

which teaches the notion that morality is identical with religion. Let the moralist know, amidst the honours he claims and receives, and the advantages which he and the circle in which he moves may enjoy on account of his morality, that after all the moral and social virtues have been experienced and practised by him, he must be born again before he can see and enter into the kingdom of God.

Of the construction we are considering, "Faith of Jesus Christ," Rom. iii. 22; "The faith of Christ," Phil. iii. 9; and "The faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20, are instances which afford another important example. Nothing can be more evident than that *pistis*, (faith,) in some period of its history, has acquired an appropriated or, what Alford on 2 Tim. iv. 7, calls, an "objective technical sense." But the surprising thing about this fact is, that in some instances where no other sense is possible, expositors seem to admit it tardily, and in others, where its claims are paramount and decisive, they ignore or deny them. We have an astounding example of this perversity now before us. Ninety-nine of every hundred teachers will expound "the faith of Christ," in all three of the above instances, as meaning the belief of believers. Every expositor of these passages with whose writings I am acquainted, interprets the word in this very jejune sense. But the "objective technical sense," as it is called, does not more certainly belong to the word in 2 Tim. iv. 7, than in these three passages, and it is not possible to give any tolerable interpretation of it in either instance in any other sense. The "Faith of Jesus Christ," in the first instance, "of Christ," in the second, and "of the Son of God," in the third, is the same as that of which Jesus Christ himself spoke as "My faith," Rev. ii. 13, which the church at Pergamos had not denied; and as that of which many different things are predicated in many other of its occurrences elsewhere.

But it should be observed that when this word takes this "objective technical sense," it is found in different

situations and is employed to represent different ideas. The leading meaning seems very clearly to be that of a great scheme of pure favour, of which Christ is the Beginner and the Perfecter, and which, for this reason, is called "the faith of Christ." Sometimes "the faith" is a principle out of which things arise, at others a law through which they are done. Then the doctrine which teaches the truth concerning the faith takes this name; and this is to be earnestly contended for, and its proportion or analogy is to be studiously regarded. Again, from what this scheme is, it comes to have its uses. Paul, as we have seen, spoke of it as that in which he lived, and thus gave it the meaning of a sphere. Speaking of the whole armour of God, he assigns to the faith the place and use of a shield. At another time it takes the meaning of a party distinction to which some are said to belong, and at another something else, for it is not at all pretended that this list is exhaustive of the meanings of the word when used in this sense. It is merely intended to point out to those who may wish to know the mind of God in his Word, that when this objective sense of faith may have been ascertained with certainty in any instance, that its exact meaning must then be a subject of solicitude. This must be found from connection.

For instance, in the first of the three examples now before us, we learn that the righteousness of God is manifested now through the faith of Jesus Christ, and that it is unto all, and upon all, them that believe. Connection here points unmistakeably to that great scheme which takes its name from Jesus Christ, as he is its Beginner and Perfecter, and is here distinguished as the medium through which the righteousness of God is manifested; just as when the righteousness of God is said to be revealed, Rom. i. 17, out of faith, the idea of principle or ground is pointed out. The same idea obtains in the second example. Paul desired to be found having that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, and which is upon the faith. That is, through the great scheme of Christ's faith, not his

belief, as the medium, and upon the faith as the principle or ground; for as the righteousness of God is revealed from the principle of faith, and manifested through the faith of Jesus Christ, so its possession is based on the same principle as its revelation, and it is received through the same medium as it is manifested. In the third example, "the faith of the Son of God" can only be regarded as the same great scheme presented to us as the sphere of the apostle's life. "I live," he says, "in the faith of the Son of God." This does not mean that his life consisted in believing on the Son of God; but that the great scheme so designated comprehended all the aims, the actions, the joys, and the hopes of his life.

In the term, "the faith of God's elect," Tit. i. 1, however the preposition may be understood with which it is construed, and which is rendered "according to," we have another example of the word, "faith," taking the meaning of scheme of favour. Other meanings are given. Some take "faith" here to be the creed of God's elect in Old Testament times, and that the apostle's ministry agreed herein with what was taught by Moses and the prophets. Others, that it means the doctrine of faith which the apostle was appointed to preach, and that we are to understand by the words that "it was the duty of an apostle to propagate the faith." Others, "that the faith, (that is, the belief,) of the elect is aimed at." That is, it was the aim of the apostle that unbelievers should be led to believe, and that the belief of believers should be strengthened by his ministry. Now, if it may be said that no one of these notions is palpably erroneous, it may also be very confidently asserted that the mind that can receive content in any one of them is, in this instance at least, very easily satisfied.

