

ATKINSON, ISRAEL-FAITH

by Israel Atkinson

Atkinson's study on the nature and practice of biblical faith, examining what Scripture teaches about trusting God, living by faith, and the relationship between faith and the Christian life.

15 Chapters

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002 PREFACE

PREFACE.

WHAT may be a sufficient justification to publish a book is not yet, it is presumed, a closed question, but one on which opinion is, and is likely still to be, a good deal divided. Many who commit this act seem to be nervously anxious about the right and the wrong of it, and various reasons are advanced by them, with the view, apparently, to bespeak the good opinion of their readers. Having been so very diffident about the worth, of their thoughts, nothing but the urgent entreaties of friends, so it is said, could have prevailed on some writers to run the risk of giving the world a trouble in reading them. From this influence I am entirely free ; and whatever blame may arise from laying my opinions in this instance before the public must be charged solely on myself. Sometimes the importance of the subject is alleged ; and if this, in my case, were of itself a sufficient warrant to employ the printer and publisher, my justification is established without argument. At any rate I may offer this for an apology. Well known as the term is in the Scriptures, thrashed out as every one of its different senses may be thought, and established as its meaning in every one of its occurrences may be considered, I have had a profound conviction, of not a few years' standing, that the last word was very far from having been said upon Faith. Yea, more, I have thought that while there are but few words in the Book of God which contain significations of equal weight, that there is no one that is more ill understood in some cases, more misunderstood in others, and in others more perverted. This little treatise has been written in the midst of other, paramount, and engrossing engagements; and this fact is mentioned for the purpose of disarming criticism and conciliating the critic respecting faults of composition. On the matter itself no favour is solicited. If, tried by the truth, this is found faulty, forty stripes, save none, will not be too severe a lashing. But if, as it is hoped, this little thing shall receive the approbation of men of understanding in the Gospel, and God shall be pleased to use it to perform a service in the churches like to that which Aquila and Priscilla rendered to Apollos, my reward will be abundant. Certain it is that the truth, with some pains, has been the object sought, and that what is set down is the fruit of conviction as in the sight of God. I will only add that, If I have done well, and as is fitting the story (subject), it is that which I desired : but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto."

38, Rose Hill Terrace, Brighton. Nov. 28th, 1877.

Israel Atkinson

01 Preliminary Observation

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

CHAPTER I .

PURPOSING to treat on what is taught in the Scriptures concerning faith, in some of its principal meanings, with the light that may be vouchsafed to me, I enter on the engagement under a profound sense of the importance and difficulty of the undertaking. Any one that may have seriously asked that world-old and worldwide question, " How, then, can man be justified with God ?" will know that it represents an inquiry, the importance of which on the interests of mankind is equalled by but very few others, and surpassed by none ; and, whoever may have sought for a solution of this momentous problem, with a direct reference to himself, will have felt its weight with a tenfold force. Apprehending, then, in some measure, the great consequence of a sinner's justification before God, and of his everlasting salvation ; and bearing in mind that we are taught in the Scriptures, that " A man is justified by faith," and that "" He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not, shall be damned ;" I cannot be unconscious of having taken the teacher's chair with the view of conveying instruction on matters which are inferior to no others in their influence on the well-being of man.

Any one, too, that may have given but the slightest attention to this subject, cannot fail to feel that, in not a few respects, the undertaking is beset with no little difficulty. To mention nothing else just now, any one that is not so happy as to have, nor so unhappy as to be possessed by the conceit of having, the faculty of intuition in the case, will feel, on a very slight consideration, that the exceeding equivocalness of the word faith must, of itself, give rise to much perplexity. Bishop Middleton, speaking on an equally equivocal word in his work on the Greek article, in Romans 2:13, says, "" It must, indeed, be admitted, that there is scarcely in the whole New Testament any greater difficulty than the ascertaining of the various meanings of nomos (law) in the Epistles of St. Paul." Having stated in some following remarks what is the main object of the Epistle to the Romans, and mentioned the meanings which the word in question obtains in use, the Bishop adds, " The various senses, then, of this word are calculated to produce perplexity, especially since, as will be seen, there are passages, in which more than one meaning of the word will accord with the tenor of the argument." If we substitute the word pistis (faith), for nomos (law,) and extend the reference to the whole of the New Testament, these very just observations will be equally, if not in a higher degree, pertinent and important. Not the least difficulty, and by no means the least in importance, which the earnest and devout student will have to cope with, is the question, In which instances of the occurrence of this word is an objective sense, and in which is a subjective to be understood? And when he may have mastered this obstacle to his satisfaction, when in a given case he is persuaded that the former of these senses is the correct one, another embarrassment will present itself when he has to decide on the particular objective sense intended. After a patient investigation of this matter, the conclusion has been arrived at by myself, that the latter of these senses has often been thrust into the place of the former, to the serious

misleading of many, and to the great detriment of the truth. For, if this conviction is well founded, it will be at once apparent that, to the extent such a misinterpretation may have been accepted, the meaning of the word has been wholly misapprehended, and its teaching totally missed. Nor is this all, for while two meanings of a word may in some particular instances be equally conformable to the truth in general, in this case the mistake is not so harmless. For the word has not only received an erroneous meaning, but one that has laid the foundation for not a little of the false doctrine about works and grace that is so widely taught so generally accepted, and so exceedingly pernicious. For the sake of clearness, it will be necessary to treat of these two senses of the word, and it may, probably, be the most convenient course to begin with the objective. But having decided on this course, a definite plan of proceeding seems necessary; and, out of some others suggested, that which is felt most to commend itself is to consider the word " faith " when construed after another in the first place. I purpose, therefore, to pass this word under review, in some of its occurrences, when construed after nouns, prepositions, and verbs, in the order mentioned ; and, afterwards, in a few instances, when it is construed before some nouns. Without at all determining the relative importance of the different examples of the association of this word when used in an objective sense and construed after a noun, or claiming for the " law of faith " any particular right of first consideration, it may be convenient to begin with this term.

02 Of The Law as Distinguished From Law of Works

ON THE LAW OF FAITH ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE DIVINE SOVEREIGN AND HIS SUBJECTS, AS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE LAW OF WORKS.

CHAPTER II.

IF not the most, yet one of the most considerable distinctions of meaning which this word takes, when employed in an objective sense, is that of a law. As such, it may be just mentioned here, it must not be understood as a precept, nor as a code of precepts, by which a duty is defined and enforced ; but as a principle of procedure, or law of living, established between the Sovereign and the subject in relation to some matter of pure favour from the former to the latter. It may also be just mentioned that although we have but one occurrence of the terms, the law of works and the law of faith in full; yet that the words, works and , faith, are frequently the conventional or technical representations of these terms elsewhere, will, on consideration, it is thought, appear incontestably evident.

Paul, treating of the justification of a sinner by the righteousness of God without the law," says, " Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.Romans 3:27. Mere two laws are spoken of in direct and precise terms ; and it may be observed that, according to one or the other of these laws, every known relation existing between the Creator and the creature, or the Divine Sovereign and the subject, has been established ; and that according to one or the other of these, all affairs between a man and his Maker, in every connection between them, are conducted. Between God and man there exists no third law of living. If, then, these laws embrace matters of so high consideration, it will be obvious that to understand their nature, and to know in what provinces they are in force, are sciences of which no man ought to be ignorant, and in which the interpreter of Scripture, and teacher of religion, especially, should be thoroughly instructed.

Moreover, it should be observed that these two laws bear their designation in no figurative sense. Indeed, so far as we know, the term, law of works, has received no figurative interpretation ; yet it is very questionable whether, generally, its meaning is correctly understood. But the term, law of faith has presented some difficulty to interpreters, and there is a considerable divergence of opinion about its meaning. Some seem to fix on belief as the sense to be understood, and explain the word "" law " as a catachresis employed in allusion to the law of works. Others prefer the doctrine of the gospel. But faith in this term is to be understood neither as the act of believing nor the doctrine of the gospel, but simply, as it is put, a law. Paul is speaking of boasting being excluded in reference to a doctrine of the gospel by some law. Boasting is not excluded, according to what he here teaches, concerning this doctrine by the whole system, considered as doctrine, of which it forms a part ; but by a certain law, the law of faith, which while permeating all the doctrines of the gospel, is distinct from them. Alford, expounding the place, with a rare and refreshing discrimination, says, " By what law (is it excluded ? Is it by that) of works? No ; but by the law (norma, the rule) of faith. The contrast is not between the law and the gospel, as two

dispensations, but between the law of works and the law of faith, whether found under the law or gospel, or (if the case admitted) anywhere else."

These two laws are wholly diverse from and irreconcilably antagonistic to each other. Whereinsoever one is in force the other is utterly excluded. One person may be under both these laws in different respects at the same time, but he cannot be under the authority and guidance of both in relation to the same object. Neither of these laws stands for any particular code. Each of them embodies and represents a distinguished principle.

Between God and man the law of works will be the principle, according to which the duty of the creature to the Creator, or of the subject to the Sovereign, is to be discharged. On this matter the minds of men seem much confused. Many appear to have no other notion of the law of works than that it is the law of ten commandments recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. It should be understood, if the repetition may be pardoned, that the law of works is not a commandment; nor a code of commandments which determines a duty, but the principle according to which the precepts and prohibitions enjoined are to be kept. That principle is, that a due is owed by the subject to the Sovereign, that this due is to be rendered by the discharge of a defined duty, and that when this is performed, a work is done by which, economically, a title is acquired to a reward of debt. The nature of this law is precisely interpreted by the words of the Lord Jesus to the lawyer, "This do, and thou shalt live," Luke 10:27. Expounded freely, and in colloquial terms, it may be put as if the Creator or Sovereign had said to his creature or subject, I enjoin a duty on you that is defined by certain precepts and prohibitions; if you faithfully render this due to me, you shall be entitled to enjoy this and that particular good- which I have already put into your possession ; but if you disobey me, and transgress my commandments, you shall be condemned in a forfeiture of all, and to an appropriate punishment in addition. Substantially, this may be taken as a just representation of the law of works wherein so ever this order of things obtains.

It seems necessary to observe here, that the law of works is never made the rule, or basis, of any advancement. No creature was ever put into a state with a view to his self-advancement to one that is higher by obedience to any law upon the principle of works. But of all the fallacies that the human mind has embraced, perhaps there is none that it holds more tenaciously and fondly than the notion of a probation for a higher state, according to the law of works. How many are there that are not looking to be promoted by their obedience to law as a certain reward for their good behaviour? Who has not heard of Adam being advanced, if he had obeyed instead of having broken the law? But who, at the same time, has ever heard anything that is intelligible and consistent as to the grounds on which this promotion was to have proceeded ? Of any such probation in any case, whether in that of man as a creature under natural law, either in the unfallen state, or in the fallen ; or in that of the Jews under Jewish law ; or in that of Christians under Christian law, the Scripture presents no evidence. Had any self-advancement to a superior state been held out, in any case, upon the principle of the law of works, it is most certain that there must have been a duty defined by some law to have been performed to this end, and a promise given accordingly. But where shall we find the slightest intimation of anything of the kind ? Nor have we any example of this sort of thing. Whatever advancement has taken place in the history of the race, either in an improved condition, as in the case of the seed of Abraham, or in the scale of being, as in the case of Christians, has proceeded, not according to the law of works, but according to the law of faith, and has been received and enjoyed as a favour pure and

simple. Nor does anything of the kind seem possible in the nature of things. For though it may be easily understood that it may be given to a creature, upon the principle of the law of works, as a reward for obedience, to retain a state originally conferred by favour, it is impossible to make out, at all consistently with the nature of things, that any one could acquire for himself, according to the principle of works, an advancement upon that state. The more closely this matter is investigated, the more evident it must become, that all notions of a probation for a higher state upon the principle of works are gratuitous assumptions which have not the slightest warrant from the Scripture, that they are wholly without example, and that they are contrary to the nature of things. The law of faith, as this is established between the divine Sovereign and his subject, is just the principle according to which absolute favour is extended by the Lord of all, and is received by his servants ; and this will be the mode of living in every relation of grace which may ever subsist between them. It simply represent! and embodies in itself, the principle of giving and receiving. In every case of a due from the' giver and a "duty from the receiver, this order of things cannot obtain ; for, so to speak, were the gift a due, it would cease to be a gift, for it would be wanting of the requisite freeness to make it one ; and were the receiving a duty, it would, in like manner, no longer be a free receiving. Therefore this law can have no place, and cannot be the mode of living between God and man, about any matter in any economy wherein the Sovereign claims a right, and the subject discharges a duty in obedience to a demand made on him. In every economy in which the law of faith is in force, there will be, indeed, divine claims advanced and enforced, and, consequently, duties to be discharged; but not in respect to the favours given and received according to this law.

Anything about which God claims a right, and man acknowledges a due, and for which man discharges a duty and God accepts an obedience, can, never find a place under this order of things. Nothing but absolute favour, freely giving and freely receiving, can be known here. Whatever may be required economically, on the one hand in order to the giving, and on the other in order to the realization and enjoyment of anything given under the law of faith, grace must provide. Nothing can be suspended on any legal condition to be found in, or on any duty to be performed by, the persons to be advantaged by the establishment of this law of living between them and God. Under this law there is no promise of reward for obedience, nor threatening of penalty for disobedience. If a duty were imposed, and a reward were promised to obedience, and a penalty threatened to disobedience, dutifulness must be vindicated and rewarded as a matter of right, and undutifulness must be condemned and punished as a matter of justice; but then, as must be evident, these are conditions that, in their very nature, are wholly opposed to, and utterly inconsistent with, the law of faith. Can any man want the perspicacity to see that whereinsoever a legal right is claimed, and a due is acknowledged, and a duty is performed, and an obedience is accepted, in order to the enjoyment of any good, that, not the law of faith, but the law of works is in force ? Can any man fail to see that whereinsoever the discharge of a duty is at all a factor of the enjoyment of any blessing, that this is a condition which must, in the very nature of things, wholly exclude grace and faith? Yet, axiomatic as the proposition is, that duty and faith respecting the same object exclude each other, few persons seem to apprehend this simple truth. Should this truth come to be universally understood, a veritable revolution in theological teaching and ministerial utterance must be the result to an almost equal extent. But the change would be a real reformation. May it come! In sum, then, the law of works will be the governing principle, or mode of living, in some relation subsisting between God and man. The relation may be a natural one, as

between the Creator and the creature; or it may be an economical one, as between the Sovereign and the subject. But whatever the relation may be wherein the law of works obtains, the essential elements of this governing principle will be a right claimed on God's part according to plain precept, and a due acknowledged on man's. In the event of a due obedience being rendered, a title to vindication and acceptance will be acquired ; and in case of disobedience, a penalty of condemnation and punishment will be deserved. On the other hand, the law of faith will be the governing principle established in some connection subsisting between the Sovereign and the subject, that originated and is continued from pure favour. All the advantages arising out of this relation will be free gifts, and everything belonging thereto will bear on it the impress of grace. While on the one hand the law of works knows of no grace ; on the other hand, the law of -faith knows- of nothing else. While under that a claim is made; under this a promise is given. While where that holds sway, a duty is to be done ; where his obtains, 'a gift is to be accepted. While under that, a dutiful subject will be vindicated ; under this, a-transgressor will be justified. While under the former, disobedience will be punished ; under the latter there is no precept to keep or to break all being pure promise and grace ; and, therefore no vindication and acceptance is to be 'looked for on the ground of dutifulness, and no condemnation and punishment to be dreaded for disobedience.

Here it may be proper to say a word in explanation of rewards ; a subject about which a good deal of confusion of thought seems to prevail. Rewards are of three kinds. Of merit, of debt, and of grace. Nowhere within the whole field of theological truth is a reward of merit to be found, save in the "joy" that was set before Christ, and for which he " endured the cross, despising the shame." Rewards of merit are impossible to men as between them and God. Rewards of debt are ever-found where the law of works is in force. Of this kind of reward David speaks in Psalms 6:10, as arising from keeping God's judgments. In respect to everything about which the law of works is in force, and in every economy where this principle obtains, there is a reward for the righteous." Rewards of grace are those that, are given according to that principle ; that is, they are gifts, pure and simple, to which the name of reward is given on account of their being received by persons bearing a given character, pursuing a given course. These are found in every economy in which, and in respect to everything about which, the law of faith obtains. It was to a reward of this kind that Moses had respect when he preferred the reproach of Christ to the treasures in Egypt.

Until the mind digests these distinctions between the law of works and the law of faith, and assimilates their truth, the Word of God will be, not a revelation, but a riddle. Teachers will continue to utter contradictions, and demand for them, what is impossible to a rational being, namely, an intelligent acceptance. Thoughtful learners will be staggered. Thoughtless ones, unable to make it all out, will gape with wonder at the profoundness of things, and will swallow in indiscriminating credulity what they are taught with all the benefit that may happen under such conditions ; while those that are sceptical will get their doubts deepened and strengthened.

Attention may now be turned to the provinces in which the law of works and the law of faith have been, and are, in force, in the several economies wherein they have held, and now hold, a place ; together with the extent of their operation.

03 Of The Law of Works and The Law of Faith

OF THE LAW OF WORKS AND THE LAW OF FAITH AS THEY OBTAIN IN THE ECONOMY OF NATURE.

CHAPTER III.

GOD, in his relations with man, has established three principal economies, in the world. One of these may be designated the Adamic, or natural; another the Abrahamic or typical; and the other, the Christian, or gracious. The first embraces all concerns between the Creator and the whole of mankind as his creatures. The second comprehends all things relative to the distinction God conferred on Abraham and some of his descendants in giving to them the land of Canaan for a possession. The third is an economy of grace relating to a special people of every age and nation, designated "a remnant according to the election of grace," and this comprises everything concerning Christ and his church. In all these economies both the law of works and the law of faith have been established, each occupying its own appropriate sphere.

Originally, before the fall, the law of faith had no existence in the economy of nature; man was wholly under the law of works. Regarding him as a moral being, man was necessarily placed under law to his Maker. This law has never been abrogated either in whole or in part. Man, viewed simply in his relation to his Creator, was and is, subject to its claims as the rule of his obedience, and to its penalties for every disobedience. The precepts of the law of nature have their fullest codification in the tables which God gave to Moses. These the Lord Jesus reduced to two capital articles, according to which a man is required to love his Creator to the full power of all his faculties, and his neighbour as himself. The reward of obedience is represented in the words, "Thou shalt live;" and to live in this instance, must be interpreted to be the retention and enjoyment of the state in which man was created. As he originally came from his Creator's hands, this would be life to him in the highest sense of that word known or desired. For anything beyond this state he could have no natural competency nor desire, and he had no ground of expectation. As there was a perfect congruity between his natural competency for duty and the rule of his obedience, so there was also between his faculties for enjoyment and the state in which he was created. Neither could more have been looked for by him as a reward of his obedience without a commixture of the laws of faith and works, which is never found, respecting the same object. The penalty of disobedience is contained, it may be taken, in the words, "Thou shalt die." What these words mean is, not the destruction, or annihilation, of man's existence, but the elimination therefrom of all the true elements of life in the ethical sense of this word. They comprehend the death that is upon man's existence in this sense now, and whatever there will be of the like kind in the final punishment of the wicked hereafter. The reward, and the penalty of this law in the economy of nature remain. Nothing has been altered. Indeed, about the immutability of the rule and the penalty there is no dispute, or, at most, none worthy of regard; but it is doubtful whether there is equal clearness, conviction, and general consent about the reward of obedience. However this may be, it is most certain, from repeated testimonies, that the man that performs the requirements of the

law shall have his title to live vindicated. " This do," said Jesus to the lawyer, " and thou shalt live," Luke 10:28. The life spoken of here, as the reward of obedience according to the law of works in the economy of nature, must not be confounded with that eternal life which God promised in Christ before the world began, according to the law of faith, in the economy of grace. Heaven and earth, Christ and Adam, that which is spiritual and that which is natural, do not differ more than these two lives. But it may be objected that it is impossible that any sinful man can, from a universal deficiency, keep the law perfectly, and so entitle himself to a justification before God. This is granted : and, moreover, it is contended that no works of the law can, from the very nature of the thing, justify a sinner at all. By works of law, under the law of works, a righteous man may be vindicated ; but a sinner can never be so justified. While, then, it is clear, and generally known, that no man under the fall can do anything of the kind, and in the degree required of him to constitute a complete obedience to the divine law; it ought to be equally known that, if the self contradictory proposition could be true, namely, that a sinner obeyed the law perfectly, his obedience would avail him nothing for his justification. Nevertheless, the reply of Jesus to the lawyer remains valid and important. If the law continues in force to condemn the transgressor, it is but equal that, if there are any vindicable, as righteous, they should be vindicated, and that the law should remain to vindicate them. This is so ; and, therefore, so far as the law itself is concerned, and the obligation under which, on the principle of works, the Creator Put himself to the creature; man is just as eligible to look for, and enjoy, the reward of a perfect obedience now, on the proper terms, as ever he was. The words, "The man which doeth those things shall live by them," are, indeed, accepting as a first truth that " The just shall live by faith," a decisive testimony in their way, that the righteousness by which a sinner is justified is revealed to us upon the principle of faith ; but they are also an exact representation of a still existing truth respecting the law of works. It is still a truth, and will be until the end of time, that if a man shall meet the requirements of his Maker's law at the beginning, he shall be entitled to, and shall enjoy the life that was then possessed. But it is time we proceeded to the consideration of the law of faith as this obtains in the economy of nature ; a branch of truth which, if it may not have the importance of some others, deserves, nevertheless, the most serious attention of all that would understand the Word of God.

If the fall of man gave an occasion for the wrath of God to be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, so, also, contrariwise, this terrible event afforded an opportunity for , the display of the riches of the goodness and forbearance and long suffering of God. Moreover, since Adam's crime and calamity, and the consequent guilt and misery of mankind, God, so to speak, has seized this opportunity to exhibit these excellencies of his nature in every age and nation. All sinners are existing, and are possessing whatever good of existence they have, without a right. It is purely of the Lord's mercies that all are not consumed. As, therefore, everything that is advantageous in a sinner's condition under the fall arises from the display of the riches of the goodness forbearance and long-suffering of God, it will be clear, seeing that the exhibition of all or each of these excellencies of the Most High is the extension of undeserved favour, that their manifestation creates a predicament of grace. Let this be clearly apprehended, and then it will become equally clear that, to whatever extent and by whatever means, if any, God may have warranted sinners to look for the manifestation of the riches of any or all of these his excellencies, or of any other similar to them, he has, by such means and so far, introduced into the economy of nature the law of faith in the conduct of affairs between his fallen creatures and himself.

What of favour Adam, as a creature under the natural economy, was warranted to expect from the correspondence he had with his Creator and Governor after his fall, it may be very difficult to say in precise terms ; but that his God had introduced a dispensation of goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, and that he was led to look for some expressions of these excellencies of his Maker there can be no reasonable doubt. It 'is clear that he might infer from the very words addressed to him in condemnation of his sin that his natural life would be spared for a time, and that the ground should produce what was necessary to meet his bodily wants, albeit that he was to eat his food in sorrow all the days of his life. Whatever the goodness of his Maker warranted him to infer to his advantage here from, this he might believe for and expect from his God; and his posterity have the same things that he had. But in whatever state of doubt the antediluvians may have found themselves relative to any reason or ground to hope in God from the absence of an express promise, all this has been removed from the post-diluvians by the word of the Lord to Noah. Of this distinguished man, after the flood, God made, as it were, a new head of mankind. In the promises he made to this eminent man, in the acceptance of the sacrifices offered by him, in the blessing be pronounced upon him, and in the covenant he made with him, God pledged himself to mankind that he would display his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering "while the earth remaineth." A state of favour was then established, comprehending the whole race by a covenant of which the rainbow is a token "for perpetual generations," and the law of faith was introduced, as a mode of living, between man and his Maker respecting every good therein promised or all time. What, therefore, is thus promised every man may believe for, pray for, and look for ; and for every good of the kind held and enjoyed every man should render thanksgiving to God ; and should regard himself as being not consumed by the want of what he enjoys from the freely-bestowed favour of his Maker under a dispensation of goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering. What the wise man of the world will look for from the invariability of what he calls the laws of nature, the worshipping man of the world will look for from the unchanging covenant of the God of nature according to the law of faith. Nature, to this man, is God's creature and subject. From God she received her being. Her laws are her Maker's modes of management. On him her condition is dependent. By him her destiny is fixed.

Here a question of some importance may justly claim a little consideration. May anyone that, according to his own consciousness, is not actuated by Christian principle, worship God acceptably by prayer and thanksgiving without any reference to Christ? By some, and of these there are that are very far from being vulgar and unlearned men, the negative of this question is strongly asserted, and the assertion is not made in a merely passing peremptory utterance, but is supported, as best it may be, by much argument and appeal to Scripture. Good Mr. Romaine said, "Until Christ's righteousness be imputed to you by faith, your prayers are an abomination, and your fancied good works are nothing but sin." A little further on he added, " We doubt not but the best of them works done before the grace of Christ are only so many splendid sins." Mr. Haldane, in his consideration of the case of Cornelius at the end of his generally excellent Commentary on the Romans, has cited these words with approbation, and used them to assist his proof that the centurion was a godly man in the spiritual acceptation of that term.

Now if there are men who present their repentance, and prayers, and thanksgivings, or any other acts of worship, as a meritorious consideration, or as an economical means, for the acquirement of pardon and righteousness, or of any other blessing of salvation, they unquestionably commit a

blunder and a crime. A blunder, because they introduce the law of works into that part of the economy of grace where it has no place whatever; and because it is evident that these things cannot possess in equity any meritorious character, nor be the economical means of acquiring anything at all. A crime, because they, in effect, contradict the testimony of God about, and trample under foot the provision he has made for, the justification and salvation of a sinner. If Mr. Romaine had the notions of such men in view, he was undoubtedly correct in saying that their prayers and good works were "only ; so many splendid sins." But it is very questionable whether these were the persons whom he had in view, while it is very certain that he has not been so understood, at least, by Mr. Haldane. If then Mr. Romaine meant absolutely what Mr. Haldane has taken him to mean-namely, that all acts of worship "done before the grace of Christ, are only so many splendid sins," and that they are such "because they flow from an unregenerate heart," as he says, it remains to be enquired, Are these things so?

Mr. Haldane-and we may take him to be a representative man on the opinion in question-says: " Did ever the prayers and the alms of an unbeliever go up before God for a memorial ? " Is not the sacrifice of the wicked an abomination to the Lord?" We may reply to these questions by asking, Could Mr. Haldane, can those who adopt his opinions, have forgotten that God accepted the humility of Ahab, and, in consequence, averted from his house during his lifetime the evil that had been threatened thereon by the mouth of Elijah ? Or that Nebuchadnezzar was counseled by Daniel to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, with the hope that such a course might be acceptable to God, in order to the lengthening of his, the king's, tranquility? Or that the idolatrous Ninevites by repentance found such acceptance with God as to avert the doom of their city ? Or that the mariners in the storm prayed, when they cast Jonah overboard, and found acceptance ? Or that Peter exhorted Simon the sorcerer to pray God if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven to him ? Were not all these unbelievers-or, at least, were any of them believers, in the complete sense of that term, in its relation to Christ? Had some of them the least inkling of the Messiah at all ? Was Nebuchadnezzar taught to pray by the Messiah, or Son by Jesus Christ ? The , Ninevites believed God, but had their faith any reference to the Saviour of sinners ? Was the worship mentioned in either of these cases spiritual in its nature, or did it at all relate to spiritual things? Those that have not the perspicacity to see a distinction between an- acceptable homage rendered to God in reference to things that are natural, and to those things that are spiritual, cannot understand the Scriptures. Neither can they that are unable to distinguish between an unqualified acceptance with God in righteousness, whether under law or under grace, and a qualified acceptance with him Under a dispensation of longsuffering. If the question were whether the worship of a sinner is accepted absolutely on the ground of its natural acceptableness, as that of Adam was in his primitive purity, there could be no doubt about the answer. Or if it were whether a worship rendered with an object that is not warranted by any revelation that God has made, as that of doing any legal works for justification from sin to life eternal, the answer would be equally certain. But it is neither of these. It is whether a sinner can render an acceptable worship to his Maker and Preserver relative to things that are temporal, without, on the one hand, imagining that he will entitle himself to be dealt with according to what in a like case would be due from the Creator to a sinless creature; or, on the other hand, according to the right acquired by the righteousness of Christ for them that are justified. Whether, in a word, considering that though a sinner, God his Creator, under a dispensation of longsuffering, has extended favour to him, and given promise of its continuance, he may, and

should, give thanks for the good he possesses, and pray for the fulfillment of the promise in future. He that doubts, let him learn. In all acceptable worship the worshipper will call upon God in truth." What he knows to be true of God and of himself will be his guide in his confessions, supplications, and thanksgivings. This it is that will govern his sentiments, regulate his expressions, and guide his life. Little or much may be comprehended herein; but what there is will be true.

It may be that the accepted worshipper has no more knowledge of God and of himself than the light of nature teaches a savage, and that he has never had a thought carried beyond natural things in his worship ; or it may be that, though he has not equaled, he has emulated Paul in his understanding of spiritual things, his desire after them, his delight in them, and in his devotion to God. However this may be, in either, in every case of true worship, God is "nigh to" the worshippers. "Nigh to all that call upon him in truth," whether they be penitent Ninevites, devout Romans, or believers in Christ of any age and nation. Nigh to manifest himself to them appropriately, and to, accept their worship according to its character, whether it be that of natural or spiritual men.

Again, in all true worship the worshipper will call on the name of the Lord ; that is, he will worship God, not as an unknown or unappreciated abstraction, but as bearing some appropriate designation in his relation to him, and one that he will know how to value. Thus, when Abraham built an altar he called upon the name of the Lord; so did Isaac; and so did David when he offered to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Some appropriative descriptive title under which God had manifested and magnified himself would, in each case, occupy the mind of the worshipper, and afford at once a reason and a vehicle for his worship. But when some Athenians built an altar, they consecrated it to the unknown God. Herein there was no acceptable worship, for there was no knowledge, which is essential to a calling upon God in truth. A difference is represented by these instances that, it is to be feared, still exists, and extends far more widely than is commonly credited. Under what name that God will acknowledge do many, denominated Christian, call upon the Lord? To how many is God an absolute abstraction? To how many is he a wholly unknown God? To how many is he an altogether anonymous God? But to those who do know him, his name will be some definite and instructive designation under which he has been pleased to make himself known to men, not only as the Supreme Being, but as the true object of worship in any given condition of the worshipper. Different persons will call on the Lord under various names, such as may seem to them the most fitting for the occasion. In prayer they will call on the Lord under that name that will appear to them most to warrant and encourage their supplication in the peculiar need that may press on them; and in thanksgiving they will render praise to the Lord under that name that shall appear to them to be made illustrious by the favour vouchsafed and enjoyed. But it will be evident that the true knowledge of God, without which there can be no acceptable worship, will vary much in its extent in different persons. Such as have never had the light of revelation can have known no more than nature teaches; and many such, alas! There are now. Many that have the Scriptures in their hands are without that Divine teaching by which alone a man can attain to the higher branches of the knowledge of the Lord, the highest of all the sciences. What, then, is the amount of this knowledge that is required to be possessed by any one to qualify him to render an acceptable service to God? Suppose a man approaches the sanctuary who, while reverently regarding the Bible in his hand as the Book of God, is conscious that he is not "born of the Spirit," that he "remains a "natural man," and that he does not know "" the things of the Spirit of God;" is

he, as a worshipper, to be prohibited from entering ? Or, suppose a man to come to the entrance of God's house that has no more knowledge of God than that heathen poet had who wrote the line, " For we are also his offspring;" is the door to be shut against him as a worshipper? If so, why so? By what law is it enacted that if a man knows not God, and therefore cannot worship him as his Redeemer and Saviour, he must not render to his Maker and Preserver such homage as he can? As a fact, men in different states and under great diversity of circumstances have worshipped, and do worship, God acceptably. Adam, in his primitive purity, and the Jews that outwardly kept the commandments and ordinances given to them by Moses, rendered to God an acceptable service. Christians that worship God by faith in Jesus Christ are without doubt accepted. About these there will be no question. But here is a man that has fallen in Adam, and who, in the sight of God, is without holiness, righteousness, and goodness. He is not a Jew, nor has he the hopes or fears of one, nor does he worship as one. Neither is he a Christian, in the sense that a man is one who has a consciousness of a change wrought in him by the Holy Ghost, whereby he is created anew in the image of Christ ; nevertheless, he is a worshipper of God. He receives the Scriptures as the Word of God. He accepts the historical testimony of the Lord Jesus though he is a stranger to the spiritual power of the Gospel. He holds himself to be amenable to the divine law. He recognizes that it is in God he lives, moves, and has his being, and all his well-being. He worshipfully acknowledges God as the Governor of the creatures, and he prays and gives thanks accordingly for the blessings of divine goodness. Is the worship of such a man acceptable to God? If not-why not?

