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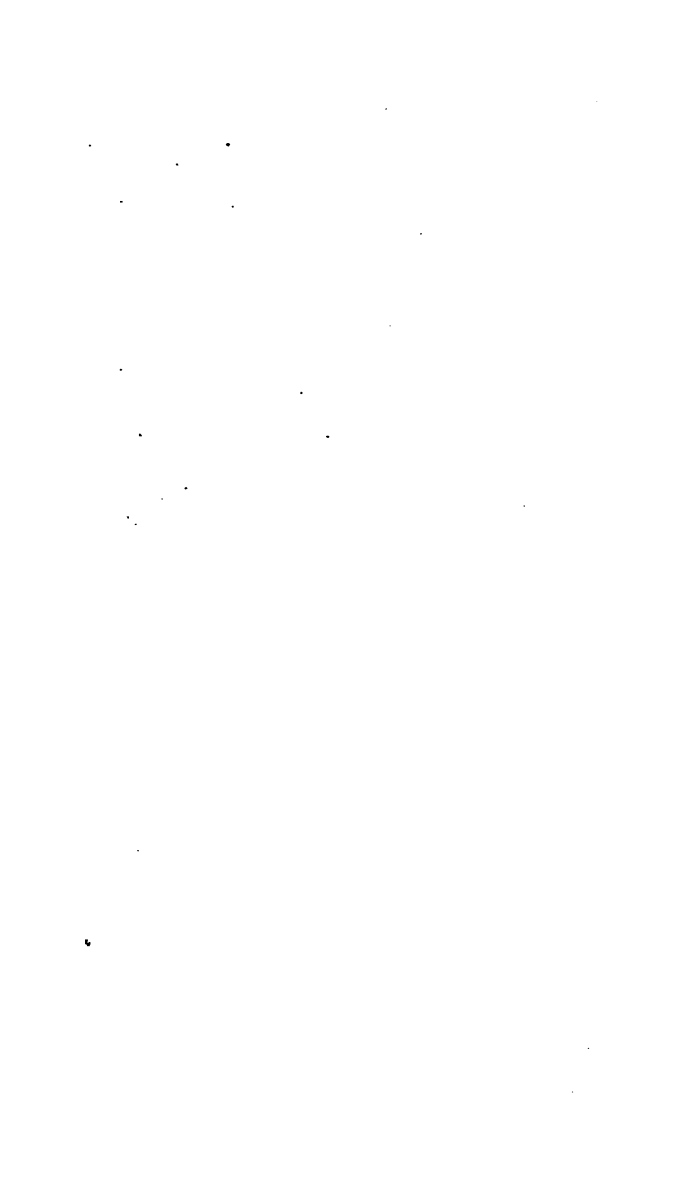
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“SAVING FAITH”

THE FAITH
BY WHICH THE SINNER
IS CONSCIOUSLY UNITED TO THE SAVIOUR
PRACTICALLY CONSIDERED

BY

JAMES MORISON, D. D.



878 THOUSAND. REWRITTEN

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO
GLASGOW: THOMAS D. MORISON
1871

101. i. 1.

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FLORENTINE BANK HOUSE,
GLASGOW,
1st October, 1870.

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“SAVING FAITH.”

INTRODUCTORY.

THERE are few words of greater interest to beings needing salvation, than the word *faith*. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that “without *faith* it is impossible to please God” (xi, 6). If any man is “saved,” it is, says Paul, “through *faith*.” (Eph. ii, 8.) The apostolic answer to the most important question that ever was or ever will be put is this,—“*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts xvi, 31.) “He that *believeth* on me,” says the blessed Saviour himself, “hath everlasting life.” (John vi, 47.) He says again, “He that *believeth not* is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name

of the only begotten Son of God." (John iii, 18.) If any enter not into "rest," either incipiently on earth, or finally and completely in heaven, it is "because of unbelief." (Heb. iv, 6.) It must, then, be of the greatest moment to be possessed of *faith*,—*faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*.

What is this indispensable *faith*? How is it to be distinguished from other mental acts or states?

Faith is really, in itself considered, a simple thing. It must be so. It is a thing for "little children." (Matt. xviii, 3.) It is for "every creature." (Mark xvi, 15.) The most illiterate of men, as well as the wisest and most cultured, have to do with it. (Rom. i, 14.) It is expected from the poor jailers (Acts xvi, 31) and the "poor Josephs" of the human race, as well as from its Bacons and Newtons. *It must be a simple thing.* And if therefore any reader has

been perplexed on the subject, as if it were some great mystery, which only few could understand, we would fraternally ask him to come with us, that we may together search out "what saith the Lord" regarding it. Surely "the way of holiness" will be opened up to those who are willing to walk in it. And we may reasonably hope that it will be so plain, that "the wayfaring men," however inexperienced, need not "err therein." (Isai. xxxv, 8.)

THE WORD FAITH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The word *faith* does not occur frequently in the Old Testament. The thing represented by the word would no doubt be a common enough experience in those ancient times. There were many Old Testament worthies,—of whom

the world was not worthy,—whose prominent characteristic sprang from *faith*. They lived and died in *faith*. In the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews we have an illuminated roll of some of these Old Testament believers. Enoch was one. Abraham was one. Moses was one. And yet in the Old Testament Scriptures themselves, the word *faith* occurs only twice; and in one of the passages where it occurs, it means what we call *faithfulness*, rather than what is called, in the New Testament, *faith*.

The two passages are Deuteronomy xxxii, 20, and Habakkuk ii, 4. In Deuteronomy xxxii, 20, the people of Israel are spoken of as "a very froward generation, children in whom is no *faith*," that is, "children in whom is no *faithfulness*." In the other passage, Habakkuk ii, 4, we read, "the just shall live by *faith*," that is, "the just by *faith*—the righteous by

faith—he who has righteousness by *faith*—shall live.” He shall have true life. Here the word has, we should suppose, its common New Testament acceptation. Indeed, the wonderful apophthegm of the prophet, in which it occurs, is the fountain or well-spring of the most peculiar and glorious element in the teaching of the Apostle Paul. (Rom. i, 16, 17.)



THE WORD FAITH
IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

In the New Testament the word *faith* occurs frequently; but not always with the same signification. It has two significations,—the same two which it has in the two places of its Old Testament usage. In some few cases, it means *faithfulness*. For instance, we read in Romans iii, 3—“For what if some did

"not believe? Shall their unbelief make "*the faith of God* of none effect?" Faith is here ascribed to God. But it is impossible for us to suppose that God is capable of exercising *that kind of faith* which distinguished the Old Testament believers, as believers, and which has rendered illustrious so many of their New Testament successors. God cannot be *a believer*, in the ordinary acceptation of the word. Belief is too imperfect an act or state, having to do with its object *mediately* rather than *immediately*, to be reverently ascribed to God. God's *faith* therefore is his *faithfulness*. There are some few other passages, in which the term seems to have this same signification; and indeed it is rendered *fidelity*, that is, *faithfulness*, in Titus ii, 10, where servants are exhorted not to purloin, "shewing all good *fidelity*," or *faithfulness*, or *faith*. The word is here rendered *faithfulness* in Tyndale's version, and

†

Coverdale's, and the Geneva. It is rendered *faith* in Wycliffe's version and the Rheims.



THE CONNECTION

BETWEEN FAITH and FAITHFULNESS.

It is noteworthy that there is an intimate connection between the words *faith* and *faithfulness*. The word *faith*, as is obvious at once to the ear and to the eye, is part and parcel of the word *faithfulness*. *Faith* is *in* *faithfulness*, because *faithfulness* is supposed to be the quality of a person's character who is *faithful*, that is *faith-full* or *full of faith*. It is assumed in the connection of the words, and it was assumed at the time when the connection of the words was established, that when a man was theologically *full of faith*, he was, on that account, morally *faithful* or characterized

by *faithfulness*. It was assumed, in other words, that when a man had *faith* and was *full of faith*, he would be a man who could be depended on,—a man who might be trusted in all circumstances, and with whatsoever might be committed to his charge. This relationship of *faith* to *faithfulness* is a most interesting connection. It is a relationship which still continues, and will continue while the world lasts—and a great deal longer. In whomsoever there is genuine *faith* in relation to the Gospel and the God of the Gospel, there will be true *faithfulness*. And in whomsoever, on the other hand, there is true *faithfulness* to conscience, in its relation to God and the Gospel, there will, sooner or later, be genuine *faith*, at least in germ. *Faithfulness* and *faith*, when we go to the ultimates of things, imply one another.

It is interesting to note, in connection

with the relationship between *faith* and *faithfulness*, two expressions, contrary to one another, which are still in common use in our every-day language, *good faith* and *bad faith*. We speak of a man acting *in good faith*, or *in bad faith*. A man who acts *in bad faith*, acts dishonestly. He deceives you. He cheats, or tries to cheat you. A man, again, who acts *in good faith*, is a man who acts conscientiously, uprightly, honourably, faithfully. The expressions have an instructive history. They belong to that peculiar phraseological group to which the word *miscreant* belongs. This word *miscreant* is a Norman or French word, meaning *mis-believer*, and its present meaning of *scoundrel* points back to a time when it was assumed, on the one hand, that no true believer could be a scoundrel, and, on the other, that if a man was not a believer in God, as the God of the Gospel,

there was no security that he would not turn out to be a scoundrel. It is thus assumed that if faith in God were lost in society, men would speedily degenerate into a mob of scoundrels. And just as faith is thus *of immense moral moment*, so is it of the greatest consequence that this faith be fixed on the true God and the true Gospel. Faith in a false God would be *bad faith*, and would ultimately exert such a moral influence, that the man would be apt to become, morally, *a man of bad faith*—a man not to be trusted—a man who would not care to keep his word to you if he could break it to his own secular advantage. A man's *worship* determines in the end his *worthship*. *A man of good faith* is a man who is supposed to have right faith—faith, that is to say, in a right object—faith in the true God and in the true Gospel. It is *expected* that such a man will be trust-

worthy to the core. If he be not, his faith is really bad, whatever his profession may be. It is either hypocritical, or based on a mis-apprehension of the grand realities of Revelation. "The word *faith*," as Dr. Samuel Clarke remarks, "always contains in it the notion "of *faithfulness* or *fidelity*." (*Sermons*, xxvi.)

SAVING FAITH = BELIEVING.

It is misleading to suppose that there is some peculiar sacredness and solemnity inherent in the word *faith*, which is not inherent in the word *believing*. Some seem to have the idea that the two terms are quite distinct in their import. But it is not so. There is only one word, in the original language of the New Testament, for both *faith* and *believing*. The term which is rendered

faith in Ephesians ii, 8, "by grace ye "are saved through *faith*," is the same that is rendered *belief* in 2 Thessalonians ii, 13, "God hath from the beginning "chosen you to salvation, through sancti-
"fication of the Spirit and *belief* of the "truth." The identity of the two terms is seen too in Hebrews xi, 6, "Without "*faith* it is impossible to please God; for "he that cometh to God must *believe* that "he is, and that he is the rewarder of "them that diligently seek him."

Our English language is a compound and conglomerate tongue,—embodying, in particular, a remarkable intermixture of Saxon and Latin ingredients. Hence it not infrequently happens that it possesses two distinct terms of identical import, though varying somewhat, it may be, in conventional application. There *are* synonyms. The word *celestial*, for example, is really identical in *import* with the word *heavenly*. And

the words *terrestrial* and *earthly*, in like manner, are perfect synonyms. They are not, it is true, identically *applied* in ordinary usage. They have, happily, established for themselves certain specialties of application, and thus our language is idiomatically enriched. But when we wish to represent the really differentiating import of either of the terms, we find it impossible to distinguish the two. The one is a perfect explanation of the other. The same is the case with *faith* and *belief*. The former is originally a Latin word, and the latter is Saxon. But both are accurate renderings of the one Greek term employed in the New Testament. And hence a very noticeable phenomenon,—there is only the one verb *to believe* corresponding to both the nouns. He *who has faith*, therefore, is simply he *who believes*. And a *Confession of Faith* is simply the *Confession of belief*. It is a *Creed*.

BIBLE-BELIEVING

NOT A PECULIAR KIND OF BELIEVING.

The words FAITH, BELIEF, and BELIEVING, have the same meaning in the Bible, which they have in the language of ordinary life. They describe a certain act or exercise of the mind, which is one and uniform, whatever be the object we believe. The phrases I believe it, I don't believe it,—I believe him, I don't believe him,—I believe in him, I don't believe in him, are expressions which every person is using almost every day of his life; and in these expressions the word believe describes precisely the same act or exercise of mind, which it describes when John the Baptist says, "He that believeth "on the Son hath everlasting life." (John iii, 36.) There is no difference between the two states of the mind, so far as the act of believing is concerned. If we know exactly, therefore, what the word

believe means in the language of ordinary life, we know exactly what it means in the inexpressibly important language of the Bible.

