonderful and precious Person who did, and who does the work.

“It is as at the wedding, the bride who married the rich man . . . confesses that she is his bride, his wife. She does not say I took him as my banker, or as my companion, or anything else. My experience has been through the years that those who profess to be saved through that kind of phraseology that is not found in the Bible quite often cannot be found after a few weeks or months” (Dr. W. L. Wilson in *The Defender*).

Pink says that “Man, with his invariable perversity, has reversed God’s order. Modern evangelism urges giddy worldlings, with no sense of their lost condition, to ‘Accept Christ as their personal Saviour,’ and when such converts prove unsatisfactory to the churches, special meetings are arranged where they are pressed to ‘consecrate themselves’ to Christ as Lord”!

How we do need to “Prove all things” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21).

— I. C. Herendeen (1883-1982)

OBEYING THE GOSPEL

by I. C. Herendeen

“Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only” (James 1:22).

According to the Word of God, to “obey” means to give our earnest attention to the Word, to submit to its authority, and to carry out its instructions in our daily life. But how very few professing Christians make any serious effort to do this. “It is easy to persuade ourselves we really desire that our daily lives should be well-pleasing to God, but what evidence can we produce that such a desire is genuine? That which is well-pleasing unto God is made known in His statutes, and it is only as we meditate on them and seek to understand them that our consciences will be impressed by them and our wills moved to do them.” The Word of God is given us to be obeyed. This is part of the honor we owe to God. It is not enough to hear God’s voice, but we must obey. “Ye shall do my judgments, and keep my ordinances” (Lev. 18:4). And this obedience is to be rendered freely and cheerfully, devoutly and fervently to be acceptable to God.

In 2 Peter 1:12 we read about being “established in the present truth.” As times and conditions change certain truths need to be emphasized and dwelt upon more than others. There was a time when the blessed truth of the eternal security of the believer needed to be stressed, but today special emphasis needs to be put upon the perseverance of the saints instead in order to preserve the balance of truth, for the pendulum has now swung to the opposite side. This balance needs to be restored. Obedience to the Word of God must be stressed sufficiently to make it effective in the lives of professing Christians instead of being soft-pedaled or neglected altogether. Perhaps in an effort to avoid the error of salvation by works we have fallen into the opposite error and falsehood of salvation without works. “The Bible knows nothing of salvation without obedience. It recognizes no faith that does not lead to obedience, nor any obedience that does not spring from faith.”

Paul tells us in Rom. 1:15 that he was sent to preach “obedience to the faith among all nations.” He reminded the Christians in Rome that they had been set free from sin because they had “obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered them” (Rom. 6:17). According to the New Testament there is no contradiction between faith and obedience, nor does it recognize any obedience apart from faith; the two are opposite sides of the same coin. If these are separated the one from the other both lose their value. As the hymn has it:

**Trust and obey,
For there is no other way
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey.**

In chapter 2:14-16 James in his epistle shows us the error and uselessness of those who rest in a bare profession of faith which does not evidence itself in the doing of those “good works” (Titus 2:14) which “God hath before ordained that we should walk in” (Eph. 2:10). It needs to be forcibly brought to our attention that such a profession of the Christian faith will save no one, that it is a useless profession, yea, a profession that will bring condemnation in the Day of Judgment. *Nothing honors God so much as our obedience.* I Sam. 15:22 tells us that “to *obey* is better than sacrifice, and to *hearken* than the fat of rams.” From

this we learn that no offering is acceptable to God unless rendered by those whose will is subject to His.

In his epistle James was writing to those who were building on a wretched foundation, a false foundation, and he brings forth arguments to prove that no man is justified by faith only without “good works” also. In 2:14 he shows us that “faith without works” will be of no profit to us, and cannot save us. “Of what value then is such a faith? It may gain us the good opinion of others, and it may also in some cases procure us some worldly good. But, really, what profit would it be to us if we ‘gained the whole world and lost our own soul?’ Such a faith is no better than no faith at all if it does not save!” “What doth it profit? Can faith (a dead, inoperative faith) save?” No, instead it will only aggravate our condemnation in the last day.