Those that deny the acceptableness of such a man's worship, rely on, what we think to be a misinterpretation of some Scriptures; notably that in Proverbs 15:8, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." But can their interpretation of this Scripture be the true one? If so, carried to its legitimate issue, it will follow that every soul of man not justified by the righteousness of Christ, that offers a sacrifice of prayer or thanksgiving to God will add wickedness to sin. Does such a proposition need a refutation? May it not be that the wicked person spoken of here is one that adds hypocrisy in his worship to all his other forms of wickedness? Would not this interpretation meet every difficulty? Is it not the true one?

Another Scripture that is relied on, we believe, in support of the un acceptableness of such worship as a man of the world can render to God, is that in Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him ; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Those who support their view by this Scripture contend that the faith spoken of here is identical with that by which a sinner believes with the heart in Christ unto righteousness. But this is begging a great question, and one which must be brought under consideration later on. 'It will be enough here to say that this view is disputed. The worshipping man of the world we have briefly sketched answers every requirement of this text. He believes that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and he seeks him accordingly. What more is demanded?

Let but the truth taught in the Scripture on this subject be apprehended and accepted, namely, that God after the fall of man, without, any reference to Christ, introduced into the economy of nature a dispensation of long-suffering, created a predicament of grace, and imported into the relations between himself and his fallen creatures, the law of faith for temporal purposes, then all will be set right. Men of the world will then see that, if they cannot worship God as Christians, they are not

utterly excluded from the sanctuary; but that they have the privilege to pray for such blessings as the Lord has promised to give them, and that they are under the obligations created by Divine favour to give thanks for all the good they enjoy. Those that doubt the obligation and the privilege of such men to worship God at all, will then feel, it is to be hoped with pleasure; that their ground is completely taken from under them; and that they may invite their fellow men, nevertheless for that these may now lie under an entire disqualification from worshipping God as their Redeemer and Saviour, to unite with them in doing homage to the Most High as the Maker and Preserver of all. Then too, those that have heretofore encouraged and exhort such men to acknowledge God, often it may be feared with no sounder arguments than the promptings of their own good-nature have supplied, will emerge from the confusion of their uncertainty and will speak with such a confidence as is inspired by the clear guidance of the true reason for urging a right thing to be done. My apology for having pursued this subject to this great length, is a conviction that without such a discrimination of things that differ, no clear understanding of a great part of the Word of God is possible.

04 Of The Law of Works and The law of Faith

ON THE LAW OF FAITH AND THE LAW OF WORKS AS THEY OBTAINED IN THE JEWISH ECONOMY.

CHAPTER IV. IN speaking of the Jewish economy, I include so much of it only as takes in the gift which God made of the land of Canaan to Abraham, the promise that he should have a numerous seed to people the possession, and the covenant made with these relative to their retention of the inheritance given to their father. Both faith and work has a place in this economy, each occupying its own appropriate sphere.

God, when he made his gift to that distinguished man, said, "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed, for ever." Somewhat later on, the Lord of all, condescending to his servant's weakness, gave Abraham an additional guarantee that he should have a numerous offspring, and inherit the land, by making a covenant with him by sacrifice. In all this we have nothing but pure promise. Of due from the divine Giver in this gift there was none, and nothing of duty to be done by the receiver in order to his possession of the bestowment. The law of works had no place in this business. 'Not a single precept was given to Abraham as a rule of any obedience to be rendered in order to the possession of the inheritance. No promise of rewarding him with this inheritance was made to him upon his rendering any required obedience. Neither was there any threatening of a penalty of the forfeiture of the inheritance being inflicted on him in case of disobedience. "God gave it to Abraham by promise." All was pure grace. It was a case of gift and acceptance. The whole business of the gift, both on the side of the Giver and of the receiver, was conducted according to the law of faith. Had there been any due from the Giver, or had there been any duty to be discharged by the receiver, in order to the possession of the inheritance, in either case, or in both of them, the law of faith would have been wholly made void and displaced, and the law of works established. The inheritance, then, would have been "of the law," and, consequently, according to the apostle's irrefragable argument, could have been "no more of promise." The rite of circumcision was, indeed, afterwards enjoined on Abraham. But this was not imposed on him as a duty upon the discharge or failure of which the inheriting of the land was contingently to hang. To the descendants of Abraham, when they possessed the land, circumcision fell under the law of works; but to him this ordinance came under the law of faith, and was instituted for a token of the covenant God had made with him, and a seal of the good promised to him. They were, when in possession of the land, to observe the rite as a part of the righteousness by which they were to retain the inheritance ; he received it as a token of the covenant between God and himself, that he should enter upon the possession.

Moreover, not only was the original appropriation of the land to Abraham a pure gift, but everything requisite to his descendants taking possession of it was secured as a matter of favour. It was altogether of faith and grace that the promise might be sure to all the seed. Nothing was left hanging contingently upon the performance or the omission of any duty whatever, for none was imposed. As there was in the original appropriation to Abraham a case of pure gift and simple

acceptance, so in the actual possession his descendants were led to, and, so to speak, seized of the inheritance purely by favour. Before entering on their possession, Moses constantly spoke to the people about it as the "land promised," and "the land which the Lord our God giveth;" not as the land that was to be obtained upon the performance of any condition laid down in some precept. When, also, they had taken possession, Joshua bore this testimony to the truth we are presenting; "And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swear to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he swear unto their fathers; and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel, all came to pass." Joshua 21:43-45. The law of works, then, had no more a place in the business of the actual possession than in that of the original appropriation of the land. All was conducted according to the law of faith.

Deeply interesting as all this is to the historian, it has for the divine a peculiar, significance, which may well warrant the engagement of his keenest attention. This land was a type, and the antitype is something spiritual. Among other designations which Canaan received was that of a rest. It was God's rest. Not one, indeed, in which he reposed, but one which he gave for the temporary repose of his people Israel, and one which foreshadowed another. Writing to the Hebrews, the apostle refers to Joshua introducing their fathers into this land as into a rest, though but an incomplete and passing one. Connecting the type with the antitype, he said, "For we who have believed do enter into rest." The gospel state, that is, the state in which a believer in Christ is found under the gospel dispensation, was then, we may take it, and as by very general consent it is taken, foreshadowed by the rest of Canaan. If, then, the antitype answers to the type, a believer in Christ will have entered into this spiritual rest of the gospel wholly according to the law of faith; and therefore, without having discharged the least imaginable duty in order to his introduction and possession. Plainly this is so. But is not this truth the very reverse of the theology that, from the chair and the pulpit, is now almost universally taught on this subject? But while it is indisputably true that God gave the inheritance to Abraham by promise, and that the original appropriation and the actual possession were comprehended in the gift; it is an unquestioned fact that all the Jews that came out of the land of Egypt that were twenty years old and upward at the time of the exodus, save Joshua and Caleb, fell in the wilderness through unbelief. Here lies a difficulty; but a little patient endeavour will suffice to untie the knot.

It must be distinctly understood and constantly held in mind that where the law of faith is in force in relation to any specific object, that there the law of works is, of necessity, utterly excluded. Both these laws cannot obtain respecting the same thing. The term, duty-faith, has, indeed, been employed to designate the doctrine of the duty of believing in Christ in order to salvation; but, as salvation is by grace, the expression is a very infelicitous one for a designation, being a simple self-contradiction, yet sufficiently good, perhaps, to designate a self-contradictory doctrine. We may as correctly use the term acid-alkali as a designation of some chemical substance. Duty and faith necessarily exclude each other respecting the same object. If anything be by faith, it cannot be by duty; and if by duty, it cannot be by faith. By the use of other words of similar import, the apostle teaches by an unanswerable argument this self-same truth in respect to election. "Even so, then, at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is

no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." Like duty and faith, words and grace exclude each other respecting the same object; and, indeed, they are, in some cases interchangeable terms.

But, nevertheless, while these truths are to be clearly understood and distinctly held in mind, it should be with equal clearness known, and with like constancy held in mind, that according to the express testimony of the Scripture the unbelief of those Jews whose carcasses fell in the wilderness was a sin and that their crime brought upon them the retributive judgment of being denied admission into the promised land. Seeing, then, that their unbelief was a sin, and seeing that according to the law of faith no duty can, in the nature of things, be imposed and discharged in order to the enjoyment of any good promised absolutely, it will necessarily follow that their sin must be the transgression of some precepts still binding on them according to the law of works in connection with another economy. This was so. When God made promise to Abraham and his seed, they were not as a consequence released from the law of nature. They were not lifted out of the natural condition of men when they were raised to a state of favour, as the seed of Abraham, in distinction from all other people. The law that requires men to love the Lord their God with all their heart, was as binding as ever upon them; and if it pleased the Most High to bear a testimony to them with sufficient evidence, they were bound to believe him. From what one may sometimes hear, and read, and see, it might not be unprofitable to some, who profess to be distinguished by the highest state and style of man known in this world, to lay to heart the doctrine taught here concerning the Jews; that is, to understand that by becoming Christians they do not cease to be men. The seed of Abraham did not believe God, and this was their sin. Again and again God had testified, and had confirmed his testimony under the solemnities of an oath, that he would give them the land of Canaan, but they believed him not. He had further assured them by many miracles wrought in their favour, but still they believed not his word. Their unbelief in one view of it was positive, was disbelief; in another it was negative, was non-belief. In view of the precept originally given to man enjoining upon him, according to the law of works, the duty to love the Lord his God with all his heart, their unbelief was positive, was a criminal disbelief of the testimony of God, which, in effect, was to make God a liar. In view of the promise God made to Abraham and his seed' assuring them, according to the law of faith, that he would give them the land Canaan for an inheritance, their unbelief was negative, was a disqualifying non-belief. For as God swear that they should not enter into his rest, because of their transgression of natural law, by their disbelief of his testimony; so also, "they could not enter in "this is set down by the apostle distinctly and emphatically as impossible in the very nature of things because of their disqualifying non-belief of the promise given, according to the law of faith.

It may be just observed here that there may be non-belief in some cases where there is no disbelief; for unbelief, like belief, has its differences. Many never deny or dispute, the testimony of God. Many receive, and some will ostentatiously avow the witness of God to be true, who appear to be uninfluenced by its truth. Agrippa believed the testimony of God by the prophets; but he did not act on his belief. There was in his case, as in many others, to use the old distinction, the credere Deuni, and the credere Deo ; but there was not the credere in Deurn. That is, there was a belief that God is, a belief of what God has said as true ; but not a relying belief upon God for the fulfillment of his word. There was not the criminal disbelief of God, or of his testimony as true ; but there was the disqualifying non-belief. But this is a subject which must come under review later on.

Passing from a consideration of the province which the law of faith held in the Jewish economy to notice that in which the law of works obtained, we shall find that while everything connected with the original gift, and the actual possession of Canaan, was conducted according to the former law, the retention and peaceable enjoyment of the land were afterward governed by the latter. The covenant made with the heads of the people respecting their inheritance in the day when God took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt had the principle of works for its basis. In this respect, as we are expressly told Deuteronomy 5:3; Hebrews 8:9 this covenant wholly differed from that which was made with Abraham. That with him was a simple case of promise. This with them was a case of contract. God required of them an obedience to his will expressed in sundry precepts, and they consented; saying, " All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient." Afterward, when they were in possession of the land, Joshua, who had led them into their inheritance, knowing that his end was approaching renewed this covenant with them in solemn form at Shechem. Here again they said, "" The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." It was, then, upon these terms that the land, now possessed, was to be retained and peaceably enjoyed. An important difference, it may be observed, has uniformly existed between the law of works and the law of faith respecting the enjoyment of the good promised according to each of these laws. The enjoyment of what good has been promised according to the former law has constantly failed sooner or later, while that which has been promised according to the latter has invariably been realized and never lost. In the economy of nature, the enjoyment of the good originally promised to Adam, according to the former law, was wholly and irretrievably, lost. On the other hand, the enjoyment of the good promised in the same economy under a dispensation of long-suffering according to the latter law, is held to the present hour. The reason is not far to seek. Everything in the former case was made to depend on man; everything in the latter rested, and does rest, on God. In the former case unbelief could, and did, destroy the faithfulness of man to God, through the maintenance of which the good was to be perpetuated; but in the latter, neither the unbelief of man, nor any other sin of his, could in the least degree influence for ill the faithfulness of God by which the continuance of the favour promised is secured. Developed as that original God denying sin of unbelief may have been in every form of wickedness known or possible to man in every age of the world's history until now, no flood has covered the earth since the Noachian deluge, the sun has not failed to rise and set, the recurrence of the seasons has not been prevented, nor their progress retarded, and seed time with its opportunity, and harvest with its plenty, have come round in their " appointed weeks " with an unvarying precision. In reckoning on the future continuance of this order, no one in his senses thinks of taking into the account the righteousness or the wickedness of individuals or nations; but every one rather looks on the rainbow when it appears, and relies on the faithfulness of God.

It is without doubt true that, in occasional instances, God, it may be to manifest to men that they are, indeed, living under a dispensation of long-suffering, to rebuke their practical and sentimental atheism, to exhibit to those that deny, and to those that own him too, that the earth is his, and that he exerts a providence over all, and for innumerable other purposes beside, has sent famine at different times upon the nations of the world. But as this dispensation of favour under which all are living was established with the admission, and in the very face of the fact that "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," so, nevertheless for the wickedness of men, Divine faithfulness perpetuates the good they enjoy. In the case of the Jews in the typical economy, the same truth holds. God gave to Abraham and his seed the land of Canaan for an inheritance according to the

law of faith. Many, however, of the Jews disbelieved God, and as a consequence, their carcasses fell in the wilderness : a fearful example of the sinfulness of disbelief. But this in nothing made the promise void. Their unbelief did not make the faith of God without effect. The land was given in possession according to the promise. Nothing failed; all was brought to pass. But, on the other hand, the retention of the inheritance, together with its peaceable and prosperous enjoyment, were promised to them, according to the law of works, upon obedience rendered to certain precepts. These they weakly and wickedly disregarded, broke their promises of obedience, forfeited their title to their possession, offended their God, and have reaped, and to this hour are reaping, the miserable consequences of their defection.

There is one thing, however, relating to the retention of the land which, for. more than one reason, deserves special notice. The terms of the law according to which the Jews were to hold and enjoy their inheritance differed in one very material particular from that according to which, originally, Adam was to hold Eden. Both he and they, as we have seen, held under a law which had the principle of works for its basis ; but that, it should be observed, under which Adam held Eden was wanting in one important provision, which the other contained. In the law under which he held his state there was nothing enacted to allow of repentance for wrong. For the first disobedience, by an irrevocable sentence, he was to die. In the law under which they held theirs, there was such a provision. We have the record of this remarkable enactment in Leviticus 26:40-46. Without this statute in their law there would have been no more ground of repentance for them than there was for Adam. It is on the ground of this provision that we find such confessions as, for instance, those in Isaiah 64:5-7; Daniel 9:3-15; Nehemiah 1:6-7; together with the prayers which accompany them. It was on this ground that Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, founded the arguments of his prayer for Israel in those circumstances of evil into which they might possibly fall through sinning against God. It was on this ground that this people were exhorted in every age by all the prophets to repentance and obedience. " Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I," said God by Jeremiah, " have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them ;" and the burden of the Divine message to them was, " Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place." " If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land ; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword." To Jesus, the Son of the great Householder, sent " last of all," the last and greatest of all the prophets of Israel, it was reserved to pronounce their national doom. When about to take his departure from their temple for the last time, he uttered that doom in the memorable words: " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Having thus spoken he went to Mount Olivet, and there uttered the last prophecy to Israel. It was the prediction of national ruin, and the word is fulfilled. After holding their inheritance in ever varying conditions through a period of about fifteen centuries and a quarter, Israel, for their manifold sins, were cut off, and the Jewish polity and nation became for ever defunct.

Here, a convenient opportunity presents itself to make some observations on what seems to me, and what, as I think, must on a very slight reflection, appear to be to others, an astounding misapprehension and preposterous misapplication of the Word of God. No one can reasonably question that "the law is not of faith;" and no one, especially if a teacher, ought to be in doubt that

the gospel is not of works. But who does not know that words addressed to the Jews, as such, in the typical economy, that are wholly and unalterably the language of the law of works, are used by preachers and writers, as the utterances of grace and of the law of faith when preaching or writing of the Gospel of Christ? Nor is this perversion chargeable only upon a few individuals who may be quietly regarded as unlettered and bigoted persons—men of no name, no position, and no weight, and such that the wisest course to take respecting them is contemptuously to ignore them. In fact the truth lies in precisely the opposite direction. In general estimation, they are the few and the ignorant that refuse to employ the language of law to express the mind of grace. The many, the men of letters, of position, of weight, and whose known opinions on this point are as surely believed as oracular decisions, are just those who sin the most egregiously in this misapplication and perversion.

Specifically, what we mean as being so perverted is that large class of Scriptures of which we may take for a sample such a remonstrance as, "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezekiel 18:31. Such a rebuke as "Why should ye be stricken any more?" Isaiah 1:5. Such an exhortation as, "Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations." Ezekiel 14:6. Or such an invitation and threatening as, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 1:18-20. Can any man, having given this matter the slightest consideration, doubt for a moment that all this is the language of the law of works? Can any man have the boldness to say that, even when usurping the utmost latitude of accommodation that he may desire, the language of the law of works is suited to express a truth that has for its basis the law of faith? Does God express his mind in the law of works and the law of faith in the same terms?" No truth can be more axiomatic than that the language of the law of works can never express the mind of God in any matter that is governed by the law of faith. No demonstration can be clearer than that the language of the law of works in the typical economy can never be the voice of the law of faith in the anti-typical. With a due regard to the differences of things, the testimonies of God spoken according to the law of works and to the law of faith, respectively, in the typical economy may be employed to express his mind about the things that are governed by these laws, which belong to the anti-typical. This is a course that should be pursued. But to employ the language of the law of works, belonging to the former economy as the voice of the law of faith proper to the latter, is not dividing the truth rightly, is not interpretation, is not warrantable appropriation; but it is mischievous misinterpretation, it is preposterous confusion, and it is work of which any workman ought to be ashamed.

Some of the best writers on this subject have not quite hit the white on this particular point, respecting these Scriptures. They have said that what was required of the Jews was a natural, as opposed to a supernatural and spiritual, repentance. This is true, but it is only a part of the truth. A Jewish repentance was required. For had they practiced all the social virtues, so long as the temple of Jehovah was neglected, and their hearts were the sanctuaries of idols, they would have been required to repent. Idolatry as much as, perhaps more than, anything else was the ruin of the Jews.

05 Of The law of Works and the Law of Faith

ON THE LAW OF FAITH AND THE LAW OF WORKS AS THEY OBTAIN IN THE CHRISIAN ECONOMY.

CHAPTER V.

BOTH these laws hold a place in this economy, each in its proper and appropriate sphere. If it were desired to fix on any one word as a designation of the design of this economy, salvation perhaps, would be considered the one most eligible. Now salvation is altogether of grace, and, consequently, is wholly provided, bestowed, and enjoyed according to the law of faith. Neither in the acquisition nor in the possession of salvation has the law of works any place whatever.

Salvation is so of grace that it is by no means a due from God to the sinner. As there was no due from the Creator to elevate the un-fallen creature above his original standing, so it is certain that salvation can in no wise be a due to him under his fall, fallen as he is by his own fault. Equally, also, salvation is so of grace that it has never been made the duty of any sinner to save himself, nor to contribute anything in the least degree towards his salvation. From the inception, so to speak, of the design, to the consummation of this chief of the works of the Most High, " Salvation belongeth to the Lord," and is altogether of grace.

It is without doubt that men are "chosen to salvation," and that, therefore, election is an important factor of this great matter. We say, without doubt, advisedly, for it can hardly now be thought worth while to notice those, or the arguments they use, who affect still to deny this Scripture truth. It will, however, be wholly outside of our purpose to say anything about the truth of this doctrine further than that it is taken for granted. But election is of grace. This fact of itself settles the dispute of some whether the act of election proceeded on any foreknowledge of the faith, repentance, and sincere obedience of the chosen. Men, if they are saved by grace, and if election is a constituent element in the business of their salvation, were not chosen to this wonderful deliverance and advancement as a favour, on the ground of any foreseen belief in the Lord Jesus unto righteousness, of repentance toward God, and of sincere obedience to him as of so many duties discharged; for, in the very nature of things, this could not be. If election is by grace, no imaginable discharge of any duty foreseen of God can have prompted, and no failure can have hindered, the act of election in any case. If the foreseeing of the discharge of any supposable duty on the one hand could have led to, or in the slightest degree promoted the act of election in one instance; or, on the other hand, the foreseen failure of any obedience could have prevented it in another, grace would have been wholly excluded. In that case, the principle of faith would have had no place, and that of works would have been the established order. The elect would then have been chosen on account of a due to them according to the law of works. That is, according to this law, they would have been entitled to their election. Can a more egregious absurdity be imagined? The purpose of election comprehended, moreover, the possession of salvation, which, also, like the actual inheritance of Canaan by the Jews, is altogether of grace. "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain" (that is, to the possession of) " salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." The appointment

and the execution are of grace. Had any obedience been prescribed by any precept in order to the possession of salvation, this would have been an introduction of the law of works. Were any such obedience for this object rendered and accepted, possession would be given and taken as a due to those that obey; but this would wholly shut out the law of faith and principle of grace in the actual inheriting of salvation, and establish their precise opposites. But it is certain that, originally, God did not owe it to them that are saved that he should put them in possession of the salvation they inherit; and it is equally certain that they did not owe it to God, by any rule prescribed for this object, to possess themselves of their precious inheritance. The whole is of pure grace, according to the law of faith. God "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works; but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

Redemption, too, is a constituent element of salvation. It is not within our purpose now to discuss the extent of redemption. We simply take it for granted that this great work is in design and merit, and that it will be ultimately in effect, co-extensive with election. Our present business lies in aiming to show, in a word, the relations of grace and faith, to this part of the salvation of God. Briefly stated, the redeemed are ransomed, rescued, and raised. The whole of this work proceeds upon the principle of grace, and according to the law of faith.

Grace is everywhere apparent in the ransom. The Son of Man himself tells us that he came to give his life a ransom for many." The devoting, then, of his life for this purpose was a pure gift, and was, originally in no wise a due from him ; and subsequently, there was not, nor could be, anything acquired by them that are redeemed, which could be of the nature of a due to them. The rescue, like the ransom, is wholly of grace. As God delivered the children of Israel from Egypt by favour according to the law of faith, so he delivers his ransomed ones, their antitype. The type exactly foreshadowed the antitype. God had accepted the title of the Redeemer of Israel, and assumed the responsibility of their redemption purely of favour, and he wrought their deliverance accordingly. "I am come down," said he to Moses, "" to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians;" and" by strength of hand " he brought them out. They did not deliver themselves. They could not. It had never been made their duty. Had this been so, and the duty been discharged, the glory of their deliverance would have been their own. So, also, it has never been made the duty of those that are ransomed by the gift of the life of Christ to rescue themselves. Had this been so, and the duty been discharged, they would owe their rescue to themselves and might claim the glory of it. They would then have " whereof to glory," though not, indeed, before God. That is, they would have something whereof to boast that is righteously due to them as a debt according to law, though not anything that is meritoriously acquired above the requirements of law. Works then, and not faith, would have been the rule of their deliverance. But it is God, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." He bound the strong man armed. He took the prey from the mighty. He delivered the lawful captive. He led his ransomed ones into their inheritance. All is of gift and acceptance. So is the raising. The redeemed that are quickened together with Christ, are, at this present time, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is a higher state than the earthly places in which Adam stood originally. Redemption is more than a restoration. It is more than the restoration of the lost image. The redeemed have borne the image of the earthly; they are raised to bear that of the heavenly. It is more than a restoration of the lost state. Creation gave an earthly state;

redemption gives a heavenly one. All this is of grace. Man in his created state had all that was due from his Creator to a creature possessing his endowments. He was entitled to look for nothing more. He lost all. He became criminal. He deserved to die. Is it supposable that if, in his uprightness and honour he was entitled to look for nothing more as a due from his Creator, that he should have the right to expect something more now under his fall and disgrace? If by the discharge of his natural duty man might not expect an advancement upon his original condition, is it to be imagined that it has been made his duty to advance himself from his fallen state to a higher than his first by obedience rendered according to some law? Yet this is the theology of every one who teaches that it is the duty of the unregenerate to believe with the heart in Christ in order to their elevation to the supernatural standing of those who are redeemed unto God by the blood of his Son.

Justification is another of the essential elements of salvation. Grace and the law of faith wholly obtain in this also. "It is God that justifieth." He devised all and he accomplished all. He admitted and provided the Surety. He wounded and bruised the Substitute for the iniquities of the principals. He discharged and raised and honoured the Surety when the responsibilities of his surety-ship, so far as his substitution was concerned, had been fully met. He bestows the precious blessing of the acquired righteousness upon the ungodly for their justification. He justifies them. They are from first to last." justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Their justification, therefore, was no due from him.

Neither is it a due from men to God that, in whole or in part, they should justify themselves. Men receive this blessing from the Lord, this righteousness from the God of their salvation. They are "justified by faith;" that is, according to the law of faith, the principles of which are giving and receiving as a matter of pure favour on both sides. This is the meaning of the term, " justified by faith," in the Scriptures. This expression is almost universally taken to mean that sinners are justified by their belief; and it is almost as extensively taught that the belief is a duty. Nothing can be more erroneous, and no error more mischievous. Nothing but righteousness justifies, and this is of God. Men "receive the gift of righteousness." By no possible act of his own can a sinner be justified. Sinners, therefore, are not justified by the discharge of any duty. Neither does the discharge of any duty whatever contribute in the slightest degree to their justification. If it had been made the duty of a sinner to believe with the heart unto (that is, in order to) righteousness, justification would then be by the law of works, not by the law of faith. No doubt that sinners blessed with an appreciative and receptive power do believe with the heart unto righteousness, but they discharge no duty in so doing. Cannot those who make it the duty of a sinner to believe with the heart unto righteousness perceive that in so doing they have as much " fallen from grace " as had those who had accepted the doctrine that it was their duty to be circumcised in order to their justification ? Are any so wanting in perspicacity as to be unable to see that the discharge of any duty in order to the enjoyment of any good whatever is altogether alien from the law of faith?

Lastly, regeneration also forms a constituent element of salvation. "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus 3:5. Grace, then, and the law of faith rule here also. God was under no obligation, originally, to regenerate a sinner ; but he does this according to his mercy. Neither was it ever made the duty of a sinner to regenerate himself. If any one imagines this to be a mistake from what God said to Israel by Ezekiel, " Make you a new heart and a new spirit," he has yet to learn to distinguish the law of

works and its use among the Jews, from the law of faith and the place it holds in the economy of grace. But does not the idea of a man regenerating himself represent itself to the mind as nonsense of the broadest type? Because there are mysteries in the religion of Christ, it would seem that there are those who will not hesitate to derive thence, in support of a favourite theory, a divine warrant to propagate the grossest of absurdities and perpetrate the silliest of mummeries, and who will make such follies to belong inherently to the highest manifestation of the wisdom of God. No teacher vents so much nonsense under the guise of mystery, nor contradicts plain truth and himself so flatly and unblushingly—we do not say insincerely—as the ordinary religious instructor. He will often light on two testimonies, each of which, to his mind, contradicts the other. He says that he cannot, and that he is not bound to reconcile them. He affirms that each is true. He believes then both. He demands, often on pain of a terrible retribution, a practical acceptance of the truth of both in his view of their meaning, although this is confessedly self-contradictory, and does not seem to know that the human mind cannot receive, and that it does not come within the range of human powers to act on both testimonies of a contradiction; neither does it appear that he is at all conscious that he is talking folly, *ex cathedra*, on the most momentous of all subjects. What mummery has been perpetrated, and what nonsense uttered about regeneration! Some, having, it is presumed, been so regenerated themselves, regenerate their neighbours by the performance of a religious rite; a rite that is plainly and, indeed, in the judgment of many that still observe it, confessedly without any Scripture authority. Others, having, as it is to be supposed, so regenerated themselves, cry in the ears of all, "Only believe, only believe!" confident, it seems, of the practicability and efficacy of a simple volition to work a radical change in a sinful man's whole moral being. But this great change is the work of God. The very terms by which it is designated in the Scriptures demonstrate this truth. Beside the word regeneration, which is usually employed in speaking and writing to represent this change, it is spoken of as a creation, a resurrection, and a transformation. Is the work represented by such terms as these predicable of a man upon himself, or upon others? To those that know the grace of God in themselves it will ever be an unspeakable joy to see this moral miracle in others; but in periods when multitudes are converted—under extraordinarily exciting conditions, a very natural fear will possess the minds of sober persons that the possibility of a conversion which is purely the work of man, and one that has no basis in regeneration, (which is the sole work of God) will in too many cases prove a fact. To be instrumental in converting a fellow-sinner to Christ is something an angel might covet; but he that persuades to a profession of Christ, any one who is without such Christian principle as is the fruit of the Spirit, tempts a terrible consequence, grave enough to make men and angels weep.

If, then, it was never made the duty of a sinner to regenerate himself, will it not follow that it was never a due from him to produce in himself spiritual faculties? We know, on the highest authority, that, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Ought he to produce in himself this perceptive faculty? If it will not stand with any sane conception of things that a man is obliged to produce in himself a new and supernatural faculty, will it stand nevertheless that it is his duty to exert a new and supernatural act, the enabling faculty for which he does not possess, and which was never a due from him to have? We know on the authority just mentioned, that, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Ought a man, then, to exert that power which is indicated in the words, "Enter into the kingdom"? That is, ought he to act by a faculty which he has not, and which it never was his duty to have? But even if an unregenerate man were under the extraordinary obligations indicated here, would not such a

state of things be wholly subversive of the law of faith in relation to this part of the salvation of God? Would not works be the law in force here?