It could not well be otherwise. For did not the Holy Spirit, who animated the Bible-writers, and who is therefore the Divine Author of the Bible, intend it to be understood? Surely it could not be his design to make the Bible a **Mystery**, or an **Enigma**. He meant it to be a **Revelation** or an **Unveiling**. And hence, that he might speak to us intelligibly, he made use, not of his own divine and infinitely perfect language, such as he may employ in his ineffable communings with the Father and the Son, but of our human and imperfect phraseology. And not only does he employ our human words, he employs them, as far as the circumstances will permit, in their ordinary human acceptations. Our own words would not other-

wise be intelligible to us,—more especially those of them that have become stereotyped in their usage, as the representatives of the objects of our invariable self-consciousness. The Holy Spirit employs, for instance, in addition to the word *believing*, multitudes of such words as *thinking, remembering, forgetting, loving, hating, choosing, hearing, speaking, standing, walking, running, eating, drinking, singing, mourning, doubting, knowing*. But, if, while employing these words, he metamorphosed or interchanged their meanings, his communications would be either unintelligible or misleading. If, for example, when using the word *thinking* he meant by it *loving* or *hating*, how perplexing it would be! Or if, when he used the word *remembering*, he meant *forgetting*, or *speaking*, or *singing*, how exceedingly puzzling the revelation would be, and how exceedingly *disheartening* to the reader! If, when he

says "Thou shalt not *kill*," or when he still more sublimely says "Thou shalt *love thy neighbour as thyself*," he neither meant *kill* on the one hand, as men in general understood the word, nor *love* on the other, such as men in general understand by the term, of what use would the statutes be? It could not be said of them, "The commandment of the Lord *is pure, enlightening the eyes*"—"more-over, by them is thy servant *warned*." (Psalm xix, 8—11.) Nothing seems clearer than that the Holy Spirit employs those stereotyped words in their stereotyped acceptations. When he uses the word *standing*, he does not mean by it *leaping*. If he speaks of *running*, he does not mean *sitting*. If he speaks of *hearing*, he does not mean by it *speaking*. He uses all these words in their ordinary acceptation. And can we suppose that when he uses the word *believing*, he means something as dif-

ferent from *common believing*, as *thinking* is from *choosing*, or as *choosing* is from *remembering*? It surely cannot be.

If a master were to command his servant to *run*, and were then to beat him because he did not *stand*, what would we think of him? And if God were to command men to *believe*, and were then to punish them for not doing something as different from *believing* as *standing* is from *running*, would he not be acting in an utterly inexplicable way?

If there had been, indeed, an *Inspired Preface to the Bible*, in which we were instructed to understand all other words, descriptive of the well-known objects of human consciousness, in their ordinary acceptations, but to beware of understanding the term *believing* in its usual sense, and defining plainly the peculiar sense which was to be attributed to it, *then we could* easily have supposed that

the Holy Spirit had given to it some extraordinary signification. But as there is no such Prefatory Note, we seem to be shut up to understand the term in its common acceptation.

Moreover, it is an undenied and undeniable fact that the word *believing* is frequently used, in the Bible, in its ordinary acceptation. See, for instance, Acts ix, 26, where it is said, "When Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples; but they were afraid of him, and *believed not* that he was a disciple." Here the word *believed* is admitted on all hands to have its ordinary meaning. See too Acts xxvii, 11, where it is said, "Nevertheless, the centurion *believed* the master and the owner of the ship more than those things that were spoken by Paul." Here also the word is used undeniably in its ordinary acceptation. Dr. John Erskine,—the venerable correspondent of Jonathan

Edwards,—after referring to some similar passages, remarks,—“I may venture to say, If Christians had consulted systems less, and Scripture and their own experience more, they would not have affixed to *believing* in other passages a sense entirely different from what it bears in these.”* See also Exod. iv, 1, 5; 1 Sam. xxvii, 12; Prov. xiv, 15; xxvi, 25; Jer. xii, 6; Hab. i, 5; Matt. xxiv, 23; Luke i, 20; John iv, 21; ix, 18; Acts xxiv, 14; xxvii, 25; xxviii, 24; Rom. xiv, 2. In all these passages the word is admittedly employed in its ordinary acceptation. How extremely perplexing, then, it would be, if, in multitudes of other passages, and more especially in those that come home most closely to our bosoms and our most important interests the term were, without any note or warning, used in a totally different and alto-

* *Dissertation on the Nature of Christian Faith,*
§. 1.

gether unexplained acceptance ! If the Bible were constructed on such a principle, a man might guess, indeed, at its meaning, but he could scarcely be ever sure that he understood it. He might accidentally alight upon its true import, as some men draw prizes out of a lottery, but it would be utterly beyond his power to engage in a rational and sober interpretation of "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." "I humbly apprehend," says Archibald Hall, "that the act of believing is the same, whether Christ, or the creation of the world, or the birth of Isaac, or the departure of Israel out of Egypt, or the falling down of the walls of Jericho, be the thing believed."*

* *Treatise on the Faith and Influence of the Gospel.*
Part I, Chap. ii, §. 1.

BELIEVING A KIND OF THINKING.

Believing is not a kind of feeling. Neither is it a kind of willing. It is *a kind of thinking*. "The understanding," as James Fraser of Brea expressed it, in his *Treatise concerning Justifying or Saving Faith*, written by him while "a prisoner for Christ in the Bass Rock," "is the proper and immediate subject of faith." (Vol. i, p. 175). When we believe that there is a God, we do not feel that there is. Neither do we will that there shall be. We think that there is; and we think that there is, because we have reason for entertaining such a thought. When we believe that there is a land called Australia, we do not feel that there is; and we do not choose that there shall be. We think that there is and we think that there is, because we have evidence to satisfy us that there is *such a country*. When we believe that

Abraham was the father of the Israelites, we do not feel that he was. We do not will or choose that he should be. We think that he was; and we think that he was, because we have evidence to satisfy us that he was. When we take money to the bank, and lodge it for a period, we have faith that we shall get interest for it, and that we shall get it back, whenever we may wish to have it. We *believe* that we shall get interest; and we *believe* that we can get back the entire sum. What is this believing or faith? It is, assuredly, neither feeling nor willing. We do not feel that we shall get interest; and though we choose or will to get it, yet our choice or will is founded on our believing or faith, and is thus not the believing or faith itself. When we believe that we shall get interest, and both interest and capital as soon as we wish to have both, we just *think* that we shall get interest.

and our capital too; and we have this thought because we have evidence that satisfies us that the bank is worthy of being trusted,—of being entrusted with our money. The bank's *credit* is good with us. The bank commands *credit* in the money market.

Believing then, is *a kind of thinking*, though not the same kind of thinking as that by which we demonstrate a mathematical proposition, or that by which we observe the facts of science, or that by which we weave a web of imagination. It is that kind of thinking which is founded upon evidence. It is a *persuasion* of the mind.*

It is assuredly of great moment that men should bear in mind that, when they are called upon to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ in order to salvation, *it is thinking that is needed*. It is our thoughts of things that ulti-

* *πίστις*, from *πειθω* to persuade.

mately rule us. It is thought that rules the world.

If, then, men would believe in God,—they must think, and think the right thought about God. In thus thinking, they *do believe* in God, and *will become*, in their moral character, *men of good faith*. Their thought about God will rule them. Being right thought, it will rule them rightly. And so, if men would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they must think,—and think the right thought about him. They must think the Bible-thought, the Holy Spirit's thought. And if they do, their thought will be not simply *faith*,—it will be *good faith*, and they will hence become, in their moral character, *persons of good faith*. If they be *full of faith*, it will be reasonably expected that they shall be found *faithful* in all their relations.

SAVING FAITH THE RECEPTION
OF THE TESTIMONY OF GOD.

The Apostle John says, in his General Epistle (v, 9—11), "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

This is an exceedingly instructive passage. The famous Scottish theologian Boston found it, "in his extremity," to be "the sweet and comfortable prop of his soul." From that time onward, he made the passage one of the chief themes of his ministry. The writer's beloved *father*, too, found peace in its represen-

tations,—peace, and something in addition that was the principle of an entirely new career of life.

1. Note the words *witness* and *record*. It is but one term in the original which receives the two translations. It is the same term that is rendered *testimony* in John iii, 32, 33; v, 34; viii, 17; xxi, 24; Acts xxii, 18; Rev. i, 2, 9; vi, 9; xi, 7; xii, 11, 17; xix, 10. The whole passage might have been correctly and appropriately thus rendered,—“If we receive the *testimony* of men, the *testimony* of God “is greater; for this is the *testimony* of “God, that (ὅτι) he hath *testified* of his “Son. He that believeth on the Son “of God hath the *testimony* in himself; “he that believeth not God hath made “him a liar; because he believeth not on “(εἰς) the *testimony* that God gave of his “Son. And this is the *testimony*, that “God hath given to us eternal life, and “this life is in his Son.” In the Rheims

version of the New Testament, it is the word *testimony* that is used in all the clauses. In Wycliffe's version the corresponding word *witnessinge* is employed throughout.

2. "The testimony that God *gave* of "his Son," is the testimony that he gave by "the Spirit, the water, and the "blood," (ver. 8). It is *the Gospel*. It is the Glad Tidings of salvation for sinners. The tidings are true in all their elements, Spiritual, Baptismal, Sacrificial. They are God's *testimony*. No other one but Himself could inform us whether he was willing and wishing to save sinners. No other one could inform us whether the way was clear for us to obtain, or for him to dispense, the wonderful gift of "everlasting life." *Hence his testimony was needed*. Being needed, it was given.

3. God's Testimony or Record or *Gospel*—be it remarked in passing—

amounts to this,—“God hath given to “us eternal life, and this life is in his “Son.” God has made a gift to us of eternal life; and this life is in his Son. (Compare Rom. vi, 23.) Such is the idea of the “beloved disciple;” and hence he adds,—“he that hath the Son, hath “life; he that hath not the Son of God, “hath not life.”

Boston and all the “Marrow-men” used to draw special attention to the words “to *us*,” in this *testimony* or *record* or *Gospel*. The Gospel, they reasoned, is good news to “all nations,” and to all in “all nations,”—to “every “creature;” and hence when it is testified in this universal Gospel, that God has made a gift “to *us*” of eternal life, the fulness of the divine meaning, and of the divine generosity, is not apprehended, unless it be clearly seen that the gift is *to all without distinction or exception*, or, as Boston and his fellow

Marrow-men used to express it, *to us mankind-sinners as such*. The gift is really to you, my fellow-sinner, "whosoever" you are, and whatsoever you have been. The message of salvation, says Dr. Chalmers, harmoniously with the Marrow-men, "points the eye of each, "and of every man, to an open heaven, "and invites him to enter thereinto. By "such terms as *all* and *any* and *every* "and *whosoever*, it brings its offers of "reconciliation most specifically to bear "on each unit of the human population."*

4. He *who believes the record* is just he *who receives the testimony*. Hence we see what it is *to believe the Gospel*. It is to think the thought of God regarding what is "in" his Son, Christ Jesus. Saving faith is thus, most certainly, a kind of thinking.

* Introductory Essay to Hall's *Faith and Influence of the Gospel*, p. xxiv.

5. This view of saving faith is remarkably confirmed by the solemn declaration that "he who believeth not God *hath made him a liar.*" He is acting toward God, as *if he were a liar.* He treats God's glorious Gospel as if it were an untruth. God and he contradict one another. The man says "No" to God. Although God assures him that it is the case that there is a gift of eternal life, and that the gift is to him and to all, yet he does not take in the idea; and thus he not only dishonours the divine Testifier, he continues uninfluenced by the sublime moral power of the idea. He *exists* indeed; but he does not really *live.* He has not "everlasting life."

SETTING TO THE SEAL
THAT GOD IS TRUE.

It is said by John the Baptist,—“He “that hath received his testimony”—the testimony of the Son of God—“*hath set to his seal that God is true.*” (John iii, 33.) The expression throws illustrative light on the nature of saving faith.

Not only is it the case that the believer receives the testimony of Christ concerning the Father, and the concurrent testimony of the Father concerning Christ. This *is* the case. But it is also the case that, in receiving this testimony, *he hath set to his seal that God is true.* He has avouched his confidence in the veracity of God,—whereas the unbeliever acts *as if God were a liar.* The believer *holds-for-true*, as the Germans express it,* whatever

* *Für-wahr-hält.* See, for instance, Krug's *Pistologie*, §§. 3, 4.

God has testified. He is satisfied with the simple asseveration of the living God.

Much, indeed, is "perilled" on that simple asseveration. There are great interests at stake. They are great at all events to the sinner,—great in their bearing on his bliss for time, and his prospects for eternity. But the believer does not hesitate. *He just takes God at his word*,—a fine old-fashioned definition of saving faith. He could not do otherwise, for he "has set to his seal that "God is true."

The act and fact of faith is thus an avouchment of confidence in the divine veracity. And hence faith itself is that kind of thinking which responds unfalteringly to the evangelical Testimony or Declaration of God. It recognizes in the divine veracity the ground of its own "full assurance," and of the "full assurance" of that "lively hope," into which it effloresces. (Heb. vi, 11.)

FAITH A KIND
OF HEARING OR SEEING.

The Apostle Paul asks the Galatians, who had vacillated in their faith, the following question,—“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (Gal. iii, 2.) The apostle admits and assumes that the Galatian believers had received “the Spirit.” They had received all those effluxes of his influence that were needful in their peculiar circumstances. They had received the specific efflux that resulted in miracles. (Chap. iii, 5.) They had received the more generic efflux that resulted in the inward flow and glow of “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith (or faithfulness), meekness, temperance.” (See Chap. v, 22.) These, says the Apostle, are “the fruit of the Spirit.” They are “earnests” of the

glory that is yet to be. They are earnestnesses which are needful for all cycles of time, and in all circumstances of outward condition. They are generically needful.