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

Elect is a term of definiteness. It is inclusive in purpose, and, therefore, exclusive by consequence in effect. Everybody, then, is not comprehended. The elect are the predestinated, and these become the called, and these become the justified, and these become the glorified. The elect are the people of Christ, on whose behalf he received the name Jesus, because he came to save them from their sins. They are the sheep for whom he laid down his life. They are the persons for whom he prays, as distinguished from the world that he does not pray for. The elect are those that hear God's words, because they are of God, in distinction from those that hear them not, because they are not of God; and because they are the sheep of Christ, they believe in him; and they are thus distinguished from others that do not believe because they are not of his sheep. In every branch of this scheme the persons and interests of God's elect are comprehended; in no one branch of it are the persons and interests of the non-elect included. As "the faith of God," so called for the reasons we have assigned, embraced the persons and interests of the seed of Abraham only, so "the faith of God's elect" takes within it only the "remnant according to the election of grace."

The interpretation of the text is exceedingly easy. For the furtherance of this great scheme, Christ, upon his ascension, gave ministerial gifts to men; "he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Paul was made a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the furtherance (*kata*) of the faith of God's elect, and the knowledge of the truth that is according to godliness.

It may be observed, in addition to what has been said above of the faith of God's elect, that the same idea belongs to this word in the expression "common faith," in verse 4. If that scheme includes God's elect only, it should be noted that these are some "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." In the "common faith," then, there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. National distinctions are

annihilated. "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Paul, a Jew by nature, regarded Titus, by nature a Gentile, as his own son, and a joint partaker with him of all spiritual privileges "according to" (*kata*, in, or along the line of) "the common faith." According to the *common belief* is, beyond all question, inadmissible here.

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

It would be a wholly mistaken kindness to bandy compliments with a hero of this stamp. However high a theological distinction any man may have acquired who speaks thus, we will not be awed from denouncing in the strongest terms, teaching so strangely erroneous and so highly mischievous, as that a man is to be counted as having performed all duties by believing, and for the sake of this that he will be reckoned righteous. This is

just that perversion of the gospel of Christ which demands that the perverter, though he be an angel from heaven, should be accursed. When any man, however exalted, shall affirm that it is not anywhere said that Christ's righteousness is imputed to believers, he must be told in plain terms, not that he errs in opinion, but that he denies a matter of fact, and that it would be a waste of words to contradict so palpable a contradiction of the testimony of God.

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

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

Haldane, with whom we may reckon Dr. Carson,

lays great stress on the preposition. Not “*for*,” but *unto* righteousness, he says. I fail to perceive the force of these remarks; for however the preposition may be rendered, it is unquestionable that Abraham was reckoned to be righteous. Again, he says, “the expression ‘unto righteousness’ is elliptical, and signifies unto the receiving of righteousness.” This is almost like Alford. Let us, however, fill up the expression as directed, and see then how it reads. *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him unto the receiving of righteousness.* How does this help out of the difficulty? Filled up as the ellipsis now is according to direction, if this saying is not still elliptical, the sense is singularly subtle, or wonderfully profound, and very far to seek. Again and again this writer very properly tells us that believing and righteousness are not identical. He says that we receive righteousness by believing. This is not disputed, but it requires to be explained differently from the common method. But he here says that Abraham believed God, and that his believing was counted to him unto the receiving of righteousness; that is, that the act by which he received righteousness was counted to him unto, or, in order to, the receiving of righteousness. Surely this never can be a making the truth plain on tables. Unless a man is exceptionally keen-witted and clear-sighted he can never catch the sense of this interpretation at a glance while running. How the act of believing should be interpreted as that by which a man receives righteousness, and at the same time that it should be reckoned unto, or, in order to the receiving of righteousness to him that believes, may fairly be ranked among things not easily comprehensible by persons of ordinary intelligence, and things not easy to be surely believed.