Substantially the same remarks will apply to every other branch of the salvation of God. Everything contributory to the saving of a sinner yet to be accomplished, after his regeneration, "belongeth unto the Lord." All, therefore, that there is yet to do or to possess, is to be done and possessed; according to the law of faith. Nothing of all to be done or to be possessed is made the duty of the regenerated man to accomplish or to acquire. Unto the consummation of his salvation, "" The just shall live by faith." Eternal life as it is possessed and enjoyed here and hereafter, is purely the gift of God. Whatever, therefore, without him or within him, that is requisite for the preservation and the perseverance of the believer in Christ, is effectually secured to him, and the whole is of grace. Faith, as a law of living, will obtain, and "grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." As grace will complete the whole, so this precious principle will characterize the whole when finished. As the law of works is shut out from everything belonging to the salvation of God here, so it will be hereafter. It may be that there will be degrees in glory, arising from the sovereign pleasure of God. But if there are a proposition that is open to the gravest objections inferior and superior degrees established among the saints in light, among those that are perfectly transformed into the image of Christ, among those that are all one in him, and among the children when they are at home, this difference will not be of works. At best this difference is a very doubtful theory when it is based on the sound principle of divine sovereignty. But they have more than founded a doubtful theory on a sound principle who would give a superior place in heaven to those believers that have rendered a better obedience or a longer service on earth than others. They have conjured up a palpable and mischievous delusion from a false notion. They have made degrees of glory in the salvation of God in heaven to be of the law of works; and they, in effect, teach worms to put on the airs of boasting pride before the throne of the Most High! No terms are too strong to reprehend justly the perniciousness of this detestable doctrine.

Salvation, then, in sum, is the design purposed to be brought to pass by the economy of grace. Salvation in every part of it from beginning to end is so of grace that in nothing is it a due from God to the sinner; and it is so according to the law of faith, as to its appropriation, possession, enjoyment, and all the means necessary thereto, as to exclude all duty necessarily and wholly. From first to last, "" By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."

If these truths are thoroughly digested, it will be no presumption to predict that a complete revolution will follow in not a few minds as to the meaning of the word faith in many of its occurrences in the Scriptures. But the change will be from error to truth; from confusion to clearness. No one that does so digest them when, for instance, he reads again, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," will imagine that "faith" there simply means belief, and that the belief is a duty. But if the law of works has no place in the economy of grace in relation to the purpose and the accomplishment of salvation, it nevertheless holds an important sphere of its own therein. If this law has nothing to do with the saving of sinners, it has a great deal to do with those that are saved.

Moral law is ever in force among moral beings whatever state they may happen to be. It is inconceivable that a man can ever be released from the law which obliges him to love the Lord his God with all his heart, and his neighbour as Himself. It is monstrous to suppose that a Christian is relieved from this obligation. Why should he be? It is cheerfully enough admitted that a regenerated man will be naturally disposed under the, prevailing power of Christian principle to live in conformity with this law; but is it to be supposed that because he is raised to a privileged state, and endowed with a law loving disposition, he is therefore to be freed from obligation. No fallacy could be more egregious. But while it is conceded that a Christian is naturally disposed by the prevailing power of godly principle to love and delight in the law of his God, it is past question that this disposition is often overmastered by another. What Christian is there, save such a one that is blinded by pious pride, that is not found sometimes confessing his faults in the Apostle's language, " For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that I do not ; but what I hate, that do I " ? Does he on any grounds excuse himself for the wrong? Emphatically and indignantly, he will answer, No. And this is just. For independently of his privileged standing, and of his sympathies and antipathies, he experiences that he is, and knows that he must be, under moral law. Whether he likes or dislikes it, whichever of the principles in him that " are contrary the one to the other " may be in the ascendant, a Christian is always bound by divine law to keep the moral commandments of God, and he is subject to an economical penalty for every breach.. If he is instructed in the gospel he will not endeavor to his utmost, with a sense of slavish dread, to observe the precepts of this law with any view to his justification as a sinner before God; but he will try to put forth all his powers to do so with filial sentiments that he may not be prevented by transgression from enjoying communion with his beloved Lord. In case of disobedience, he will not dread the damnation of hell as the penalty of his wrong; but his flesh will tremble for fear of his God, and he will be afraid of the judgments of his displeased Lord. If, on the other hand, his heart is sound in God's statutes, and he has respect to all the commandments binding on him, he will not imagine the proud folly that this economical righteousness forms the matter of his justification as a sinner; but he will experience an un-ashamedness before God, and in his intercourse with his Lord he will lift up his face with confidence. Not only is the law of works in force in the economy of grace respecting moral law, but it obtains also in relation to what is specifically, and may be so designated, Christian law. Precisely the same state of things obtained under the typical economy. The Jews, in common with all men, were under the moral law; but they were also specially bound for particular reasons to observe, what was specifically, Jewish law. There were things to be done by law in the typical economy which, if a properly qualified Jew did not do, the omission would have been to him a sin; but if the same things had been done by a Jew not so qualified, or by a Gentile, the doing would have been a transgression. The antitype answers to the type herein. Some things there are that a Christian by the law of Christ is obliged to do, which if he does not the omission will be to him a sin. Were others that are not Christians to do the same things they would transgress. When the Lord Jesus, said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;" he clearly pointed out a distinction of persons and precepts. He that hath the commandments of Christ. is one that has been brought into relation to him. One that, having found favour, has become a willing subject. One that, having experienced the power of the cross of Christ, has become devotedly attached to his throne. One that, having obtained mercy, is not only willing to render an obedience to his merciful Lord, but is fervently desirous to have some service prescribed to him that by serving he may practically testify his affectionate gratitude. As another can feel none

of these obligations, and have none of these 'sentiments, so neither has he any of these commandments. He that is not a disciple of Christ, is under no obligation to observe specially Christian precepts. More; if an unbeliever practises those things that are specially commanded to believers, he will add presumption to his unbelief. He is ineligible to keep the special precepts of Christ.

Among the commandments of Christ that are specially Christian may be reckoned that confession of him which he requires of his disciples at whatever cost this may be to them as to their worldly substance, their kinsmen and friends, or their life. It is clear that the Lord Jesus bound his disciples to such a confession at whatever sacrifice this might involve ; but it is equally clear that he neither bound nor expects others to do anything of the kind. Indeed, if others imitate Christians herein, they are but imitators, and must be dealt with accordingly. Believers, according to the commandment of Christ, ought to be baptized; but an unbeliever is under no obligation to observe this ordinance. More; no unbeliever ought to be baptized; and no minister of religion who understands the Scriptures, and reveres the authority of Christ, will ever dare, wittingly, to baptize one that believes not. Christians are obliged to keep the feast of the Lord's Supper. "Do this," said the Lord to his disciples, "for my memorial." But if another than a Christian does this, one that has no spiritual power to discern Jesus in the ordinance, he acts presumptuously, he partakes of the sacred symbols unworthily, and becomes "guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord." The new commandment" John 13:34, must be included among those that are specially Christian. Both as to its reason and to its rule, this differs from the old commandment, " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The reason of the old commandment is simply moral ; that of the new is Christian ; that is, the love of Christians to Christians is to be shown for Christ's sake. We say, shown, because this affection is as far superior to mere feeling as is a living energy to an empty utterance of an expression of sentiment. The rule of the old commandment is, " as thyself;" this of the new is, " as I have loved you." In the former case a man's neighbor is to be set on a level with himself; in the latter a Christian is to advance his fellow Christian above, or before himself. Jesus taught his disciples that he that sitteth at meat is greater than he that serveth ; 'I but," said the Lord of all, " I am among you as one that serveth." Answerably to this example, the new commandment must be interpreted as binding Christians to prefer each other in honour; to submit themselves one to another ; each to esteem other better than themselves; and all to make themselves of no reputation, cheerfully to take upon themselves the form of a servant, and in this capacity lovingly to serve their brethren " for Jesus' sake." But more ; Jesus repeated his commandment to his disciples with a very important additional instruction. "This is my commandment, hat ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do what soever I command you." From this, then, it will be seen without doubt, that Christians, if occasion require, " ought to lay down their lives for the brethren." But all this is peculiarly Christian law for Christians. Bound as all men are, independently of belief in Christ, to love their neighbours as themselves, no unbeliever is obliged to love a Christian, as such, more than he is a heathen. If a heathen refuses to prefer in honour a a Christian, as such, before himself, to esteem him better than himself, to submit to him, and to lay down his life for him, he will be a transgressor of no precept under which he is bound; but a default in either of these cases would be chargeable upon a Christian as a breach of the "new commandment." But here a question of considerable importance presents itself, namely, What are the consequences which arise to the Christian from obedience to moral and Christian from obedience to moral and what

from disobedience? In the case of Adam in Eden it may be taken that the maintenance and loss of a right to his standing and life were involved in his obedience or disobedience; and in the case of the Jews in Canaan the retention or the forfeiture of their inheritance. What reward, then, will arise to the Christian from obedience, and what penalty from disobedience? By obedience, even the most perfect that ever was or ever will be rendered, no reward of merit, properly speaking, is acquired. Rewards of merit from God are beyond the reach of men in any state; but rewards of debt are not. If the Divine Sovereign is pleased to give a promise of good upon the principle of works, he makes himself a debtor on the fulfillment of the conditions upon which it was given. When, therefore, God gives the Christian a commandment with promise, and a due obedience is rendered, the good promised becomes a reward of debt. But it ought to be distinctly and constantly held in mind that everything which constitutes salvation itself, and all that may be necessary in order to its being acquired and possessed, are of the Lord; and that absolutely nothing belonging to these was ever made the subject matter of a promise to sinner or to saint, to be fulfilled upon the keeping of any commandment. "For ye are saved by grace, through the faith (of Jesus Christ;) and this (namely, ye are saved, all that is comprehended in the completion of the whole action off the word saved, is) not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not of works, that no man may boast." Ephesians 2:8-9. But if the Christian can contribute absolutely nothing to his salvation by any obedience which he can render, in keeping the commandments of his God and Saviour; he can do much by which he will experience in exact accordance with the law of works, that in a thousand things "there is great reward. Among very many other advantages which might be mentioned, he will enjoy confidence towards God at all times. When he walks in paths of light and pleasantness, and when he walks in darkness and has no light. Not only when, appreciably to himself, all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth; but when, also, the methods of God in his providence and grace are as if his Father were cruel to him. Communion will be another privilege. "If a man love me," said Jesus, "he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." God will walk with that man who walks before him. A good conscience will be another advantage. Before God; though an honest man may stand in the good opinion of all others who know him, it profits him nothing so long as he stands out of his own; but if he stands in his own, this will sustain him even when he may stand out of everyone's else. When the friends of the afflicted man of Uz charged him with wrong, he appealed from them to God, and said to him, "" Thou knowest that I am not wicked." Spiritual fruitfulness will be another advantage. "He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Respecting the penalty of disobedience to Christians, two or three things require to be premised Disobedience is, frequently chargeable upon them. If any Christians say they have no sin they deceive themselves; and if they say they have not sinned, they make God a liar. In many things we offend all, both against moral and against Christian law. Further, God, as King and Father, in his economical dealings with his subjects and children, punishes them for their transgressions; but this punishment, it should be observed; is wholly independent of. And different from the judicial penalty of their sins, which was borne alone by their Surety, when he was wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities. Further, that in all economical punishments God never deals with his children after their sins, nor rewards them, according to, their iniquities Psalms 103:10; but which is wholly unlike the Judicial penalty borne by Christ he ever punishes them less than their faults deserve. Ezra 9:13. `Further, unlike the case of Adam in Eden, and like that of the Jews in Canaan, repentance is admitted to Christian,. For them there is forgiveness with God that

he maybe feared. If they confess their sins, God is faithful and just to forgive them their sins. "If any (Christian) man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." 1 John 2:1. Yet one thing more: just as the Christian contributes nothing to his salvation by his obedience, so he suffers the loss of nothing that constitutes his salvation by his disobedience. Being entirely of the Lord, this great matter exists wholly independently of Christian obedience, and is altogether unharmed by Christian disobedience; and concerning nothing of all that " God doeth," can it be affirmed more completely and confidently than of " the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory," that nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." It is immutably true that, "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Romans 8:29-30. No obedience of man ever formed a link in that wondrous chain of sequences, which Christians can never enough admire, and no disobedience has ever broken, or ever can break one.

What then is the penalty of Christian disobedience? Much, and many things, the barest contemplation of the least of which may well enough fill a Christian with awe, and lead him to say humbly to God, " My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments." But this is a subject which must not be labored here. Briefly, by their faults, churches may lose their purity of doctrine, their spiritual vitality, their moral honour, their "candlestick," and their organic existence. Ministers may build improper materials on the true foundation, and suffer the loss of their reward ; they may make shipwreck concerning the faith ; they may defile the temple of God, and themselves may be defiled by God; (pheirie, phtherei, 1 Corinthians 3:17; that is, God may put them aside as vessels that are unsanctified and unfit for his, the Master's, use, and they may end their days in that condition which, for himself, Paul so earnestly deprecated and so sedulously endeavored to avoid, namely, 0 horrible consummation ! that of a castaway. Christians of every condition, although not condemned with the world, are, nevertheless, judged of the Lord. Although their God Still never suffer his loving kindness and faithfulness to fail, yet if they forsake his law, and walk not in his judgments; if they break his statutes, and keep not his commandments, he will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. If they walk contrary to him, he will walk contrary to them. If they sow to their flesh, they shall of the flesh reap corruption. Pride will lead to destruction. A haughty spirit will be followed by a fall. Covetousness will tend to penury. Envy will be the rottenness of the bones. Wrath will bring strife and drive away peace. A lying tongue will be silenced in shame. The house of the idle will drop through. A backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways. Fleshly lusts indulged will become an army with banners warring against the soul. Sin will separate from communion with God, and make all the means of his grace dry breasts. What God said to Israel by Azariah he says to Christians now: "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." Indeed, over and above all of a like kind recorded in the New Testament, having a due regard to existing differences, almost all the promises and threatening, the reasoning's and the invitations which were delivered to the Jews, not only may, but should be, transferred to Christians. Those were to enjoy their Jewish, these are to enjoy their Christian privileges, by keeping the commandments of God. All those promises, and threatening, and expostulations, and invitations, addressed to the Jews in the typical economy were written, partly, for the learning of Christians. Christians, therefore, should be taught their truth and importance relative to

themselves. But the monstrous blunder and criminal folly already alluded to, namely, the use of the language of the law of works addressed to the Jews as that of the law of faith addressed to men in general, cannot be avoided with a too sedulous care, nor, where it is found, be denounced too strongly, by whomsoever it may be committed, or sanctioned.

06 Of The Beginner and The Perfecter of Faith

OF THE BEGINNER AND THE PERFECTER OF THE FAITH ; THE PROPORTION OF THE FAITH ; THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE FAITH ; AND THE MYSTERY, SHIELD, AND SPIRIT OF THE FAITH.

CHAPTER VI.

IF I may be permitted to urge the importance of the subject as a justification of the lengthened remarks made on the first example of the word faith construed after a noun, perhaps I may excuse myself for the brevity of what may be said on others which it may be felt necessary to notice, from the length of what has been said already.

We have an example of the construction under consideration in Hebrews 12:2, where "faith " is construed after two words which represent, in part, the acquired character of our Lord Jesus. Jesus is here said to be the "Author and the Finisher of the faith"; but as to what is meant there is a considerable divergence of opinion, save that all seem to be of one mind that faith must be understood in a subjective sense.

Respecting the words here rendered Author and Finisher, there ought to be no doubt that the ideas of beginning and perfecting are represented by them, 'With submission, I would rather say Beginner and Perfecter, than Author and Finisher; for, with respect to Finisher, while telein, equally with teleioun, will mean to finish, the latter, the root of the word in question, will signify the perfect quality of the finishing attained. But of what is Jesus here said to be the Beginner and Perfecter? Our version having added the word "our," supplies one answer. On authority so high it is no wonder that this view should have many firm adherents. All, perhaps, of the older English expositors explain according to this opinion. Owen may be taken as a sample. He says that Christ is the Author and the Finisher of our faith by reason "of procurement and real efficiency;" that" he by his death and obedience procured this grace for us." He adds further, "So he is the Author or Beginner of our faith in the efficacious working of it in our hearts by his Spirit; and the Finisher of it in all its effects in liberty, peace and joy, and all the fruits of it in obedience." But however true and pleasing these thoughts about Jesus may be in themselves, it is felt that, when employed to express the mind of the apostle speaking of him as the "Beginner and Perfecter of the faith," they are utterly unsatisfactory.

Another view may be given in the words of Bengel. He says, " By this appellation Jesus is distinguished from all those who are enumerated in chap. xi. He himself is the only matchless example, the only rule and standard of our faith. He is called the Prince and Finisher of faith, because he himself showed faith in the Father from the beginning to the end." For, ourselves, we cannot receive this exposition. Christ an example of trust is the sum of this interpretation; the true one will present him as an object of trust also. Unquestionably he' is an example of trust and of all else that is excellent, and it is equally without doubt that this feature of his character is found in this connection ; but there is also something exhibited to incite confidence as well as to provoke

emulation. And this is needful. Sinful and weak believers, in the struggles and conflicts of their life, require for their encouragement something more than the example of One who was without sin, and who knew no moral weakness. They have more. In their infirmity of purpose and of power against all fighting's without and fears within, they are encouraged to run the race, looking trustfully to Jesus, who giveth power to the faint, and increaseth strength in them that have no might. While compassed about with a whole cloud of witnesses, who have in their day run the same race, won the prize, and have left to all that come after them the benefit of their example, believers have in Christ, the Beginner and Perfecter of the great scheme of favour,' designated" the faith," an object of trust throughout their whole course, to assure them of their perseverance and final success.

Bengel's opinion is shared by other men of name, and among these is Alford; but he goes further. It is true that the remarks by which he conveys his more extended views on perfecting the faith are somewhat perplexed; but we may gather with certainty what, in his judgment, faith itself in this text does not, if we cannot what it does, mean. For, speaking of the faith, he says, " That faith of which we have been speaking through chap.Hebrews 11:1-40and thus, rather the faith than our faith, which latter is so liable to the mistake so often made in English, viz., to be taken as if it were equivalent to faith in us, so that Jesus should be said to be the Author and Finisher of each individual Christian's faith which he has within him." I am very grateful that Dean Alford should lend the weight of his name to correct the very prevalent mistake of which he speaks, and am equally sorry to be unable to receive the rest of his teaching on this text. No doubt the beginning and the perfecting of the individual faith of believers is a great, is a Divine work; but it is devoutly, to be wished that men, especially teachers of religion, will leave off supposing that these great names of Jesus Christ receive a satisfactory interpretation when the beginning and completing of that operation are considered as the sum of their significance. What, then, is the meaning?

Wholly unsanctioned as the opinion may be, and, perhaps, is, by any great name, no other interpretation satisfies my mind than that which makes the words, "The Beginner and the Perfecter of the faith," to represent the official engagements, the responsibilities, and work of Jesus, in connection with that great scheme which has been planned for the salvation of his people, and which here, as frequently elsewhere, is called " the faith." This view I hold to be strongly, corroborated by the terms used in relation to the accomplishment of salvation in chap.Hebrews 2:10. There we are taught that Jesus, as it respects his official character, was made perfect through sufferings ; and we know that the perfecting of his character and the perfecting of his work were contemporaneous, and were, effected by the same means. But what in particular corroborates our judgment of his being the Beginner and the Perfecter of the faith, in the view we take of it, is that the word rendered "Author," in chap.Hebrews 12:2, is the same" as that which 'is rendered "Captain" " in chap.Hebrews 2:10; and the verb rendered " make perfect," in the latter place is the root of the substantive rendered "Finisher" in the former. As we read these Scriptures; therefore, we find the Beginner of salvation perfected through sufferings in chap.Hebrews 2:10; and the Beginner and the Perfecter of the faith in chap.Hebrews 12:2, presented as an object of trust to believers, for their confidence and comfort throughout the whole of their suffering and sorrowing course. If they suffered, their afflictions had been foretold; these were, in the nature of things, a moral certainty, and had been accomplished in their brethren already; nevertheless they had for their consolation, the end of their faith, that of which Christ is the Beginner and Perfecter, which is the salvation of their souls. And "A hope so much divine, May trials well endure." The

point which they were to "consider" respecting Jesus in verse Hebrews 12:3, was not so much an example of excellence in suffering to emulate, as one of fact, the recurrence of which might, in their own case, be looked for with the moral certainty of its coming to pass. For as an infant cannot equal a giant in feats of strength, so it would not sound like the voice of wisdom if some one were heard encouraging a babe to emulate a man in prowess and power. So, therefore, those who "cannot do the things that they would" in the spiritual conflict, because of the lusting of the flesh against the spirit, can hardly be encouraged with any wisdom to equal the example of Him overcoming all opposition, who was "Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;" and who could say of himself, "The prince of this world cometh, but he hath nothing in me." But if Jesus is pointed out to those that are resisting almost to blood striving against sin, as the Beginner and the Perfecter of that grand scheme called faith, which has their salvation for its purpose; and if multitudes, as a cloud of witnesses, are introduced, who have, within the sphere of faith, looked to him trustfully and come off victorious, the heartening will be as forceful for its propriety as it will be pertinent to the occasion.

Let us now pass to a brief consideration of another example of this construction, namely, the proportion or analogy of the faith. When the apostle spoke of "the proportion of (the) faith" in Romans 12:6, he undoubtedly intended the word faith to represent the idea of doctrine. He that prophesies must prophesy according to the proportion of that doctrine; and this is so designated, among other reasons, to distinguish it from that of the law; from that of all other religions; from that of all the different schools of philosophy then existing; and, perhaps, from "that most curious amalgam of Hellenic and Oriental speculation with Jewish superstition, which was afterward called the Gnostic heresy." As "faith" serves to represent the principle on which the salvation of sinners originated proceeds, and will be finished so this word fitly designates the true teaching on this great subject. Therefore, while it maybe possible to imagine a false doctrine, or to give a false interpretation of a Scripture text, which is in harmony with the principle of faith, it will be impossible to imagine a true doctrine of salvation, or to give a true exposition of any Scripture which is not. Any teaching, then, on the subject of salvation, in any one of its many branches, that is not in accord with this principle, can form no part of the doctrine of faith. Any interpretation, moreover, of those Scriptures that relate to salvation which is not in agreement herewith must certainly be erroneous. If it is correct to- says the principle of faith that it represents a good promised, given, and received wholly as a pure favour, the any teaching about salvation-not in analogy with this must be false and so far as it exerts an influence, dishonoring to God, and misleading to men: All teachers of religion, therefore, ought to give the most earnest heed, for many reasons, to the doctrines they teach, and especially that all their teaching about salvation may be according to the proportion of the faith.

While purposing to avoid any argument on the principle of the analogy of faith, as this is generally understood, we cannot but think that this term, as found in Romans 12:6, has been sadly misunderstood. It is simply surprising how pertinacious some writers endeavor to exclude an objective sense from the word faith in almost every instance of its occurrence. Mr. Haldane says here, "They were to speak according to the extent of their information or measure of faith." No teaching to our mind can be more fallacious, and, to dreamy minds, there is little that we can imagine that could be more pernicious. Like some other writers, he makes the measure of faith in verse Romans 12:3, and the analogy of faith here, identical or equivalent in meaning. But is it

consistent with common sense, or with anything else that is suitable to the understanding of testimony, to make measure and analogy mean the same thing whether as identical or equivalent? If the Greek word for analogy may mean proportion, does it, like measure, take this meaning as to absolute extent merely? Does it not most certainly mean a due proportion of one thing in its relation to another? Paul had spoken just before, in verse Romans 12:3, of the measure of faith which God deals to Christian men, as the rule according to which they should esteem themselves. The subjective sense of faith is, undoubtedly, to be taken there. Faith in this sense is itself the gift of God; and not only so, but he deals the measure of the favour to every one as he pleases; and, therefore, it may be observed in passing, it would seem that any teacher of religion must do violence to the truth taught there if he blames any man for not having this precious bestowment, or any Christian for not having it in larger measure. But because a Christian man is to esteem himself in relation to his fellows with soberness, according to the measure of faith which God has of pure favour dealt to him; that he, if he prophesies, and does so according to the proportion of faith, is to be understood as so doing according to the measure of his information and belief, seems to us what one might imagine of the very madness of folly and perversity. As clearly as faith is subjective in verse Romans 12:3, it is objective in verse Romans 12:6. As clearly as the Christian man is taught by what rule within him to esteem himself among his brethren in the former verse, the Christian teacher is taught by what rule without him to prophesy in the latter. Nor is this making of the extent of the teacher's information and belief the rule of his prophesying or teaching a slightly harmful error. According to this doctrine what, for instance, might not mystics teach with authority? Allow a hysterical mystic to prophesy, according to his bent, and to the extent of his information and belief, unchecked by a demand for agreement with the truths of the Word, and what proportions might not his prophesying assume? To what on earth that is sober and true would it be likely to be proportionate? What transcendently mystical notions, what spiritual monstrosities might we not be called upon to regard as the proportion of faith? Perhaps the apostle had in his mind Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Of the several other examples of the construction under consideration, it seems needless, for the present purpose, to mention but one more, namely, "The righteousness which is of faith." Mr. Haldane says, "The righteousness of faith is an elliptical expression, meaning the righteousness which is received by faith." Now there is no doubt that the righteousness of faith is received by believing, but it is an entire mistake to suppose that this is what is meant by that term. When anything is said to be, or to be done, from the principle of faith, or from that of works, believing and working, respectively, will always be supposed; but principle and practice are not identical even when they bear the same name, and they ought never to be confounded. "The righteousness which is of faith," does not mean that righteousness which is received by believing, but that which arises from the principle of faith, in distinction from that which springs from works, Nor is this a distinction without a difference. The righteousness that is of law and that which is of faith are radically different. This truth does not seem to be generally understood. While it appears to be tolerably well known that the principle of works has no place in the righteousness revealed in the gospel, it yet seems to be very commonly supposed that righteousness itself must be pretty much the same thing, whether it arises from the principle of law, or from that of faith. Mr. Haldane, in expressing Romans 10:6-8, While the language of the law is, Do and Live, that righteousness which it demands, and which man is unable to perform, is, according to the gospel, gratuitously communicated through faith." He

makes, it will be seen, the righteousness which the law demands identical with that which, as he says, is gratuitously communicated through faith. Pretty general consent will indeed, accord to the righteousness acquired by the Lord Jesus, from the superior dignity of his person, some notion, more or less vague, of a superiority over that which belonged to Adam in his upright state; but as to their power to justify, they appear to be regarded as identical. They are, however, in fact as different from each other as to their purpose and power as they are in respect to their source and principle. The true distinction between these righteousness's is one of great importance, and one which I do not remember ever to have seen or heard pointed out. Their sources or grounds, severally, are the principle of law and the principle of faith; Romans 10:5-6. The purpose and power of each are as different as the principles from which they spring. Through the righteousness which is of law a man "shall live," verse Romans 10:5; through that which is of faith a sinner "shall be saved," verse Romans 10:9. No theological blunder can be greater than that of representing the terms "shall live," and "shall be saved," as identical or equivalent. It is to the essential distinction, not only between the different sources and principles of these righteousness's, but also between their purposes and powers, that the apostle here directs attention. The righteousness which is of law," (without the article, denoting principle) is thus described by Moses, "That the man which doeth those things shall live by them." That is, in other words, that the righteousness which arises out of the principle of law will serve for the vindication of a man that has not transgressed, but that it will not, from its very nature, be of any avail to make a transgressor righteous. But "the righteousness which is of faith" (without the article, denoting principle,) speaks a different language altogether. This, personified by Paul, with, "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of [the] faith," (the article here denoting the great scheme of favour so designated,) "which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." No man, therefore, that has sinned can ever be justified in the sight of God through the principle of works of law, but only through this righteousness, which is of faith; and this is the distinguishing Excellency of its purpose and power, a sinner even the very chief of sinners, is made righteous, and so fully and for ever justified from all things. In sum, the righteousness which is of law, is, as to its purpose and power, available only to vindicate a man's title to his standing, who has not fallen by transgression; but the righteousness which is of faith, is, according to the word of the faith, designed, and possesses the power to justify the ungodly, and by consequence, to raise the fallen, and to save the lost. It alone belongs to the righteousness of God, revealed in the gospel out of the principle of faith, to justify a sinner.

Two principal reasons are commonly assigned why, now, a man cannot be justified by the righteousness of the law. One of these is man's inability to render a perfect obedience; and, therefore, according to that method there can be no righteousness forthcoming wherewith to justify. This is the interpretation commonly given to Romans 3:20, and Galatians 3:16. Supposing that a perfect obedience were possible, then all, or nearly so, would be at a point that righteousness might still be by the deeds of the law. Few seem to have reached the truth that it is wholly beyond the province and the power of the principle of works of law to justify, a transgressor. Few appear to understand that the province of this principle to justify is limited to law abiding persons, and that its power, from the nature of the thing, cannot be exerted beyond a vindicating their title to what they already have. Most men miss the evident meaning of the apostle, when he says, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." He speaks of the province and power of

the principle: he is interpreted of the practice of the works of law. Nothing can be clearer than that if a man doeth the things of the law he shall live upon the principle of works; but if he transgresses, his life is forfeited; and' in this condition, it is utterly beyond the power of the principle of works to give him life. See Galatians 3:21. The other reason alluded to is, that God has ordained another method than that of works of law for justification. No doubt God has ordained another method to justify, but the true reason why a man shall not be justified by works of law lies deeper than this notion. From this true reason arises the occasion for the introduction of another method of justification; but the reason itself is the nature of the thing. The only righteousness possible upon the principle of works of law is a title to the retention of a given state upon a perfect discharge of duty. If a sinner is to be justified, this must arise out of and proceed upon another principle altogether. On this point interpreters are very unsatisfactory. On the words, "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith," Gal. iii. 8, Alford says, "God justifieth, not merely because the time foreseen was regarded as present, nor in respect of Paul then writing; but because it was God's one way of justification. He never justified in any other." No doubt this has been, and is, God's one way; but it should have been shown that this is his one way of justifying a sinner, not simply as a matter of selection, but from the very nature of the thing. If God is pleased to justify a sinner, it must be by a righteousness that is provided, promised, given, and received altogether of pure favour ; and the "righteousness of faith," answers to all these necessary requirements. A like un satisfaction is found in the Dean's teaching on Romans 3:20. He says the future tense, "shall be justified," implies possibility, but he, nevertheless, affirms that "The apostle does not here say that justification by legal works would be impossible if the law could be wholly kept." Where then, if not here, does the apostle say that justification by legal works is impossible? We have an exactly like saying in Galatians 2:16; "For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified;" and the Dean, speaking for the apostle, says, " It is an axiom in our theology that by the works of the law shall all flesh find no justification." With submission, Paul said nothing of the kind. I will venture to affirm that nothing was further from the apostle's mind than any particular axiom in his theology in distinction from anybody else's. Clearly, what was present to his mind, his distinctive theology apart, was the self-evident truth of what he said from the very nature of the thing. That as all flesh had corrupted its way, by the works of the law all flesh shall find no justification, because this is impossible from the nature of the thing. That the province and power of the principle of works of law cannot, from their nature, extend to a sinner. Would, however, that this truth were an axiom in the theology of all Christian teachers!