The Galatian believers had thus "received the Spirit;" and the Apostle asks them whether they had received His gifts "by the works of the law," that is, *by obedience to the prescriptions of the ceremonial or moral law*, "or by the hearing of faith." We know that it was "by the hearing of faith." But note the expression. It denotes *the hearing into which faith resolves itself, or, of which it consists*. It thus graphically represents *faith as hearing*.

The representation is very instructive. It teaches us that, in exercising faith, we do not need to turn inward *to feel*. Neither do we need to turn inward *to will*. *We need to turn outward to hear*.

It is assumed that One is addressing us, who may be heard, and who is worthy of being heard. It is assumed that he brings a message to us. It is assumed that his message is true. It is assumed that it is from God. The message is divine. So is the messenger. He is from God. *He is God. It is God the Holy Spirit who speaks.* In Him the Son speaks. In Him the Father speaks. They unitedly speak *to us.* The three-one God speaks *to all.* His voice is directed *to men* as men. He "cries aloud, and spares not." He says, "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the children of men":—"hearken unto me":—"he that heareth shall live,"—he shall have peace, and joy, and lively hope, and holiness, and everlasting life:—"O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord" and live:—"Why wilt thou die?"

We thus see the proper attitude of

the soul in putting forth the exercise of faith. *It is the attitude of a hearer in relation to a Divine Speaker,—the attitude of a listener, a receiver of good news as by the ear. Faith is hearing.*

Or, if any prefer a transference to another of the recipient senses, *faith is seeing*. It is looking,—looking unto Jesus. “As Moses lifted up the serpent “in the wilderness,” that whosoever looked to it might live, even so has the Son of Man been lifted up, that whosoever looks to him “might not perish but “have everlasting life.” (John iii, 14, 15.) Look, the sight is glorious! “Look “unto me,” He calls aloud, “and be ye “saved, all the ends of the earth.” (Isaiah xlv, 22.) Look, then, O serpent-bitten sinner! Look now. Lo, your sin was on the Lamb of God. He bore it eighteen hundred and fifty years ago. He bore it away. *He bore it out of the way which leads up to God and to glory.*

The brave old African chief, who had been led by Mr. Moffat to think of heavenly things, came, in his dream, to a mountain,—vast, precipitous, and insurmountable. It stretched right across the pathway that led to the home of his heart. What was he to do? It was the mountain of his iniquities. As he looked, his spirit failed him. He gazed wistfully from point to point of the vast expanse, and scanned, and scanned again, the whole frowning mass, to see if there was any trace of a possible pathway. But there was none. He wept in an agony of distress. What was he to do? He looked higher; and lo, as he looked, *a drop of blood descended from heaven on the mountain's peak*, and immediately the whole tremendous mass melted away. The way was clear! The way is still clear. It is clear, not by your efforts, O sinner, but by the grace of the *great Saviour*.

FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE.

Saving Faith is a kind of knowledge. This is rendered evident by what our Saviour says in John xvii, 3, "This is *life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*" "Life eternal" is the gift of God. (Rom. vi, 23.) It is the gift of God to men. (1 John v, 11.) It is given *that men may know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.* (John xvii, 3.) And hence when men come to this knowledge, they have eternal life, and shall "never die." (John xi, 26.) They may drop the body; and eyes that have fondly looked on them here, may for a season see them no more. Hands that have fondly pressed them may touch them no more. But they shall "never die." Their death will, as it were, be no death. It will be death without its deadly element,—death with-

out its "sting." How glorious! And all this is to be attained *by knowing God and Christ.*

Hence we read in 1 Timothy ii, 4, that God "will have all men to be saved, and "to come unto *the knowledge of the truth.*" The last clause informs us how the first is to be accomplished. Men are to be *saved, by coming to the knowledge of the truth.* As soon as any come to *the knowledge of the truth,* they enter into the enjoyment of salvation. "They that *know thy name,*" says the Psalmist, "will put their trust in thee." (Psalm ix, 10.) And if any do not put their trust in God, it is because they are "alienated from the life "of God *through the ignorance that is "in them.*" (Ephes. iv, 18.) They are "destroyed *for lack of knowledge,— "because they have rejected knowledge.*" (Hos. iv, 6.) "Israel doth not know," says God, "my people doth not consider."

(Isaiah i, 3.) There are very many who are "laden with sins, and led away with "divers lusts," and who are "ever learning" and yet "never able to come to "the knowledge of the truth." (2 Tim. iii, 6, 7.) For this reason they remain unsaved.

It is obvious, then, that saving faith is *a kind of knowledge*. It is not so much a kind of feeling, or a kind of willing, as a kind of thinking. But it is right thinking. And hence it is *knowledge*. It is thinking that corresponds to the reality of the thing which is the glorious object of the thought. He who thinks the right thought regarding God and Christ, as God and Christ stand related, in the scheme of mercy, to sinners, knows the truth of truths. He is a believer of the glorious Gospel, and has eternal life.

Men often distinguish between *faith* and *knowledge*; but not always happily.

There are indeed certain kinds of knowledge which could not be called faith. Whatsoever we know directly and intuitively, we do not believe. Friedrich H. Jacobi called such knowledge *faith*;^{*} but unhappily. *We need to know that we may believe.* Although it is also true that there is a sphere of things in which we need to believe that we may know. But we do not believe that we exist. We know that we do. We do not believe that we see, and hear, and smell, and taste, and touch: we know that we do. We do not believe that we are self-conscious: we know that we are. We do not believe that twice one is two: we know that $1 + 1$ is 2. But we may either know by demonstration on the one hand, or believe through credible testimony on the other, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. We may either know,

^{*} See, especially, his *Idealismus und Realismus*.

or simply believe, that the earth is round, and that the sun is larger than the earth. We may either know or simply believe that there is a God. *No man knows directly that there is.* He ascends to the knowledge. He starts from some other knowledge, and thence rises up, as on a ladder, to see. He ascends, as Des Cartes beautifully shows,* from his own consciousness. It is there that he finds his first foothold. Our knowledge of God is thus *mediate*; and hence it may be merely *faith*. We “believe in God.” We “believe that “God is.” (Heb. xi, 6.) But the steps by which the higher minds climb to this conclusion are so real,—they so incontrovertibly lead to it,—that the conclusion is an object of the highest possible subjective certainty. *They ‘know’ that God is.*

When once we not only know that

* *Discours de la Méthode.*

God is, but also know that he has revealed himself in the volume of the Book, and in the glorious Gospel of his grace—as the central and all-pervading theme of the volume of the Book,—then our faith in the glorious object of the Gospel may be most legitimately represented as *a kind of knowledge*. Although faith in some cases, may be only the certainty of ignorance; yet in other cases, and emphatically in the case before us, it may be, and should be, and often is, the certainty of true knowledge.



FAITH "THE SUBSTANCE
OF THINGS HOPED FOR."

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for." So says the inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the first verse of the eleventh chapter. And

very likely he knew well enough, while penning the words, that he was not giving a description of faith which would be intelligible at a glance to every child and childish mind. Very likely he intended that the words should be food for mature meditation. He was accustomed to discriminate between *ideas of milk* and *ideas of meat*, (chap. v, 12—14); and most probably he would be quite well aware that his words here were “strong meat,” which would require prolonged mastication and strong digestion, that they might be thoroughly triturated, assimilated, and made their own, by the minds of his readers.

While it is matter of great gratitude that there is abundance of milk for babes in the Revelation of the mind of God, it is also matter of almost equal gratitude that there are other elements and aspects of things that require far more than an infantile apprehension to master

and make use of. It would have been a pity if there had been nothing in "the volume of the Book" to task our mental powers, and to keep us recurring, and recurring, with renewed effort and energy, to the invigorating engagement of adding research to research, and thinking to thinking, till, after overcoming every successive difficulty, we at last achieve success, and stand on the elevated platform of view which was occupied by the inspired writers, and by the Spirit of God who inspired them. It is well that in the ample domain of Scripture there are lofty mountains and deep ravines, as well as level plains.

What, then, is it that the inspired writer means, when he says that "Faith *is the substance of things hoped for*"?

There is something in the statement that is sufficiently obvious. Faith has to do with *things hoped for*. Not indeed *with these things only*. It has to do

with multitudes of other things, as is evidenced by the writer's second affirmation, in which he says that faith is "the evidence of *things not seen.*" That is a wider sphere of things than *things hoped for.* Faith, in so far as it can occupy itself at all, must deal with "things not seen,"—things that are *beyond the reach of sight, and hearing, smelling, tasting, touching.* And among these things, are *the things that we hope for.*

Besides *the unseen things that we hope for,* there are indeed multitudes of other unseen things, with which our faith has to do. For example, it has to do with God. (Heb. xi, 6.) He is not seen, though he is not one of the things hoped for. Things hoped for are to us in the future; but God is in the past and the present as well as the future. Faith, again, has to do, as the inspired writer reminds us (Heb. xi, 3), with the creation of the world. "By faith we

"understand that the worlds were framed
"by the word of God, so that things which
"are seen were not made of things which
"do appear." This divine creation of the
worlds is to us a thing unseen, but not
thing hoped for.

Christian faith, also, has much to do
*with Christ, as he 'was' when upon the
earth.* It has to do with what he taught,
with what he then did, with what he then
suffered. Did he teach for our sake as
well as for the sake of others? Christian
faith has to do with that. Did he live on
earth for our sake as well as for the sake
of others? Christian faith has to do with
that. Did he think of us, when he was
down here? Did he look forward to us?
Did he feel for us? Did he take our sins,—
yours? Did he lay them on himself? Did
he bear them to the cross? Did he make
full propitiation or satisfaction for them?

all? Did he, or did he not? Faith, Christian faith, saving faith, has much to do with all that. And it is in such things as these—long ages past—that Christian hope for the future finds a firm and sure foundation on which to rest.

But, while all this is the case, it is equally true that faith has much to do with what is future and “hoped for.” It has much to do with everlasting bliss and glory and honour. Is there to be a future existence? Is it possible for this future existence to be a state of glory? May *our* future existence, notwithstanding our woful sinfulness, be a state of life rather than of death? May it be a state of blessedness? Will it be? Will heaven be our home? Shall we be admitted to the fellowship of angels and archangels? Shall we get to a position that will be within sight of the throne? Faith has to do with these questions. Christian faith answers them all in a

gloriously unwavering affirmative. And thus this Christian faith is "the substance of things hoped for."

Their *substance!* What means the inspired writer? What can he mean?

We all know more or less about the meaning of the word "substance. When we take a piece of wood in our hand, we say, This is a certain kind of *substance*. It is quite a different kind of thing from iron. Iron, too, we denominate a *substance*. As such, it is very different from silver or gold. We speak of hard *substances* and soft *substances*, rough *substances* and smooth, malleable *substances* and brittle, solid *substances* and fluid, and vapoury and gaseous *substances*. Then philosophers step in and speak of *mental substances*. They tell us that every mind is a *substance*, though a *spiritual substance*, and therefore a very different *substance* from flesh or bones, or brains, or wood, or stone, or

iron. Then, too, we are accustomed to speak of the *substance* of a sermon, or the *substance* of a poem, or of a book. We speak of the *substance* of a conversation. And speaking of this same *substance*, we often call it *the sum and substance* of the whole matter in hand. We say, moreover, at other times, that such or such a book, or pamphlet, or sermon, or address, has little *substance* in it. And reverting from these spiritual or intellectual things to things material, we say, perhaps of this fabric or of that, or even of this kind of food or of that, it has little *substance* in it.

Now, what is the meaning of this word "substance," which is so freely used in reference to so many different things? It cannot mean *what is hard*; for though iron is hard, water is not, neither is gas; and yet both of these are as really substances as iron. And then if it meant what was hard, it could not be

applied to minds, and sermons, and poems, and such like things. Every soft thing as well as every hard thing, is a substance. It is a soft substance. So every red thing is a red substance. And every sweet thing is a sweet substance. Every tall thing is a tall substance; and every broad thing is a broad substance.

What, then, is this *substance* (this *substantia*, this *ὑπόστασις*)? What is the real meaning of the word? It is this—*that which is standing under*. That is its real meaning; and we shall never fully understand the various applications of the word, unless we carry with us the idea, that a *substance* is *something standing under*. When we lift a bit of iron, and feel it hard and heavy, we say—That is a hard and heavy substance. What do we mean? We feel hardness. We feel heaviness. But there is more than hardness and heaviness in our hand. There is something

standing under the hardness and the heaviness. That something is the substance we call iron. When we lift a handful of down, we feel it to be soft and light. What do we mean? We feel softness and lightness. But there is more in our hand than the feeling of softness and lightness. There is a thing that is soft and light. There is, in other words, something standing under the softness and lightness which we feel. There is, that is to say, a substance. The down is a substance light and soft. When we taste sugar, we feel sweetness, and we say, there is sweetness in it. In it? In what? In that which is under and standing under the sweetness,—in the substance of the sugar. In all other cases, when the term is legitimately used, it has the same meaning. The substance of water is that which is standing under the fluidity. The substance of steam is that which is

standing under the vapour. It is, indeed, the very same substance that is standing under the fluidity of water, and the solidity of ice. The substance of every mind, also, is that which is standing under its power and acts of thinking, its power and states of feeling, and its power and acts of willing. The substance of a sermon is that which is standing under all its explanations, and illustrations, and argumentations. The substance of a poem is that which is standing under the entire superstructure of its imagery and mental music. The sum and substance of a speech is that which gathers up all that was said into its essence, and which was really standing under every head and particular of thought. A speech without any substance, is a speech whose words and phrases and images and arguments go for nothing, as really having nothing at all *standing* under them that is worthy (

consideration. And food too, without substance, would be food that may have bulk indeed, and the appearance of what is nourishing, but which has really little or no nourishing properties standing under these appearances.