No solution of the acknowledged difficulty of this subject presents so powerful a claim to acceptance as that according to which the word “faith” and the pronoun “it” are to be regarded as representing the object believed. Abraham saw Christ’s day, and was glad. His sight of Christ, therefore, was an appreciative

one. He saw Christ in prospect as the New Testament believer sees him in retrospect. He apprehended the mystery of substitution as this was taught and illustrated by sacrifice. He saw as in a glass the Antitype in the type. He learned that he was to be justified by the righteousness of another through imputation. Having learned "the law of righteousness," he submitted, and became obedient to the faith. He believed in Christ with his heart in order to his justification, and the meritorious acquirement of the Object of his faith was reckoned, or imputed to him unto righteousness. The difficulty of the passage is strongly felt and frankly admitted. I give my opinion.

CHAPTER XI.

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

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

It may be taken that the word faith is sometimes employed, at least in the ordinary course of speech, to designate a specific faculty of the mind. All created intelligences seem to have this faculty. Anyhow, it is certain that men and devils have it, and there can be no sound reason to deny it to angels. Like the power to hope, to love, to judge, or to will, this, to believe, seems to be a constituent element of mind. As the eye and the ear, organs of sense, give those that have them the power of seeing and hearing, so the faculty of faith gifts with that of believing.

But a question of considerable importance here presents itself. To what extent will this natural faculty enable to believe? We know on the indisputable authority of the Word of God that "the natural man

receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14. What these things of the Spirit of God are can present no difficulty. If we say that they are the mysteries of the kingdom of God, the truth as it is in Christ, or something else of similar import, we shall correctly enough express what they are in different words. But the question is, if a natural man cannot know these things, will his faculty of faith enable him to believe them? If they are without the range of his appreciative knowledge while he is a natural man, are they nevertheless meanwhile within the compass of his faith? It seems impossible to give any but a negative answer to this question. Nothing can be plainer than that the natural man is by nature unable to know the things of the Spirit of God, and, therefore, that he is under an inability appreciatively to believe them.

No one who may be but very slightly acquainted with this subject can fail to perceive that, if this view of the apostle's teaching is correct, it must most materially affect the instruction which is almost universally given concerning believing in Christ. For we shall be chargeable with no exaggeration in saying that natural men are sometimes invited by everything that can be imagined as a winning inducement, and at others threatened by everything that can be conjured up as a terrible retribution, to believe in Christ. But if it be so that the persons so invited and threatened have not so much as the faculty to do what they are required, it must be obvious to all that the invitations are something worse than silly, and the threatenings something worse than a mere cruelty. That this inability does exist, and that its existence is everywhere taught in the Scriptures will, on examination, very clearly appear, we have no doubt.

Regeneration represents, if anything, a great change produced by the power of God. Those who imagine this to be effected by, or to consist in, what may be justly termed a burlesque on a religious rite, painfully

illustrate the truth that the natural man does not know the things of the Spirit of God. Radically considered, regeneration is a power of special, namely, of all spiritual, perception and action. That is, a regenerated person possesses a power which one that is unregenerate does not, to perceive things, and to take courses of action, which are called spiritual. One that is not born again "cannot see the kingdom of God." He cannot. He is without the necessary faculty of perception. In order to see the kingdom of God, the eyes of his understanding must be enlightened by a regenerating power. Regeneration gives, indeed, no new faculties to the mind, but it does give a new power to existing ones, which is equal to a creation. Hence a regenerated person is called "a new creature." Human blindness to spiritual things is more than perverseness, it is inability. A perverse man may, indeed, shut his eyes and refuse to see; but a blind man cannot see. Open his eyelids as he may, no light penetrates his sightless eyeballs. So, walk as the natural man may, in the brightest rays of the Sun of Righteousness, he will still be in darkness, because he is darkness. This truth is conclusively taught also by such Scriptures as "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them," Prov. xx. 12. "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind." Psa. cxlvi. 8. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." Isa. xxxv. 5. And in Isa. xlii. 7, we have a prophecy that Jehovah would give his servant, "To open the blind eyes." Taken literally, do not these words represent an absolute inability to see by reason of a natural organic defect? Taken spiritually, are not the persons spoken of supposed to be as destitute of the faculty of spiritual sight as persons wholly without, or with absolutely defective eyeballs are of natural? If they ever see, must not a creative power be brought to bear upon them quite as much as if they had no eyes? If when Jesus Christ opened the eyes of the man born blind he did not create new organs, did he not give a power to existing ones which they had not before, and never

could have had but for the omnipotence he exerted? Was not this act of power equal to a creation? God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath, indeed, shined into the hearts of his ministers, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in Christ; but not to give the sight requisite to profit by it. He himself gives that. He gives that peculiar faith, which is the receptive faculty of things spiritual, the eye of the believer's soul, and the only medium by which the light of the ministry can be appreciatively beheld.