Among other examples which may be regarded as belonging to the same class as those now passed under consideration, are the " Mystery of the faith," 1 Timothy 3:9; the " Shield of the faith," Ephesians 6:16; and the " Spirit of the faith," 2 Corinthians 4:13. From what has already been said on the others, it seems unnecessary to dwell at length on these. But I affirm with the utmost confidence, that the mind of God in all these places of his Word can never be understood by those who read and interpret "faith" in them in a subjective sense.

07 Of Faith construed with Prepositions

OF FAITH CONSTRUED WITH PREPOSITIONS.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL consent concedes an objective sense to the word "faith" in some of its occurrences; but whether the concession extends so far as the truth demands is open to some question, and may justly form a subject of further enquiry. Alford, in *Php 3:9*, has laid it down that when *pistis* (faith) occurs in the genitive, and is followed by a genitive article, an objective sense is decisive. Whether he has said as much for the nominative, the dative, and the accusative, I have not observed; but if not, why not? Why should not this be the sense when followed by a nominative, as in *Acts 3:16*? Why not when followed by a dative as in *Galatians 2:16*? And why not when followed by an accusative as in *Acts 20:21*? But as it seems that this enquiry about an objective sense may be facilitated by some observation taken of *pistis* (faith) when it is construed with a preposition, we will take that course, and begin with *ek* (out of.) The first occurrence of this construction is in *Romans 1:17*, where we read, "the righteousness of God, revealed from faith ; " and " The just shall live by faith."

It may be noticed in passing that the apostle is stating the ground of his confidence in the gospel of Christ ; which is that the righteousness of God revealed therein arises out of the same principle as that from which, according to the prophet, the just man lives. He found that the righteousness of God was revealed in the gospel, not according to the law of works, which represents the principle of due and desert, and according to which no sinner can be made righteous; but according to the law of faith, which represents the principle of a good promised, given, and accepted as a pure favour, and according to which through the, mediation of Christ a sinner can be justified. Hence his confidence.

It may not be improper to observe also, that there seems to be a good deal of confusion of thought about living by faith. Imagining that justified by believing is the interpretation of "justified by faith," interpreters suppose also that to live by believing, conveys the sense of the words, "live by faith." Both interpretations are radically faulty. No doubt belief forms a part of what is comprehended in these words, live by faith;" but it is also very certain that here, as in many other places, interpreters have given to the act of believing an importance immensely beyond its due. Have not also some of them been guilty of perversely blindfolding their learning while they have been restricting to the word faith in this, and in some other passages, the meaning of belief? Have they not felt that they were giving to the Greek preposition construed with the word in question a forced sense?

It is most clear that the true meaning is, that the just man lives from, that is, that his life springs out of the principle of faith, which as we have said represents and comprehends a good promised and given and received, as a pure favour The elements of the just man's life are what Christ is made of God unto him, according to this principle. These are "Wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,," and they are living energies within him, making him wise and

righteous and holy and free. As such he lives. He has in his existence the true elements of life. The Christian lives as Christ in the fullness and power of his Mediatorial character lives in him. "I live;" said Paul, Galatians 2:20, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by (in) the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Here "by," though representing a different preposition from that in the quotation we are considering, is a palpable intrusion, and seems to be introduced for the sole purpose of restricting to the word, "faith," the sense of belief. No doubt Paul did believe in the Son of God; but that is not solely, nor mainly, what he meant here. He said that Christ lived in him, and that he lived in the faith of the Son of God; and this is just what he meant. As the former was the wellspring of all that in him was living; so the latter contained him, was the sphere of all his activities, and comprehended all his desires and expectations.

It may be noticed further that we have in this passage, Romans 1:17, three occurrences of the word faith, and therein an example of the difficulty, of which mention has been made, of knowing its meaning, in some instances, with certainty. Alternative meanings are a favorite resort of some interpreters when a difficulty presents itself. It may mean this, that, or the other. Any one of these will suit the context. All are in conformity with what is received as the truth. Take which you please; or, if it likes you, take all. But this is not interpretation. It is a putting on the fair face of Scripture testimony a nose of wax, and giving to whim liberty to use her plastic fingers to shape the form just as her humor may direct. Every word of God means something definite; and this is what is desired to be known and taught.

It is painful to impugn the critical judgment of men who have justly entitled themselves, as expositors of the Gospel, to the highest respect which one man ought to feel towards and to pay to another; but fidelity to the truth of God must override all considerations of deference to our fellow men. Verbiage more puerile than is much of what has been written on the words, "from faith to faith," in the passage now under consideration, has never, perhaps, had accorded to it the dignity of critical interpretation. But, taking it for granted that the mere mention of some of the absurdities advanced will be sufficient for their refutation, we will only say that these words do not mean from the faith of God to the faith of man, whatever significations may be given to the terms, faith of God and faith of man; nor from the faith of preachers to that of bearers, nor from the faith of the Old to that of the New Testament saints ; nor from the faith of the Jew to that of the Gentile ; nor from a lower to a higher degree of faith in the same person. Mr. Haldane has got very near to, but has not quite hit the sense. He says, "The meaning, then, is the righteousness which is by faith, namely, which is received by faith, is revealed to faith, or, in order to be believed." No doubt the words "to faith" mean in order to be believed; but the words, "the righteousness of God revealed from faith," do not mean the righteousness which is received by faith, that is, by belief. The preposition (ek) "from," clearly points to an originating principle, in the word it governs, out of which arises the righteousness that is revealed. This principle is designated faith. According to this principle, which is that of a good promised, and given, and accepted, wholly as a pure favour, the righteousness of God is revealed to (eis) faith, that is, in order to be believed. Borrowing the thought from the expression of the apostle in Ephesians 2:9, "Not of works," we have a key that will open this lock with the greatest facility, and one which any person of the humblest capacity may use with complete satisfaction to himself. By putting the case before the eye in a sense precisely opposite, we shall bring the meaning within the comprehension of a child.

Let it be supposed, then, that the righteousness of God, revealed in the Gospel, was made known as arising from the same principle as the righteousness of Adam in Eden, and that of the Jews in Canaan, the passage would then read thus : Therein the righteousness of God is revealed from works to works. That is, it is revealed as originating from the principle of works in order to works. The reverse of this is exactly the apostle's meaning. The righteousness is revealed according to the law of faith, in order to faith; not according to the law of works, in order to works. This agrees with the prophet's testimony, "The just shall live from faith." This gives a solid ground of confidence in the Gospel of Christ. On the next occasion the apostle quoted this testimony of the prophet Galatians 3:11, he introduced it to disprove the notion that a man is justified by law. His words are, "But that no man is justified by law (without the article) in the sight of God, it is evident; for the just shall live by [from] faith; and law (without the article) is not of faith." Here, then, we have again law and faith as two distinct and opposite principles, or laws of living, presented to us. In the case of these Galatians it would seem that they had been taught to understand and conform to the law of works as the rule of their justification in the Jewish sense. That is, that they must render obedience to the Mosaic as well as to the moral law. Those of them, therefore, that had been converted from heathenism submitted to circumcision, and they, with those that had been converted from Judaism, observed days, and months, and times, and years ; and, indeed, seem to have conformed to the Jewish ritual very generally. The manners showed the men. They had ' I fallen from grace " in practice, and, therefore, in principle. They had abandoned the law according to which righteousness is a gift to be received, and had adopted that according to which a man is justified by a due that he has deserved, which, "in the sight of God," is impossible to a sinner.

Alas, that there are so many like them now! How many that bear the Christian name have yet to learn that law does not spring from the principle of faith, and that a man is not justified from the principle of works! How many that teach, and that are taught, in this matter are as the blind leading the blind! How many are taught to make their peace with God! How many, if not under the Jewish ritual, are, nevertheless, under some other almost as burdensome and quite as unprofitable, labouring in vain to acquire for themselves an acceptance with God! How many are there that do not yet understand that the discharge of the least duty in the matter of justification, either in its acquisition or in its appropriation, would be the creation of a desert, and, therefore, would be fatal to the law of faith, according to which only a sinner can be justified ! On the third and last occasion the apostle quotes this testimony Hebrews 10:38, his object seems to have been to give the Hebrew saints, in their tribulations for Christ's sake, a mark to distinguish a true believer from a nominal one, and to encourage their confidence under their afflictions. Against all opposition, and under all oppression and persecution for Christ's sake, the apostle assured them, and he assures all others, that "The just shall live from faith." Apostates, he suggests, there have been and will be; and he declares that the soul of God will have no pleasure in them. When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and 'by all that are not supported by the principle of faith will be offended. Having started on the principle of works, and having this only for the mainspring of their action, the source of their consolation, and the assurance of their success, they soon act accordingly; they strike their colours, turn their backs from fear, and decline to destruction." But we," lie says, " are men of faith." This distinguished and precious principle is the source of our life. This is in us an unfailing energy, ever supplying a vital activity; this is a wellspring of strong consolation under the direst calamities suffered for the truth's sake. Every person of the Godhead is in this pledged and employed on our behalf, and we have herein a divine

security for the salvation of our souls.

We take it, then, that every earnest student of the truth must arrive at the conclusion, however this may be at variance with the commonly received interpretation, that in all the three instances in which the apostle has quoted the words of the prophet, "The just shall live by faith," it is not the power nor the act of believing merely that is to be understood by the word faith; but the whole principle so designated, in opposition to that of works. About Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11, it is inconceivable how any other conclusion could have sustained itself in credit for a moment in a reflecting mind; while Hebrews 10:38, appears to bear this meaning only a little less clearly at first sight. But I am not only persuaded that this is the meaning of the word in these instances, I am equally convinced that the same sense belongs to it in Hebrews 11:1-40 throughout. If by expressing this judgment I should earn for myself an unenviable distinction, I must bear obloquy with what grace I may, consoling myself with the recollection that public opinion has sometimes mistaken wisdom for foolishness; and, on matured thoughts has changed its mind. However this may be, it is certain that whatever is the meaning of the word in the last two verses of chap. Hebrews 10:1-39, the same must belong to it from beginning to end of chap. Hebrews 11:1-40.

According to my judgment, then, we have in chap. Hebrews 11:1, not an explanation of the nature of belief, but of the practical effect of the principle of faith on the believer's mind. Upon this principle the believer has a perfect persuasion of things hoped for, and a demonstration of things not seen, of which he has the testimony in the word of faith. Upon this principle these things come to have an assured existence in his mind, and he possesses them by anticipation. Upon no other principle could there be such results respecting these things, hoped for and not seen. Upon the principle of works, which the apostle had mentioned and still carried in his own and his reader's thoughts, all would be uncertainty and doubt, and these would lead to their natural consequences in time of trial. Instead of a noble resistance, there would be a faltering and a drawing back.

How the apostle would have explained the practical effect of the principle of works in relation to things hoped for and not seen, it would be presumptuous to say; but we may be allowed to suppose, guided by his exposition of that of faith, that it might be in some such terms as these: Now work is the uncertainty (distasis), the opposite of (hypostasis, substantiation) of things hoped for, the problem (problema), that is, in its figurative sense, namely, in our meaning of problem, the opposite of (elenchos, demonstration) of things not seen. By this we should understand him to mean that the principle of works which puts all the good it embraces into a man's possession by the exertion of his own energies in fulfillment of certain required conditions, must have the practical effect of uncertainty in his mind, and this a leading to a faltering in his life. Whereas, on the other hand, as he teaches us, the principle of faith, which puts all the good it embraces into a man's possession as a thing of favour by the power of God, may well, and ought to have, the practical effect of certainty of mind, and this a leading to a constancy of life.

Moreover, that the word bears our meaning here is further confirmed by the design of the apostle throughout this connection. What was his design? Evidently it was to encourage these Hebrews, suffering for the truth's sake, not to cast away their confidence. In prosecuting this purpose he, in chap. Hebrews 10:23, encouraged them to hold fast their profession without wavering, from considerations of the faithfulness of God; in verses Hebrews 10:6-31, by the fearfulness of

apostasy from the truth ; and in verses Hebrews 10:32-34, by the remembrance of what they had so nobly endured heretofore, and of their taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods on the knowledge they had of having in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Having brought these things under review he, in verse Hebrews 10:35, earnestly heartens them not to cast away their confidence on account of its recompense of reward. In verses Hebrews 10:36-37, he admits their need of patience, but assures them of the timely interference of God. Then, in verses Hebrews 10:38-39, as we have seen, he draws their attention to that great principle which is the source of the just man's life, an unfeeling energy within him, and a fountain of comfort to him. In chap. Hebrews 11:1, he is still speaking for their encouragement. There is not the slightest break in his discourse. He did not take an extraordinary jump from a subject so thoroughly practical as that of comforting believers in their reproaches, losses, and afflictions, to one so recondite as a metaphysical disquisition on the nature of belief, or of what is commonly called justifying faith. Nay, but still pursuing his course, he taught these sufferers the practical effect of the principle to which he had drawn their attention immediately before and afterward drew to the end of the chapter, and he confirmed this, his teaching, by bringing a cloud of witnesses to testify to its truth by their example. Nor is this subject discontinued until the end of chap. Hebrews 12:1-29.

Dr. Owen says, "The subject spoken of." that is, in chap. Hebrews 11:1 "is faith ; that faith whereby the just doth live ; that is faith divine, supernatural, justifying and saving, the faith of God's elect, the faith that is not of ourselves, that is of the operation of God, wherewith all true believers are endowed from above." So far as we know, the older interpreters are, substantially, of one mind with the learned doctor, But will the apostle's examples throughout warrant this notion? If this opinion breaks down in one of these examples, will it not justly prejudice it relative to the whole ? Now while there can be no reasonable doubt that all those that are mentioned by name in this chapter, and many of those that are not, were believers in Christ by a supernatural faculty given to them, is it imaginable that all that are spoken of here, as supposed to do something by believing were such ? Does not this notion, upon any reasonable interpretation of it, utterly break down at verses Hebrews 11:29-30? Surely there can be no doubt. But let the word be explained as the principle of faith, and there is no difficulty whatever.

Again, however slight at first sight the force of any argument that may be founded on the word "with out," in verse Hebrews 11:6, may appear to be, we are mistaken if, on consideration, there is not therein alone power enough to overturn the commonly accepted interpretation of faith in this connection. Nothing can be clearer than that "without" here is understood in the sense of not having. Neither, indeed, can it be otherwise understood if "faith" is to be considered as that particular faculty or power, so called, which is the gift of God, and is of the operation of God. But to understand " faith " here in this sense, requires the word (choris) which is rendered " without," to take a meaning which none of the lexicons give to it, and which it does not receive in all New Testament usage. Nowhere else in the New Testament where this word is used can it take the meaning of not having, and we have the utmost confidence that it cannot take this sense here. We do not say that charts does not mean "without;" but we do say that without must not, as its representative, be understood as not having. For not having, we should require (me echonta); just as in Ephesians 2:12, for " having no hope," in the subjective sense, we have (elpida me echontes). "Without " here can only be rightly understood as apart from, namely, a principle. Just, indeed, as it must be understood in "without law," (without the article,) in Romans 3:21; "without

works of law," (without the article,) in verse Romans 3:28; and " without works," in chap. Romans 4:6. Under the fall, and apart from the principle of faith, though as holy as Enoch, it is impossible for any man to please God. Now, all men being in the condition consequent upon having sinned, to him that cometh to God it is necessary that he should not only believe that God is, but that he has also BECOME (ginetai,) a Rewarder of those that diligently seek him. A consummation this, in a world of sinners, respecting the blessings of justification and salvation, that could only be possible upon the principle of faith.

But, further, there is a fact relative to the use of (choris), (without,) which has a most important, a decisive, bearing on the interpretation of "faith " in this passage: namely, No noun when preceded by (choris) ever takes a subjective sense, but always an objective. At least, this is so in all New Testament use. Everyone who perceives the force of this fact will apprehend that, if what is here stated is so, there is an end to all dispute about the commonly accepted meaning of "faith" in Hebrews 11:1-40, however confidently this may have been accepted, or widely, or long. It would be easy, by a reference to the opinion of some great man, or by a brush remark, to brush aside, easier far than to confute, the argument for an objective sense of "faith" here, founded on this, it may be thought, unimportant word ; but the more thoroughly this matter is investigated, if ingenuously, I am confident that the more conclusively will it appear that the opinion generally held about " faith " in the whole of this passage is a mistaken one. In the greater number of the occurrences of the word (choris), my assertion will be undisputed; but there are three or four places where this word is found which may, at first sight, beget a doubt of the soundness of my position. One of these is Php 2:14; " Do all things without murmurings and disputing." But outward expressions of dissatisfaction or displeasure must be the interpretation of murmurings here, and, indeed, everywhere else, not inward repining. Not sentiment is intended, but action. Paul says, in effect, Do all things to one another and to all men, after the' example of the meek and lowly One, without muttering any expressions of dissatisfaction or displeasure. We have, indeed, a subjective sense given to the word (goggusmos, murmuring,) in 1 Peter 4:9, "Use hospitality without grudging." Alford, however, rejects "grudging," and retains " murmuring." But granting, which, however, I do not, that (goggusmos) may receive a subjective sense here, the argument about (choris) will not be affected ; for Peter does not use this word, but aneu. The explanation given by Trench (Authorized Version of New Testament, p. 21), is, however, no doubt, the true one. " (Grudge)," he tells us, had formerly, but has not now, the sense of murmur; and that, having lost this signification, "It no longer conveys to us with accuracy the meaning of the original " in 1 Peter 4:9. Respecting (dialogosmon), (disputing,) Paul must be understood, as Alford decides, to have exhorted the Philippians 'to avoid disputing with men, not doubts in themselves.

Another of these places is 1 Timothy 2:8, " I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting," But (choris), (without,) retains here its true sense of separate from, requiring the meaning and conveying the idea, as Conybeare puts it, of an actual putting away of wrath and disputation; not the not having of wrath and doubt in the mind.

"Without preferring one before another," in 1 Timothy 5:21, must not be understood in the sense of not having the sentiment of prejudice ; but apart from any act or appearance of preference. The only other place which seems to call for notice is Hebrews 12:14, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." What calls for remark here is the word "holiness." Little, however, requires to be added to Alford's observation. ("Agiosmos,") he says, " is

not equivalent to {agiotēs}, but is the putting on of it and becoming (agioi)." That is, that {agiosmos}, (sanctification,) the word used here, is not equivalent to (agiotēs), (holiness,) but that sanctification is the putting on of holiness and a becoming practically holy; and that, apart from following peace with all men, and the putting on of holiness, no man shall see the Lord.

Duly considered, it will clearly appear that a local sense belongs to (choris), (without,) when it is construed before nouns and pronouns; and that, in the place under consideration, it answers exactly to the true local meaning of en, (in,) as its opposite. {Choris pisteos}, in Hebrews 11:6, (apart from faith,) is the precise local contrast of en tauter, (in this, that is, (pistei), faith, in verse Hebrews 11:2. We have a strikingly like example of the words en and (choris) in John 15:5. "He that abideth (en emoi) in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit for (choris emou) without me ye can do nothing." Apart from the true local sense of these two words, it is impossible to understand the mind of the writer in either of these passages. What the apostle means in Hebrews 11:2, clearly is, In this, that is, in this faith, locally considered, as the sphere of their life, the elders were testified of, or, had a good report. So, on the other hand, in verse Hebrews 11:6, he as clearly means that the man who is apart from faith, objectively considered as a law of living between him and his Maker, and as the sphere of his life, he, being a sinner, cannot please God. The only real difficulty in the way of our interpretation lies in verse 3. But truth has ever prevailed over difficulty, and it will overcome in this instance. Now it must be noticed that it is supposed that "faith" here means belief, and "" worlds " the material universe. On this supposition the general opinion rests. This sense of " worlds " here is necessary to sustain the meaning usually given to " faith." "Worlds" must mean the material universe, because "faith" must mean belief. So it is thought. I doubt. Let us see.

It affords me a real satisfaction to be able to avail myself in this matter of the learning of one whose authority respecting the meaning of the word rendered " worlds " is beyond dispute ; and the pleasure is even increased by the fact that he falls in with the general opinion of " faith " and " worlds " in this passage. While, therefore, his general teaching on the word translated "worlds" is received with docility and gratitude, his interpretation of Hebrews 11:8, is disputed with the earnestness of conviction in a matter of great importance.

Archbishop Trench in his most interesting and valuable Synonyms of the New Testament, Sect. lix., discriminating between kosmos and aion, says, "The first of these words our translators have rendered 'world' in every instance but one¹ Peter 3:3; the second often, though by no means invariably so; for (not to speak of (eis aiona) see Ephesians 2:2,7; Colossians 1:26. It may be a question whether we might not have made more use of 'age' in our version: we have employed it but rarely-only, indeed, in the two places which I have cited last. "Age" may sound to us inadequate now; but it is quite possible that, so used, it would, little by little, have expanded and adapted itself to the larger meaning of the word for which it stood. One must regret that, by this or some other like device, our translators did not mark the difference between (kosmos), the world contemplated under aspects of space, and (aion), the same contemplated under aspects of time."

Further on, speaking of (aion), he says, " Like (kosmos) it has a primary and physical, and then, super induced on this, a secondary and ethical, sense. In its primary, it signifies time, short or long, in its unbroken duration; but essentially time as the condition under which all created things exist, and the measure of their existence." Here he cites a passage from Theodoret, which may be

rendered, thus: Aion is not anything material, but an imaginary something which ever accompanies things that have a created nature. For it is called (aion), from its being the interval that exists from the constitution until the consummation of the (kosmos) world. Aion, therefore, is the time that is inseparably yoked with nature by the Creator." A little further on, speaking of Ephesians 2:2, the Archbishop says, "The last is a particularly interesting passage, for in it both the words which we are discriminating occur together. Bengel excellently remarking: (we give the translation of Bengel by Bryce,) Aion and kosmos differ ; 1 Corinthians 2:6,12; 3:18-19. The former regulates the latter, and in a manner gives it form; kosmos is something more, external; aion something more subtle and internal in its character.' "

After adding more that is interesting of the ethical meaning of aion, the Archbishop has made a most important admission to which it will be necessary to call attention. He says, "It must be freely admitted that there are two passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews which will not range themselves, according to the distinction here drawn between aion and kosmos, namely, Hebrews 1:2, and Hebrews 11:3. In both of these aiones are the worlds contemplated, if not entirely, yet beyond question, mainly, under other aspects than those of time. Some indeed, especially modern Socinian expositors, though not without forerunners who had no such motives as theirs, have attempted to explain atones at Hebrews 1:2, as the successive dispensations, the chronoi and kairoi of the divine economy. But however plausible this explanation might have been if this verse had stood alone, Hebrews 11:3 is decisive that the aiones in both passages can, only be, as we have rendered it, 'the worlds,' and not 'the ages.' " This is a stupendous admission, and one that ought not to have been made except on sufficient grounds. No grounds but a necessity ought to be considered sufficient. Are we, then, shut up to this admission by a necessity? If so, what forms the necessity? We suspect, and of this there can be no doubt, that it is the commonly accepted divinity of the passage which required the Archbishop's admission, and necessitated his philology to be thumb screwed into compliance. Just because faith here, from a foregone conclusion, must mean belief, aion must mean the material universe. But, on consideration, it will be evident as demonstration that faith here must be understood in the same sense which it takes in the quotation from the prophet in chap. Hebrews 10:38; and we think we have succeeded to put it past question, that there it does not mean the power and exercise of believing, but the principle of faith in opposition to that of, works. Let faith, then, take this, its true sense here, and the necessity to do violence to the learned prelate's philology, and of investing aion with a new and before unheard of signification, will at once utterly disappear. Is it not a prejudice against any interpretation of a text when one of its most important words is forced to take a wholly new meaning in order to sustain the correctness of the exposition? Now this is just the case here. Not only is an important word of a text required to take an unusual sense to support an interpretation, but a meaning is forced upon it that is wholly unknown to it elsewhere. According to the Archbishop and a more competent philological authority, we suppose, does not exist the history of this word affords no instance of its taking the meaning of the material universe until it was, as he says, but we deny, employed in this sense by the apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews. But neither is this all. Another principal word in the text must be made to take a wholly new meaning in order to support the accepted interpretation of "faith "in this connection. Philology must be yet further humbled and coerced to sustain the received theology of this passage. That must submit, because this is established. Yea, with a confidence so nearly universal and completely unquestioning is the latter received, that not to acquiesce in it one may well fear being put outside the pale of rational beings, and, if mentioned

at all, spoken of only in such terms as might be suggested by pity or by scorn. Be this as it may, however, we do doubt, and for this further reason. The word rendered "framed" in verse Hebrews 11:3 never takes the meaning of create, or make, in the creative sense, throughout the New Testament, and ought not to have this signification forced upon it here. In every instance in the New Testament where mention is made of creation, the word *ktirein*, *poieih*, and *genesthai*, with their derivatives are constantly employed; *katartizein*, the word used here, never. It is surprising that the received theology of this context, in view of the facts we have brought to notice, seems never to have been questioned. Nothing, however, can be more clear to our mind than that the accepted exposition of the word faith in this text and connection, when tested by the philology of its own learned advocates, by logic, by the scope of the writer, and by the application of the doctrine taught throughout the passage, wholly fails. No exposition of any word under such conditions can be sustained. In prosecuting our enquiry into this part of our subject yet another step or two, by a further reference to this passage, we do so under a serious conviction of many years' standing, that there is scarcely a more important word employed in the Scriptures, and hardly one that is more ill understood, not to say misunderstood, than is faith. Perhaps, indeed, it may well be doubted whether so much extravagant folly is blurted out in our pulpits on any subject as on believing; or whether there is throughout the whole field of religious literature more unlearned and learned nonsense written about anything than there is about faith.

It must be clear to all that read the original text that the preposition *en* (in,) is to be understood as governing *pistis* (faith) in every instance in which this word is put in the dative case throughout Hebrews 1:1-13:25: Should any doubt this, (*en tautei*) (in this,) inverse Hebrews 11:2, ought to remove all hesitation. Now all our instructors teach us that the primary sense of this preposition is in, within, contained within. From this primary meaning proceed, in the most natural manner, two distinct significations; one, the speck way or means of performing an action; the other, the particular sphere within which an action takes place. It is in the former of these significations that this preposition is accepted so generally, and attended with so much mistake, throughout this connection. "By faith," therefore, instead of in faith has become the rendering, and the interpretation has followed accordingly. By believing, therefore, it is said, by many, have all these wonderful things been done. Others," more hesitating, have felt it to be necessary that there should be distinctions made between efficient and instrumental causes, and upon this subject they have expended some learning; while some of these have at length told us that, properly speaking, faith, that is, in the sense of belief, is not a cause at all: All this seems to arise from, and proceed upon the' fundamental mistake about the meaning of faith here, which has been already pointed out. If faith, in chap. Hebrews 11:1-40, takes the sense belonging to it in the quotation from the prophet, in chap. Hebrews 10:38, as it ought to do, and must do, to be rightly understood, it will then be seen that *en pistei* is not to be taken as the means by which, but as the sphere in which something has been done. Harmony will then reign throughout, and difficulty vanishes. All these things that are here predicated of faith, will then have been done within the sphere of, and in accord with the principle of faith, instead of by believing; a notion that, to be tolerated in the mind at all, needs no end of conciliatory explanation; and after all, at its best, it leaves a strong sense of un-satisfaction, not to say dissatisfaction.

Once more: the generally accepted interpretation of faith in verse Hebrews 11:3, seems also to be logically faulty. "Through faith, we understand," &c., it is usually said; but is faith, or believing, the

ground or the means of our understanding? Do we believe in order to understand? Again we doubt. This notion appears to us to be neither good logic nor good divinity. Rather, as it seems to us, we require to understand, in order to believe. Is not the Word of God, as such, received by the understanding on evidence? Need we to be possessed of justifying faith, as this is called here, in order to receive the testimony of God in his Word? Is this justifying faith requisite for us in order to receive God's testimony of fact, respecting the creation of the material universe? Are those that reject God's account of the creation excusable because they have not this so-called justifying faith? Moreover, would any man be able to believe this, who possesses justifying faith, if he did not first understand that it was so from God's testimony? We will take it that each of these questions will suggest with unfailing certainty its own appropriate answer, and that this will be a sufficient refutation of the accepted reasoning on this subject. Happily for the logical credit of the apostle in this matter, we have, in Romans 10:14, an example directly to the point. He there says, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" But it surely does not require proof that a man cannot believe, nor believe in, that of which he has no knowledge. Good Sibbes says, "Faith is an understanding grace; it knows whom it trusts, and for what, and on what grounds it trusts." By a figure of speech, this is beautifully true. Spoken of a believer, it would be true without a figure. Paul, too, knew whom he believed. Having now conducted our enquiry into the acceptableness of the accepted interpretation of faith in this connection to a point where it conclusively appears that it can only be retained upon such terms as the scope of the writer being ignored, philology being again and again violated, divinity making no end of conciliatory explanations, and logic being humbled, we may very well take our leave of it. From the length to which the foregoing observations have been extended, our remaining remarks on *pistes* (faith) construed with *ek* (out of) must be brief. This construction occurs several times in connection with justifying. In Romans 3:30, we have "Justify the circumcision by faith." In Romans 5:1, "Being justified by faith." In Galatians 2:16, "We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ." In Galatians 3:8, "Justify the heathen through faith." And in Galatians 3:24, "Justified by faith." Neither *by* nor *through* at all represents the preposition employed by the apostle, and both are evidently used to sustain the mistaken sense of belief in "faith" which is so commonly accepted. Sinners believe with the heart in order to righteousness, but they are never said, and never can be said to be justified *ek* (out of) believing. In every one of the instances quoted, the self-same idea is found. It is the idea of a principle, ground, or source, that is distinguished from another and a totally different one, out of which a certain proceeding springs, and is completed. Were any argument needed to confirm this view, nothing more could be required beyond what is found in the quotation from Galatians 2:16. Knowing from the divine testimony that a man is not justified from works of law, but through the faith of Jesus Christ, "Even we," says the apostle, "have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified from the faith of Christ." Can any man fail to see that the believing of the apostles and the faith of Christ are two broadly distinguished and plainly distinct things? Just as the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel to be from the principle of faith, (which is of free gift from pure favour), in order to belief, (which is the simple reception of the benefit bestowed), so the apostles renounced the principle of works, and became obedient to that of faith. To sustain the common interpretation, namely, justification by believing, in whichever of the senses this term may be commonly understood, the apostle's words, in Galatians 2:16, should run thus: Even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we

might be just fed from the belief of Christ. According to this rendering of his words we should, indeed, understand him to mean that the justification of himself and his brethren arose out of and was owing to the act of their believing in Christ. But would this be a right rendering? Would this be what the writer intended to convey? Is there a syllable of such teaching to be found in the Book of God? Is anything like this known in the experience of the godly? Can a sinner's justification arise out of and be owing to his believing in Christ in the nature of the thing'?