We now have before our minds what a *substance* is. But how does this help us to understand what the inspired writer means when he says—"Faith is "the substance of things hoped for"? Is it the case that faith is something standing under the heavenly things hoped for by all Christian believers? Yes, this is the case. Faith is *the condition of standing under the heavenly things hoped for*. The heavenly things, as things hoped for, inhere in faith. And thus faith is *standing under them*, so far as they are hoped for. Is the reader puzzled? Then, for a moment or two, transpose the words *standing under*, and part of the inspired writer's idea—

though of course only a part—will become transparent. Faith is the condition of *under-standing* the heavenly things hoped for. Is not light now looking in? Faith, in some of its relations, is a kind of standing-under; and such a kind of standing-under as is kindred to understanding. Christian faith is, in an important sense, *standing-under, or under-standing, the heavenly things hoped for*. Whatever we under-stand, that we stand-under. We not only look at its surface, and on this side of it, and that; we go down to its foundation. We search into its basis. We *go under-neath* it, as it were, and stand underneath. Then we under-stand it. Do we under-stand an argument, for instance on any disputed point? If we do, then we have not only examined its surface or superficialities, and gone over in detail points that strike everybody's view; we *go farther* in our investigation. W

to the bottom of the subject. We go farther still. We wish to see what it is on which it rests, what it is that is underneath it altogether. We must judge whether or not that which is underneath it is sufficient to support it. Hence we need, in our search, to go down and stand underneath the whole intellectual erection. When we go down in this manner, we *under-stand* it. Now faith is a *kind of under-standing*. All faith is a kind of under-standing: and Christian faith is a kind of under-standing of the heavenly things hoped for. It is, for instance, understanding that they really are. It is understanding that they are the gifts of a Father's love. It is understanding that they are given through the glorious propitiation accomplished by the Son's death upon the cross. It is understanding that they are free to all, and reserved in heaven for all them who joyfully anticipate them, and who

walk, and run, and live, on earth by faith that terminates on them. This is Christian faith in relation to heavenly things. It is at once an understanding and standing-under. *He who has the faith stands under the things hoped for, and the things hoped for.* Heaven is above his soul,—heaven as his hoped-for home. He looks up, as he stands under, and understands. He sees not merely the stars that stud the sky,—he sees beyond the sky, into the interior of the temple not made with hands, and he beholds the right hand of the Majesty, Jesus his Saviour and his Advocate. *The things hoped for—as hoped for—dip down into, and inhere in his faith.* His faith is, as it were, their subjective substratum or ground.*

* “Faith gives, thus, things hoped for, and as they are hoped for, a real subsistence in the minds and souls of them that do believe.”—OWEN, *Exposition of Hebrews*, in loc.

Hence it is that the word which is translated *substance* in the text, and very literally and correctly so translated, is rendered *ground* in the margin. It is the rendering of Lefèvre and Calvin.

It is also rendered *confidence*, and quite properly so. This is the rendering given in the versions of Luther, Tyndale, and Coverdale; and it is approved of by such critics as Böhme, Bleek, de Wette, Ebrard, Moses Stuart, Delitzsch, Alford. He who in his soul stands under, and thus far understands, the heavenly things hoped for, is *confident* in reference to them. His standing under, and his understanding, is confidence. He is confident that the things really are; that they are altogether glorious; that they are gloriously free,—the purchase of the blood of him who shed his blood as “a ransom for all.” *His faith is, thus, confidence.* (Compare

2 Cor. ix, 4; xi, 17; Heb. iii, 14.) But it is a departure from accuracy to translate the word as Grotius, Cameron, Ernesti Rosenmüller, and Kuinöl do, *expectation*. The *confidence* of 'expectation' is not identical with *the confidence* of 'understanding.' It is its result.

FAITH "THE EVIDENCE
OF THINGS NOT SEEN."

Faith is the evidence of things not seen. This is the other and simpler part of the description of faith, that is given by the inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi, 1).

He is not referring to *logical evidence* properly so called. Such logical evidence is not itself faith, but the substrate and reason of faith. The mind *needs* logical evidence to warrant its

belief. The inspired writer is referring to a species of *psychological evidence*. He means that the things not seen *evidence themselves*, psychologically, by means of faith. They make themselves evident to the mind by means of faith.

The word rendered *evidence* may also be rendered *demonstration* or *proof*. "The things hoped for" *demonstrate*, or *show*, or *prove, themselves* to the mind by means of faith. Things visible evidence themselves to the mind by means of the eye. Things tangible evidence themselves to the mind by means of the touch. Things audible evidence themselves to the mind by means of the ears. And so things that are beyond all our outer senses, things in heaven, the glorious invisibilities that are there, evidence and prove and demonstrate themselves to the mind, by means of faith,—faith in the testimony of God, written or unwritten.

“SAVING FAITH.”

The eye is the evidence we have for what we see. The touch is the evidence we have for what we feel. The ear is the evidence we have for what we hear. And, in like manner, faith—faith in the sure testimony of God—is the evidence we have for the heavenly invisibilities which we hope for. By it we *under-stand* them and find them present to our contemplation. Happy, therefore, is the man whose life on earth is “a life of faith.” He keeps the earth under his feet; and he sees heaven overarching his soul. He sojourns down here as in a strange country, admitting and professing that he is a pilgrim. He declares plainly that he desires a better country—an heavenly. (Heb. ix, 8—16.) His loins are girt. His heart is elate. His aims are sublime. His whole demeanour is a beautiful and solemn propædeutic preparation for glory, honour, and mortality.

FAITH AND TRUST.

There is an intimate connection between *faith* and *trust*. The connection is so intimate that the Greek term which is rendered *faith* and *belief* in the New Testament, is very frequently in the classics employed to denote *trust*. "Every reader of Greek knows," says Julius Charles Hare, "that the leading idea of the Greek word is that of confidence, of reliance, of trust." (*Victory of Faith*, p. 18.) Luther and Melancthon constantly reproduce this import of the word. With them, as with Marshall the author of *the Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*, and Bishop O'Brien, and many others, faith is in a great measure "trust." (*Fides est fiducia.*)

We make no question that one could preach the Gospel for years, and successfully too, though merging out of view the word *faith* or *belief*, and substituting

in its room the word *trust*. *Faith* would always be implied, and the *object* or *objects of faith* would need to be carefully exhibited; but *the word 'faith'* might be dispensed with.

If the sinner really *trust to the Saviour*, or *trust in the Saviour*, or *trust the Saviour*, it will be well with him.

We have a lively remembrance of hearing Dr. Chalmers illustrating to the Scottish mind, the part which the sinner has to act in coming to the Saviour. "He has just to come," said the Doctor, "with all his sins about him, and '*lippen*' to the Saviour." If he do really *lippen*, that is, if he *trust*, he will have peace. He will have joy. He will have lively hope. And his spiritual contact with the great object of his trust will inspire him with a spirit of admiration and adoration. He will love the Lord his God with all his heart and

soul and mind and strength. He will "follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord," and with which every man would be meet to be for ever in the glorious presence of the Lord.

We have read of a father who had occasion to be in a dark vault underneath his house, into which he entered by a trap-door. While he was groping below, his little daughter, who had been in quest of him, came and called out, *Father, Father, where are you?*

"I am down here," he replied.

She leaned over the edge of the aperture, but could not see anything. It was pitchy dark. But she had heard her father's voice, and she suddenly said, *Let me come down beside you.*

Her father, looking up, saw her clearly against the light, as, bending over, she gazed into the darkness. He said to her, *Just drop down, and 'kippen'*

to me; I shall catch you in my arms. She had "faith" in her father, though her father did not use that term. She "believed" that her father would receive her in his arms and take care that she should not be injured; though he did not use the word "believe." She 'listened' to him, as he had told her, and confidently let go her hold of everything around her. She was not disappointed. All was well; and she was gratified in getting to be with her father, and looking up from his side to the light.

In the Old Testament Scriptures the duty of *trust* is very frequently inculcated, while the duty of *faith*, as distinguished from *trust*, is just as frequently merged out of view.

But it is of moment to bear in mind two things:—

Firstly, That there is a connection between *trust* and *truth*. Trust is, as it

were, the counterpart of truth. When we see *truth* in an object, the *truth* seen, shining into our minds, naturally reflects itself back in the form of *trust*. We respond to *the truth*, and to *the true*; that is, we *trust*. It is thus that we can trust Christ and God. It is thus that we can trust in the atonement wrought out by Christ, and accepted by God, on our behalf. The belief of the truth is in such a case the real basis of our trust.

Secondly, Trust, while really the duty of the sinner, is yet by no means his primary duty. He must have a reason for his trust, and "a sufficient reason" as Leibnitz delighted to express it, (*une raison suffisante*). He must, in other words, *believe the truth as it is in Jesus*. In that truth he has a truly "sufficient reason" for trusting in the Saviour as his Saviour, and in the Heavenly Father as his propitiated and propitious God. And hence when the

sinner is called upon, in the New Testament Scriptures, to "*believe* in the "Lord Jesus Christ," that he may be saved, and when he is assured that *if he do thus believe* "he shall be saved" (Acts xvi, 31; John iii, 16, 18, 36), the trust of the soul is not lost sight of in the call to *believe*. It is only, by a species of sublime philosophy, analysed into its indispensable substrate. It is however, as it were, the last analysis. The analyst cannot proceed farther *and continue to find sufficient ground on which to erect the unreserved promise, "thou shalt be saved."* He may easily proceed farther, indeed, if he be not in quest of the ground of that promise. There must be antecedents to faith. Men must have evidence ere they can rationally believe. They must also willingly search and see that they may be able to apprehend and appreciate the *evidence*. But still it could scarcely be

said, *Search into the truth of the Gospel, and thou shalt be saved.* A man may search, and yet not search sufficiently. He may take a wrong direction in his search. He may search in the dark with his torch unlighted. Or he may carry his lighted torch into empty vaults.

But it can be legitimately and confidently said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, *and thou shalt be saved.*" When once the preliminary searching is completed, and the sinner *believes the truth as it is in Jesus*, then his spirit is in presence of those glorious realities, which, when spiritually discerned, secure peace and joy and hope and love and holiness. We have reason to believe that God's own infinite purity of heart, and consequent infinite happiness, are everlastingly secured, though not necessitated, by the realities which are included within the infinite scope of his knowledge. And, correspondingly, there are certain

grand realities, which are so related to men, and are of such wondrous heights and depths and widths of adaptation to the wants of men, that, *if the human mind be consciously in their presence*, its peace and purity are secured. These realities are divine; and it is because all the chief realities in our human sphere of being, have more or less of vital relation to them, that there is ground for plying, with encouragement and in hope, the various instrumentalities within our reach for advancing and consummating the moral education of the world. There is something to work upon. There are grand correlations of being. We need not despair of humanity. If once all mankind were induced to stand consciously, "with open face," in the August Presence, so as to look upon Christ as he is, and upon "God in Christ" as he is, they would all be "changed into the *same image from glory to glory, as by*

“the Lord the Spirit;” and the golden age of humanity would be realized.

Archdeacon Hare misunderstood the philosophy of human thought and feeling, when he imagined that belief “is *not* “a practical principle,” (*Victory of Faith*, p. 30), and that “the understanding is “powerless to produce any lasting renovating effect on the heart and soul of man.” (p. 26.) The understanding *of itself*, indeed, is powerless. Its mere abstract act can be of no moral avail. But when the objectivity of the act is in correlation with the wants of the spirit, it makes all the difference conceivable. Nothing is more practical in human pursuits, and in the shaping of human character, than *belief*.

2

“SAVING FAITH.”

APPROPRIATING FAITH.

Some of our older theologians—inclusive of many of “the Marrow-men”—spoke much of the *appropriating act of faith*. It was this act which they supposed to be saving. “In the direct act of saving faith,” says Anderson, “a person appropriates Christ crucified to himself, saying with the heart, *I am verily persuaded that Christ is mine.*”^{*} This idea was partly right, and partly wrong.

It was right in so far as it assumed that it is indispensable on the part of the sinner, that he should realize *his own ‘proper’ interest* in the grace of God and the work of Christ. We think rightly when we think that it is not enough for the sinner’s peace that he believe that God is gracious. He must believe

^{*} *Scripture Doctrine of the Appropriation which in the Nature of Saving Faith*, p. 76.

that *God is gracious 'to him.'* It is not enough that he believes that *Christ made atonement for sins.* He must believe that *Christ made atonement for 'his 'sins.'* He must find the word *me* in the bosom of the word *world.* The language of his faith must be,—*God so loved 'me' that he gave his only begotten Son that 'I,' believing in him, should not perish but have everlasting life.—The Son of God loved 'me' and gave himself for 'me.'* The believer thus realizes his *property*, or, as it was often called, his “right of *propriety*,” in the grace of the Great Father, and the atoning work of the Great Saviour. He *appropriates* to himself what God is, and did, and does, in so far as he is exhibited in the Gospel,—in so far as he is the Father of mercies. He *appropriates* to himself what Christ did, and does, and is, in so far as he too is exhibited in the Gospel,—in so far as he is a merciful High Priest and Saviour.