Being persuaded that there is a very general misconception of the truth we are now considering, and that this is a fruitful source of much error about faith, generally speaking, we will add another remark or two. In 2 Thess. iii. 2, the apostle says, "All men have not faith." No proof will be required that by "all men" we are to understand professing men. Some men that profess to have faith, whether their profession may arise from ignorance or hypocrisy, have it not. But how is *to have faith* to be understood? Critics generally, and, as we think, rightly, have discarded the pretensions of *fidelity* to a place here; but at the same time they seem to speak as if not to believe did not arise from not having faith, but from not exercising it. Hence arises much error. The natural man is almost universally credited with a power that he has not. Paul might have conveyed his meaning, by saying, *All professors of Christianity are not believers*; or, *all do not believe*. But had he expressed himself in either of these ways, he would have undoubtedly intended to convey, what interpreters for the most part are altogether unwilling to receive, the idea that the faculty of a spiritual faith was wanting. For if a man says of another, speaking absolutely, he does not hear, or see, or speak, who fails to come to the conclusion that he is speaking of one that is deaf, or blind, or dumb? No man can speak thus of another, absolutely, without intending to convey this meaning, or to mislead his hearer. Paul said, "All men have not faith." The Lord Jesus said, "But there are some of you that believe not." John vi. 64.

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

While desiring to avoid cumbering these pages with quotations, a passage in Edwards on *The Religious Affections* may be inserted here without in the least crossing my wish in this particular. After having drawn attention to several Scriptures in proof that a radical difference exists between what is natural and what is spiritual, he says:—"From hence it follows, that in those gracious exercises and affections which are wrought in the minds of the saints through the saving influences of the Spirit of God, there is a new inward perception or sensation of their minds, entirely different in its nature and kind from anything that ever their minds were the subjects of before they were sanctified. For, doubtless, if God by his mighty power produces something that is new, not only in degree and circumstances, but in its whole nature, and which could be produced by no exalting, varying, or compounding of what was there before; I say, if God produces something thus new in the mind, that is a perceiving, thinking, conscious thing; then, doubtless, something entirely new is felt, or perceived, or thought; or, which is the same thing, there is some new sensation or perception of the mind, which is entirely of a new sort, and which could be produced by no exalting, varying, or compounding of that kind of perceptions or sensations which

the mind had before ; or there is what some metaphysicians call a new simple idea. If grace be, in the sense above described, an entirely new kind of principle, then the exercises of it are also entirely a new kind of exercises. And if there be in the soul a new sort of exercises, of which it is conscious, which the soul knew nothing of before, and which no improvement, composition, or management of what it was before conscious or sensible of, could produce ; then it follows, that the mind has an entirely new kind of perception or sensation : and here is, as it were, a new spiritual sense that the mind has, or a new principle, perception, or spiritual sensation, which is in its whole nature different from any former kinds of sensation of the mind, as tasting is diverse from any of the other senses ; and something is perceived by a true saint, in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely diverse from any thing that is perceived in them by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men get of honey by only looking on it, and feeling it. So that the spiritual perceptions which a sanctified and spiritual person has, are not only diverse from all that natural men have, after the manner that the ideas or perceptions of the same sense may differ one from another, but rather as the ideas and sensations of different senses do differ. Hence the work of the Spirit of God in regeneration is often compared to the giving a new sense ; giving eyes to see, and ears to hear ; unstopping the ears of the deaf ; and opening the eyes of them that were born blind ; and turning from darkness unto light. And because this spiritual sense is immensely the most noble and excellent, and that without which all other principles of perception, and all our faculties, are useless and vain ; therefore the giving this new sense, with the blessed fruits and effects of it in the soul, is compared to a raising the dead, and to a new creation.

This new spiritual sense, and the new dispositions that attend it, are no new faculties, but are new principles of nature. I use the word *principles*, for want

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

Whatever faith, then, a natural man may have, and whatever he may be capable of believing by its exercise, the faculty and the act are so utterly deficient of a spiritual nature that, in speaking of spiritual things, it may be said of him that he has not faith, and that he does not believe.