It seems to be thought that believing, under grace, must not only supplant working, under works, but that the former is just a substitute for the latter; that is, that believing is introduced into the place of working to accomplish the same thing by a different method. That as, according to the principle of works, a man was to justify himself by working, so, according to the principle of faith, a man is to justify himself by believing. That as righteousness in the former case arose out of a perfect working, so, in the latter, the same thing is to arise out of and to be owing to a certain distinguished act of believing, which has commonly been designated a justifying faith, in distinction from some others which do not, it is said, possess this peculiar excellence. So that, in either case, or in both, a man's justification is, in fact, to arise out of and to be owing to his own act, whether of working or believing. But are these things so? Upon the principle of works the working, if perfect, made the man's righteousness; but does believing, upon the principle of faith, do this even when this act takes its most perfect form? If not, will it not appear, then, that the province and power of believing are altogether different from those of working? When a man works in order to righteousness it is to make or maintain it; but when he believes in order to righteousness there is nothing of the kind in his thoughts or intentions. When a man ceases working and commences believing in order to righteousness, he renounces the principle of works and acquiesces in that of faith, and he looks, not to make a righteousness for himself, but to receive one of the Lord, and so to be made righteous ; that is, to be "justified freely by his grace." In every view of it, the notion of a sinner being justified out of his own act of believing is a pure fallacy. True, there are many who attribute no justifying virtue to believing, although they speak of a justifying faith. But, why then, in the sense of believing, speak of faith as justifying at all, if believing does not justify? Justifying faith is a wholly unscriptural term; in the sense of believing it is susceptible of no true interpretation, it expresses very badly the most harmless of its accepted meanings, it is in a high degree misleading on a most important subject, and it would be every way well if it fell into disuse. Unscriptural and misleading as this term is, there can be little doubt, however, that it has arisen from the scriptural one, "justified by faith;" still it nevertheless owes its existence to the fundamental mistake, in the interpretation of the words whence it arises, of confounding principle and practice. Moreover, there is no just ground to doubt that in every instance, without exception, in which Paul speaks of " works," of " works of law," and of " faith," in connection with justification, principle is intended and not practice ; and there is as little ground to question that he is almost universally interpreted as speaking of practice and not principle. Whoever so mistakes the apostle's meaning can never understand his teaching on this great subject until the error is corrected. Let the matter be well weighed, and it will most evidently appear that as justified by believing cannot be the meaning of "justified (ek pisteos) from faith," in the quotation from Galatians 2:16, so neither is it in any one of the others. No doubt the faith of Christ implies a believing in him. Each of these, indeed, will always imply the other; but one is not the other, and they ought never to be confounded.

We have other examples of this construction and meaning in the term Righteousness which is of faith " found in Romans 9:30,6. This term does not at all mean that men are justified from believing, as has been already said, and it means very much more than that men believe in order to righteousness. The righteousness, which is of faith, is just that element of God's salvation which is essential to the justification of sinners. As it is the righteousness of faith, it is to be understood as springing out of that principle which is so designated, and which is everywhere opposed in the Scriptures-to that which bears the character and name of works.

In Romans 3:26, we have another example. As nothing can more decisively show, so nothing, perhaps, has contributed more strongly to give, the bias of general opinion in favour of belief for faith, than what we find here. "Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus " we read ; "Justifier of him that is of the faith of Jesus " is what Paul said, But where lies the difference ?

Just here. Paul speaks of the faith of Jesus, and men interpret this of the belief of believers. Hence so much mistake and misleading on this subject. No doubt they who are of the faith of Jesus are believers on him ; but these things are very far from being identical, and the terms from being interchangeable, and their difference is important. What the apostle teaches here is, that there are some men who are of the works of law, and others who are of the faith of Jesus. That not one individual who is of the works of law shall be justified before God; verse Romans 3:20. That the righteousness of God, which is brought to pass through that wondrous scheme of faith which has Christ for its Beginner and Perfecter, is manifested as being unto and upon all them that believe. That, according to this scheme, sinners are justified freely by grace, on account of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. That God set forth his Son, through means of this scheme of faith, as a propitiation by his blood, in order to the manifestation of his righteousness, that he might appear to be just, and made known to be the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus. It is not said here that God is the justifier of the sinner who believes in Jesus, but of him who is already of the faith of Jesus, as opposed to them who are of the works of law.

Another example is found in the term "of faith," without the addition of the distinctive designation "of Jesus," but inclusive of it. This may be found in Galatians 3:7, " They which are of faith;" and again, in verse Galatians 3:9, "They which be of faith." No doubt these are believers; but that is not what is asserted and taught here. What is taught is, that these persons are discriminated as belonging to a certain class that adheres to a particular principle in religion, which is designated by the word "faith," or the term "faith of Jesus."

So, again, when the apostle tells us " The law is not of faith," Galatians 3:12; he teaches us that the principle of law is not only not identical with that of faith, but that it is the precise opposite.

Another example, about which a good deal of confusion seems to prevail, is found in Galatians 5:5. Belief, as the meaning of faith in this verse, is wholly out of question wrong. The Galatians had gone from grace to law, from the principle of faith to that of works in the matter of justification. Paul gave them a proof of this defection, by showing them the example of himself and brethren. "For we," he says, "by the Spirit," (the teaching and power of the Holy Ghost) "from faith," (the principle, as opposed to works, from which every blessing of salvation arises)" wait for the hope of righteousness." To make these words represent the idea of waiting for the hope of righteousness by believing is simply a monstrous perversion of meaning.

Another noteworthy example is that in Galatians 3:22 "The promise by faith of Jesus Christ." Here we have another instance of a distinction between the faith of Jesus Christ and the believing of believers. The apostle is not speaking here of some promise which comes into possession by means of belief in Christ, and of its being given to them that believe at the time of their believing. Plainly, what he teaches is, that the Scripture has shut up the whole world under sin, and consequently, under condemnation, and, therefore, wholly without the pale of works of law respecting the attainment of righteousness, that the promise which arises out of the faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe. The faith of Jesus Christ, so designated because he is its Beginner and Perfecter, is the source out of which the promise arises to them that believe. In Christ, the promise was made, and out of the faith of Christ, in direct opposition to works, it strings.

Only one other instance remains, namely, that in James 2:24. "Not of faith only." How a man may be said to be justified from the principle of works, and from that of faith too, will present no difficulty to him that has mastered the instruction of the Word on the provinces of these principles in the different economies which have been established between man and his Maker and Saviour; but to him that has not, this matter will be a Gordian knot which can be no more cut than untied. Faith and works here, are the principles or grounds of a man's justification; they are not identical with believing and working, and ought not to be so interpreted. The conclusion arrived at is, therefore, that in no one instance of the word *pistis* (faith) governed by *ek* (out of) is the sense of believing to be understood.

It will be instructive to observe that out of the twenty instances of this construction brought to notice, in just half of them the preposition is rendered "by," seven times "of," once "from," and once "through." Rendered "by," and "through," there can be no doubt that the noun governed is commonly understood as an instrument, and that instrument, the believing of believers. So interpreted and accepted, no term that affects theological truth so widely has ever, perhaps, been misunderstood with worse effect. Interpreted as the instrument of reception, utterly aside as this is from the meaning of the term, the interpretation is comparatively harmless. When, as is most general, it is spoken of as an instrument of acquirement, and the exercise of it a duty, the mischievousness of the teaching cannot be overrated; but when, as by Dr. Macknight, its exercise is expounded as equal to a complete performance of duty, and will be rewarded accordingly, the interpretation is a little too vicious to be much hurtful. When the preposition is rendered "of," as in the example "righteousness of faith," there is still a pertinacious clinging to believing. It is then the righteousness which, as some, is received by believing; or, as others, which is to be acquired or appropriated by anybody if he will only believe; or, as others, believing will be reckoned as an equivalent to a complete performance of duty. What but the perverseness of preconception could warp candid minds enough to rest in the crookedness of such twisted meanings? Paul is speaking of the source of righteousness, not of its reception. No doubt righteousness is received upon the same principle that it is bestowed; but when we read of the righteousness which is from faith, in evident distinction from another that is from works, we are not to understand faith to be the instrument of the reception or acquirement of the blessing, but the nature of its source. Even in the one solitary instance of the most correct rendering of the preposition, namely, "from," Romans 1:17, Mr. Haldane will have it "by," and faith, that is, believing, the instrument of reception. Alford adopts De Wette's notion of faith being the subjective ground; and others what not of the same description. But objective ground, or source, or principle, the evident teaching of the apostle, men

will not see in this construction. Why is this? Is it an unwillingness that the edifice of salvation, from foundation to top stone, should be wholly of grace? When will men be content that God Almighty should do something completely for them, that shall be wholly of grace?

08 Of Faith construed with Prepositions -continued

OF FAITH, CONSTRUED WITH PREPOSITIONS (CONTINUED).

CHAPTER VIII. A FEW observations will take in all that, for our present purpose, it will be necessary to say about this word when construed with some of the other prepositions. Of the several instances in which *faith*, (faith,) is governed by *en*, (*in*,) it will be unnecessary to bring more than three or four under review. Respecting the interesting occurrence of this construction in Galatians 2:20, "I live in the faith of the Son of God," it seems a positive marvel that interpreters, as with one consent should fix on believing as the meaning of faith here. Alford, indeed, rejects *en* and adopts *in*, in its exact local sense, as referring to an element; but, surprisingly enough, he holds fast to the sense of believing, and makes the exercise of believing the local element. Of Paul's life! This seems to be another example of the power of preconceived notions to influence the mind when interpreting the Word of God. Paul said distinctly, with the greatest clearness, "I live in the faith which is of the Son of God." He teaches us that it was in that great scheme of favour, so designated, he found the clement of his life, and that, as a sphere, it contained within itself all the aims of his activities, all his delights, his desires, and his hopes. It seems impossible that any mind, not predetermined to see nothing else in faith but believing, could mistake the meaning here.

In Colossians 2:7, we have "Stablished in the faith." The difference between "stablished in the faith," and stablished in believing, is not great, and taking the latter for the former involves no serious error; but they are not identical. Walking in Christ in this text, presents the idea of the sphere of the Christian's activities. "Rooted and built up in him" give the figures of a tree and a house, and Christ the local home and stability of the Christian under these views. In being "stablished in the faith" we have the same thoughts in unfigured language, with this difference; namely, for Christ himself the faith of Christ is substituted as the sphere of the man, the element of the tree, and the foundation of the house.

In Titus 1:13, we have "Sound in the faith." Here an objective sense ought to be undoubted, and the importance of what is believed seriously taken into account. It may be justly questioned whether some teachers of religion; in their exceeding anxiety about believing, are not almost, if not altogether, forgetful about what is to be believed; but all should lay it much to heart that the salvation of sinners is, in Scripture teaching, joined only to a "belief of the truth."

It is assumed, as has been already said, from the connection of *en* (*in*) with the pronoun relating to *faith* (*faith*) in Hebrews 11:2, that this preposition is to be understood in every following occurrence of the noun in the dative case in that passage. On this assumption, and giving to *en* its natural local meaning, we have then the sphere within which all those things were done of which mention is there made; and, at the same time, an interpretation that will free the earnest student of the Word of God from the manifold embarrassments which beset him when trying to expound faith as the instrumental means by which those wonderful things were done.

Pistil (faith) construed with en,² Corinthians 13:5, like unbelief,¹ Timothy 1:13, is the name of a state. Under different views of them, these same opposite states are otherwise represented. Darkness and light, alienation and reconciliation, death and life, are some of the more familiar of these representations. The state of faith is only entered by a translation. None are born in it; all require to be born again into it. As being in darkness, men are delivered from the state so called and brought into light. As enemies, they are reconciled. As dead, they are quickened. As found in a state of disobedience and unbelief, they are raised, through the Gospel, to obedience, and to the whole condition of things that is found in the state of faith. The importance of being in either of these states, and all men are in one or the other, is sufficiently indicated by the terms employed to represent them. But from the earnest exhortation of the apostle it would appear that a man may mistakenly imagine himself to be, or may falsely assume a seeming to others that he is, in the state of faith. Hence the Corinthians were to examine and prove themselves. A matter of this importance was not to be cheaply taken for granted by them. Misconception was possible, and a mistake might be cherished where life and death were in question. Hypocrites have no need of this self-examination. Purposely putting on an appearance to deceive, they cannot be mistaken. Neither for this reason could the apostle have such in view. But all others that name the name of Jesus, without exception, may profitably engage in this work.

It would carry us quite beyond our present purpose to discuss the matter at length, but we may just remark that there are not a few influences at work which as we judge, are, in this respect, very strongly misleading. One of these is the often and earnestly repeated exhortation or invitation, it is both these by turns, "Only believe! Only believe!" varied at times by "Believe now, believe at once!" and, at other times, otherwise varied to the same effect. Now that, from the popular reverence entertained in a greater or less degree for men engaged in the sacred calling of the ministry of the gospel, this sort of thing, however ridiculous it is to reflecting believers, is likely to produce certain effects, is well enough known to all that have expended but the least thought upon the matter. If special services are organized to bring this sort of thing to bear on the popular mind, given that considerable numbers of the people can be brought together, and a man of fervent spirit and some oratorical power is found suitably to address them, and it may be assumed, with an almost mathematical certainty, what corresponding results will follow. New and forcible impressions will be experienced. Moral revolutions in some cases will be effected. Conversions will abound. Baptisms, when this ordinance is observed in connection, will be multiplied. Sympathizing magazines and newspapers will put forth glowing accounts of successes. Sanguine minds will talk of Pentecostal times, and of the Millennium, and of a nation being "born at once." Zealous teachers, more ardent than judicious, imagining that faith, and prayer, and preaching, are the prime factors in the salvation of sinners, from the great things supposed to have been accomplished, will come to form calculations of how much effort would suffice to convert a whole community. Then will come the inevitable reaction, on which it is painful to think, but unnecessary now to dwell.

God forbid, indeed, that a syllable should be written or uttered reflecting disrespectfully on a true earnestness of soul in the work of the Lord. A cold-hearted minister of the gospel is a misnomer. He that is coldhearted in this work has mistaken his vocation, and, however orthodox, and learned, and devout he may be, the sooner he is otherwise employed the better. But he, on the other hand, whose zeal carries him aside from the line of knowledge can only mislead, and the more

successful he is in that course, the more mischief he works. After all of this kind of thing that may have been brought about by human agencies, and whatever may be the number or the startling character of the conversions which may have been effected, it is of the highest importance to know that if a radical change in the entire moral nature of the converted has not been created by God himself, they have simply been impressed more or less deeply by natural forces, and have acted under certain merely human influences. If they have not been created anew in Christ Jesus, if they have not passed from death to life, if they have not been born again, if they have not been translated from a state of unbelief to a state of faith by the power of God, they have misconceived the truth about themselves respecting one of the most momentous matters that can affect the interests of human beings. Whether, or to what extent, or with what guilty consequence, they may have been misled, must be left to the Judge of all motives and actions of men. Abhorrent to us as is a cynical suspicion of the entire effects of those outbursts of unwonted fervour and activity that occasionally take place under the designation of revivals, the credulity of a weakness bordering on imbecility would, it seems to us, be required to regard the results of such movements with an unquestioning confidence. A serious conviction of the un-warrantableness of the manner of address we have mentioned; the evident teachings of many Scriptures, particularly the parables of our Lord, and notably among them those of the sower and the seed, and the ten virgins; the Scripture testimony of apostasies; the history of the church; and, to mention nothing more, our own painful observation, peremptorily forbid all such unquestioning confidence. We suggest, with all brotherly well-wishing, that the converters in these movements, and the converted, should bear in mind and lay to heart that conversions may take place which have no basis in regeneration; that they should read together, learn, and inwardly digest such a book as that of President Edwards on "Religious Affections;" and that, by this and similar means within their reach, they should seriously observe the exhortation given to the Corinthians, Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith."

Passing to *dia*, (through,) construed with *pistis*, (faith, we have about nineteen instances of this particular construction; but in no one of them does the general opinion concede any other meaning to faith than belief. Is this a right judgment? I doubt. In six of these instances the faith is expressly spoken of as being in direct relation to Christ. "By faith of Jesus Christ" in Romans 3:22; Galatians 2:16. "Through the faith of Christ" in Phil 3:9. "By the faith of him" in Ephesians 3:12. "By faith in Christ Jesus" in Galatians 3:26. "Through faith which is in Christ Jesus" in 2 Timothy 3:15.

Now as *pistis*, (faith,) is always in the genitive case when construed with *dia*, (through,) it seems clear, that there are only three meanings which can possibly be assigned to that word in this construction; namely, that of an instrumental means, or that of an efficient cause, or that of a principle of procedure. All expositors whose opinions count for anything in general estimation, decide for the former. They are at a point that "the faith of Jesus Christ" means the belief of believers in him, and they come to the very necessary conclusion from these premises that instrumental means must be the meaning. Bound by the conviction that the faith which is of Christ and in him, mentioned in these quotations, is a believing on him; any other deduction is impossible. But is the conviction from which this conclusion is drawn a necessary one? No. Is it a sound one. This is doubted. Another conviction that leads to another conclusion is entitled to consideration. The faith mentioned in these instances which is of Christ and which is in him, is not that of which he is the object, that is, belief, or believing; but a great scheme of favour so designated from him because he is its Beginner and Perfecter. Not the exercise of belief in or upon

him, as an instrumental cause through which something is done ; but that great scheme of pure grace which bears his exalted name because he is its Alpha and Omega, considered as a principle of procedure, through which something is done, is what is intended. If the reader will undertake an operation that cannot be very well done without some pains ; that is, if he will thoroughly pick to pieces in his mind what is said to be, and to be done, through the faith that is of Jesus Christ, and that is in him, in these passages, he will find that believing, taken as the instrumental means, is immensely over weighted, and will require all sorts of apologetic explanations. Whereas, on the fullest consideration of what is said to be, and to be done, through the faith of Christ, taken as a principle of procedure, all will be easy, and all clear. In some instances of this construction, when faith is connected with Christ by no express reference, the same principle of procedure is intended. For instance, we have in Romans 3:30, " Justify, through faith ;" and " Do we make void the law through faith ?" in verse Romans 3:31. "Receive" the promise of the Spirit through faith," in Galatians 3:14. And "Saved through faith," in Ephesians 2:8. In these instances the faith, as opposed to works, is the principle through which proceeds, severally, justification, receiving the promise of the Spirit, and salvation. This view is entirely confirmed in the last quoted passage by what follows. "Not of works," says the apostle, "lest any man should boast." But it is the law, or principle, of faith, Romans 3:27, as we have seen, not believing simply, which, according to the apostle, excludes boasting. Could anything be more decisive?

On Galatians 3:14, Alford says faith is there "the subjective medium ; but rendered objective by the article, as so often by St. Paul." Is this criticism sound? Is it necessary to conclude that when Paul gave pistis (faith,) an objective form by the use of the article, he did not intend to convey a corresponding meaning? Might not the apostle be teaching a truth which the dean failed to perceive, or perceiving, discarded? Would it not be as honorable to Paul to entertain the view that he meant what he said, rather than that he indulged in a habit of peculiar, if not faulty, and, withal, misleading composition ? Nothing but a being tied down by the conviction that faith must almost always mean belief, it is felt, could induce such a man to write so mischievously faulty a criticism. The faith does not mean your belief, when the pronoun is not employed, nor always when it is. For, see 1 Thessalonians 3:2.

Only five instances of pistis, (faith,) construed with peri, (concerning,) occur in the New Testament ; namely, Acts 24:24; 1 Thessalonians 3:2; 1 Timothy 1:19; 6:21; and 2 Timothy 3:8; but seeing that in all these occurrences an objective sense is generally admitted, save in 1 Thessalonians 3:2, it will be only necessary to say a word about that. An objective sense is clear here. Timothy was sent, not to comfort the Thessalonians concerning their believing, but to hearten them about what they believed. No doubt the heartening them about what they believed would strengthen their belief under the tribulations they suffered for the Gospel's sake; but the latter depended on the former, not the former on the latter; and therefore the former was the express object of Timothy's mission.

Once only we have this word construed with apo, (from,) namely, in Acts 13:8; but an objective sense is here allowed by all.

Construed with epi, (upon,) it occurs twice; namely, in Acts 3:16, and in Php 3:9. But in both these instances expositors cling to their fondly cherished subjective meaning nevertheless for that, in both occurrences, according to their own teaching, the objective form is used. No objection ought

to exist against the meaning agreeing with the form. Many difficulties, and as many objections, stand against coercing the form into compliance with the favourite meaning. Feeling a difficulty, as it is supposed, respecting [Php 3:9](#), it seems that some one suggested a construction to Alford, which he speaks of with a kind of half approval, which gives this rendering: "the righteousness which is of God on my faith." That is, as it is explained, the righteousness of God which is "built on, grounded on, granted on the condition of my faith;" that is, on believing. Now if any imagination can conjure up a theological notion more monstrous than this exposition, that faculty is capable of creations more distorted and preternatural than vulgar opinion credits. If there are any in whose minds such an exposition fails to disestablish the favourite meaning of the word under consideration in this text, it would be utterly useless to add anything further with the view of convincing them. They must be given up. Give the word its true meaning, and let the exposition be, The righteousness of God which is grounded or built on the faith, of which Christ is the Beginner and Perfecter, and all will be analogical and beautiful. The word we are considering occurs four times with kata (according to), namely, in [Titus 1:1](#) is verse [Titus 1:4](#); in [Hebrews 11:7](#), and in verse [Hebrews 11:13](#). Leaving a consideration of the occurrences in Titus for the present, it may be observed that general opinion, consistent with itself so far, gives the same meaning to faith, in the two instances mentioned in [Hebrews 11:1-40](#), as it does in all the others in this connection. There ought to be no doubt that an objective sense is intended in both. The righteousness, which is according to faith in verse 7, is the same as that revealed in the gospel to be "from faith to faith"; and those that died according to the faith in verse [Hebrews 11:13](#), died consistently with, along the line of, that principle. They had lived, supported through all their afflictions (ek) from the sustaining power of that principle, and they died (kata) according to it in all respects. Here an end might be made to the consideration of this word when construed with a preposition, and only a few remarks more shall be added.

Shut up to belief as the meaning of faith in almost all its occurrences, Mr. Haldane says, on [Romans 3:30](#), "by faith and through faith. It is difficult to see why the prepositions here are varied. Similar variations, however, occur in other places, where there appears to be no difference of meaning, as in [Galatians 2:16](#)." It is strange that he, and passing strange that his learned coadjutor, Dr. Carson, a man of unusual critical discernment, should never suspect that this word might bear another meaning than belief in these places. On their view of the meaning of the word here, and in [Galatians 2:16](#), there is, no doubt, a difficulty, and that an insuperable one, unless it be overcome by the supposition that various prepositions are construed with this word without giving any difference of meaning; thus they overcame the difficulty. According to them, the apostle used his prepositions indiscriminately, or at least, interchangeably, without design. Can any mind be satisfied with this view? When our view of a text of Scripture requires us to impute inconsiderateness or purposelessness to the writer in his choice of words, we ought to suspect the soundness of our judgment of his meaning. Let the word faith; construed with these different prepositions, in both these passages, be viewed as the name of a principle, then all difficulty will pass away, and the understanding will experience a satisfaction in the light of an interpretation that is as pleasing as it is clear. Let the verse be read and interpreted thus: "Seeing it is one God who shall justify the circumcision out of faith (as the principle from which the justification arises) and the un-circumcision through faith," (as the principle of procedure in the justification), and nothing will be left to be desired. By a reference to six passages, together, five of which have been already separately considered, an example may be seen of the confusion of thought which so lamentably

prevails on this important subject in the minds of those that teach, and those that are taught alike. In Romans 3:22, we read, ' 1 The righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ.' In Romans 5:1, "Being justified by faith." In Galatians 2:20, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." In Philippians 3:9, " The righteousness which is of God by faith." In Hebrews 11:7, " The righteousness which is by faith." And in Romans 5:2, "We have access by faith." Attention is solicited to the fact that the term "by faith" is found in all these passages. This noted, it will be readily admitted, it is presumed, that nineteen out of twenty, whether teachers or learners, will consider " faith " to mean believing, and " by " to indicate that the believing is the instrumental means of what is said to be, or to be done, in each of these passages. Many will not, of course, know that "by " in the first five of these quotations is made to do duty for five different Greek prepositions, and that the sixth simply represents the dative case. But their lack of this information, judging from the authoritative renderings we have, and from the expositions most in vogue, is not solely the veil which hides the truth from them, for the majority of those who know the most about these things are at a point, as to their interpretations, with those who know nothing. Learned and unlearned, as if by a common consent, are agreed that "faith" in all these instances means believing; and that "by " indicates the believing to be the instrumental means of what is said to be and to be done. It is no matter that one Greek preposition means through, another out of, another in, another upon, and another according to. As faith can have no other sense than believing, therefore all these prepositions, whatever differences of meaning they may represent, must be lengthened, or shortened, and shaped to the dimension and form of "" by," as remorselessly as the guests of Procrustes were to his celebrated bed. Is this expounding the Word of God?

09 Of Faith construed with Verbs

OF FAITH CONSTRUED WITH VERBS.

CHAPTER IX. IN entering on a consideration of the word faith when construed with verbs, no surprise will be felt from beginning with justify, and no apology need be offered. The province of believing in the business of salvation is a matter of considerable importance. "Justification by faith," is a term of general acceptance, and is taken to represent a principle of common agreement among almost all Protestants. Perhaps there is no other term which, as representing a principle of common agreement, is so generally used; so strongly asserted, and so strenuously defended. Under banners emblazoned with this potent sign, almost all, on occasion, seem ready to rally, to march, and to fight; but, with all this unanimity and fervour, it is open to question whether, to the multitude, this term is anything more than a fetish; while to the few who have a meaning for the motto, it is doubtful whether, among an equal number of persons, any imaginable expression, not as certainly ambiguous as the celebrated oracle, could be more diversely, yea, more oppositely understood. Some, for instance, hold that it is the duty of every man to believe in Christ, in order to justification, and that every one that believes is justified by his believing. Justification by faith may be their motto, but nothing can be clearer than that justification by works is, nevertheless, their interpretation of it. Plainly as words can represent things, faith, in this view of it, is made a factor of the believer's justified state. Mr. Binney, indeed, openly avowed this notion. Speaking of the distinction of those to whom the gospel comes in word only, and those to whom it comes in power, he says, 'I both, therefore, have faith, in the true meaning of the term, as the reception of what is really before the mind; but that which is so, is infinitely different in each; and hence the difference in their character and state.' That a man's spiritual state arises from his faith is a fundamental error, and a most pernicious one withal; it attributes to faith that which belongs to the righteousness of God only. It invests a man with the prerogative and power of God, and credits a sinner with his own justification. It makes a man's belief the factor of the quality of his state, instead of making his state the factor of the quality of his belief. It is a reversing cause and effect. But, against all contradiction, it is the radical qualities of a man's state which give a corresponding distinction to his faith; and not the radical qualities of his faith which give a corresponding character to his state. A man is either in the unregenerate or the regenerate state. If in the former, he, in the spiritual sense of the word, does not believe, nor hope, nor love, because he has not faith, is without hope, and is alienated in his mind; if in the latter, he has passed from death into life by the power of the Holy Ghost exerted on him as sovereignly and mysteriously as the blowing of the wind; and he will have, consequently, a corresponding faith, and hope, and love, and these will have their natural activities. State precedes faith, and not faith state. Perception and action follow state in the order of nature, and their quality will be according to what the state of the man is. The tree exists before the fruit. The fruit is not the factor of the quality of the tree, but the tree of the fruit. Fruit simply declares the quality of the tree which produces it. By their fruits trees are not made, but merely known. An unregenerate man is in the natural state under the fall; all his perceptions and actions do, and must, correspond therewith; and, as they never do, so they never

can, rise higher. As justly might we look to gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles, as to find spiritual perception and action in an unregenerate person.

It is immutably true that, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and that "He cannot enter into the kingdom of God." He can have no spiritual perception; can engage, in no spiritual action. He cannot, therefore, perceive the truth of the Gospel, nor exercise faith in the truth. He cannot believe more than that the Gospel is true, systematically understand it, and assent to it. The spiritually remedial excellencies of the Mediatorial character of Christ lie utterly beyond the range of his understanding, and, by consequence, of his faith. Before regeneration, in fine, whatever credit may be given to any truth concerning Christ, there can be no such belief of testimony as is united to trust with a view to advantage, because the remedial properties of the truth to be believed are unknown, unappreciated and unappreciable. How, then, shall a man's faith become the factor of his state? Moreover, it is alike immutably true, and to the same purport, that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The interpretation of the "natural man" here as that which is natural in a man, that is, of a principle, not of a person, is sanctioned by whatever great names, vicious, and cannot be too severely denounced. If, then, unenlightened by the Holy Ghost, a man's understanding is so darkened that he cannot know spiritual things, it is simple contradiction to the Divine testimony to say that he can; and if such a man cannot know them, it is pure insanity to say he can believe them. What place does the Holy Ghost hold in their view of the economy of salvation who make a man's faith the factor of his state, and who make faith the duty of all men?

Faith, as to its exercise, being such a reception of the divine testimony as is animated by a trust with a view to some advantage, the province of this faculty is simply to enable its subject to receive and rely on the word of God, and to realize the good of the testimony. It is not the province of faith to produce or to cause anything. It does not justify. God justifies in every sense, and he only. Faith is neither the matter nor the instrumental means of a sinner's justification, but only that faculty by which a sinner is enabled to rely on the testimony of God concerning the Lord our Righteousness, and to receive the righteousness therein testified. It is simply the subjective medium, as it has been called, through which a man comes to possess and enjoy a provision that was before made for him. By this medium he realizes righteousness; he possesses peace; he enters into rest. But he does not make the righteousness, peace, and rest by believing; neither, indeed, does he make them his own. They, together with all other spiritual blessings, were his as given to him in Christ Jesus before the world began, as acquired for him by his great Surety, and as specifically promised to him in the Word; but by the enabling of faith, itself the gift of God, and its exercise the fruit of Divine energy, he comes to enjoy all these things as his own. Faith is the eye that lets in the already shining light, and that apprehends the already presented object, the ear that receives the glad tidings, and the hand that takes the gift. Faith is not, and cannot be, in any sense, the cause of any one thing in the justification and salvation of a sinner.

It is commonly said that immediately a sinner believes in Christ he is justified. If this saying is intended to mean that immediately before believing in Christ a sinner is in a state of condemnation, and that immediately after he is in a state of justification, it is open to much objection. This notion makes the state of justification contingent on believing, and faith, in some sense, the factor of a sinner's righteousness. But, whatever may be said about its manifestation

and realization, the state itself of justification is in nothing contingent on believing. Sinners are justified by Christ being made sin for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him. Apart from Christ there is no justification, and there is no condemnation to those who are in him. Whether, therefore, a man is in the justified state depends on his being in Christ. Whether he is in Christ depends on his having been chosen in him. Whether it is made manifest, and he is warranted to entertain the conviction that he is in Christ will depend on his being a new creature; and this will have its evidence in the vital outcome of those distinguishing powers which spring into being at the new birth, and especially in that of faith. Perhaps it would be difficult to point out, from any other instance of a fallacious interpretation of Scripture, mistakes more misleading and mischievous than are those which have arisen from the term, "justified by faith," being expounded as justified by believing, and attributing to belief, in some sense, the quality of a cause.

