

Instruction In The Westminster Standards

The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations

○ STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 86. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

Scripture References: Heb. 10:39. John 1:12. Phil. 3:9. John 6:40.

Questions:

1. Why is faith in Jesus Christ called a "saving grace"?
It is called a "saving grace" because it is a gift of God and is given to the sinner not because of any merit or worth the sinner has (I Cor. 4:7).
- 2. Why is this faith called faith in Jesus Christ?
It is called such because Christ is the principal object of saving faith according to Acts 16:31.
3. Why is the word "receive" used in this Question?
The word "receive" is used because Christ is offered in Scripture as a gift. He is given to those who are without hope in themselves, have nothing and are nothing.
4. Why does the Question mention resting on Him alone for salvation?
The person coming to Christ must rest on Him alone because the Bible reveals Him as the only foundation on whom one can rest his confidence, his trust.
5. What is this salvation that is received by the person coming to Him?
This salvation includes three things: (1) Deliverance from the curse of the law. (2) Deliverance from the dominion of sin. (3) The blessedness of heaven.
- 6. Who offers Christ to us?
God offers Christ to us, God the Father who made the offer in John 3:16.
7. Do all believers have the same measure of saving faith?
No, all believers do not. Some have little faith and others have strong faith (Note the comparison of Matt. 14:31 and Rom. 4:20). But even those with little faith have sufficient to get to glory if it is saving faith.

PREACHING THE SAVING FAITH

D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, in his wonderful book, "Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and cure", states: "Lop-sided Christians are generally produced by preachers or evangelists whose doctrine lacks balance, or rotundity, or wholesomeness. More and more as we proceed with our studies we shall see how vitally important are the circumstances of the birth of the Christian."

The preaching of, witnessing to, saving faith in Jesus Christ is an awesome responsibility of the believer. Too often it is not done at all. Too often when it is done it is done with methods that are far from being all-inclusive, theologically speaking. It is simply a "passport to heaven" approach or an offering of the forgiveness of sin without anything else being mentioned.

The whole salvation message should be preached or witnessed to by a believer. Usually deliverance from the curse of the law (from the wrath of God) is made plain, it is offered by the person speaking. The individual hearing it simply then thinks in terms of his deliverance and possibly the fact he will someday reach heaven. But what about the time in between, the months and years before he goes to meet his Lord? Is not the doctrine of the deliverance from the dominion of sin part of saving faith?

I once heard an evangelist give the invitation in a very plain, Scriptural manner. In it he certainly emphasized that "If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ your sins will be forgiven" but he also made it very plain that a part of saving faith—if it is truly wrought in the soul—is the fact regeneration has taken place in the soul and now there will be a new principle of life present and that new life will produce fruits of holy living. It meant new life will want, for the most part, to live a holy life. The new life will have power to—will to want to—conquer sin and obey God and to make his will the rule of life in the days to come.

It is true that this faith will start small for it is a new life. But it will grow and will want to grow. Why can't this be made plain to those coming to Christ, why can't they be made to see in the beginning that the Christian life is not simply a passport to heaven but also a life of hating and fleeing from sin? Paul knew this and wrote 11 Cor 5:17 for all of us to see and believe.

Published By: The SHIELD and SWORD, INC.

Dedicated to instruction in the Westminster Standards for use as a bulletin insert or other methods of distribution in Presbyterian churches

For information write to: The Shield and Sword, Inc., Box 17580, Memphis, Tennessee 38117. A non-profit religious organization.

Vol. 6

No. 3

March, 1967

Price

Rev. Leonard T. Van Horn
Editor

To Churches — \$2.00 per 100
Individuals — \$1.35 per year

Back Copies

To Churches — \$2.25 per 100
Individuals — 15c each