It is at once the privilege and the duty of the sinner to "ply diligently," as Luther used to express it, "the first personal pronoun," and say *me, me*. All this is right. It is of great practical moment. It is indispensable in order to personal peace, and personal joy, and personal hope of glory, and the personal experience of the constraining power of the love of God and of Christ,—the constraining power which sweetly urges and impels the believer to a life of reciprocal love and holy devotedness.

"What avails to believe that God is a "Father," asks John Rogers reasonably, "*if I believe him not to be mine?*" What avails to believe "that Christ is a perfect "Saviour, who died for man's sins, and "rose again for his righteousness, except "I believe that *he did these for me?*" What avails to believe in "the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection to "*eternal life, except I believe they belong*

“to me?” (*Doctrine of Faith*, p. 27. ed. 1632.)

But the idea of *appropriation*, as advocated by John Anderson, John Rogers, and many others, was partly wrong, as well as partly right. They combined with it the limitarian doctrine that the grace of God was really restricted in its outflow, and that the atonement of Christ was really confined in its compass, to a few of mankind—the unconditionally elected. They did not believe that “God so loved *the* “(*whole great*) *world*,” that he sent his only begotten Son to be “a propitiation “for the sins of *the whole world*.” (John iii, 16; 1 John ii, 2.) They did not believe that Christ “gave himself a “*ransom*” really “*for all*,” and that “he “tasted death” literally “*for every man*.” (1 Tim. ii, 6; Heb. ii, 9.) They thought only of God’s love to *the whole elect world*, and of Christ’s ransom for some

of *all classes of men*, and of his death for every one of the many sons whom he brings to glory. They believed that outside the number of these favoured ones there is an immense world of the unconditionally reprobated, whom God never loved, and for whom Christ never tasted death or gave himself a ransom. They conceived that if Christ had shed his blood for any who are finally lost, it would have been a waste of suffering. The idea that our Saviour's death should be "in vain" in relation to any, appeared to them a glaring incongruity. They could not reconcile themselves to the notion that One, who saw the end from the beginning, would buy with his blood the souls of those who would "bring upon themselves swift destruction." Hence they required to devise a theory of faith which would supplement what was deficient in their theory of *the atonement*. In their doctrine of

the atonement, and of the grace of the Great Father, there was nothing that enabled them to say to sinners, without distinction or exception, *God loves 'you,' Christ died for 'you.'* And yet, as they saw clearly that the sinner's conscience would not be satisfied, nor his heart pacified, until he could say, *God loves 'me,' Christ died for 'me,'* they invented a doctrine of faith which enabled the sinner to bring out of the Gospel what the Holy Spirit, according to their theory, had never put into it. It was an unwarrantable doctrine. The appropriation of antecedent non-existences is an impossibility. The imagination of such an appropriation is a delusion. Faith cannot make a fact of its own object. The notion of Marshall, the author of *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*, that the object of saving faith "*becometh a certain truth when we believe it,*" (p. 142, ed. 1836) is a manifest inversion

of thought. To have faith is one thing to have a fancy is another. But happily it was no fancy that *God loves all*, and that *Christ died for all*. It was only the limitarian creed of the theologians referred to which was at fault. It was it which was the fancy. The Holy Spirit has, as a matter of fact, put into the Gospel all that the worthy preachers sought, by means of *appropriating faith*, to bring out of it. It is actually the case that the grace of God is to all, and that the atonement of Christ was for all; and hence when any appropriated to themselves their full share of the universal grace and universal atonement, they only took though they knew it not, what had been really provided for their use.

THE TRANSCENDENT IMPORTANCE
OF THE OBJECT OF FAITH.

It is the object of faith, that is the great matter,—the great great matter. The act indeed, is also indispensably necessary. Without it the object could never take the least effect upon the soul. It could not get access to the soul. But the whole peculiarity of the moral effect is dependent on the peculiarity of the object.

Compare faith to *a hand*.—Let us suppose that the soul is indigent. It is indigent. It has “wasted its substance “on riotous living,” and is reduced to the most abject poverty. *It needs to hold out its hand for “an alms.”* That is the attitude of the convicted soul. But the mere outstretching of the hand will not satisfy its craving wants. And when once the hand is held out, the mere folding of the fingers upon themselves

will do no good. It is the thing grasped that will do good. But what if it be a stone? What if it be a serpent? What if it be a counterfeit coin, or a forged bank note? What then? No relief will be experienced. Positive injury may be the result. *All depends on the nature of the object which is received by the hand.*

Change the figure. The act of faith may be compared to *the act of eating*. —“Come ye, buy and eat.” (Isai. lv, 1.) The soul is hungry. It is in danger of perishing for want. It must eat or die. But the mere act of eating will do no good. It is the thing eaten, and it alone, that can nourish. The thing eaten, however, must be of a nourishing nature. Suppose that the man should eat what is utterly indigestible. What then? Suppose that he should eat what is positively poisonous. What then? The act of *eating* might be perfect; but could he

be nourished? It is the thing eaten, or the object on which the act of eating takes effect, that is of transcendent importance.

Or consider believing under the figure of *looking*.—"Look unto me, and be ye "saved." (Isai. xlv, 22.) Look unto Jesus, as he was lifted up on the accursed tree. The act of looking is indispensable. If the eyes are closed, and nothing be seen, no benefit can be received. But even though the eyes should look,—that is not enough. Suppose that they look, not unto Jesus, but on the dust of the ground, or on the fiery-flying serpents in the air, or on self, or on some "sow wallowing in the mire,"—the mere act of looking at such objects will utterly fail to give "peace and joy and hope"—happiness and holiness. It is the nature of the object looked at that affects the mind of the beholder, either with pleasure or with pain, either with

delight, or with disgust, or with indifference.

Compare believing to *coming*.—"Come unto me," says Jesus, "all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi, 28.) The act of coming *is* indispensable, but the result of the act is entirely dependent on the direction taken by the locomotive soul, and on the nature of the object that is reached. Suppose that one comes, not to a friend, but to a foe! Suppose that one comes, not to a home, but into the heart of an ambush. What then? Or what if he comes toward a pitfall or a precipice, and then continues to advance? What then? The act of motion may, *as an act*, be all that could be desired; but the result of the movement would be disastrous.

It is the object then, the object, that is the matter of transcendent moment. *The inquiry* of the spirit should not

so much be, *how am I to believe?* as *what am I to believe?* The attention should be fixed, not on *the right way of believing*, but on *the right thing to be believed*.

THE OBJECT OF SAVING FAITH
TWOFOLD.

The object of saving faith is, in a certain important respect, twofold or dual. It is something that has both *a without* and *a within*. It is somewhat like a casket enclosing a gem; or a body containing a soul; or a word with a thought within. That which is *without* is the immediate, or direct, and primary object of saving faith (the *objectum quo*). That which is within is the mediate, or indirect, and ultimate, object (the *objectum quod*).

The immediate, direct, and primary

object of saving faith is *the Gospel—the divine Testimony—the Truth—the Truth as it is in Jesus*. The mediate, indirect, and ultimate object is *Jesus Himself in his living personality, doing or suffering whatsoever was needed for the salvation of men*.

THE IMMEDIATE AND PRIMARY
OBJECT OF SAVING FAITH.


The immediate and primary object of saving faith is, we have said, *the Gospel or the Testimony which God has given concerning his Son, or 'the' Truth—the Truth as it is in Jesus*. It is thus a *proposition*. All truth is propositional. It is, from its very nature, subjective and therefore only subjectively real. It is subjective reality in a state of correspondence with objective reality.

is the faithful mental mirroring of what is objective to the mental mirror. And being thus the correct reflection of objective realities, it is a secondary condition of things. The primary realities are not truths. God, for instance, is not a Truth. It is a truth that *God is*. But when we think and say that *God is*, we form and utter a proposition. God's attributes too are not truths,—though it is true that he has attributes. They are objective realities. Time is not a truth, though it is a truth that time is. In like manner, though it is true that space is, it is not true that space is a truth. Powers, too, *as powers*, are not truths. And acts and facts, *as acts and facts*, are quite distinguishable from truths; although, if we rise to a standpoint of observation that enables us to see an intended meaning in all that is being brought to pass, and in all that has been brought to pass,

then acts and facts may be regarded as implicit propositions. God's acts and facts will be implicit truths. Men's acts and facts will be either implicit truths or implicit falsehoods.

The proposition which is the immediate and primary object of saving faith is, as we have said, *the Gospel*, or *the Truth as it is in Jesus*.—What is this?

The angel who appeared on the plain of Bethlehem will inform us. He said, *Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.* (Luke ii, 10, 11.) The "good tidings of great joy," were the divine Testimony. They are "the Truth." They are "to all people." They are to you, O sinner. Unto *you* was born, eighteen hundred and fifty years ago, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.



Paul the apostle declares to us explicitly "the Gospel." He says to the Corinthians (1st Ep. xv, 1—4), "Brethren, "I declare unto you *the Gospel*, which I "preached unto you, which also ye received, and wherein ye stand; by "which also ye are saved, if ye keep in "memory (*or hold fast*) what I preached "unto you, unless ye have believed in "vain," *and this is impossible, unless it be false that Christ rose from the dead*, see verse 14; "for I delivered unto "you, first of all, that which I also "received, *how that Christ died for our "sins according to the Scriptures, and "that he was buried, and that he rose "again the third day according to the "Scriptures.*" The Gospel, then, is this, —"Christ died *for our sins*, and was "buried, and rose again." It was "for "our sins," mark; that is, for *yours and mine*. Is not that enough?

Hear again another announcement of

the Gospel, coming more immediately from the lips of the Saviour himself. We read in John iii, 16, that "God so loved *the world* that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is "the world" which God loved and loves. And the word "world" just means, O sinner, *every other human being 'and you.'* How glorious! *You* are not omitted or lost sight of. And then *God 'so' loved every other human being 'and you,' that he gave his only begotten 'Son' for you all!* The greatness of the gift is the measure of the greatness of the love. How great then must God's love have been! How great must it still be! And it is *to you.* Is not the revelation of it "glad tidings"? And then the Son finished successfully and triumphantly the work which was given him by the *Father* to do. He completed the atone-

ment for human sin. All your sins, O sinner, have thus been fully atoned for,—all without exception. “The blood of “Jesus Christ God’s Son *cleanseth us “from all sin.*” (1 John i, 7.) “Herein “is love, not that we loved God, but “that he loved us, and sent his Son to “be the propitiation for our sins,” “and “he is the propitiation not for our sins “only, but also *for the sins of the whole “world.*” (1 John iv, 10; ii, 2.) God is well pleased for his Son’s righteousness’ sake. Such is *the truth as it is in Jesus.* It is by pre-eminence “*the*” *Truth, the testimony of God regarding his Son,—the glorious Gospel of the grace of God.*



THE MEDIATE AND ULTIMATE
OBJECT OF SAVING FAITH.

Christ Himself, in his own living personality, is the mediate and ultimate object of saving faith.

He is the *mediate* object. Now that he is on the other side of the veil, which divides the unseen from the seen, the human mind, which is on this side, cannot reach him *immediately*. It can reach him only by means of *the testimony concerning him*,—that testimony which, in consequence of its peculiar delightfulness on the one hand, and of its peculiar importance on the other, is called '*the Gospel*' and '*the Truth*'. This testimony is *the way* by which the human soul travels to the Saviour, and gets to be consciously in his presence at the foot of his cross, or on the footstool of his throne.

Christ is also the *ultimate* object of

saving faith;—*ultimate* relatively to the testimony as the primary object. So far as there is a necessary dualism in the objectivity of saving faith, Christ is the ultimate object. When the mind goes beyond this dualism into an interior or higher sphere of relations, it meets with another dualism in which Jesus is not the ultimate but the primary Object of faith, not the Last but the First, not the End but “the Way.” The Divine Father is the Ultimate Object. Jesus is *the Way to the Father*. (John xiv, 6.) He is *the Mediator* between God and men, and is thus *the Medium* by which erring men may get back to God. The Father is the End of ends,—the Final End. He is the absolutely Ultimate. The Son, as Saviour, is “subject to the Father, *that God may be all in all.*” (1 Cor. xv, 28; John xiv, 28.) When, in the exercise of saving faith, we believe in Jesus, as “the propitiation for our sins, and not

"for ours only, but also for the sins of "the whole world" (1 John ii, 2), we naturally ascend from the Propitiator to the Propitiated. The propitiation was rendered *to* the Father, and was accepted *by* Him. We thus believe, *ultimately*, not so much in the propitiation of the Son, as in the propitiousness of the Father.

But relatively to the Gospel, or the Testimony of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is ultimate. He is beyond or within the Gospel. He is on the farther or inner side. We must penetrate the Gospel, to get to Him. And the moment that the soul does penetrate, or get through, it is "with Jesus." There is nothing else intervening. In an exceedingly sublime sense, the soul is then "*in* Jesus."