Moreover, if when it is said that immediately a sinner believes he is justified, this saying is intended to mean that he realizes his justification, facts are often, if not invariably, utterly at variance with this notion. It is beyond question, and a thing that must be more or less known to every soul of man who has passed from death unto life, and who has any experience of personal religion, that reliance precedes realization ; and reliance is the very soul of faith. Nor ought it to be supposed that this is a condition of things which, in every instance, speedily passes away. One of the most perplexing anxieties of some Christians has been, in their case, the continued lack of a specific realization of their personal justification. Dealing with tender-hearted Christians in this condition has proved to be one of the most troublesome difficulties of godly ministers of Christ. Not only may this state of things last for years, but he will be a bold man that will dare to say that in some instances it may not continue through life. Indeed, one such instance has fallen under our own notice; and the deep and painful anxiety experienced through a protracted affliction awoke such a corresponding interest in our mind as to make it likely that the case will never be effaced from memory. There was, so far as it is permitted to one to know another, every true appearance of an earnest hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and there was the prayerful reliance for the precious blessing; but of realization, so far as could be gathered, there was none in this world. The being " filled " was, in this case, not only partly and perfectly, but altogether reserved for heaven. But, if, when it is said that immediately a sinner believes he is justified, the saying is intended to mean that it may then be predicated of such a one that he is in a state of justification, no objection need be raised, excepting that the words are singularly inappropriate to express the intention. Are, however, these words ever employed simply as an affirmation respecting the state of a believer in Christ? This is doubtful. Rather, they seem to be generally used to assure unbelievers that if they would only believe in Christ they would be immediately justified. That nothing more is required in order for them to enter upon this distinguished state but that they should believe ; and that there is nothing more within their competency, and nothing easier to be done than believing. From the way in which it is commonly said that immediately a sinner believes he is justified, nothing can be plainer than that the saying must be taken to mean that faith, in the subjective notion of it, has, in some sense, an acquiring power in the matter of justification. No doctrine can be more untrue, and, perhaps, none more pernicious. More never ought to be affirmed of faith, in the matter of a sinner's justification, than that it is the medium of reliance, of reception, and of realization; and it ought never to be forgotten that, as such, it is purely the gift of God. Let it be granted that there is any acquiring virtue in believing, or that faith is, in any sense, a factor of a sinner's righteousness, then we shall have belief converted into a work, and the essential truth of the justification of the

ungodly being accomplished wholly upon the principle of grace will be altogether subverted.

How then, it may be asked, are the terms justify and justified by, or through, faith to be interpreted? The answer to this question will vary according to circumstances. When no preposition is employed, and the dative case only is used, as in Romans 3:28, the noun must be taken, not as the instrumental dative, but the local, that is, as the sphere within which the action of the verb is begun and completed. A man is justified in faith, without works of law. That is, a man is justified wholly within the sphere of the principle of faith and, therefore, entirely apart from (choris,) that of works of law. The local meaning of *chris* fixes this sense to *pistei*, faith, here. A like example is found in verse Romans 3:24. Here Jews and Gentiles are said to be "justified freely by his grace." "Grace," in the dative case, is not the instrumental or efficient cause of what is said to be done, but the sphere in which the action of the verb is begun and finished. The cause is mentioned in the words immediately following. They were justified "through (*dia*) the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." This points, without doubt, to the meritorious cause. A similar example is also found in Ephesians 2:8; only that we have here, not a single branch of salvation spoken of, as justification, but the whole of it. "By grace are ye saved, through faith." "Grace," in the dative case, is here, not the cause by which, but the sphere in which the whole action of the word saved is begun and finished. "The faith" is that great scheme of favour of which Christ is the Beginner and the Perfecter, which is founded on the principle of the same name, and represents the precise opposite order of things to that which proceeds upon the principle of "works." mentioned in the following verse. "Through (*dia*) the faith" will mean, therefore, the principle of procedure, according to which the action of the verb is begun and completed.

Belief, then, is not the interpretation of faith when construed with justify either with or without a preposition. This is said with the full knowledge that it is to impugn the judgment of the greatest of theologians and the best of men, and that too, so far as is known to myself, without a single exception. But it is nevertheless said with the fullest confidence, and it is declared further, that to suppose that the action of this verb, justify, arises (*ek*) out of the belief of believers as its ground or principle, that it is contained (dative case) within this belief as its sphere, and that it is completed (*dia*) through this belief as its instrumental cause, is, taken as a whole, one of the most extraordinary assumptions that ever usurped and held the place of theological truth in intelligent minds. Perhaps it may not be improper to remark that it is felt that this interpretation of Ephesians 2:8, destroys a fondly cherished notion of not a few who have regarded this text as affording an unanswerable argument against those who contend that it is the duty of everybody to believe in Christ unto salvation. They have thought that "the faith" mentioned here is the power of belief, and that this is the gift of God. Their argument about faith and duty is safe enough; but they cannot rely on this text, in the sense in which it is commonly interpreted by them, for the confirmation of their doctrine. Our next example shall be Paul's testimony, before Agrippa, of the mission he received from the Lord Jesus. When Jesus gave Paul his apostleship, he said to him, "I send thee to open their (the Gentiles') eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me," Acts 26:17,8. All seem to be agreed that faith here means belief, but a considerable divergence of opinion exists as to with which of the verbs in the text it is to be construed. Some decide for sanctified," some for "receive," and others for "turn"; but not one, so far as I know, for "open. How is this? Is it some theological conclusion, so far foregone, that

everything must of necessity bend to the decision? Is there any grammatical reason why "to open" should not have as good a claim to this connection as any of the others? If it be thought that "to open" is too far off, may it not be answered that it is inseparably linked with the nearer terms? But is there any grammatical reason why any one of the preceding terms of the text should be cut off from this connection? Have we not an inseparable whole here, and this a synoptically account of the designs to be accomplished by Paul's mission? Yea, ought not, therefore, the whole to be connected? There can be but little doubt that the sole reason why "to open" has never found a friend adventurous enough to give it a connection with "by faith that is in me," is the foregone conclusion generally formed that faith here must mean belief, and that it would be a little too much to predicate of believing the opening of the eyes of the blind. Because it would be presumptuous to call into question the accepted theology of the text, grammar, therefore, must be sacrificed, and common sense hoodwinked. Only let faith here be understood as the name of that great scheme of favour which takes in everything comprehended in Paul's description of the mission he had received from his Saviour, and then there will need no learned disquisition about which' of the words preceding the expression by faith that is in me," should be connected with it, nor which should not; neither will grammar need to be violated by leaving out any one of them, and we shall have, moreover, a theology that will be under no necessity to make ever so many conciliatory explanations of the terms it is pleased to employ. The faith that is in Christ is so designated from its express connection with him, and to distinguish it from all others. He, in his Mediatorial character, is the centre to which every line of the great scheme of favour so designated converges, and the circumference within which everything contemplated thereby is originated, carried on, and consummated. In him all the good of this wondrous scheme is purposed, in him promised, in him given, and in him received. It bears this name too as a distinction from everything else that in terms, or by just inference, may be so called. It is distinguished, for instance, from "the faith of God," in connection with either the Noachian or the Abrahamic covenant, just as the Lord Jesus discriminated between believing in God, and believing in himself, John 14:1. As there is a considerable diversity of opinion about the words of the Saviour just alluded to, I am tempted to a digression in order to offer a remark on them. It so happens that the Greek verb in the second person plural is formed exactly alike in the indicative and the imperative moods, and this is one of the sources of variance. Is the word "believe" in both instances indicative, or both imperative? Or does it take both these moods? If so, which does it take first, and which last? In other words, have we here two assertions or two exhortations? Or have we an assertion and an exhortation? If so, which of these stands first and last? Every difference represented by these questions has its advocates, who severally agree more or less in the divinity they found thereon. Bengel makes the verb imperative in both instances, and says that the emphasis in the second clause should fall on the words in me; and adds, '1 So that the ancient faith in God may be as it were seasoned or dyed with a new color by their believing in Christ." Erasmus, Beza, and Grotius, it is said, take "believe" in the first instance as indicative, and the second as imperative. "This view," says Olshausen, "gives the fine sense that true faith in God is accompanied by faith in the Redeemer, because in him God perfectly reveals himself, so that faith in Christ appears to be only a development of general faith in God." It is to us passing strange that any thoughtful mind can find satisfaction in such interpretation and such divinity. Gill, in the last of his alternative meanings, comes provokingly near to the mark without hitting it.

We accept the grammar of those who teach us that we have here an assertion in the first clause, and an exhortation in the second ; but not their divinity. Nothing can be clearer to our own mind than that to rightly understand these simple and sweet utterances of the Saviour, it must be taken that he was discriminating between his disciples having believed in God respecting earthly things, and their believing in himself respecting heavenly things. Divine promises of temporal good, as we have seen, have been made to fallen man under a dispensation of favour wholly apart from the Mediatorial headship of Christ. For such good, God, through his promises, entirely apart from Christ as Mediator, has been in all ages with much advantage man's object of faith. Men have believed in God, and they may, yea, ought to believe in him as the Governor of the world, in his good pleasure doing them good, giving them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons; filling their hearts with food and gladness, or withholding all these things in his displeasure : as forming light and creating darkness : as making peace, and creating evil. The disciples of Christ did believe thus in God as ruling all things in the physical world, and as the Observer and Judge of all moral actions. But Jesus had, to use his own words, told his disciples of "heavenly things," and it was about these that he directed them to believe in himself, because all the promises of these things were made in him, in him given, and in him received. Having instructed them that he and his Father are one, he presented himself to them as the object of their faith and the ground of their confidence respecting heavenly things, just as God, irrespective of mediation, was already all this to them concerning earthly things. In effect, Jesus said to his disciples, I and the Father are one. I came from the Father to tell you of heavenly things. Having almost finished my work, I shall shortly go to the Father. But let not this trouble you. As you have given God your confidence about earthly things, give me your trust about the heavenly things of which I have spoken. In resuming our main argument, it may be next remarked that " faith" is found construed with " contend for " in Jude 1:3; and although it may not exactly fall in with my main purpose here, seeing that an objective sense is commonly allowed, yet it will not be foreign to my general design to make an observation or two. Jude says, "It was needful for me to write unto you, and to exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints." From this exhortation we may learn that the doctrine of faith, for some reasons, either is not self-evidently true and excellent, or that men are by nature incompetent to apprehend its truth and excellence; and that such is the condition of things that, whatever may be the beneficial importance of the gospel of salvation to human interests, this is to be preserved among men by their earnest contention for it who have received it. Although Christ himself, the very Word of life to dying men, had before met with the same treatment, it will appear strange at first sight that the doctrine of faith, the very word of salvation in a world of lost men, should meet with rejection, and that with scorn, coming, as it does, with self-evidence of its truth and worthiness of all acceptance. Equally strange, too, will it appear that the distinctive truth of the gospel should require to be perpetuated among men by a continual earnest contention that has been often sustained by the self-sacrifice, and always by the self-denial of its advocates. But this surprise may be yet further increased-if we will call to remembrance how we ourselves originally received this doctrine. Is it not absolutely true, and profoundly humiliating, that we originally received the truth of the gospel of our salvation in its distinctiveness with a reluctant obedience and submission? We obeyed this form of doctrine! We submitted to the righteousness of God! While, however, the feeling of humiliation may well enough remain with us, the sense of the strangeness of this fact may be abated if it is remembered that man was created with a constitutional fitness to live in a condition only and wholly suited to the

doctrine of works, and that his descendants, though they now are fallen, and utterly unqualified to raise and sustain themselves in acceptance with God on the original grounds, are nevertheless born with this element of the human constitution. The doctrine of faith is of things purely supernatural; and man, therefore, needs a new constitutional fitness to live in a condition suited thereto. Before a man can so much as cross the border line that separates the old state of things from the new, he needs to be radically changed. Before he can set foot upon the kingdom of heaven, he must be born again. Nothing, therefore, can be done in personal religion that is spiritual, not so much as an acceptance of the doctrine of faith in any true and real sense, until a man is regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and has received a natural fitness for this new state of things. Even then, as all experience and observation prove, in consequence of the old constitutional element asserting itself against the new one within him, the newborn man receives this new doctrine only with sentiments of obedience and submission. No doubt fallen man is proud, and certain it is that the doctrine of faith is intolerant of human pride, and that it necessitates whomsoever receives it to humble himself low enough to acknowledge that he is guilty, and vile, and miserable, and helpless. This, it is freely admitted may have a vast subsidiary influence in producing the universal opposition prevailing against the doctrine of faith ; but the root of all is to be sought in the original constitutional element.

As, therefore, this element is inborn, and is as the spots in the leopard's hair, and the color in the Ethiopian's skin, it is not more evident that material things will follow the law of gravitation than that the propagation of the doctrine of faith must be by a perpetual aggression, and that its maintenance must be by a continual contention. Self-evident as the doctrine may be,' and commonly appreciable as may be its evidence, a special power is required to value its excellence. Lost in the sense that man is under the fall, he requires a new heart to understand appreciatively the very word of his salvation. Yea, more, this qualification is necessary to him not to reject with positive scorn this counsel of God against himself, and not, unless divinely restrained, to oppose the promulgation of it among his neighbors. It will be an entire mistake if 'it is supposed that this opposition to the doctrine of faith proceeds mainly on moral rather than on religious grounds. Profane men would resist the enforcement of any moral code that prohibited with equal stringency and condemned with like severity their lawless gratifications. Moral men, whose sense of right and wrong owes, excepting in a very indirect way, little or nothing to the doctrine of faith, are more opposed to it than their immoral neighbors, but on different grounds. But it is the religious enemies of this doctrine that have ever been its most active, determined, and indefatigable opponents. These are keenly sensible that neither their moral virtues, their almsdeeds, their prayers, their penances, nor the whole of their costly and self-denying religious observances, which give them so proud a distinction among men, count for anything, according to this doctrine, 'for their acceptance with God. This truth, and the doctrine that teaches it, are alike revolting to them ; these are their most offensive offences, and as they feel towards them all the bitterness of a religious hatred, they act accordingly. Nor is this a new thing. When the Saviour preached the sermon on the mount, a not disagreeable sense of admiration seems to have been the result. It is said simply that " the people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." But afterwards, when he advanced in his teaching beyond the moral principles of that sermon, and explicitly taught the doctrines of the faith, the result was far different. When in effect, he plainly told the people that bethought it no robbery to be equal with God ; that is, when he asserted that God was his Father; that he was before Abraham ; and that he and the Father are

one, they attempted to stone him. When he taught the doctrine of divine sovereignty and a particular salvation, by a reference to the widow of Sarepta and Naaman the Syrian, the people of his own city sought to destroy him. When he taught the doctrine of atonement by the sacrifice of himself, and that a personal participation of his flesh and blood is essential to eternal life, the people murmured, and some of his disciples deserted him. When he expounded the doctrine of substitution by referring to himself as the Good Shepherd who would lay down his life for the sheep, many said he had a devil and was mad. It is now, therefore, as it was of old ; moral principles may be laid down, enforced, and exalted with a very general acceptance. But if any man will advocate the distinguishing doctrines of the faith, pure and simple, preserving their harmony, as the gospel of the grace of God, he must lay it to his account to be reckoned ignorant, bigoted, proud, and whatever else may go in public estimation to make him "the off scouring of all things."

If, then, the promulgation of the doctrine of faith is opposed by natural and acquired forces so strong, it will be no wonder that its maintenance can only succeed by a continual contention. The Saviour of sinners in bringing peace, brought a sword that, in the nature of things, can never be left to rust in its scabbard. The doctrine of the cross was to, the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, and, in different respects, it is an offence to the natural man of every nation. Generally the nominal Christian is its most active enemy. For though ignorant of its excellence he knows its antagonism to his opinions and he will hate it and dogmatize accordingly. Stung by a pretence to religious knowledge offensively advanced, a man who was venerable as a faithful minister of long standing, as a capable theologian, and as deeply versed by personal experience in the things of God, once said, "I wish men would not meddle with religion until religion meddled with them." If it would be difficult to justify this saying absolutely, no difficulty need be felt about doing so in reference to teaching religion. Of all the branches of human knowledge, there is no one whose importance can be mentioned in comparison with religion, and there is no subject of enquiry about which men, generally, assume to, themselves a competence to pronounce, and none which they affect to teach more readily and positively. But the singular thing about this is that men, who confessedly know nothing of the power of religion, will affect to expound the divine testimonies concerning it. Like some that desired to be teachers of the law in the apostles' day, they understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm; but they will teach. Now if they do not handle the word of God deceitfully-their motives are between themselves and their Judge-they must do so ignorantly; and it will not need a prophetic inspiration to foretell the result. It is just a case of the blind leading the blind. Not only they may, they must go and lead wrong. Not having "obtained precious faith" themselves, they will not only not teach the doctrine of faith, but they will infallibly teach its opposite. Being alien by nature from the principle of faith, their teaching must be antagonistic to its doctrine. This has been and is so in fact. Yea, to such an extent is the old constitutional element in force, even in those teachers that seem to have obeyed and submitted to the doctrine of faith, that it is rare that one can hear or read any of their teachings without finding a large admixture of works with faith. In some instances, these naturally diverse and incompatible doctrines are jumbled together in painful confusion, and in others the whole matter from beginning to end is all of works. Hence the necessity for an earnest contention, We may now pass to a brief consideration of some few examples of faith construed as a governing word.

10 Of Faith construed as a Governing Noun

OF FAITH CONSTRUED AS A GOVERNING WORD.

CHAPTER X.

Pistia, (faith) is sometimes construed as the governing word. We read, for instance, of the "Faith of God" in Mark 11:22, and Romans 3:3. Respecting this latter example, if the almost, perhaps quite, universal consent of expositors is to decide, nothing remains but to bow and to accept fidelity or faithfulness as the meaning of the word faith in this expression. When so very general a consent obtains in the interpretation of any part of the Word of God, it requires some strength of conscientious conviction to entertain, and some courage to express, a different judgment. We, however, do differ from the common judgment and are convinced that our view is the true one, and, therefore, that it has the importance of the truth on this particular subject. At the risk, therefore, of being charged with affectation or presumption, we will briefly show our opinion.

We are convinced that the word faith in this term here stands for that divine scheme of favour according to which the seed of Abraham were put in possession of the promised land. That scheme was God's. With him it originated. He put it into action. Against all opposition he carried it into effect. It receives the designation of "faith" because the good designed to be brought to pass by it was promised, given, and received as a pure favour. Faith, therefore, was a most appropriate designation. Had there been some "work of God" John 6:29 to do to give effect to the scheme, it would have been otherwise designated, and we maybe sure that failure would have been the result. But it is designated the "faith of God," and was, therefore, to receive effect from the power of Him whose goodness originated it. This scheme presented no good to be possessed as a reward for the discharge of some duty, but one that was to be had by the pure favour of God. Hence it was not made without effect by all the opposition that was offered against it.

We may add, moreover, for what it is worth, that, so far as our limited reading extends, the Greek word represented by "make without effect," is never found having a moral virtue for its object nor for its subject. If the nullification of a law, a rule, a promise, or, as in the passage we are now considering, a scheme is to be spoken of, then this is the word to be employed; or, perhaps, (kenoun), which would represent the same effect under another idea. Had it been intended to represent the failure of a moral virtue, such as fidelity, then, we speak with submission, (ekleipein), or (ekpiptein), would have been the word employed.

But, if the digression may be forgiven, because we reject the common interpretation of the term "'faith of God," we are not to be understood as asserting that the word faith nowhere means fidelity. So far from this, it is perfectly clear to us that this word takes this meaning, not only in Titus 2:10, where it is so translated, and in some other places where it is so commonly understood, but also in Galatians 5:22, where it does not generally receive this sense. Here we have the fruit of the Spirit set in opposition to the works of the flesh, and faith, in the sense of fidelity, belongs to the former. But, seeing that this, as also every other subject in the category, is simply a moral virtue, it

may be very pertinently asked, how can it be the fruit of the Spirit? Moreover, as moral virtues, all these may be, and are, found in those who could not, and do not, make any pretension to the Holy Ghost living in them; or that this moral Excellency in them is to be "specially predicated of that divine Person; or that their virtuousness should be designated a "walking in the Spirit." The observation is true, and often pertinently made, that there may be a high moral sense, inducing a corresponding virtuous action in a very eminent degree, where there is no profession of spiritual religion; but that whoever truly names the name of Christ will certainly be virtuous. This, however, does not relieve us of our difficulty here. What will? Motive seems to be the true solution. Why a man is virtuous must be the rule to settle whether or not his virtue is the fruit of the Spirit. Joseph was a chaste man because he dreaded and abhorred to sin against God. Nehemiah avoided extortion and unjust usury, because of the fear of God. Paul delighted in the law of God. His virtue is the fruit of the Spirit who is virtuous from the fear of the Lord. His virtue is the fruit of the Spirit who, from believing with his heart in the Lord Jesus Christ unto righteousness, dreads and abhors to sin against God, and delights in the law of God after the inner man.

If this view be a correct one, it is as an axe at the root of all that very extensively patronized divinity which teaches the notion that morality is identical with religion. Let the moralist know, amidst the honors he claims and receives, and the advantages which he and the circle in which he moves may enjoy on account of his morality, that after all the moral and social virtues have been experienced and practiced by him, he must be born again before he can see and enter into the kingdom of God. Of the construction we are considering, "Faith of Jesus Christ," Romans 3:22; "The faith of Christ," Php 3:9; and "The faith of the Son of God," Galatians 2:20, are instances which afford another important example. Nothing can be more evident than that *pistis*, (faith,) in some period of its history, has acquired an appropriated or, what Alford on 2 Timothy 4:7, calls, an "objective technical sense." But the surprising thing about this fact is, that in some instances where no other sense is possible, expositors seem to admit it tardily, and in others, where its claims are paramount and decisive, they ignore or deny them. We have an astounding example of this perversity now before us. Ninety-nine of every hundred teachers will expound "the faith of Christ," in all three of the above instances, as meaning the belief of believers. Every expositor of these passages with whose writings I am acquainted, interprets the word in this very jejune sense. But the "objective technical sense," as it is called, does not more certainly belong to the word in 2 Timothy 4:7, than in these three passages, and it is not possible to give any tolerable interpretation of it in either instance in any other sense. The "Faith of Jesus Christ," in the first instance, "of Christ," in the second, and "of the Son of God," in the third, is the same as that of which Jesus Christ himself spoke as "My faith," Revelation 2:13, which the church at Pergamos had not denied; and as that of which many different things are predicated in many other of its occurrences elsewhere. But it should be observed that when this word takes this "objective technical sense," it is found in different situations and is employed to represent different ideas. The leading meaning seems very clearly to be that of a great scheme of pure favor, of which Christ is the Beginner and the Perfecter, and which, for this reason, is called "the faith of Christ." Sometimes "the faith" is a principle out of which things arise, at others a law through which they are done. Then the doctrine which teaches the truth concerning the faith takes this name; and this is to be earnestly contended for, and its proportion or analogy is to be studiously regarded. Again, from what this scheme is, it comes to have its uses. Paul, as we have seen, spoke of it as that in which he lived, and thus gave it the meaning of a sphere. Speaking of the whole armor of God, he assigns to the faith the place

and use of a shield. At another time it takes the meaning of a party distinction to which some are said to belong, and at another something else, for it is not at all pretended that this list is exhaustive of the meanings of the word when used in this sense. It is merely intended to point out to those who may wish to know the mind of God in his Word, that when this objective sense of faith may have been ascertained with certainty in any instance, that its exact meaning must then be a subject of solicitude. This must be found from connection. For instance, in the first of the three examples now before us, we learn that the righteousness of God is manifested now through the faith of Jesus Christ, and that it is unto all, and upon all, them that believe. Connection here points unmistakably to that great scheme which takes its name from Jesus Christ, as he is its Beginner and Perfecter, and is here distinguished as the medium through which the righteousness of God is manifested; just as when the righteousness of God is said to be revealed, Romans 1:17, out of faith, the idea of principle or ground is pointed out. The same idea obtains in the second example. Paul desired to be found having that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, and which is upon the faith. That is, through the great scheme of Christ's faith, not his belief, as the medium, and upon the faith as the principle or ground; for as the righteousness of God is revealed from the principle of faith, and manifested through the faith of Jesus Christ, so its possession is based on the same principle as its revelation, and it is received through the same medium as it is manifested. In the third example, "the faith of the Son of God" can only be regarded as the same great scheme presented to us as the sphere of the apostle's life. "I live," he says, "in the faith of the Son of God." This does not mean that his life consisted in believing on the Son of God; but that the great scheme so designated comprehended all the aims, the actions, the joys, and the hopes of his life. In the term, "the faith of God's elect," Titus 1:1, however the preposition may be understood with which it is construed, and which is rendered according to, "we have another example of the word, faith," taking the meaning of scheme of favor. Other meanings are given. Some take "faith" here to be the creed of God's elect in Old Testament times, and that the apostle's ministry agreed herein with what was taught by Moses and the prophets. Others, that it means the doctrine of faith which the apostle was appointed to preach, and that we are to understand by the words that "it was the duty of an apostle to propagate the faith." Others, "that the faith, (that is, the belief,) of the elect is aimed at." That is, it was the aim of the apostle that unbelievers should be led to believe, and that the belief of believers should be strengthened by his ministry. Now, if it may be said that no one of these notions is palpably erroneous, it may also be very confidently asserted that the mind that can receive content in any one of them is, in this instance at least, very easily satisfied.

Taken in the sense of a scheme of favor, difficulty vanishes, and a feeling of contentment is enjoyed. So understood, we are taught that such a divine scheme exists, and that it embraces the persons and interests of a people that are thus distinguished from all others.

Elect is a term of definiteness. It is inclusive in purpose, and, therefore, exclusive by consequence in effect. Everybody, then, is not comprehended. The elect are the predestinated, and these become the called, and these become the justified, and these become the glorified. The elect are the people of Christ, on whose behalf he received the name Jesus, because he came to save them from their sins. They are the sheep for whom he laid down down his life. They are the persons for whom he prays, as distinguished from the world that he does not pray for. The elect are those that hear God's words, because they are of God, in distinction from those that hear them

not, because they are not of God; and because they are the sheep of Christ, they believe in him; and they are thus distinguished from others that do not believe because they are not of his sheep. In every branch of this scheme the persons and interests of God's elect are comprehended; in no one branch of it are the persons and interests of the non-elect included. As "the faith of God," so called for the reasons we have assigned, embraced the persons and interests of the seed of Abraham only, so "the faith of God's elect" takes within it only the "remnant according to the election of grace." The interpretation of the text is exceedingly easy. For the furtherance of this great scheme, Christ, upon his ascension, gave ministerial gifts to men; "he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Paul was made a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the furtherance (kata) of the faith of God's elect, and the knowledge of the truth that is according to godliness.

It may be observed, in addition to what has been said above of the faith of God's elect that the same idea belongs to this word in the expression "common faith," in verse Jude 1:4. If that scheme includes God's elect only, it should be noted that these are some "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." In the "common faith," then, there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. National distinctions are annihilated. "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Paul, a Jew by nature, regarded Titus, by nature a Gentile, as his own son, and a joint partaker with him of all spiritual privileges "I according to" (kata, in, or along the line of) "the common faith." According to the common belief is, beyond all questions, inadmissible here.

Every candid mind will be ready to admit that an interpretation of the terms employed about Abraham's faith in Romans 4:1-25 is hedged around with a formidable difficulty. No one who has studied this subject will be surprised that different opinions exist, however justly some of these are to be wondered at. "Abraham believed God, it is said, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." The words are simplicity itself their exposition is difficulty itself. Is it impossible to evade as a fact that what these words say, however they are to be explained, is that 'it was the act of believing that was counted unto Abraham for righteousness? Some say, No; and some of these explain that God in, judging mankind, will place on one side of the account their duties, and on the other their performances, and that in judging believers he will place their believing on the side of their performances, and by mere favor will value this as equal to a complete fulfillment of all their duties, and will reward them accordingly. That is, that he will count the act of believing to amount to righteousness, and will accept believers as righteous on account, or for the sake of, their belief. One of these has had the courage to affirm that it is not "said anywhere that Christ's righteousness is imputed to believers."

It would be a wholly mistaken kindness to bandy compliments. with a hero of this stamp. However high a theological distinction any man may have acquired who speaks thus, we will not be awed from denouncing in the strongest terms, teaching so strangely erroneous and so highly mischievous, as that a man is to be counted as having performed all duties by believing, and for the sake of this that he will be reckoned righteous. This is just that perversion of the gospel of Christ which demands that the perverter, though he be an angel from heaven, should be accursed. When any man, however exalted, shall affirm that it is not anywhere said that Christ's righteousness is imputed to believers, he must be told in plain terms, not that he errs in opinion, but that he denies a matter of fact, and that it would be a waste of words to contradict so palpable a contradiction of the testimony of God.

Others, those who hold that believing in Christ unto salvation is a duty, and that a man's justification and salvation wait on this act as its appropriate reward, find here one of their strongest arguments. Fortified by their view of Abraham's faith, they proclaim with an emboldened confidence that unbelief, understood as not believing in Christ unto salvation, is the chief vice, and that condemnation is its proper penalty; and that to believe in Christ unto salvation is the prime virtue and the first duty of all men, and that justification and salvation will be its certain consequence and due economical reward. How foreign all this is from the Gospel of Christ needs not to be dwelt on here.

Others, these too holding that it is the act of Abraham's believing that is said to be reckoned to him unto righteousness, explain more soberly and on sounder principles. Alford says on Romans 4:2-3, after repudiating the theory of a meriting faith, "It will therefore follow, that it was not the act of believing which was reckoned to him as a righteous act, or on account of which perfect righteousness was laid to his charge; but that the fact of his trusting God to perform has promise introduced him into the blessing promised." Although this exposition is vitiated with no erroneous doctrine, it fails to satisfy. Introduced into righteousness, the blessing promised, is a very lame interpretation of reckoned unto righteousness. No, the "It" did not introduce him into righteousness according to the testimony, but was counted to him unto righteousness, which is a very different thing, and this is the difficulty.

Haldane, with whom we may reckon Dr. Carson, lays great stress on the preposition. Not "for," but unto righteousness, he says. I fail to perceive the force of these remarks; for however the preposition may be rendered, it is unquestionable that Abraham was reckoned to be righteous. Again, he says, "the expression 'unto righteousness' is elliptical, and signifies unto the receiving of righteousness." This is almost like Alford. Let us, however, fill up the expression as directed, and see then how it reads. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him unto the receiving of righteousness. How does this help out of the difficulty? Filled up as the ellipsis now is according to direction, if this saying is not still elliptical, the sense is singularly subtle, or wonderfully profound, and very far to seek. Again and again this writer very properly tells us that believing and righteousness are not identical. He says that we receive righteousness by believing. This is not disputed, but it requires to be explained differently from the common method. But he here says that Abraham believed God, and that his believing was counted to him unto the receiving of righteousness; that is, that the act by which he received righteousness was counted to him unto, or, in order to, the receiving of righteousness. Surely this never can be a making the truth plain on tables. Unless a man is exceptionally keen-witted and clear-sighted he can never catch the sense of this interpretation at a glance while running. How the act of believing should be interpreted as that by which a man receives righteousness, and at the same time that it should be reckoned unto, or, in order to the receiving of righteousness to him that believes, may fairly be ranked among things not easily comprehensible by persons of ordinary intelligence, and things not easy to be surely believed. No solution of the acknowledged difficulty of this subject presents so powerful a claim to acceptance as that according to which the word "faith" and the pronoun "it" are to be regarded as representing the object believed. Abraham saw Christ's day, and was glad. His sight of Christ, therefore, was an appreciative one. He saw Christ in prospect as the New Testament believer sees him in retrospect. He apprehended the mystery of substitution as this was taught and illustrated by sacrifice. He saw as in a glass the Antitype in the type. He learned that he was to

be justified by the righteousness of another through imputation. Having learned "the law of righteousness," he submitted, and became obedient to the faith. He believed in Christ with his heart in order to his justification, and the meritorious acquirement of the Object of his faith was reckoned, or imputed to him unto righteousness. The difficulty of the passage is strongly felt and frankly admitted. I give my opinion.