It is one thing to profess to have faith, but another to actually have it — they are two entirely different things. When the faith professed is genuine it is bound to manifest itself in the life by the performing of that which God requires. “Faith worketh, and “worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6). Christ says, “The that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me” (John 14:21). We are only “mocking” Him if we profess to love Him when we do not obey Him! Selah! “Nowhere in Scripture does God own any one as a lover of Him but those who keep His commandments. Love is something more than sentiment or emotion, it is a principle of action, and expresses itself by performing deeds which please the object loved.” My reader, you are only deceiving yourself if you think you love God and yet have no deep desire and make no sincere, honest and real effort to obey Him in all things as required by the Word.

We read in Acts 5:32 that the Holy Spirit is given only to “them that obey Him.” If we do not sincerely desire to please Him in all things, we do not wish to please Him in anything. “To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17). “And that servant that knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes” (Luke 12:47). “Be not deceived: God is not mocked” (Gal. 6:7). God has given us His Word not alone to instruct us, but to direct us. In it He makes known what He requires us to do and to refrain from doing if we would please Him who has “redeemed us to God by His blood” (Rev. 5:9). When a man has been truly regenerated a transforming work has been wrought in him so that a sincere and honest desire now moves him to do whatsoever He saith unto us, and to say “When Thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek” (Psalm 27:8).

“Obedience is not only subjection to external law, but it is the surrendering of my will to the authority of another. Thus, obedience is the heart’s recognition of His lordship; of His right to command and my duty to comply. It is the complete subjection of the soul to the blessed yoke of Christ.” “Good works” (Eph. 2:10) of themselves do not save, but neither can we be saved without them. “Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2:17).

We repeat, it is not enough to hear God’s voice, we are required to obey it. And if we truly love Him we will make every effort to be obedient. God disdains our sacrifice if obedience is lacking. The purpose for which God has given us His commands is that we obey them. “Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments” (Lev.18:5). A king publishes his edicts for the purpose of their being obeyed. Our obedience to be acceptable to

a holy God must be rendered freely and cheerfully, and must reach to all God's commandments. It must be like the fire on the altar which was always kept burning (Lev. 6:13). If we love the Lord as we profess to do then our obedience will be constant; we will make every endeavor to imitate Christ who was "obedient unto death" (Phil. 2:8).

By our profession we have vowed to renounce the pomp and vanities of the world, and to fight under Christ's banner till death. To refuse or be neglectful in obeying God is a high contempt of Him, a terrible sin indeed; it is rebellion against God, and rebellion His Word tells us "is as the sin of witchcraft" (I Sam. 15:23).

"There is much praying today for revival, but little revival has resulted. Why? Because we have substituted prayer for obedience. We will never have God's blessing upon us individually or in church groups until we begin in earnest to obey God's commandments, for our disobedience has blocked the channel of blessing." Is it any wonder, then, that our lives are so listless, lifeless and fruitless? How can it be otherwise, for God will not bless our ignoring His precepts Ezekiel (33:31) had the same situation to contend with in his day; he says, "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as thy people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love but their heart goeth after their covetousness." Isaiah (29:13) uttered the same complaint when he wrote, "The Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me... and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men." God complained that the Pharisees honored the Lord with their lips but their hearts were "far from" Him.

How about your heart? Are you diligently seeking and endeavoring to the best of your ability to obey His commands and honor His precepts? Do you acknowledge to God and mourn over your many sins and failures? "An honest and good heart" will seriously endeavor to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" (Col. 1:10), and keep His "commandments" which are not "grievous" (I John 5:3). The Psalmist said, "Thy commandments are my delight" (Psalm 119:127, 143). Can you say the same?

• This article by the late I. C. Herendeen is available as we published it in an old issue of our paper, *Truth for Today*. Help us to distribute this far and wide. Mr. Herendeen is best known in America as the publisher of Arthur Pink's works during the dark days of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, when the larger publishers would not readily accept Pink's writings due to his strong Calvinism