The Gospel testimony, however, must be penetrated. It will not suffice that the mind be arrested on its superficies. *There is a dualism here too, in the testi-*

mony itself,—a dualism with which the mind has to deal, before it proceeds to the interior dualism of *the word and the Word*, and the still grander dualism of *the Son and the Father*. The testimony has an outside and an inside,—*a word and a thought*. The mind must not be arrested at the outward word. It must go through it to the inward thought. It is the thought of the Holy Spirit of God. If the mind do not go through the outward word to the inward thought, then “the word may be nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, even the word of faith, which we preach,” and yet thou mayest all the time be out at sea, and inconsistently and inconsiderately saying in perplexity—“Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring Christ down from above? or, who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ from beneath?” (Rom. x, 6—8.) The mind must go through the word to the thought, and

into the thought, and *through* the thought, if it would find the actual Saviour. But whenever it *does* get to and *into* the thought, and passes *through* it, it *is* with the Saviour. It is with the Saviour as he was. It is with the Saviour as he is. It is with Christ crucified. It is with Christ glorified. It is with Christ the Propitiator,—the Propitiator for all human sin. It is with Christ as "the Way" to the Father. It is *on* "the Way;" and it ascends *by* "the Way," till it is with the propitiated and propitious Father. It is *presented* by the Propitiator, and it is therefore *present* with the propitious Father. How is it possible for it to despair, in such a Presence? How is it possible for it to fear? How is it possible for it to be ungrateful, unadoring, unholy?

BELIEVING

'ON' OR 'IN' THE SAVIOUR.

We not only speak of *believing*. We also speak of *believing on*, and *believing in*. And in the Greek language there is still another idiom, which has not been reproduced in our English tongue, *believing to*. This phrase *believing to* occurs very frequently in the New Testament. It is the phrase that occurs, for instance, in John xiv, 1, "Let not your heart be troubled: *believe in* God, *believe also in* me." In the original it is *believe to* God, *believe also to* me. It is a beautifully significant idiom. It represents *believing* or *faith* as going out from the mind *to* its object. "Let your *believing*," said the Saviour to his disciples, "go out *to* God; let it go out *to* "me." In our English idiom we merge from view the process of going, and fix our attention on the rest or repose which

is obtained at the termination of the journey. Hence we say *Believe 'on' God, believe also 'on' me; or Believe 'in' God, believe also 'in' me; that is, Let your believing rest 'on' God and 'in' God; let it also rest 'on' and 'in' me. Or, we might express the idea thus, Have faith in God, have faith also in me.*

We can speak not only of *believing 'in Jesus' and 'in God,'* but also of *believing 'in the Gospel.'* The expression in Mark i, 15 that is rendered in our Authorized Version, *believe the Gospel,* is, in the original, *believe 'in' the Gospel.* The two phrases, though lying on one line of import, are not absolutely identical. When we speak of *believing the Gospel,* we regard it as veraciously testifying to some object beyond itself, on which our believing is to terminate. When we speak of *believing in the Gospel,* we regard the Gospel for the moment as itself the terminus of our

faith,—the object in which our believing gets repose.

There is another set of phrases that occurs,—*believing Christ* and *believing in* or *on Christ*. Christ said to the Jews,—“Because I tell you the truth, ye *“believe me not”*—“if I say the truth, *“why do ye not believe me?”* (John viii, 45, 46.) Paul, on the other hand, said to the Philippian jailor, *“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”* (Acts xvi, 31.) He said also to the Galatians *“We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ.”* (Gal. ii, 16.) The difference between the two phrases is obvious. It does not involve a difference in the act of believing. It only involves a difference in the objectivity of the act. When we *believe Christ*, we regard him as veracious, or as *truly exhibiting a testimony*,—it may be *a testimony concerning himself*. He is “the Amen,

"the faithful and true witness." (Rev. iii, 14.) Our faith is ready to rise and fly to the thing which he testifies, or to the object which he testifyingly holds out to view. But when we *believe 'in' him* or *'on' him*, we regard him as himself *truly exhibited in a testimony*. Our faith is supposed to alight on him, and to remain where it has alighted. It folds its wings and is at rest.

DEGREES OF FAITH.

It arises from the very nature of faith, that it is susceptible of degrees. The mind in believing reaches its object, whatever that object may be, discursively or *mediately*, not immediately. There is, in other words, something *in the middle* between the mind and the *object*. This something in the middle

may be more or less complex. It may be a pile of successive complexities. At all events, and whether simple or complex, it requires to be interrogated and interpreted. Hence it may be more or less thoroughly mastered; and thus the faith, that reaches its object through the intervening medium, may be more or less coincident with absolute knowledge on the one hand, or mere opinion on the other.

In the case of the Gospel, and the Great Living Object exhibited in the Gospel, there is scope for very varying degrees of faith. If one's faith were founded on only a single passage of the Bible, it might stand indeed, but it could not be exceedingly secure. If, for instance, one's faith in the Trinity were founded simply and singly on 1 John v, 7, "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one,"

it would be exceedingly insecure. The verse is unauthentic. It is apocryphal, as has been admitted for long by all competent critics. It is not found in the critical editions of the New Testament. It was not found in the first and second editions of Erasmus's text. It is not found in any of the old manuscripts. It could not be found in any real Revision of our Authorized English Version. It should never have been at all in any copy of the Bible. But what then? Is the doctrine of the Trinity in peril? Is it rendered uncertain, when this passage is withdrawn? Not in the least. But if any one's faith in the doctrine rested singly and exclusively on the testimony of this passage, it would falter and totter and collapse as soon as he found himself compelled to surrender the text.

If, in like manner, any one's faith in *the Gospel*, and in the Great Living Object

exhibited in the Gospel, were dependent on one passage only, or on one single fibre and aspect of representation, in the volume of the Book, it would not be very secure. A new view of a word or of a phrase might overturn it. A single wave of public or social thought, dashing against the single support of his faith, might any day shake it to its base, and the man's faith would stagger and might altogether fail and fall.

But if one's faith in the Gospel, and in the Saviour as exhibited in the Gospel, be grounded on a large induction and aggregation of individual passages, carefully tested, sifted, and interpreted; and if this grounding be itself grounded on a judicious and comprehensive consideration of the entire scope of the written revelation,—there will belong to the faith a very different degree of stability and security. If there be added to this, the experience in

one's self, and the observation in the case of others, of the moral power of the object of faith,—its power to give peace on the one hand, and to restrain from evil on the other, and to constrain to good, then there will be great confirmation of the faith. And if, in addition, there be harmony discerned between the history that is within the Book, and the history that lies scattered about outside the Book; and if there be also harmonies discerned between the revelation that is written in the volume, and the unwritten revelation of things spiritual: and if science too, as it advances, is seen to furnish no antagonism at all to Scripture, but only to lift us to loftier and still loftier standpoints of observation and interpretation,—then the faith becomes still more settled and fast. It grows broader. It grows deeper. It rises higher and higher. It feels stronger.

In consistency with these views, we

find in Scripture a recognition of very different degrees of faith. Our Saviour said to his disciples, on the sea of Galilee, when they were alarmed by the rising storm, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of *little faith?*" (Matt. viii, 26.) He said to Peter at another time, "O thou of *little faith*, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matt. xiv, 31.) He said, on the other side of things, to the Syrophenician woman, "O woman, *great is thy faith.*" (Matt. xv, 28.) He said too in reference to the Roman centurion in Capernaum, "I have not found so *great faith*, no, not "in Israel." (Luke vii, 9.)

There may then be *little faith*, and there may be *great faith*. And hence there may not only be *assurance*, there may likewise be *the full assurance of faith*. (Heb. x, 22.) The disciples had reason to say to the Lord, "Increase our "faith." (Luke xvii, 5.) And the Lord had good reason to say to the disciples,

"If ye had faith *as a grain of mustard seed*, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." (Luke xvii, 6.) *The least real faith will do wonders.* It will effect marvellous changes. It will root up and transplant. It will remove even "mountains," that would otherwise be immovable and obstructions for ever. (Matt. xvii, 20.)



LIVING FAITH and DEAD FAITH.

James, "the servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ," says in the 2nd chapter of his Epistle, verses 14—20 :—

"*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?*

“If a brother or sister be naked, and
 “destitute of daily food, and one of
 “you say unto them, depart in peace,
 “be ye warmed and filled; notwith-
 “standing ye give them not those things
 “which are needful to the body; what
 “doth it profit? Even so faith, if it
 “hath not works, is dead, being alone.
 “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith,
 “and I have works: show me thy faith
 “without thy works, and I will show
 “thee my faith by my works. Thou
 “believest that there is one God; thou
 “doest well. The devils also believe
 “and tremble. But wilt thou know,
 “O vain man, that faith without works
 “is dead?”

Are we to conclude from these words,
 that there are two distinct kinds of
 faith, or two distinct ways of believing
 the true Gospel, a right way and a
 wrong? So many have imagined,—but
 without sufficient warrant.

*The inspired writer is reprobating pretended faith of the Gospel. He is supposing the case, not of a man who has "faith without works," but of a man who "says he has faith" while he has no works. And he proceeds to show that such a person's faith is unreal. It is not merely of a wrong kind; it is a "sham." He adduces, for illustration, the case of a destitute brother or sister coming to a professed brother in the faith, who has plenty of this world's good things. This professed brother has a philanthropic tongue, and liberal lips. He "says" *Depart in peace, be warmed, be filled.* These are admirable words, kind and charitable, such as might be expected from an open-hearted, open-handed, generous man. But the liberality, it is supposed, is only from the teeth outward. "Notwithstanding "he gives not those things which are "needful to the body." Well, "What*

“doth it profit?”—What is the profit to the man *to* whom the gracious words were spoken? Manifestly, nothing. And what is the profit, in the ledger-book of heaven, to the man *by* whom the gracious words were uttered? As manifestly, nothing. “Even so,” continues the inspired writer, “faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” The person who “*says* he has faith,” whilst he has no corresponding works, is as truly a mere pretender to faith, as the man with the liberal lips and close pocket is a mere pretender to kindness and generosity. His profession is mere profession, without possession. It is like a body without a soul. The life is gone out of it, if life it ever had. It is “dead.”

No doubt the man who “says he has faith,” while he has no “works of faith,” *may be believing something*. He may even be believing something that is very

intimately connected with the Gospel. And hence the inspired writer adds,—
"Thou believest that there is one God. Thou doest well. The devils—the demons—also believe, and tremble." The man of liberal loquacity and loquacious liberality might be believing, it is admitted, in some such doctrine as the unity of the Godhead,—a most important truth. "Thou doest well." It was good that the man had got so far as to believe that. Few in the days of the apostles had got that length. The whole world was running after "gods many." Men in general were idolators. To the eye of the world it was one of the most distinguishing and extraordinary features of Christians, that they denied that there were any more gods than one. It was universally said of them,—
"These Christians say that our Jupiter is no god, and that our Mars and Mercury are no more gods than stocks and

“stones are. Did you ever hear of such “profanity?” The Christians indeed were often called *atheists*, because they denied the godhead of the gods of the nations. Hence the idea of the unity of the Godhead was regarded as one of the salient peculiarities of the Christian; and a man might be apt to suppose that if he embraced that idea, he would be a Christian.

It was a mistake, however. A man might “believe that there is one God,” and be a bad man after all. He might have no *good works*. The very demons believe it, says the inspired writer, and continue demons still. There is nothing wrong, to be sure, in the way in which they put forth their act of faith. It is not some peculiarity in the forth-putting of that act that renders their believing nugatory. By no means. Their belief is followed by appropriate and powerful effects. They “tremble.” They know

that there is a God to whom they are responsible. And they know too that there is no second God, into whose dominions they might have a chance of fleeing, so as to be beyond the reach of the God whom they have offended. But then this truth of the unity of the Godhead *is not the Gospel*. It is not Jesus. There is thus no Gospel, there is no Jesus, in the object of the faith of the demons. They do not, and they cannot, believe that *the Son of God loved them, and gave himself for them*.

If any man, then, has never "trembled" before God, we have good reason to conclude that he has never believed so much as even the demons believe.

But if any man has merely "trembled" before God, we have good reason to conclude that he has never believed more than the demons believe.*

* Mr. Ecking, in his day, startled many people *unnecessarily* by maintaining that "whosoever

If any man, however, is glad indeed, and grateful to God,—if he loves God,—if he loves his character and will,—he has believed far more than that there is one God. He has believed “the word of reconciliation”—“the glorious Gospel of God’s grace”—the glad tidings that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto men (2 Cor. v, 19). His faith is thus alive with “life eternal,” and is for ever shooting forth from its vitality flowers of holiness and fruits of good works.

“among men believes what devils do about the “Son of God, is born of God, and shall be saved.” *Essays on Grace, Faith, and Experience*, pp. 100, 169.

BELIEVING WITH THE HEART.

The apostle Paul expresses himself in the following manner,—“If thou shalt “confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, “and shalt *believe in thine heart* that “God hath raised him from the dead, “thou shalt be saved. For *with the “heart man believeth* unto righteous- “ness; and with the mouth confession “is made unto salvation.” (Rom. x, 9, 10.)

Many theologians, founding on the apostle's expression, have distinguished between *believing with the heart* and *believing with the head*. The latter they represent as a wrong or insufficient kind of believing. The former they regard as the right kind.

The distinction is pleasantly alliterative and well meant. It proceeds, moreover, on the correct assumption that if *the love* of the heart is not stirred

toward God and toward goodness, no amount of profession of faith will be of the least avail. But it is nevertheless an unhappy and unwarrantable distinction.