11 Of Faith in The Subjective Sense.

OF FAITH IN THE SUBJECTIVE SENSE. THE FACULTY OR POWER OF BELIEVING.

CHAPTER XI. IN passing from the consideration of faith taken in the objective sense, to make some observations on this word in its subjective sense, it seems fitting to bring the faculty or power of believing under notice in the first place.

It may be taken that the word faith is sometimes employed, at least in the ordinary course of speech, to designate a specific faculty of the mind. All created intelligences seem to have this faculty. Anyhow, it is certain that men and devils have it, and there can be no sound reason to deny it to angels. Like the power to hope, to love, to judge, or to will, this, to believe, seems to be a constituent element of mind. As the eye and the ear, organs of sense, give those that have them the power of seeing and hearing, so the faculty of faith gifts with that of believing. But a question of considerable importance here presents itself. To what extent will this natural faculty enable to believe? We know on the indisputable authority of the Word of God that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Corinthians 2:14. What these things of the Spirit of God are can present no difficulty. If we say that they are the mysteries of the kingdom of God, the truth as it is in Christ, or something else of similar import, we shall correctly enough express what they are in different words. But the question is, if a natural man cannot know these things, will his faculty of faith enable him to believe them? If they are without the range of his appreciative knowledge while he is a natural man, are they nevertheless meanwhile within the compass of his faith? It seems impossible to give any but a negative answer to this question. Nothing can be plainer than that the natural man is by nature unable to know the things of the Spirit of God, and, therefore, that he is under an inability appreciatively to believe them. No one who may be but very slightly acquainted with this subject can fail to perceive that, if this view of the apostle's teaching is correct, it must most materially affect the instruction which is almost universally given concerning believing in Christ. For we shall be chargeable with no exaggeration in saying that natural men are sometimes invited by everything that can be imagined as a winning inducement, and at others threatened by everything that can be conjured up as a terrible retribution, to believe in Christ. But if it be so that the persons so invited and threatened have not so much as the faculty to do what they are required, it must be obvious to all that the invitations are something worse than silly, and the threatening something worse than a mere cruelty. That this inability does exist, and that its existence is everywhere taught in the Scriptures will, on examination, very clearly appear, we have no doubt.

Regeneration represents, if anything, a great change produced by the power of God. Those who imagine this to be effected by, or to consist in, what may be justly termed a burlesque on a religious rite, painfully illustrate the truth that the natural man does not know the things of the Spirit of God. Radically considered, regeneration is a power of special, namely, of all spiritual, perception and action. That is, a regenerated person possesses a power which one that is

unregenerate does not, to perceive things, and to take courses of action, which are called spiritual. One that is not born again "cannot see the kingdom of God." He cannot. He is without the necessary faculty of perception. In order to see the kingdom of God, the eyes of his understanding must be enlightened by a regenerating power. Regeneration gives, indeed, no new faculties to the mind, but it does give a new power to existing ones, which is equal to a creation. Hence a regenerated person is called "a new creature." Human blindness to spiritual things is more than perverseness, it is inability. A perverse man may, indeed, shut his eyes and refuse to see; but a blind man cannot see. Open his eyelids as he may, no light penetrates his sightless eyeballs. So, walk as the natural man may, in the brightest rays of the Sun of Righteousness, he will still be in darkness, because he is darkness. This truth is conclusively taught also by such Scriptures as "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them," Proverbs 20:12. "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind." Psalms 146:8. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." Isaiah 35:5. And in Isaiah 42:7, we have a prophecy that Jehovah would give his servant, "To open the blind eyes." Taken literally, do not these words represent an absolute inability to see by reason of a natural organic defect? Taken spiritually, are not the persons spoken of supposed to be as destitute of the faculty of spiritual sight as persons wholly without, or with absolutely defective eyeballs are of natural? If they ever see, must not a creative power be brought to bear upon them quite as much as if they had no eyes? If when Jesus Christ opened the eyes of the man born blind he did not create new organs, did he not give a power to existing ones which they had not before, and never could have had but for the omnipotence he exerted? Was not this act of power equal to a creation "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath, indeed, shined into the hearts of his ministers, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in Christ; but not to give the sight requisite to profit by it. He himself gives that. He gives that peculiar faith, which is the receptive faculty of things spiritual, the eye of the believer's soul, and the only medium by which the light of the ministry can be appreciatively beheld. Being persuaded that there is a very general misconception of the truth we are now considering, and that this is a fruitful source of much error about faith, generally speaking, we will add another remark or two. In 2 Thessalonians 3:2, the apostle says, "All men have not faith." No proof will be required that by "all men" we are to understand professing men. Some men that profess to have faith, whether their profession may arise from ignorance or hypocrisy, have it not. But how is to have faith to be understood? Critics generally, and, as we think, rightly, have discarded the pretensions of fidelity to a place here; but at the same time they seem to speak as if not to believe did not arise from not having faith, but from not exercising it. Hence arises much error. The natural man is almost universally credited with a power that he has not. Paul might have conveyed his meaning, by saying, All professors of Christianity are not believers; or, all do not believe. But had he expressed himself in either of these ways, he would have undoubtedly intended to convey, what interpreters for the most part are altogether unwilling to receive, the idea that the faculty of a spiritual faith was wanting. For if a man says of another, speaking absolutely, he does not hear, or see, or speak, who fails to come to the conclusion that he is speaking of one that is deaf, or blind, or dumb? No man can speak thus of another, absolutely, without intending to convey this meaning, or to mislead his hearer. Paul said, "All men have not faith." The Lord Jesus said, "But there are some of you that believe not." John 6:64.

Both sayings may be interpreted in the same sense. Paul spoke of the absence of the faculty simply. The Lord spoke of the absence of its exercise, but including in his meaning, without doubt,

the faculty itself. It can as little be said absolutely Without misleading, that a man believes not who possesses the faculty of faith, as it can that a man sees not who has his eyes. These propositions of the Lord Jesus and of Paul are not identical, but they carry the same meaning. Both are true of the same subject. When one is true of any man the other must be; and when one is not true the other cannot be. While, then, either of these terms will suit the meaning intended, it ought to be known that he that does not believe has not the requisite faculty to do so, and that this is the gift of God.

While desiring to avoid cumbering these pages with quotations, a passage in Edwards on The Religious Affections may be inserted here without in the least crossing my wish in this particular. After having drawn attention to several Scriptures in proof that a radical difference exists between what is natural and what is spiritual, he says : From hence it follows, that in those gracious exercises and affections which are wrought in the minds of the saints through the saving influences of the Spirit of God, there is a new inward perception or sensation of their minds, entirely different in its nature and kind from anything that ever their minds were the subjects of before they were sanctified. For, doubtless, if God by his mighty power produces something that is new, not only in degree and circumstances, but in its whole nature, and which could be produced by no exalting, varying, or compounding of what was there before ; I say, if God produces something thus new in the mind, that is a perceiving, thinking, conscious thing ; then, doubtless, something entirely new is felt, or perceived, or thought; or, which is the same thing, there is some new sensation or perception of the mind, which is entirely of a new sort, and which could be produced by no exalting, varying, or compounding of that kind of perceptions or sensations which the mind had before ; or there is what some metaphysicians call a new simple idea. If grace be, in the sense above described, an entirely new kind of principle, then the exercises of it are also entirely a new kind of exercises. And if there be in the soul a new sort of exercises, of which it is conscious, which the soul knew nothing of before, and which no improvement, composition, or management of what it was before conscious or sensible of, could produce ; then it follows, that the mind has an entirely new' kind of perception or sensation : and here is, as it were, a new spiritual sense that the mind has, or a new principle, perception, or spiritual sensation, which is in its whole nature different from any former kinds of sensation of the mind, as tasting is diverse from any of the other senses ; and something is perceived by a true saint, in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely diverse from any thing that is perceived in them by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men get of honey by only looking on it, and feeling it. So that the spiritual perceptions which a sanctified and spiritual person has, are not only diverse from all that natural men have, after the manner that the, ideas or perceptions of the same sense may differ one from another, but rather as the ideas and sensations of different senses do differ. Hence the work of the Spirit of God in regeneration is often compared to the giving a new sense; giving eyes to see, and ears to hear; unstopping the ears of the deaf ; and opening the eyes of them that were born blind; and turning from darkness unto light. And because this spiritual sense is immensely the most noble and excellent, and that without which all other principles of perception, and all our faculties, are useless and vain ; therefore the giving this new sense, with the blessed fruits and effects of it in the soul, is compared to a raising the dead, and to a new creation. This new spiritual sense, and the new dispositions that attend it, are no new faculties, but are new principles of nature. I use the word principles, for want of a word of more determinate signification. By a principle of nature in this place, I mean that

foundation which is laid in nature, either old or new, for any particular kind of exercise of the faculties of the soul; or a natural habit, or foundation for action, giving a person ability and disposition to exert the faculties of such a certain kind ; so that, to exert the faculties in that kind of exercises, may be said to be his nature. So this new spiritual sense is not a new faculty of understanding, but it is a new foundation laid in the nature of the soul, for a new kind of exercises of the same faculty of understanding. So that the new holy disposition of heart that attends this new sense, is not a new faculty of will, but a foundation laid in the nature of the soul, for a new kind of exercises of the same faculty of will." See Part III., chap. i.; and again in chap. iii.

Whatever faith, then, a natural man may have, and whatever he may be capable of believing by its exercise, the faculty and the act are so utterly deficient of a spiritual nature that, in speaking of spiritual things, it may be said of him that he has not faith, and that he does not believe. But we are not left alone to the deductions of our reason to conclude that where the faculty of faith respecting spiritual things is wanting the act of believing cannot be exerted, for the Saviour has informed us that a natural man not only does not, but that he cannot believe. In John 6:44, he says, " No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Or, as he puts it in verse John 6:65 "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." It will not be disputed that to come to Christ is to believe in him. But though this is generally admitted, the truth taught about it is not so easily conceded. For from what the Lord Jesus had previously said to the Jews in chap. John 5:40, "And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life," it has been contended, and we believe the opinion is very generally entertained, that aversion of heart is the only obstruction to faith in Christ. How false this notion is, and how empty is the metaphysical distinction between a natural and a moral inability respecting this matter, may be seen at large in the late Mr. John Stevens' book entitled, " Help for the true Disciples of Immanuel." But even supposing, which we do not, that aversion of heart were the only obstruction to faith in Christ, if this is "by nature," that is, if it is the natural condition of man under the fall, is not the hindrance insuperable? Does it not amount to a cannot? Whether the nature of an obstruction to a particular perception and action of the mind be moral, or mental, or physical, if it be inherent in a man and irremovable by him, it is effectual, and constitutes an actual inability. Practically, what matters the nature or the name of an obstruction that effectually obstructs? Is an effectual hindrance less so by one name than another? But a false principle of interpretation lurks here. This is interpreting the cannot by the will not. What authority is there for this? Why might not others interpret the will not by the cannot? Either way is a vicious method of handling the Word of God. To interpret the cannot by the will not in this instance is to do away with the testimony of man's helpless inability, and the absolute necessity of Almighty grace to be exerted to overcome it. To interpret the will not by the cannot would be to make void the severe reproof delivered by Jesus Christ to the Jews, and to all beside that are guilty of the same offence. Each of these testimonies, the will not and the cannot, has its own interpretation independently of the other. As they will not, they are perversely disinclined. As they cannot, they are wanting of the requisite power. But a distinction lies here that seems to escape general observation. In John 6:44, the Lord Jesus reveals a terrible want which constitutes a fatal inability with the view of bringing to notice the necessity of the exercise of divine grace to remedy the mischief. Moreover, his testimony here is absolute and comprehends the race; and it should be noticed that there is in it nothing of the nature of a personal reproof. On the other hand, what he said in John 5:40, was not absolute and unlimited, but it had a particular reference to the persons whom he was then addressing, and had in it very strongly the nature of

a personal rebuke. He appealed to the Scriptures in proof of his Messiahship ; and although these abundantly testified of him, and he answered most evidently in every point to their testimony, these Jews, who thought they had eternal life in them, nevertheless would not receive him as the Christ. Now where there is a just cause of reproof, and doubtless there was in this instance, there must be fault, and where there is fault there must be a breach of duty, and where a breach of duty a transgression of law. It was, then, without doubt, the duty of these Jews, and is of all others who have the Scriptures in their hands, to come to, to receive, or to believe in Christ. The will not, therefore, represents that coming to, and reception of Christ which is the duty of all men who hear the testimony God has testified concerning his Son. This duty, falling as it evidently does under the law of works, is wholly unconnected with the promise of life and salvation in Christ. Its due discharge will have its appropriate reward; its omission, its just desert. On the other hand, the cannot come represents that peculiar appreciative coming to, and receiving of Christ, which is a special privilege granted under the law of faith. Those who come not thus commit no .fault, incur no blame, and are not reproved. Those who do come thus, simply exert a given power and u e a given privilege, and in so doing they get to enjoy the blessings of salvation. But they discharge no duty by so doing, earn no reward, and receive no commendation. What they do is altogether of grace just as much as is what they enjoy. About the doing and the enjoying they may be congratulated, but not applauded. But more of this later on.

12 Of Believing

OF BELIEVING.

CHAPPER XII.

FAITH is the name of a mental exercise. It is so employed, sometimes, in what may be designated an untrue, a true, and in an incomplete, and a complete sense. In the untrue sense a man is sometimes said to believe something that he merely desires, the wish begetting the thought. Sometimes, on a balance of probabilities in his mind, he is said to believe what he thinks to be likely relative to anything past, present, or future. At other times he is regarded as believing what he does not positively disbelieve. Perhaps the most pernicious example of what we are calling the untrue use of this word is the most widely extended, and it certainly is not employed about anything else of equal importance. We allude to the fact, everywhere to be observed, of persons taking the truth of the gospel for granted, while they remain utterly ignorant of its most elementary principles, and, consequently, exercise no trust at all in its testimonies, or a blind one only, and suppose that this is believing. In any one of the cases mentioned there is, indeed, no faith at all, in any true sense. But the word may be used in what may be termed a true, although it be only in a more or less incomplete sense. As when a man is said to believe things of common credit, although he may have no concern in them, nor may interest himself at all about them. Or as when he is said to believe some testimony about something which does concern such as he is, though he himself never takes any interest in the matter. For it seems certain that a man may most confidently believe the truth of a testimony of fact, of a threatening, and of a promise to such as he is, and that he may still pay no practical regard to the counsel of the first, nor heed the danger of the second, nor care for the good of the third. Now just as unbelieving may be most truly predicated when more or less complete ; so, in calling these and similar exercises believing, as we truly may, we yet do so only as in a very imperfect sense. Perhaps one of the most subtle delusions associated with the use of this word in a true, but incomplete, sense, is that which arises from an acceptance of testimony upon the decision of the judgment, after evidence has been investigated and weighed by the understanding. A testimony of the gospel, or the gospel itself, is laid before the mind. On this the understanding is brought to bear. Evidence of the truth is taken and examined. On the completion of the examination the Judgment decisively gives a favourable verdict, and on this decision the man is said to believe the testimony. So he, very truly, does believe; but it will be a ruinous mistake if he concludes that, therefore, he is a believer in the complete sense of the word. Properly, complete belief follows upon this reception of testimony. "" We have known and believed," says the apostle John.¹ John 4:16. This intelligent reception of the testimony of the gospel, unconnected with any further believing action, is what we designate incomplete faith. The gospel is intelligently received as so much testimony of fact and truth, but nothing further. No important persuasion, in this case, is conveyed in the testimony of fact and truth, and no procedure of trust follows. The mind is possessed of a new and assured fact and truth, and that is all. Thus, as we hold, belief may be true so far as it extends, when it may yet be very incomplete. He that believes the gospel is true may very truly believe; but if he proceeds no

further, his belief will be very incomplete. In its complete sense, faith will be the name of a complex mental exercise embracing belief and trust with a view to advantage. If, therefore, a man believes in this sense a simple testimony of fact that concerns him, he will act in a manner corresponding with the instruction which the truth of this affords him. If in pursuing any particular line of action he believes a threatening stands against him, he will alter his conduct accordingly. If he believes a promise made to him, he will desire and aim to become possessed of the promised good. But where the exercise of faith is found in its complete sense, there also will be found certain requisite conditions. There will be, for instance, a testimony of some kind to be believed, and this will bring with it, or bear in itself, evidence of its truth. That is, there will be some scheme of faith revealed, containing provisions of good, concerning which testimony will be made with sufficient evidence to justify and encourage belief. Moreover, the testimony to be believed, whatever may be its specific character, will relate to him that believes; he, too, will apprehend this relation, and will understand that the matter concerns him; for it is clear that, where these conditions are wanting, no man can have any sufficient warrant to exercise a trust in any testimony with reference to himself. Another thing will be a consciousness of a need of the good of the testimony to be believed. For as it is certain that every scheme of faith will be remedial in its provisions, and that what is to be believed according thereto will be to meet a necessity; so also it is equally certain that it will be an essential element of belief to be able to appreciate the good provided and made known by the testimony. By these we are conducted to a fourth particular, namely, that every exercise of faith, therefore, will be an act of trust with a view to advantage. The whole may be put thus; "With the heart man believeth unto (eis, in order to, with a view to,) righteousness," or to some other good, of which he is conscious that he is in need, the provision of which he understands has been made, and made, as he learns from testimony, for such as he is. These conditions are essential to the exercise of faith in the true and complete sense. For if a man speaks of believing without having a positive testimony to believe, he is ignorantly practicing an illusion on himself. If what he is said to believe bears no relation to him, according to testimony, he is presuming rather than believing. If he has no consciousness of need of the good of the testimony that he is said to believe, he fails to understand a first requisite to believing, and is as the fool with a price in his hand to get wisdom who has no heart to it. If he has no view of, and exercises no trust in order to, a promised advantage, he fails to appreciate the scheme of faith, and his belief is a mere empty conceit. Although he may have a creed, and this be of unimpeachable orthodoxy, and though he may repeat its terms ever so devoutly and frequently, he never believes in the complete sense. Not only because he is not a disbeliever is he therefore not a believer, but his mind may be in a state of non-belief although it be not in that of disbelief; and, whether ignorantly or intelligently, simply crediting the truth of a testimony is not faith in the complete sense, and will never constitute him a believer in the full meaning of the word. Many entertain no sentiment or thought of disbelief about the testimony concerning Christ in the Scriptures; yea, there are, it may be, not a few that would repel in the most scornful terms, and be prepared to disprove by cogent arguments, anything that might be advanced against the credit of the truth of the Word concerning Christ, although they themselves never dreamed of exerting any trust in him. Altogether persuaded these are, and that intelligently, of the verity of the testimony of Christ, yet have they none the more ever at any time committed anything to him. Herein all such are broadly distinguished from Paul,² Timothy 1:12, and all other believers, in the full sense of the word, and this distinction arises out of a radical difference of state.

We are now brought to a question of considerable importance and some difficulty; namely, whether there are different kinds of faith. This question is strongly affirmed and denied. So far as our observation has extended, no one has more elaborately discussed this question, nor more strongly defended the negative side of it, than the late Mr. Binney, in his Discourses on the Practical Power of Faith. Reduced to a sentence his whole argument would stand thus: As the nature of the testimony of the gospel is God's promise and provision of mercy for man, or the conveying to him assurances of good through the medium of intelligible facts; and as faith, all faith, is the simple reception of testimony as what it is, or according to its nature; so, therefore, every man that believes the gospel must necessarily believe it to be God's promise and provision of mercy to him. If there are any, therefore, who are said to believe the gospel, but who at the same time do not feel such impressions, nor experience such consequences, as correspond with the receiving a testimony of such a nature, "such persons," he says, "properly speaking, have no belief at all. Not because they believe nothing, but because they believe not that which God intended they should." Respecting the objections that might be raised against this view in reference to un-fallen and fallen angels; these, he says, believe the gospel as what it is to them, namely, a testimony of mercy to man; and they are impressed by their belief in a manner corresponding to their several states. Respecting the faith of a sinner and the faith of a saint; these, he says, are one and the same in nature, and differ only in extent. Respecting those who are said to assent to the gospel and systematically to understand it, those to whom it comes in word only, and who, if they do not deny, do not experience the power of it; these, he says, merely believe the proposition, "the gospel is true," while others, those to whom it comes in power, believe the truths of the gospel. Both, he says, have faith in the true meaning of the term, as the reception of what is really before the mind; but that which is so is infinitely different in each; and hence the difference in their character and state. This is, and mostly in his own words, a concise representation of Mr. Binney's argument; and, though brief, it comprehends everything in it that is material. No careful reader can fail to observe that Mr. Binney begins his argument with a radically faulty proposition. He says that the gospel is God's promise and provision of mercy for man; meaning, without doubt, for the race indiscriminately. This is a fundamental error. As a testimony of fact and truth, the gospel is to be proclaimed the world over, without discrimination of nations or individuals; but the promises and provisions of the gospel are for persons that are everywhere and always, either in direct terms, or by plain and necessary implication, distinctly discriminated. Can the promise and provision of mercy be for the race when God says with a solemn distinctness in so many words, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy"? The testimony of the gospel is just "The record (testimony) that God gave (testified) of his Son. Substantially, this is all contained in the instructions which the angel of the Lord gave to Joseph about the name which he was to give to the Child of his espoused wife; namely, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21. Every testimony of the gospel, concerning the Son of God is in conformity with this. This defines the extent of the Saviour's relation, of his responsibility, the object of his advent, and the work which was given him to do and which he perfected. He is the Head of the church. He loved the church, and gave himself for it. He laid down his life for the sheep. He prayed for his disciples; and in doing so he made a solemn distinction between them and the world. Is there, then, any promise or provision of mercy in Christ beyond what is indicated in these and similar testimonies of his relation, responsibility, and work? If not, how then can the testimony of the gospel be a provision and promise of mercy to man indiscriminately? And how,

indiscriminately, can men believe the testimony of the gospel to be a provision and promise of mercy to them? As no ingenuity of man can frame an unlimited saving result from the mediation of Christ; so, no man, whose mind is obedient to the truth concerning this great business, can find in the testimony that God has testified of his Son, an unlimited promise and provision of mercy; and he will be a very daring man that shall be bold enough to affirm that the accomplishment of salvation will not be commensurate with the purpose. The testimony of the gospel is a proclamation of intelligible facts and truths to all men indiscriminately; to some men only, who are distinctly discriminated, it is a promise and provision of mercy. The other leading proposition of Mr. Binney's argument is open to much objection. He, in effect, says, that it is not "metaphysically just" to affirm that a man believes a testimony at all, if he fails to assimilate the object of his belief and act accordingly. Perhaps, among beings whose moral rectitude is unimpaired, we should always and uniformly find what is "metaphysically just" undisturbed by what has been called "the logic of facts;" but it is more than questionable whether we shall find this due order and sequence of things among fallen intelligences. Satan, Mr. Binney allows, is a true believer; but it would seem that, whatever he may feel from his belief, he very often does not act in a corresponding manner. The supposition that men always assimilate what they know and believe, and that they act correspondingly, is to give them a credit which no one of them that is sensible will take; and to affirm that they do not believe at all such and such things because they do not always assimilate what they are said to believe, and to act correspondingly thereon, is to deny the plainest facts; and if this denial were carried to its legitimate consequences in cases of wrong-doing, it would go far to eliminate criminality from transgression. But men, and these none of the worst, are sometimes found confessing errors, which they cannot palliate by any consideration of ignorance or disbelief, in the well-known words, "I see the better, and I approve; I follow the worse :"

and one of the most distinguished believers in Christ has said, "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I." Facts put the question beyond doubt that a man may be most certainly persuaded of a truth which he, nevertheless, may fail to assimilate, and may practically disregard. Who has not most certainly believed a testimony of instruction, of threatening, and of promise, that he has not, severally, not followed, not dared, not despised? Shall it be said of a man that he did not at all believe the instruction, because he did not follow it? Or the threatening, because he dared it? Or the promise, because he despised it? Human corruption and weakness will account for the certain belief of many most important facts and truths which, nevertheless, may not be assimilated, and may be practically disregarded. Shall it be said of every man who sins that he disbelieves the threatening of the law? Is it because a man disbelieves that the wages of sin is death that he is not deterred from sinning? On the other hand, shall it be affirmed of every man who is said to believe the testimony God has testified of his Son, if he fails to assimilate what he believes, that he makes God a liar? So monstrous a notion can surely find no acceptance in a same mind. It is more than admitted that belief, when complete, assimilates its object and induces a corresponding action; but if any one is pleased, in a case of what we call incomplete belief, to institute distinctions between belief and conviction, and to affirm that faith, in the incomplete sense, is not faith at all, we are content to leave hint to his disquisitionary wire-drawing. If any one is pleased to say that it is "metaphysically just" to affirm that a man does not believe at all what he does not in believing assimilate and act on, we appeal from metaphysics to facts.

Starting with the utterly unsound proposition that the gospel is a promise of mercy to man indefinitely, and the consequent mistake that every man ought to believe this promise for himself,

Mr. Binney arrived at the conclusion that, as all faith is the reception of testimony as what it is, if a man does not believe the gospel as a promise of mercy to himself, he does not believe it at all. Consequently, according to him, there are not among men different kinds of belief of the gospel. For though he admits, that there are some men who systematically understand and assent to the truths of the gospel, and that these have faith in a true sense, he nevertheless denies that they believe the gospel, because they believe not that, as he says, which God intended they should, and which they ought to believe. We, on the other hand, say, that the gospel is the testimony which God has testified of his Son; that this is a testimony of fact and truth concerning the Son of God to all men; that every man into whose hands the Scriptures may come is obliged to believe it as such; and that such belief is, to this extent, as truly a believing the gospel as was Agrippa's believing the prophets. That, beyond this, the gospel is a promise of mercy to some men; that these are distinctly discriminated in direct terms in connection with, or by clear implication in, the promise made; that these are the only persons that are either able or entitled to believe the gospel as such; and that this belief only is that which is associated with, and issues in, salvation. Consequently, we say that the gospel forms two distinct objects of belief; and, further, that there are two distinct classes of believers, whose beliefs of the gospel are, and must be, as different from each other, as is the gospel severally to them, and as are the state and character of those that believe.

Substantially, Mr. Fuller had before advanced the same contradictory doctrine. He spoke of faith in the proper and improper sense, and designated the latter conviction. "It is true," he said, "this conviction is called believing; but it is only in an improper sense." That is, as he contended, in a sense in which there is, actually, no believing at all. But is not conviction an element of belief? Can a man be convinced that a testimony of fact is true without a corresponding belief? It is readily granted that a man may be convinced that a given testimony of fact is true without taking any procedure corresponding with his conviction; but can the mind be convinced that a testimony is true without believing it to be true? Does it not seem that, as a plain thoughtful man long ago said, to apply this reasoning to those passages of the word where some are said to believe in this sense, is to contradict the Scriptures rather than to expound them? It is more than granted that, in the complete sense of believing, there is a complex exercise of the mind; but may there not be, nevertheless, simple exercises of faith. For in stance, it is "A faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." May not this word be accepted as a simple testimony of fact without being received as conveying an important truth to him who accepts it? Shall it be said that those who do receive this word as a testimony of fact, without any second element, do not believe it at all? Mr. Fuller would affirm this; but it ought to be known that he had a favorite opinion to serve, and it is unknown how far, when under the potent influence of a pet theory, any good man's mind may be led astray. Only let it be granted that there is but one kind of faith, and taken as proved that all who have got the testimony of God in their hands ought to believe it, and the opinion that it is the duty of all men, universally, so circumstanced, to believe in Christ unto salvation-the fondly cherished notion of Mr. Fuller will be established at a stroke. But the establishment of this opinion about human duty would annihilate the principle of grace, and annul the law of faith in the salvation of sinners-so far, at least, as believing is concerned in it. Can anything more decisively prove the unsoundness of the opinion?

13 Of The Duty of Believing

OF THE DUTY OF BELIEVING.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHETHER it be a duty that devolves on all men who have the Scriptures to believe in Christ unto salvation, is a question that has long been, and now is, always warmly, and sometimes strongly, disputed. Among the disputants on the affirmative side there have been those who, advancing with consequential airs the undisputed dictum that if faith is not a duty then unbelief is not a sin, have seemed to imagine that they have hit upon a short argument which must conclusively settle the whole matter to the utter confusion of their opponents. In truth this is, what they seem to fail to see, but a very evident mistake of the question. No one disputes that faith in Christ is a duty, nor, so far as this extends, that unbelief is a sin; but there are some who strongly deny and who think that they can clearly disprove, that the salvation of a sinner receives the slightest contribution from, or is in the least degree furthered in anything by the discharge of any human duty. Dispassionate enquirers, prepared, as they will be, to receive the testimony of God as little children, but who will be withal persuaded that there is both an essential and an appreciable harmony in divine truth, will come to the conclusion that faith in Christ is, and is not, a duty ; and that unbelief is, and is not, a sin.

God having been pleased to deliver to the world a testimony of fact and truth which bears in itself appreciable evidence of its verity, no argument is needed to prove that the divine record ought to be believed by all who may become cognizant of it. Equally clear will it appear that, being delivered to the world as a testimony of fact and truth, he that receives the record, as such, sets to his seal that God is true, and discharges the obligation which, in this matter, lies upon him; and that he that rejects the word fails in this duty, and commits the sin of making God a liar. But can any one fail to see that this obligation to believe springs out of man's original relation to God; that the claim arises from the first table of the law; that obedience is purely a work of law; that the reward of this duty forms no part of the promise of life in Christ; that the obligation and obedience, and reward, all fall under the law of works, according to which no man can be justified and saved; and that this belief, therefore, in nothing furthers a sinner's justification and salvation? Everybody must perceive that whatever is a man's duty is a due from him to his Sovereign, and that this is prescribed by law. So, also, that in every case where a duty is clone, and a due is rendered according to law, that there a debt from the Sovereign to the subject will arise, and that the dutiful and obedient man will be come invested with a right of reward. But how any thing of this kind can become blended in any mind with, so as to form a part of, the doctrine that a sinner is justified and saved altogether of grace, passes all knowledge. What can be clearer than that a duty can only obtain where, and in respect of what, the law of works is the governing principle between the Sovereign and the subject? And what can be more evident than that the law of works has no place in the justification and salvation of a sinner; or than that by works of law no flesh can be justified and saved? So far, then, as the gospel is a testimony of fact and truth which God has testified of

his Son, an obligation to believe devolves on all that become acquainted with the record, and, to the same extent, unbelief is a sin. But this defines the limits of the duty of believing on this point and the sin of unbelieving. He that carries the duty and the sin further than this, errs in principle. For, that salvation is of the Lord, and altogether of grace from first to last in every conceivable particular, is a truth, and that this is everywhere declared and insisted on against every contrary notion in the Scriptures, may be taken as proved. When salvation is the subject, grace, not works, is all in all. When, therefore, the testimony of God in the gospel rises from the character of a proclamation of fact and truth, concerning his Son, and takes that of the promise of salvation in him, we are at once elevated wholly out of the region of the principle of duty and reward, into that of giving and receiving. Not only is every blessing of salvation a gift of pure grace, but everything that is collaterally requisite to the possession and enjoyment of the whole is equally so. Had these things not been so, salvation could not have been wholly of grace. Had a provision been made and a duty imposed which must have been discharged in order to possess and enjoy the good provided, then grace and works would have been commixed.

