

# The True Character of Unbelief

by Horatius Bonar

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*The sermon emphasizes that unbelief is rooted in a flawed opinion of oneself and God, and that true conviction and peace come from accepting the truth about God's character.*

**Scripture:** Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:8

**Topics:** "Grace Of God", "Unbelief"

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## Description

Horatius Bonar addresses the true nature of unbelief, emphasizing that it stems from a distorted self-image and a flawed perception of God. He explains that individuals often overestimate their own righteousness while underestimating God's grace, leading to a reluctance to fully trust in Him. The Holy Spirit's role is to transform these perceptions, helping sinners recognize their true state and the necessity of Christ's sacrifice. Bonar stresses that true peace comes from accepting God's character as revealed in the gospel, which contrasts our sinful nature with His grace. Ultimately, he calls for a deep understanding of both our need for salvation and the goodness of God.

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## Transcript

In all unbelief there are these two things - a good opinion of one's self and a bad opinion of God. Man's good opinion of himself makes him think it quite possible to win God's favor by his own religious performances; and his bad opinion of God makes him unwilling and afraid to put his case wholly into His hands. The object of the Holy Spirit's work (in convincing of sin) is to alter the sinner's opinion of himself, and so to reduce his estimate of his own character that he shall think of himself as God does, and so cease to suppose it possible that he can be justified by an excellency of his own. The Spirit then alters his evil opinion of God, so as to make him see that the God with whom he has to do is really the God of all grace.

But the inquirer denies that he has a good opinion of himself and owns himself a sinner. Now a man may SAY this, but really to KNOW it is something more than SAYING. Besides, he may be willing to take the name of sinner to himself, in common with his fellow-men, and yet not at all own himself such a sinner as God says he is - such a sinner as needs the cross, and blood, and righteousness of the Son of God. It takes a great deal to destroy a man's good opinion of himself; how difficult it is to make a man think of himself as God does! What but the almightiness of the Divine Spirit can accomplish this?

Unbelief, then, is the belief of a lie and the rejection of the truth. Accept, then, the character of God as given in the gospel; the Holy Spirit will not give you peace irrespective of your views of God's character. It

is in connection with THE TRUTH concerning the true God. "the God of all grace," that the Spirit gives peace. That which He shows us of ourselves is only evil; that which He shows us of God is only good!

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