The word *heart*, as used by the apostle, is not to be distinguished from the word *head*. There is no such distinction suggested by the apostle himself. In using the word *heart*, he did not refer to *the seat of the emotions*, as distinguished from *the seat of the intelligence*. He did not employ the word in our English conventional acceptation of the term. He employed it in its usual Biblical acceptation as denoting generically *the heart, or interior part, of our complex being*. The term is thus very much equivalent to our word *mind*, or to the phrase *the inner man* as distinguished from *the outer man*. Hence it is that we read of "*thinking in the heart*" (Matt. ix, 41); "*under-*

"*standing with the heart*" (Matt. xiii, 15); "*musings in the heart*" (Luke iii, 15); and "*reasoning in the heart*" (Luke v, 22). In all such cases there is no distinction intended between the *heart* and the *head*. And assuredly there is none intended in Romans x, 9, 10; for the apostle explicitly points out the distinction which was present to his mind. It is the distinction between *the mouth* and *the heart*. "If thou shalt confess *with thy mouth* and "believe *in thine heart*." It is the distinction between *external profession* and *internal possession*. With *the mouth* "confession is made unto salvation," when with *the heart* "man believeth unto righteousness." "There is in reality," says Rotheram, "but one kind of faith." (*Essay on Faith*, p. 50.)

NO FEAR OF BELIEVING
THE RIGHT THING IN A WRONG WAY.

There is really no fear of believing the right thing in a wrong way.

There is very great danger of turning the attention of the mind *to the wrong thing*. Or if the object contemplated be the right thing in the main, there is yet considerable danger of carrying to it, and spreading over it, some wrong idea, through which it is distortingly apprehended.

There is danger too of the mind becoming arrested on the superficies of mere words,—though the words are in themselves the right words, and indeed the very best words imaginable. It is the thoughts behind the words, and the things behind the thoughts, that are the all-important realities. It is Christ Himself, or God in Christ, who is the Reality of realities. The mind must

go to Him. It must never rest on any stepping stone that keeps it out of sight of Him.

There is also danger of men looking *to* their act of faith, instead of looking *through it* to the Glorious Object. But if you look *to* the telescope, instead of *through* it, you will never see the rings of Saturn or the satellites of Jupiter.

Faith is *eating* as it were. "I am "the living bread," says Jesus, "which "came down from heaven; if any man, "eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." (John vi, 51.) If the right bread be set before men, when they are hungry, there is little danger of them getting no good from what they eat, *because they eat it in a wrong way*. If you were to see two men eating hungrily, each a piece of bread; and if the one were immediately to sicken and die, while the *other* was refreshed and invigorated,

would you naturally suspect the manner of eating, and have no suspicion whatever in reference to the thing eaten? Would you naturally say—*No doubt they both ate what was very good in itself: but unhappily the one ate and masticated his morsel in a very wrong way.* Would you not rather suspect that the difference of result was to be attributed to the difference of what was eaten? Would you not suspect that, while in the one case the thing eaten was wholesome, in the other it was
 • poisonous?

Faith, again, is *looking* as it were. Suppose yourself in the midst of the camp of the dying Israelites. Two men are lying before you, who have been bitten by the fiery flying serpents. Moses calls to them both to *look to the brazen serpent and be healed.* The one complies, and turns round and looks up, and is instantly healed. The other thinks

it an absurdity that a mortal wound can be healed by looking to a piece of brass; and he turns away his eyes and looks at some other object, and expires. What is the reason of the difference in the two men's condition? Both looked; and so far as the act of looking is concerned, they looked equally well. Why then did the one die while the other lived? *The one looked at the right object; the other did not.*

Faith is *coming* as it were. It is *coming to Jesus*. There is no fear of coming to him by a wrong road. If a man only get to the right point, it matters very little, in all ordinary cases, by what way he arrives. The great difficulty is in getting to the right object, not in getting to it by a right way.

TRYING TO BELIEVE.

There is probably something wrong with a man's view of the Gospel, if he be *trying to believe*.

If a man say, *I am trying to believe in Jesus,—I am doing what I can,—and trying as much as ever I am able*, the mental attitude indicated is not likely to be right. It is too much akin to the attitude of him who rather asks "*How am I to believe?*" than "*What am I to believe?*"

A man might try to get himself warmed at a painted fire. It would be in vain. Whereas if once he should have a real fire before him, he would in all probability get warmed immediately, without any trying in the matter.

So, if a sinner be believing something *like the truth as it is in Jesus*, as like it as a painted fire is like a real one,

and yet only like it, he will never feel it filling him with spiritual sensations of comfort, and warming his heart with love to God and love to man. As soon, however, as the real truth is before his mind,—the real truth revealing behind its transparency the Glorious Saviour, as a Saviour who gave himself for all, and finished for each all that is needed for his salvation,—then, unless he wilfully turn away, he will feel his soul filled with peace and joy and fired with gratitude and love.

If a man come into a room where there are only lilies, it would be in vain for him to try hard to smell roses. There are no roses *there* for him to smell. Let him go, however, into a room where there are roses, and only roses, and he will feel their fragrance immediately, without trying at all. In like manner, if a sinner has present to *his* mind truths which are only some-

what kindred to the Gospel, it will be in vain for him *to try to believe the truth as it is in Jesus*. The truth as it is in Jesus is just *there* to be believed. But if once he have the real truth as it is in Jesus, and the real Jesus in that truth, fairly present to his mind, he will be able to believe immediately without trying at all.



'BY' FAITH, AND 'THROUGH' FAITH,
BUT NOT 'FOR' FAITH.

We read frequently of being justified or saved *by faith*, or *through faith*, but never *for faith*. It is important to note the phraseology. It lays an interdict on the idea that it is in consideration of the merit of our faith, that justification or salvation is conferred. There is no such merit. The merit is in

the great object of faith. It is in Christ.

Faith indeed is itself a work, in a small way. Jesus said, "This is *the work of God*, that ye believe on him whom He hath sent." (John vi, 29.) Faith is an act of the energy of the soul. In that particular sense, it is a work. And in so far as it is a work at all, it is *a good work*. God has enjoined it. He approves of it. There is a world-wide difference between it, morally viewed, and unbelief or rebellion. It is, moreover, *the mother of good works*. "Faith worketh." It is a working principle. But still there is nothing in it of the nature of an equivalent for salvation. When we come with it, we do not come with a price in our hand. We only come to receive, *in our empty hand*, the divine alms of salvation. When we stand, by means of it, upon the Rock of Ages, *there is nothing intervening between*

us and the Rock. We "stand bare-foot."*

FAITH THE GIFT OF GOD.

Calvin supposed that it is not *faith*, but *salvation*, that is said in Ephesians ii, 8, to be *the gift of God*. We presume, however, that it is to *faith* that the Apostle parenthetically refers; and we conceive that he is drawing attention to the fact that we are indebted to the grace or lovingkindness of God not only for the Saviour, and for the salvation which he procured, but likewise for the link of connection that

* "None are justified or saved *for* believing."
"The active and passive obedience of Christ is the
"whole and alone cause of salvation." (Benjamin
Ingham, *Treatise on the Faith and Hope of the
Gospel*, p. 64. ed. 1822.) Certainly the work of
Christ is *the only meritorious cause* of salvation.

unites us to the Saviour, and thus makes us partakers of the great salvation. Not that the Apostle means to concuss us into the conviction that we are utterly passive in the matter of faith. It would be no glory to God if we were merely *acted on*, and did not *act*. Our responsibility would be gone. We would be things, not persons. It is necessary that we be more than mere recipients, and cisterns. We are wellsprings of living activity. And assuredly we act, and act voluntarily, when we send out our thought believingly to the Glorious Object who is revealed in the glorious Gospel of God's grace.

There is indeed something involuntary in faith. We cannot absolutely determine what we shall believe, and what we shall not believe. *Evidence is sometimes overwhelming, and we must believe*, — however strongly we might

desire to come to a different conclusion. But in multitudes of cases we require to go in quest of evidence; or, if it is brought to us and spread out before us, we require to direct our minds to its consideration. We require to sift and measure it, and to weigh detail after detail. If there be apparently conflicting evidence, we require to consider it too. *Hence the need for voluntary activity.* And hence it is that men are accountable for their belief or for their unbelief in reference to the Gospel of salvation.

Faith in the Gospel is *the gift of God*, in a sense consistent with our voluntary activity and accountability. The facilities for faith are from God. All the grand inducements are from Him. The chief motives are from Him. It is He who gives the light. It is He who draws the heart, though he will not drag it. "No man can come to me," says

Jesus, "except the Father who has sent
"me *draw him*; and I will raise him
"up at the last day." But he immediately adds, in a way that is finely explanatory of what he means by *drawing*, "as it is written in the
"prophets, and they shall be *all taught*
"of God. *Every man therefore that hath*
"*heard, and hath learned of the Father,*
"*cometh unto me.*" (John vi, 44, 45.)
It is thus in the way of *teaching* that the Father *draws*. He reveals realities by his Holy Spirit, and presses them home upon human attention by the same divine Spirit; so that, whenever any one believes, he is ready to lift up his heart adoringly and gratefully to his Heavenly Father and to say,—*It is through thy grace that I see, and understand, and believe! It is through thy grace that I am what I am! Unto thee be all the glory.*

IS SAVING FAITH

A POSSIBILITY TO HEATHENS?

We should feel sad indeed, were we constrained to think that any individual of the human race is absolutely shut out from the possibility of salvation. "God is good unto all. His tender mercies are over all his works. He has not left himself without witness in any nation. The Gentiles, which have not the law, are a law unto themselves. They shew the work of the law written in their hearts." (Ps. cxlv, 9; Acts xiv, 17; Rom. ii, 14, 15.) There is a Revelation of God to all men,—a Revelation not only of what he is in his relation to men as men, but also of what he is in his relation to men as sinners. God is not dealing with any members of the human race simply as they deserve. He is dealing graciously. In wrath deserved he is remembering mercy.

But if it be true that salvation is a possibility to all men, it must also be true that the mental state, which is on man's part the means of attaining salvation, will be a possibility. Faith will be a possibility,—for "without faith it is impossible to please God."

The great Object of faith cannot indeed be known by heathens under all the phases and phrases which are familiar to students of the written Word. But such knowledge, however desirable and precious, and indeed inestimable, is not absolutely indispensable. It was unattainable even by prophets, priests, and kings, in Old Testament times. Abraham "saw afar off." It was a fact that he "saw:" yet many things which are sufficiently familiar to the simplest-minded of modern believers, and even to the little children of our Christian households, would be quite beyond the round of the great patriarch's horizon. Other

things would be but dimly apprehended by him as specks in the great distance. He could not know the incidents of the life and death of our Lord. They could be only partially anticipated, even by those who were furnished with the most powerful telescopes of prevision or prophecy. Yet he knew what was sufficient for salvation. And we may easily conceive that an area of knowledge, still more and much more circumscribed than that of Abraham, may suffice. If there be such an amount of knowledge as to quicken into activity penitence for sin, and trust in the propitiousness of God, and love for true goodness, may we not hope that it will suffice? A minutely elaborated theology, a voluminously defined "Confession of Faith," cannot be absolutely essential. And the infinitely microscopic as well as telescopic eye of God will be quick to detect the very primal germs of genuine faith.

We may confidently leave the poor heathen abroad, and the poorer heathen at home, in *His* hands. We have made reference to the possibilities of their condition, not so much to satisfy the inquisitiveness that is natural to sympathy, as to bring into view the incompleteness of that spiritual and evangelical truth that is indispensable to salvation.



HELP MINE UNBELIEF.

The words "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!" are, in some respects, intensely interesting. But it is possible to make too much of them. They indicate a struggle to be right. The battling spirit makes a desperate effort. It so far overcomes the intervening and opposing influences as to get its hand upon the edge of the much-prized object. Yet it

feels as if it could not get a firm hold. It is distressed at its comparative failure. And in its agony it turns aloft for help, and cries to God. All this is such a spectacle of moral weakness on the one hand, and moral earnestness on the other, as is fitted to enlist the sympathies of every sensitive spectator.

But it should be borne in mind, at the same time, that we are nowhere enjoined or invited to give utterance to the cry "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!" Neither was it any of the representative men of revelation, such as Paul or Peter or John, who uttered the words. Neither was it Mary or Martha. Neither is it the case that the words were said *with reference to the salvation of the soul*. They were the words of the anonymous father of the child, that was "sore tried" with a dumb demon. (Mark ix, 24.) This father had brought his poor patient to the disciples of our Lord.

But they could do nothing for him. He then applied to the Master, who said "O *faithless generation*, how long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me." When he was brought, the father in a somewhat despairing spirit said, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." He was not sure whether Jesus *could* do anything for them. Jesus said to him, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." The father stretched his spirit forth, and at length attained to some persuasion of the *ability* of the Lord, "and straightway cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!" Our Saviour did not quench the smoking flax. He did not break, or trample on, the bruised reed. And yet he did not commend the poor man's utterance. It is added by the evangelist, "*When Jesus saw that*

“*the people came running together*, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.” It would not be advisable that any should rest contented with the feeble flicker of faith that is indicated in the words of the agitated petitioner.



CHRIST THE LEADER
AND FINISHER OF FAITH.

In Hebrews xii, 2, Christ is referred to as “the author and finisher of *our* faith.” The word *our* is a supplement, and leads the mind astray from the natural interpretation of the expression. There is no specific reference to “*our* faith.” The reference is generic. Jesus is “the author and finisher of *faith*.”

Not only is the word *our* a supple-

ment, the word *author* is an unhappy translation. The word (*ἀρχηγός*) properly means *leader*. In the only other passages in which it is found in the New Testament, it is translated twice *prince* and once *captain*. In the three instances it is applied to Jesus. He is "a *prince* and a Saviour." (Acts v, 31.) He is "the *prince* of life." (Acts iii, 15.) He is "the *captain* of our salvation." (Heb. ii, 10.) He is the great *Leader* of sinful men,—the Guide. It is he only that can *lead* or *guide* them into life everlasting and eternal salvation. It is he, too, who is the great "*Leader* and "*Finisher* of faith."