Salvation, in that case, would not have been wholly of the Lord. Men would have been partly their own saviours. They would have discharged a duty, and have acquired an economical right of reward. At least, then, they might have congratulated themselves, and, probably, boasted over others, that they had rendered a due and reaped a reward of right; and, possibly, they might even have had somewhat of which to glory before God himself. But how foreign and far from the truth all such notions are, must be apparent to every believer in Christ; and they must be, too, as revolting to him as they are disparaging to the grace of God in his salvation. And such sentiments ought to excite his abhorrence and indignation. Against those that promulgate these doctrines, for many sufficient reasons, he ought to be angry, and to withstand them. What of the amenities of life he cannot preserve with them without unfaithfulness to principle, he had every way better let go. The retention would be a certain loss; the sacrifice will be a sure gain to estimableness, to truth, to honor, and to conscience before God. Bandyng compliments with them, so far from being a Christian charity, would not be a sincere courtesy, but would be unfaithfulness to them and treason against Christ. On the authority of an apostle, an angel should be anathematized that lays the basis of salvation on the doctrine of works. Let men and things have attributed to them the distinguishing titles which belong to them. Let it be faithfully said of every man that he is in error in principle who is aside of, or has fallen from the doctrine of the grace of God in the justification and salvation of a sinner. Yea, as this is no matter in connection with which men should be spoken of with honeyed euphemisms in strained courtesies, so neither should plain terms be used with bating apologies; therefore, on this point, let every man be a liar in so far as he contradicts the truth of God, which declares, in every form by which meaning can receive an utterance, that sinners are saved by grace. The notion that it is the duty of unbelievers to believe in Christ in order to their salvation receives no countenance from the general testimony of fact and truth about this wonderful deliverance in the Scriptures. This general testimony may be taken as completely represented in the well-known words of the apostle found in 1 Timothy 1:15: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." While no one can overrate the importance of the truth taught in these memorable words, it is quite possible to give them, and very probable that they often receive, a meaning that is entirely foreign to them. However this may be, it may be safely affirmed that they make the salvation of every self-justifier impossible, and that they declare that of any sinner possible, nevertheless for any

unfavorable conclusion that may be formed about this matter from any view of the evil of his sins ; but that, at the same time, they contain nothing of the certainty of an assurance that any particular person shall be saved. If any man imagines, from any consideration of his moral and religious virtues, or what not beside of this kind, that he may be saved, these words completely annihilate his pretensions and refute his conclusions. If any sinner thinks, from the evil of his sins, or what not of this kind, that it is doubtful whether he may be saved, his suspicions are fully contradicted, and his fears met. But if, again, any man thinks from these words, because he is a sinner, that he shall be certainly saved, he is wholly mistaken. From these words, the possible salvation of any sinner may be assuredly gathered, whatever may be his sinfulness; but it can neither be justly imagined by, nor predicated of, any sinner, personally, that he shall be saved from what is taught in this testimony. If then, these words, albeit they express in sum the general testimony of God about the salvation of sinners, contain no evidence of the personal salvation of any sinner, no sinner can, by them; be under the obligation to believe that he, personally, shall be saved. No duty, then, is taught here.

Just as little does the divine command to unbelievers to believe the gospel countenance this notion. Nothing, it is admitted, can be clearer than that unbelievers are divinely commanded to believe the gospel. But to believe the gospel in obedience to the command of God is of the nature of a work. He that does this duty shall reap an appropriate reward, which, whatever it may be, certainly is not salvation; and he that does not shall bear the consequence of his unbelief, whatever this may be. Can any man fail to perceive that whosoever keeps a divine command in order to the possession and enjoyment of any good performs a work of law, renders a due, and earns a reward? Is it possible that any one cannot see that if any the least thing is demanded as a duty in order to salvation, and it is done, that this is the rendering of a due and the earning of a reward; and that so far, the salvation of the doer would be wholly of works? Can there be anything imagined that could more conclusively establish the erroneousness of any such interpretation of the divine command to believe the gospel?

Again, nothing, it is admitted, can be more evident than that, according to God's economy, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ is requisite in order to salvation. But this faith stands up in high distinction, as the special gift of God, from that which is commanded to unbelievers. To believe as commanded requires but the exercise of powers already possessed to weigh appreciable evidence of fact and truth. To believe in Christ in order to salvation requires a special enlightenment of the understanding that is purely the work of God to enable to receive appreciatively the relative excellence of the Saviour's character. This distinguished faith, side by side with the Saviour's mediation, is, economically, necessary to salvation. Just as when a gift is to be bestowed, receiving is collaterally requisite with giving, so this faith is necessary to the appreciation and appropriation of God's unspeakable gift; but the reception is as little a duty devolving on the recipient as the precious bestowment itself is a due from the Divine Giver. For, seeing that all sinners are saved wholly by grace, it will follow that that which may be even only collaterally requisite in order to salvation in them that are saved, cannot be to them of the nature of a work, and that the least constituent element of their deliverance cannot be of the nature of a reward for a due rendered. In the whole business of salvation, from first to last, the least commixture of works is inadmissible, and the doctrine that teaches the contrary, in the lightest form, should be unequivocally condemned. Those Scriptures, therefore, which indicate the

connection existing between faith and salvation, cannot be justly interpreted as enjoining a duty. In the words, " He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned;"Mark 16:16; we have, simply, a most important instruction, given to all whom it may concern, of what shall be to believers and unbelievers. By this, to use a favorite expression of the apostle John, we know who will be saved, and who will not. Substantially, the same interpretation is to be given to the words, "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God."John 3:18. We learn here that every one who with the heart believes in Christ unto righteousness is passed from a state of condemnation, and that he who does not, is already condemned. If the conjunction (oti) "because," which connects the concluding parts of this sentence, creates a difficulty in any man's mind, let him compare this occurrence of the word in its relation to the verb believe here with that which is found inJohn 16:27. Nothing more can be needed to set any understanding at rest; and it is unnecessary to pursue this part of the subject any further.John 6:29, it may be observed parenthetically, has considerably perplexed some expositors ; but believing here is not connected with salvation at all. Mr. Haldane, speaking on the term, "law of faith," inRomans 3:27, says, " The word law is here used in allusion to the law of works, according to a figure usual in the Scriptures. By the same figure Jesus says, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' Here faith is called a work for a similar reason." But this is altogether a mistake; for, in deed, there is no figure at all in either of these texts. The words law" and "work" in these instances are to be taken in their usual meaning, according to Scripture usage. Law, in the one case, means a principle of government; and work, in the other, that which earns a reward. Although, it is presumed, Mr. Haldane took it that faith unto salvation is intended here, and that this is a duty, he yet seemed to feel that, spoken of as the work of God, some softening explanation was required, and this he found in a figure of speech. Bengel says of the work of God, "That which is approved by God." Olshausen takes a long step further, but wide of the mark. This expositor says, "With a fine allusion to the ` works' he terms it (faith) the work of God, faith being not only pleasing to God, but also performed by his grace, and thus being a work of God in the soul of man." Gill, who was far enough from making faith unto salvation a duty, falls into a similar mistake. He says, " This as a principle is purely God's work ; as it is an act, or as it is exercised under the influence of divine grace, it is man's act." But surely it will be plain to the most superficial observer that all ideas of what God works, mediately or immediately, must be fetched from afar in expounding this text, and that, when brought, they have in them no affinity whatever with what is here taught. "Works "and "work " are to be taken in their usual and well-understood sense in the Scriptures." That ye believe," here, is, simply a divine command and a human duty, according to the law of works, neither more nor less. God had sent his Son into the world, and he demanded then, as he demands now, upon sufficient evidence, that men should believe on him. The belief here required, being a human duty, can have no connection with salvation, for this is wholly of God, and so of him that his grace is all in all.

Another Scripture relating, not, indeed, to the duty of unbelievers, but of believers to believe in Christ, may here receive a passing consideration. In1 John 3:23, it is said, "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ." Commandment, whatever may be the relation of the parties commanding and commanded, is unquestionably a law term. That which is commanded is, without doubt, a work, and must fall under the law of works. As has been observed, this law obtains under the economy of grace; for we everywhere find

appropriate precepts enjoined on the subjects of the spiritual kingdom of God, together with fit rewards and penalties severally promised and threatened. One of those precepts, we here learn, is to believe in the name of Christ. But it should be distinctly borne in mind that this "work of God" is not identical with that mentioned in John 6:29. For that relates to unbelievers, this to believers. That respects such a belief in Christ as is due from an unbeliever; this such a faith as is due from a believer. That has to do with the original rational act of belief of fact and truth; this with the habitual exercise of the spiritual faculty which is peculiar to regenerated persons. Alford teaches us that the aorist, which is the tense used in John 6:29, imports one act of receptive faith; but that the present, which is the tense he decides for here, conveys the idea of a continuing habit. God having given this precious power, then, to regenerated persons, simply demands its habitual exercise. No one can read the Scriptures with intelligence about faith who does not perceive these distinctions. Every one that reads the Word with understanding on this subject must be able to see that there is a faith in Christ which is not unto salvation, and which all unbelievers, who have the testimony of God concerning his Son, may exercise. He must also perceive that there is a belief in Christ which is unto salvation, and which is never, and never can be, exerted, but through the exceeding greatness of the divine energy working in them that so believe: Ephesians 1:19. And he must understand that believers, God having bestowed upon them the spiritual faculty of believing, should habitually believe on Jesus Christ. Moreover, he should know that the first and third of these beliefs are explicitly enjoined duties under the law of works. That the first is the duty of man in his original relation to his Creator and Governor ; that the third is the duty of a special people in a new relation to God ; and that the second is not, and cannot be, the duty of any man ; for that salvation, from first to last, in every particular, is wholly of God, and so of him as to be altogether of grace. But it is time to return from this digression. When the testimony of God concerning his Son takes a promissory character, it may be as decisively asserted that there is no more than a duty enjoined to believe unto salvation than there is when the record is a simple declaration of fact and truth, or than there is when the Word simply teaches us that there is a particular and necessary connection between faith and salvation. Obviously, this question can only be determined, according to the terms upon which the promises are made. Promises may and may not have their fulfillment suspended upon some conditions to be performed by the promises. Both these kinds of promises, as we have already seen, were made in reference to the inheritance of Canaan by the Jews. "God gave it to Abraham by promise." The original grant was unclogged by a single condition to be performed by the grantee. The promise to give the land being wholly unconditional, its possession was secured to those for whom it was granted nevertheless for all their disobedience and unbelief. Highly culpable and justly punished as was the unbelief of the descendants of Abraham, yet their sin did not make God's engagement with him without effect to them in the least degree. Nevertheless for, and as it were in contempt of, all their wickedness, God redeemed his unconditional pledge to their father, and put them into possession. The covenant to give the land was established upon unconditional promises and was fulfilled accordingly. But the promise to retain possession and enjoyment of the heritage was wholly different, for it was entirely conditional. God made a covenant with the fathers of Israel, when he brought them out of Egypt, to give them the enjoyment of the good of the land, (which he had already granted unconditionally as a possession to Abraham,) established upon promises the fulfillment of which was suspended upon conditions that were clearly laid down and afterwards enforced, and the enforcement has resulted in the dispossession and dispersion of the Jews. About no two things could the terms of

an agreement be more unlike than were those of these two covenants; and about nothing, it is thought, do Christian teachers blunder more egregiously than in their references to, and their uses of the terms of these two most dissimilar instruments. For while it seems impossible that any careful reader of the Scriptures can mistake the different principles upon which the covenant made with Abraham and that made with the heads of Israel were established, nor which of them stands in contrast to, and which in comparison with, the covenant of salvation ; it is nevertheless clear, and monstrous as evident, that not a few, whose utterances are accepted with a submission as complete as can be claimed for an oracle, are, with perpetual self-contradiction, constantly confounding the promises of these radically distinct compacts. The day yet seems to be far distant when men will see and leave off the folly of attempting to teach the doctrine of faith in the language of works.

Now, that the principles of the covenant of salvation are in agreement with that made with Abraham, and in contrast to that made with the heads of Israel, the apostle has everywhere taught; and this is the point to be noticed here. Among other noteworthy instances of contrast to the latter, that in Hebrews 8:6-12, may be mentioned. There the apostle calls the covenant of salvation a new one, and better than the other; and better because "established upon better promises." But it will be a great mistake if the betterness of these promises is interpreted merely of their subject matter. No doubt they have a superior Excellency in this respect; but the true idea of their superiority intended by the apostle lies in their unconditionally. That this is the correct view will be plainly apparent to every mind which can see that nobody of ordinary intelligence requires the authority of inspiration to persuade him that the promises of salvation in Christ are, as to their subject matter, better than those which only assured the enjoyment of an earthly heritage. But it is quite clear that mankind have required, and still need, to be authoritatively taught that the promises of the new covenant have the superiority over those of the old of being unconditional. For no truth of the gospel from the beginning until now has been received at first with more disfavor than this, nor submitted to afterwards with more unwillingness, nor held in esteem less generally, nor fallen from more commonly ; and at the present time the sphere in which this truth is accepted and taught with anything like consistency and a loving conviction of its Excellency is, comparatively, almost infinitesimally narrow.

If, then, the covenant of salvation is established upon unconditional promises, it can be no man's duty to believe them in order to his salvation ; for the same thing can never at once be assured to any man unconditionally and conditionally. Faith in the divine promises is, without doubt, according to God's economy, necessary to salvation ; but this is secured to the promises by gift, and is not and cannot be a duty to be discharged in order to the possession of the good promised, for the whole of this is unconditionally assured. Were the reverse of this true, can any one fail to see that just in so far as the discharge of the duty contributed to a man's salvation he would be his own saviour, and that works, not grace, would be the principle upon which his deliverance and advancement would be conducted and established ? And can any one require a more conclusive disproof of this despicably un-evangelical figment?

One example of the promise of salvation will serve to illustrate and confirm this teaching as well as a hundred. If, it is presumed, any part of the divine record can make it to be the duty of every man, in order to his salvation, to believe the promises of God, it will be some such passage as that in Joel 2:32, which is quoted once and again in the New Testament, thus " Whosoever shall call on

the name of the Lord shall be saved." No one could desire this promise to be spoken with less limitation. No union with any outward association, no hereditary succession, and no genealogical descent helps or hinders fulfillment. Gentiles stand on equal terms with Jews. Nothing is mentioned of nationality, of civil standing, of natural parts, nor of moral Excellency. Individuals, as such, independently of all such distinctions are spoken of, and that to an extent as wide as the world.

But, can any one fail to see that, nevertheless, the promise here is not made indefinitely, but only to whosoever may be found pursuing a particular course, and this such a one, indeed, as, in this ungodly world, must make him that takes it a broadly distinguished person ? No man that does not call upon the name of the Lord is entitled, according to this Scripture, to believe that he shall be saved, and no one who is not thus distinguished can be obliged to believe he shall be saved, because such a consummation respecting him is not in evidence from this promise. Should any one say that every man who hears this word of the gospel ought to call upon the name of the Lord in order to his salvation, that by so doing he might bring himself within the promise, it will be enough to answer that nothing of this kind is taught here or elsewhere in the Scriptures, and that such a way of putting the matter, is but a very sorry method of begging the whole question. Such a method may please a partisan who is eager to support a theory by any means, but no such a course can ever satisfy one that is seeking for the truth.

Further, what constitutes this particular exercise ought not to be mistaken. As every true spiritual character has its spurious resemblance, as there are foolish virgins as well as wise ones, it ought not to be taken for granted that everything which looks like a calling upon the name of the Lord is such in truth. Certain it is that to call on the name of the Lord is something more than to say prayers, and, indeed, more than to pray. It may also be safely asserted that this sacred exercise can only proceed upon a previous appreciative knowledge of some of the forms of remedial character which God has graciously assumed by name in his Word, which he embodies in his great work of salvation, and which, in the experience of enlightened minds, are happily appropriate to man's ruined condition. If there is not an appeal in petition, or an offering praise in thanksgiving to God under some one of his characteristic excellencies, whatever there may be of devout feelings and of fervent utterance, there is not a calling upon the name of the Lord. On the one hand, this sacred exercise may be wholly absent from the deepest utterances of the most supplicating litany, from all the forms of the most complete liturgy, conducted as this may be with profound devotion, and with whatever costly and ostentatious accessories, and from the most eloquent expressions of impromptu prayer and praise ; and, on the other hand, a tear may be the voiceless sign of this blessed employment in its truest character and highest degree. But further. If to believe in Christ unto salvation is not a doctrine of salvation, it is nothing. If it is a doctrine of salvation, and not a theological delusion, it will necessarily enter somewhere into the experience of the saved. For it may be laid down as a self-evident proposition, that every doctrine of salvation which has a basis of truth will ever have an exemplification in fact in the experience of some one or other of them who are saved. No corroborative argument, therefore, of the unsoundness of this supposed doctrine of salvation can be stronger than is the simple fact that it has never been known to enter into the experience of any one sinner who has been saved by grace. Of this fact itself there can be no doubt. For who has ever been heard to profess that he had discharged this supposed duty when relating the circumstances of his conversion? Who was ever heard to make a

profession of any saving benefit or right which had at any subsequent time arose to him from the performance of this supposed duty? Absolutely no one. Now if to believe in Christ unto salvation were a duty, and the obligation had ever been discharged, somebody would most certainly have heard of some saving benefit or right arising from its discharge somewhere in the experience of the saved; but of any such thing the whole history of what sinners saved by grace have experienced is altogether silent.

Equally self-evident is it that every doctrine of salvation which has a basis of truth will ever be found entering into and variously influencing the worship of them who are saved. Tried, again, by this test, the doctrine that it is a duty to believe in Christ unto salvation will be proved unsound to the core. We never meet with it in the personal worship of the saved, either in private or public. When they worship God in direct reference to themselves it is never mentioned in their prayers. Never, in any view of it, does it form a subject of their thanksgiving nor a theme of their praise. Hymnologists, so far as I know, have never embodied it in verse, either for the home or the sanctuary; save, indeed, when here and there some of them, forgetting to worship and affecting to preach, may have dropped the devotional strain and picked up the didactic. None of them ever breathe a hint of it when expressing the lofty sentiments of gratitude and love, nor the loftier ones of thanksgiving and praise; and we never meet with the slightest suggestion about it when they are uttering the lowly feelings of reverence and fear, or the lowlier ones of confession and prayer. Liturgists, save when any of them may have forgotten to confess, or pray, or praise, and have affected the evangelist or the homilist, have never embodied this doctrine in any service for the closet, the hearth, or house of God. What can be the reasons that this supposed doctrine of salvation exerts no influence and finds no place in any part of the worship of the saved? One may be mentioned, and there needs not another. This doctrine is wholly unknown to the worship of the saved, because it is utterly alien from every worshipping sentiment which they feel, and from every exercise in which they engage. Not only does not any man who is saved by grace, with any reference to his own salvation, ever render any worship to God according to, and under the influence of this doctrine, but from the very nature of the thing no man can, because the thing is practically impossible.

We hear, indeed, Nehemiah saying to God, "Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people." Nehemiah 5:19. And again, "Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof." Chap. Nehemiah 13:14. See also verses Nehemiah 13:22,31]. Nothing, however, of all this related to salvation, but to matters connected with the Jewish economy, and the governing principle in force between Nehemiah and his God respecting all the things mentioned here was the law of works, not the law of faith. Hence, unusual as are these prayers, there was a perfect propriety in their use by him. But while Nehemiah spoke thus with a complete warrant, no man who is not a fanatic or a maniac would ever dare to say to God, Think upon me, my God, for good, because I have discharged the duty of believing in Christ unto salvation. But if believing in Christ unto salvation were a duty, and any man had discharged the obligation, he would be neither fanatical nor maniacal if he adopted Nehemiah's style in speaking to God about it. He would be without rebuke. He would be entirely within his privilege. But if any man of sound mind will attempt as an experiment to worship God under the guidance of this doctrine, I will venture to predict with the utmost confidence that he will not only find himself wholly outside of his

privilege, but that a sense of horror will make him speechless, and that nothing on earth would ever induce him to repeat, what he would come to regard as, the most offensive and damnable of all presumptuous sins. That two and two make four is a fact not more simple and clear than is the truth that this doctrine is wholly alien from the worship of them who are saved. But can this be said in truth of any proved doctrine of salvation? Is not every such doctrine a prevailing incentive, an instructive guide, and a living energy in the soul of the saved worshipper when he is engaged in the several acts of his worship? I lay it down as a self-evident truth that every doctrine of salvation which refuses to guide and influence saved sinners in their personal worship of God is self-condemned as false by its refusal. I charge such a refusal on the doctrine that it is a duty to believe in Christ unto salvation, and I pray judgment on the false, injurious, and presumptuous offender to proceed accordingly.

Nowhere in the whole field of religion is this doctrine to be found, save in the several walks of the teacher, and here it stands condemned as unsound and alien from its being without example. For it may also be laid down as a self-evident truth that every presumptive doctrine of salvation which cannot justify its pretensions by example is a false one. I challenge the advocates of the doctrine in question to make good its claims according to this rule. One of the readiest methods available by the Christian teacher, and one of his most precious helps, in his teaching of all matters of personal religion, is a reference to his own example and to that of others. But who ever heard a preacher illustrate and enforce the doctrine that it is a duty to believe in Christ unto salvation by any saving right or benefit which ever arose to himself or to others from the discharge of this supposed obligation? What Christian teacher has ever had the hardihood and effrontery to point to his own discharge of this supposed duty as a contribution to his salvation, and to urge an imitation of his example upon others? Or, if any man professing to be a Christian teacher may have been guilty of such a monstrous anomaly, can there have been a people silly enough to have been deceived by the preposterous pride and insolence? If there have been such instances, if any Christian teacher has been known to enforce the discharge of this supposed duty by his own example, and a people have been known to accept the teaching, a clear case has been presented, to this extent at least, of the blind leading the blind. The leader blinded by presumption; the led by ignorance.

Further evidence against any doctrine of personal religion than has been here offered against this, would be wholly unnecessary. If any presumptive doctrine of salvation has never been embodied in the experience of the saved; if it has never been known, and if in the nature of the thing it is impossible that it should ever be able, to guide and influence their worship; and if its most ardent teacher cannot support and defend it by any reference to his own example or to that of others, this will be abundantly sufficient to complete the case against it. Precisely in this condition the notion in question now stands at the bar. Call, therefore, no more witnesses. Upon this evidence the jury may be charged to decide and give their verdict. Venerable as this doctrine may be for its age, solemnly sanctioned and fondly favoured as it may be by whatever great names, and whatever else may be advanced and pleaded on its behalf, having been on fair trial according to admitted rules proved untrue, it is evidently guilty of the damning fault of inherent falseness, and this fact ought to seal its condemnation and to secure execution to proceed accordingly.

14 Of The Warrant To Believe

OF THE WARRANT TO BELIEVE.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHAT has been called the warrant of faith has exercised and perplexed men's minds a great deal more as theologians than as sinners. Whatever different opinions and contentions there may have been about this subject, but very little practical difficulty has ever been experienced about a warrant to believe by any that have desired to exert a depending belief on Christ for salvation. Practically, awakened and humbled sinners experience a vast deal more anxiety and doubt about the quality of their faith in Christ than about their warrant to believe. On this point the excellent Abraham Booth seems to have been led into a mistake. Speaking of the discouragements of the awakened sinner in the matter of believing, he says, "" He wants to find himself distinguished from others by holy tempers and sanctified affections as a proper object of mercy. This is his grand embarrassment. In other words, he considers himself as not sufficiently humbled under a sense of sin; as not having a suitable abhorrence of it ; and as not possessing those fervent breathings after holiness which, as he supposes, are necessary before he can be warranted to believe in Jesus with a well grounded hope of success." This is clearly a mistake. All these exercises, and many more, it is well enough known, do take place in the awakened sinner about believing; but at the same time they in nothing hinder him from exerting a depending act of belief on Christ for salvation. The distinctions which are so painfully, and, indeed, so justly sought by him, are not desired to encourage dependence for salvation, but to certify him that he bears the description of those whom the promise of salvation assures that they shall be saved. In other words, he seeks for these distinctions in himself, not that he may believe God's testimony of fact and truth concerning his Son as the Saviour of sinners, and dependently trust on the word believed, but that he may find in himself the peculiar features of character belonging to those that come within the promise of salvation, and of whom it is said that they " shall be saved."

Anxious as every godly minister of Christ ought to be to preserve the doctrine of the freeness of grace from the least taint of corruption and from any weakening of the warrant of a sinner to believe, in a practical sense, in Christ for salvation; it will yet be a mistake to suppose that all subjective considerations are unnecessary, and to be denied. On this point, too, Mr. Booth does not seem quite clear. Zealous to preserve the warrant of faith in its purity, he seems to have been drawn into a mistake of the meaning of an author, Dr. Hopkins, whom he rather severely criticises. Dr. Hopkins said, it appears, "A hearty submission to, and acquiescence and delight in the law of God, rightly understood, and so a true hatred of sin, must take place in order to any degree of true approbation of the gospel, and faith and trust in Christ. The sinner who comes to Christ for salvation, comes as a true penitent; and that repentance is necessary to this faith." Against these statements Mr. Booth enters upon a very long argument which it is not necessary to follow. So far as the sentiments of Dr. Hopkins may be gathered from this quotation, he never supposed that these things were required, as being the germs of a true holiness, before a sinner is warranted to

dependently believe on the word of salvation, but as forming that peculiar condition of mind, the want of which, in the very nature of things, renders a depending faith on Christ in his remedial character simply impossible. Supposing this to have been the opinion of Dr. Hopkins, there can be no just exception taken against it; but if he demanded these things as including a holy disposition, or, indeed, any holiness, as such, at all, as a warrant for a sinner to believe in Christ for salvation, he was clearly in error. A good deal of argument too is wasted by Mr. Booth upon the repentance requisite to precede faith.

He acknowledges, indeed, that repentance goes before faith, but only in part. Taken as a change of mind and a conviction of sin, he allows repentance to go before faith; but not as a sorrow for sin, and an aversion from it. This seems to be a fiddling observation, that is quite unworthy of that good man. It would be wholly useless to follow him seeing that the whole matter is so plain and may be disposed of very briefly.

It is beyond doubt that the most unrighteous, unholy, and evil sinner in the world is warranted to come to Christ, if he can come to him in truth. If he has the power to appreciate in any degree, only one of the remedial excellencies of the character of Christ, of which God has borne testimony in the Word, the gracious Saviour will not cast him out. In other words, if he has ears to hear, he may hear. If he can come to Christ, he may. He will be accepted as graciously and forgiven as freely as was the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee. But while a conscious need in any degree of only one known form of the Excellency of Christ will be a sufficient warrant for the guiltiest of mankind to exert a depending faith on him for salvation, it must be obvious that the Saviour of sinners neither welcomes nor receives untruthful applicants, nor mimics, nor triflers. All such will be dealt with as was the man who presumed to enter into the marriage feast without having on him a wedding garment. Sick persons may apply to the great Physician with the fullest assurance, because they have the most complete warrant in the Word; but let imitators of persons spiritually sick know that God has no heavier woes than those that are pronounced on hypocrites.

Those, therefore, who may contend for this warrant of faith without limit, that is, independently of all subjective considerations, are clearly in error. It has been said, and perhaps is commonly, and that, too, in a very offhand manner, when speaking of the testimony of God to unbelievers, "Never mind your feelings, believe it." Persons who speak thus, it is quite evident, have yet to learn the very elements of moral and religious truth. They speak as if it were possible to realize forgiveness without a consciousness of wrong; or that a consciousness of wrong, coupled with a desire that the wrong may be pardoned, could exist without repentance. They seem to imagine that the truths of salvation can be appreciatively believed independently of any sensibleness of the evil of the term from, which the deliverance takes place. They appear to ignore the fact that man is a moral being. With a deplorable ignorance, however commendable their zeal, they are heard saying, "Believe! Only believe! Believe now!" and the like; and if a response is made by any one to their passionate address, such as, "I believe," this is thought to be enough to set a whole congregation singing Hallelujahs that another sinner is saved. But if these persons could perceive the force of their notions, they would see that they were singing Hallelujahs, because such a one had, in the discharge of a supposed duty, and according to an imaginary warrant, raised himself out of the surrounding mass of unbelievers by the exercise of believing; or, what seems to be taken as equal, by the simple utterance of a kind of cabalistic saying. What such a person is exhorted to believe, and what he means when he says, "I believe," are things which do not very clearly appear;

and, indeed, seem to be regarded as inconsiderable trifles. But are they such?

Unquestionably, testimony is the object of faith, is that which is to be believed. In this case, it is the testimony that God hath testified concerning his Son. Therefore, the question first to be considered in the warrant of faith, if this is to be taken without limit, is, what of this testimony are all men indiscriminately, and independently of all subjective considerations, warranted to believe? Not that they are saved, because this great fact is not in evidence before faith. Not that they shall be saved, for there is no promise of salvation made to men indiscriminately, but to those only who bear a distinct description; consequently, the promise of salvation can be no evidence that any shall be saved who are without the described distinction. Neither, apart from all subjective considerations, that is, apart from all feeling, are they warranted to believe, in the sense of trusting, in order to their being saved. One of the first requisites of calling upon the name of the Lord, and in coming to Christ, is truth. But as the whole need not a physician, so for such to apply for healing is to mimic and to lie; and no man can be warranted to put on the hypocrite's garb, and to speak lies in coming to Christ. All the Mediatorial fullness of Christ is remedial, and a remedy is for a real and an experienced mischief. Christ is made of God unto sinners, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. But these are all appreciable remedies. In the nature of things it is impossible for any man to come to Christ in truth for any one of these things while he remains unconscious that he wants it; and it is utterly unwarrantable for him to render to the Saviour of sinners a lip homage of mimicry, by asking the Lord Jesus to be, or to do, or to give, something to him for which no need is felt. The completion of a gift is its reception; but God's gifts are saving ones, and for these to be asked for and received in truth, they must be begged and accepted as what they are. Pardon, for instance, can only be asked for in truth, and received as what it is, by one who has amoral conviction of his guiltiness, and this cannot exist without some feeling. So of all the rest. In sum, then, the truth is, that men, indiscriminately, are not warranted to believe the testimony of God concerning his Son beyond what it is their duty to believe; and this is, all the facts and truths, as such, which are therein revealed. But this inevitable conclusion in nothing hampers or hinders those who would believe the promise of salvation in Christ. For it may be said with the greatest confidence, and accepted with the fullest assurance, that the warrant of faith is as wide as the want and the wish to believe. He that neither wants to experience, nor, for this reason wishes to obtain the blessings of salvation, is not warranted to ask God, nor to depend on Christ for them; but he that from any consciousness of need does, may ask, and Welcome depend, and WELCOME. Moreover, he that so asks and depends may, be reminded that he already believes, that all who believe are now justified, and that all who are justified shall be glorified.

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