But we are not left alone to the deductions of our reason to conclude that where the faculty of faith respecting spiritual things is wanting the act of believing cannot be exerted, for the Saviour has informed us that a natural man not only does not, but that he cannot believe. In John vi., 44, he says, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Or, as he puts it in verse 65, "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." It will not be disputed that to come to Christ is to believe in him. But though this is generally admitted, the truth taught about it is not so easily conceded. For from what the Lord Jesus had previously said to the Jews in chap. v. 40, "And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life," it has been contended, and we believe the opinion is very generally entertained, that aversion of heart is the only obstruction to faith in Christ. How false this notion is, and

how empty is the metaphysical distinction between a natural and a moral inability respecting this matter, may be seen at large in the late Mr. John Stevens' book entitled, "Help for the true Disciples of Immanuel." But even supposing, which we do not, that aversion of heart were the only obstruction to faith in Christ, if this is "by nature," that is, if it is the natural condition of man under the fall, is not the hinderance insuperable? Does it not amount to a *cannot*? Whether the nature of an obstruction to a particular perception and action of the mind be moral, or mental, or physical, if it be inherent in a man and irremovable by him, it is effectual, and constitutes an actual inability. Practically, what matters the nature or the name of an obstruction that effectually obstructs? Is an effectual hinderance less so by one name than another?

But a false principle of interpretation lurks here. This is interpreting the *cannot* by the *will not*. What authority is there for this? Why might not others interpret the *will not* by the *cannot*? Either way is a vicious method of handling the Word of God. To interpret the *cannot* by the *will not* in this instance is to do away with the testimony of man's helpless inability, and the absolute necessity of Almighty grace to be exerted to overcome it. To interpret the *will not* by the *cannot* would be to make void the severe reproof delivered by Jesus Christ to the Jews, and to all beside that are guilty of the same offence. Each of these testimonies, the *will not* and the *cannot*, has its own interpretation independently of the other. As they will not, they are perversely disinclined. As they cannot, they are wanting of the requisite power.

But a distinction lies here that seems to escape general observation. In John vi. 44, the Lord Jesus reveals a terrible want which constitutes a fatal inability with the view of bringing to notice the necessity of the exercise of divine grace to remedy the mischief. Moreover, his testimony here is absolute and comprehends the race; and it should be noticed that there is in it nothing of the nature of a personal reproof. On the

other hand, what he said in John v. 40, was not absolute and unlimited, but it had a particular reference to the persons whom he was then addressing, and it had in it very strongly the nature of a personal rebuke. He appealed to the Scriptures in proof of his Messiahship; and although these abundantly testified of him, and he answered most evidently in every point to their testimony, these Jews, who thought they had eternal life in them, nevertheless would not receive him as the Christ. Now where there is a just cause of reproof, and doubtless there was in this instance, there must be fault, and where there is fault there must be a breach of duty, and where a breach of duty a transgression of law. It was, then, without doubt, the duty of these Jews, and is of all others who have the Scriptures in their hands, to come to, to receive, or to believe in Christ. The *will not*, therefore, represents *that* coming to, and reception of Christ which is the duty of all men who hear the testimony God has testified concerning his Son. This duty, falling as it evidently does under the law of works, is wholly unconnected with the promise of life and salvation in Christ. Its due discharge will have its appropriate reward; its omission, its just desert. On the other hand, the *cannot come* represents *that* peculiar appreciative coming to, and receiving of Christ, which is a special privilege granted under the law of faith. Those who come not thus commit no fault, incur no blame, and are not reprov'd. Those who do come thus, simply exert a given power and use a given privilege, and in so doing they get to enjoy the blessings of salvation. But they discharge no duty by so doing, earn no reward, and receive no commendation. What they do is altogether of grace just as much as is what they enjoy. About the doing and the enjoying they may be congratulated, but not applauded. But more of this later on.

CHAPTER XII.

OF BELIEVING.

FAITH is the name of a mental exercise. It is so employed, sometimes, in what may be designated an untrue, a true, and in an incomplete, and a complete sense. In the untrue sense a man is sometimes said to believe something that he merely desires, the wish begetting the thought. Sometimes, on a balance of probabilities in his mind, he is said to believe what he thinks to be likely relative to anything past, present, or future. At other times he is regarded as believing what he does not positively disbelieve. Perhaps the most pernicious example of what we are calling the untrue use of this word is the most widely extended, and it certainly is not employed about anything else of equal importance. We allude to the fact, everywhere to be observed, of persons taking the truth of the gospel for granted, while they remain utterly ignorant of its most elementary principles, and, consequently, exercise no trust at all in its testimonies, or a blind one only, and suppose that this is believing. In any one of the cases mentioned there is, indeed, no faith at all, in any true sense.