In the matter of faith he leads the way. And he brings that principle of faith in which he takes the lead, to a "finished" perfection.

The inspired writer, then, does not mean that Jesus *works within us, from its beginning to its ending, the act or*

exercise of faith. It is not "our faith" that is spoken of. Neither does he mean that it is Jesus who is *the author and finisher of the object of faith, the propitiation.* This idea, indeed, is emphatically true, and emphatically evangelical. It is the essence and quintessence of the Gospel. But as the word translated *author* means *leader*, it is not the case that the term *faith* is here employed to denote *the object of faith.*

The mind of the inspired writer was looking in a different direction. He was looking to Jesus as *the most Illustrious of Believers.*

It cannot, of course, be meant that Jesus needed, like men in general, to believe in a propitiation for his sins. That is abundantly obvious. He was the "spotless" Lamb of God.

But there are other things that may be believed in, besides the propitiation for sin. There are myriads of things on

earth, to which explorers, scientific investigators, and travellers bear testimony. And there are innumerable other things besides, having some connection with our earth, but yet not distinctively terrestrial, that may be, and that should be, the objects of our faith. Indeed, it is a very few things comparatively which we can know by personal observation and experience, by actual touch and taste and seeing and hearing and smelling, or by the inner senses of the spirit, or by demonstration. All other objects, if occupying our minds at all, must be objects of faith.

True, we are apt to associate with the word *believer*, when we use the term religiously, the idea of the propitiation for sin as the great object of faith. And hence we may feel some difficulty in so disintegrating our associated ideas as to realize that there is congruity in *thinking* and speaking about Jesus Christ as

having faith, and as being the Chief and Chieftain of Believers. But nevertheless, it is of moment, while conceding to the propitiation for sin an exceedingly high and towering pre-eminence to ourselves as an object of faith, that we should bear in mind that it is, after all, only one—though resplendently conspicuous—among many objects on which our faith may terminate. The whole universe of spirit—the whole universe of spirits—with the small exception of what is made known to us concerning ourselves in our own consciousness, is brought within the sphere of our thought and love and choice and appreciation by the exercise of believing. It is possible, then, that Jesus may have been the Chief of Believers, and the great Exemplar who, in respect to faith, as truly as in respect to meekness and lowliness and love, “left us an example that we should follow his steps.”

The inspired writer, in the glorious preceding context, has reference to *faith in things spiritual, celestial, everlasting, —in things 'not seen' but 'hoped for.'* The faith of which he speaks embraced within its range, first and foremost, God himself—the unseen God, the grandest, the most glorious, the most gladdening of all Realities. We must believe "that God is." We must believe that he is "the Rewarder of them who diligently seek him;"—a most gladsome feature of his glorious character. We must believe that it is He, our own personal Father, who made the world;—a most gladsome fact. We must believe that it was he who made ourselves, and made us in his own image, so that, indeed, we are "his offspring;"—a most gladsome fact. We must believe that he is good in himself, infinitely good, and that he is "good unto all," and that "his tender mercies are over all his works;"—most glad-

some and grand realities. We must believe that his will is good-will,—his will in relation to what he himself is to do, and his will in relation to what we, in our little spheres of operation, ought to do. And truly it is a gladsome fact that this his will is in all respects good-will. We must believe, too, that heaven is his home, that it is the city that hath “the foundations,”—whither, as toward our own sweet home, we should, in the spirit of pilgrims, be daily travelling, each day’s journey being “a day’s march nearer home.” It was gladsome believing of this kind that animated the bosoms of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and Enoch, and Noah, who all “declared plainly that they were seeking a country,” who “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth,” and that their faces were set Zionward. “They desired a better country, that is, an heavenly,” and they saw

their way into it made clear and straight, for "they saw the day of Jesus afar off, and were glad."

"These all lived and died in faith," and left us a noble example. They have gone before, and yet they are intently and intensely interested in those who are coming after. They stoop down, or bend over their parapeted glory, to be witnesses of our progress. They line in spirit the pathway of our ascent, that in spirit they may cheer us on. "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race (of faith) that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Leader and the Finisher of faith,"—looking unto Jesus, the greatest, the most persistent, the most triumphant of *all* believers. He is the Leader of the

whole company of believers. They believe *on* him,—they believe *in* him,—as the only propitiation for their sins. They believe on him and in him as their Leader, who was very far indeed from living in a merely sensuous manner while on earth,—who was very far indeed from seeking as the great object of life the things that appeal to the desire of the eye, the things that appeal to the desires of the flesh, the things that minister to the pride and pomp of terrestrial life. He rose sublime, in the whole of his earthly career, amid and above all such objects. His eye was turned to things spiritual, to things celestial and eternal. He lived a spiritual life on earth. He lived a heavenly life. He lived a God-like life. He communed from the beginning to the ending of his career with things unseen, things eternal, things heavenly and divine. He communed,

that is to say, with the things of faith. Never was there such faith in the reality and transcendency and glory of things unseen, and eternal, and divine, as was wrapt up in the spirit of Jesus. Never before, never since, was there such persistent and unfaltering realization of the spiritual side of things,—the everlasting side,—the divine side. Never, in simple phrase, has there been such believing. Hence it is that the inspired writer, after saying—"let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Leader and Finisher of faith," adds explanatorily, "who, for the joy that was set before him,"—and in which he had the most unwavering faith,—"endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.—For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself,"—consider how *he had* unwavering faith in the glory

wherewith his endurance was by and by to be crowned,—“lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.—Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”

It is true, then, that Christ's faith was a complete and completely *finished* thing. He finished it. It was perfect. He was “the *finisher* of faith,”—the great Exemplar, who, by the example of his own sublimely spiritual life, has shown us the way to live by that faith which is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”



THE LIFE OF FAITH.

“The life which I now live in the flesh,” says the Apostle Paul, “I live by the faith of the Son of God, who

"loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii, 20.) The Apostle, when penning these words, realized that he was still "in the flesh." He had not yet risen up into the more ethereal regions of the life that is everlasting. He was "here," down here, "in the body pent," cooped up in his little earthly and earthy tabernacle-house. (2 Cor. v, 1.) Hence he was not yet, in the highest sense of the expression, "present with the Lord," the Lord Jesus. (2 Cor. v, 6—8.) He was not present "face to face." He did not really "see" the Lord. He could only see his reflection, as in a mirror. And as the mirror which he possessed was far from being unclouded, he could only "see darkly." He hoped for more than he possessed. He "walked by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor. v, 7.) He "lived by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave himself for him."

The expression "the faith of the Son of God" has by some been supposed to mean "the faith which was subjectively characteristic of the Son of God" while he was down here on the earth. It is far more likely, however, that the phrase is to be understood *objectively*, as denoting "the faith which terminated on the Son of God." There need be no difficulty with the genitive expression "of the Son of God." The phrase "the love of God" may either mean, subjectively, the love which emanates from God, or objectively, the love which terminates on God. And so the phrase "the faith of the Son of God" may, as a phrase, mean either "the faith of which Christ is the subject," or "the faith of which Christ is the object." The preceding and succeeding context of the phrase seems to make it evident that the Apostle is thinking not so much of Christ our Exemplar

as of Christ our Substitute and Saviour.*

We live in the flesh *by the faith of the Son of God*, when we draw the inspiration of our terrestrial life from what our faith realizes in the Son of God. We live *by the faith of the Son of God*, when "the love of Christ" consciously "constrains us,"—constrains us "to live not unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us, and rose again." (2 Cor. v, 14, 15.) We live *by the faith of the Son of God*, when we live as Moses lived, "as seeing him who is invisible." (Heb. xi, 27.) Faith is in the place of sight. It is a kind of sight. We speak naturally and finely of "the *eye* of faith." By means of it, the veil which conceals the spiritual side of the universe is partially penetrated, so that the purest and loftiest of the motives, that can play on the

* See a very learned but unsatisfactory monograph on the phrase by Berlage, published in 1856.

springs of human action, get access to the soul. The life on earth, which is the product of these motives, is the most beautiful kind of life, the most useful, the most Christ-like, the most satisfying, the most holy.

THE EFFECTS OF FAITH.

There are many consequences of the greatest moment conditioned on faith. There are consequences that are realized beyond and above the sphere of the human consciousness; and there are consequences that are realized in the conscious experience of believers.

When man acts, God acts. Some of the old theoretical thinkers found a speculative difficulty in receiving such an idea. It seemed to them to be inconsistent with the absolute supremacy and

independence of God. They had no difficulty in seeing that human action was conditioned on divine action. But they were unable to understand the law of reciprocal action, or of action and reaction, in the inter-relationship of the creature and the Creator.

There is no real difficulty, however. It would be almost an infinite imperfection in God, were he not, in his own conscious subjectivity, to feel and act according to the reality of everything that is, and of everything that becomes. Were he merely to *see* everything that is beyond the sphere of his own self-consciousness, and within the spheres of the self-consciousness of other agents, *and to pass no judgement, and to experience no feeling, in reference to what he sees*, would not his eye be unaccountably disproportioned to his Judgement and his Heart? If there be a divine Eye, there must also be a divine Judge-

ment, and a divine Heart, even as there must also be a divine Hand. And it will be no more inconsistent with infinite supremacy and independency, for the Judgement to judge, and the Heart to feel, than for the Eye to see, and the Hand to work.

When a man, then, acts in faith, God acts too, and acts on the highest principle of correspondency or harmony. He both feels and acts. He approves in his heart of the act of faith. He smiles downward. He beholds the believer "with a pleasant countenance." He judges justifyingly. He justifies. And thus the believer is "justified by faith." (Acts xiii, 39; Rom. iii, 26; v, 1; Gal. ii, 16.) He is not only forgiven (Acts xiii, 38; Eph. i, 7); he is recognized as having in the hand of his faith the true title-deed to the inheritance that is full of glory. He is judged to be in possession of the righteousness that entitles to everlasting

life. It is "the righteousness of God,"—the righteousness provided by God, the righteousness which was wrought out by "Jesus Christ the righteous." The believer is thus enrolled as "an heir of God," and "a joint-heir with Christ."

All this takes place above and beyond the consciousness of the believer. It takes place in the consciousness of God. It is the action of God within the sphere of his own self-consciousness.

But there are other and correspondent consequences within the sphere of the human consciousness,—consequences which are the counterparts of the divine thoughts and feelings. The judgement of God reflects itself, as far as the intermediacies that bridge divine and human thought will permit, into the mind of the believer. The believer gets to know about the favourable feelings of God. They have been telegraphed. *They have* been testified. They are

involved within the promise which is in-
folded within the glorious object of
faith,—the atonement. They lie there,
ready to be evolved into the conscious-
ness of the believer. And hence the
believer, as soon as he believes in the
Great Object revealed in the good news,
experiences *peace with God*. (Rom. v, 1.)
It is something like *the peace of Christ
himself*. (John xiv, 27.) It is “peace
“that passeth all understanding.” (Phil.
iv, 7.)

He also experiences *joy unspeakable
and full of glory*. (1 Pet. i, 8.) It is
“joy in the Holy Ghost.” (1 Thess. i, 6.)
It is “joy in God.” (Rom. v, 11.) It is
the most joyful of joys.

He has also experience of peculiarly
lively hope, (1 Pet. i, 34);—of hope the
most enlivening and animating. It is
*the hope of the glory—the heavenly glory
—of God*. (Rom. v, 2.)

And, best of all, he has experience of

holiness. God "purifies his heart through faith," so that he longs to become perfectly good, and does become good. He heartily loves goodness. He loves God. He loves man. He loves both God and man unselfishly. He loves God supremely,—“with his heart and soul and strength and mind,”—with “*all* his heart, and *all* his soul, and *all* his strength, and *all* his mind.” Such at least is the constant aim with which he wings his flight in love. He loves his neighbour too *as* he loves himself,—*somewhat as*. And more, and more, and still more, does he aim thus to love his neighbour, until he loves him with a love that is *entirely like* the love which he bears to himself,—a love that is “*like*” to the love which he bears to God (see Matt. xxii, 39), and that is, in miniature, like the love which God bears to him. (1 John iv, 11.) It is his continual aim, as he moves along *through* the world, to make himself, in

meekness and in modesty, a Living Blessing to his fellow-men. Such love is at once "the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii, 10), and the fulfilling of the Gospel. When it is "full to the brim," it is goodness in the superlative degree. It is godliness. It is godlikeness.

Thus is the believer sanctified, as well as justified,—and all "through faith," through faith in Jesus, who is "made of God unto him sanctification." (1 Cor. i, 30.) He seeks to "purify himself even "as Jesus is pure." (1 John iii, 3.) He is *a new creature*, in respect of character. (2 Cor. v, 17.) He is divinely reconstructed in the tissue of his life. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. v, 17.) He is *a new man* in his mode of living, and in the motives of his life. He sees differently. He feels differently. He acts differently. And observing men "take knowledge of him, that he has

"been with Jesus." (Acts iv, 13.)

He has power to resist the temptations that continually assail him. He "can

"do all things through Christ who strengtheneth him." (Phil. iv, 13.)

He is panoplied in "the armour of God." (Eph. vi, 13.) And all along

his way, to its end, and at its end, "this is the victory that overcometh the world, EVEN HIS FAITH." (1 John v, 4.)

GLASGOW: "

PRINTED BY ALEX. M'DOUGALL,

60 MITCHELL STREET.