But the word may be used in what may be termed a true, although it be only in a more or less incomplete sense. As when a man is said to believe things of common credit, although he may have no concern in them, nor may interest himself at all about them. Or as when he is said to believe some testimony about something which does concern such as he is, though he himself never takes any interest in the matter. For it seems certain that a man may most confidently believe the truth of a testimony of fact, of a threatening, and of a promise to such as he is, and that he may still pay no practical regard to the counsel of the first, nor heed the danger of the second, nor care for the good of the third. Now just as unbelieving may be most truly predicated when more or less complete; so, in calling

these and similar exercises believing, as we truly may, we yet do so only as in a very imperfect sense. Perhaps one of the most subtle delusions associated with the use of this word in a true, but incomplete, sense, is that which arises from an acceptance of testimony upon the decision of the judgment, after evidence has been investigated and weighed by the understanding. A testimony of the gospel, or the gospel itself, is laid before the mind. On this the understanding is brought to bear. Evidence of the truth is taken and examined. On the completion of the examination the judgment decisively gives a favourable verdict, and on this decision the man is said to believe the testimony. So he, very truly, does believe; but it will be a ruinous mistake if he concludes that, therefore, he is a believer in the complete sense of the word. Properly, complete belief follows upon this reception of testimony. "We have known and believed," says the apostle John. 1 John iv. 16.

This intelligent reception of the testimony of the gospel, unconnected with any further believing action, is what we designate incomplete faith. The gospel is intelligently received as so much testimony of fact and truth, but nothing further. No important persuasion, in this case, is conveyed in the testimony of fact and truth, and no procedure of trust follows. The mind is possessed of a new and assured fact and truth, and that is all. Thus, as we hold, belief may be true so far as it extends, when it may yet be very incomplete. He that believes the gospel is true may very truly believe; but if he proceeds no further, his belief will be very incomplete.

In its complete sense, faith will be the name of a complex mental exercise embracing belief and trust with a view to advantage. If, therefore, a man believes in this sense a simple testimony of fact that concerns him, he will act in a manner corresponding with the instruction which the truth of this affords him. If in pursuing any particular line of action he believes a threatening stands against him, he will alter his conduct accordingly. If he believes a promise made to

him, he will desire and aim to become possessed of the promised good.

But where the exercise of faith is found in its complete sense, there also will be found certain requisite conditions. There will be, for instance, a testimony of some kind to be believed, and this will bring with it, or bear in itself, evidence of its truth. That is, there will be some scheme of faith revealed, containing provisions of good, concerning which testimony will be made with sufficient evidence to justify and encourage belief. Moreover, the testimony to be believed, whatever may be its specific character, will relate to him that believes; he, too, will apprehend this relation, and will understand that the matter concerns him; for it is clear that, where these conditions are wanting, no man can have any sufficient warrant to exercise a trust in any testimony with reference to himself. Another thing will be a consciousness of a need of the good of the testimony to be believed. For as it is certain that every scheme of faith will be remedial in its provisions, and that what is to be believed according thereto will be to meet a necessity; so also it is equally certain that it will be an essential element of belief to be able to appreciate the good provided and made known by the testimony. By these we are conducted to a fourth particular, namely, that every exercise of faith, therefore, will be an act of trust with a view to advantage. The whole may be put thus; "With the heart man believeth unto (*eis*, in order to, with a view to,) righteousness," or to some other good, of which he is conscious that he is in need, the provision of which he understands has been made, and made, as he learns from testimony, for such as he is. These conditions are essential to the exercise of faith in the true and complete sense. For if a man speaks of believing without having a positive testimony to believe, he is ignorantly practising an illusion on himself. If what he is said to believe bears no relation to him, according to testimony, he is presuming rather than believing. If he has no consciousness of need of the good of the

testimony that he is said to believe, he fails to understand a first requisite to believing, and is as the fool with a price in his hand to get wisdom who has no heart to it. If he has no view of, and exercises no trust in order to, a promised advantage, he fails to appreciate the scheme of faith, and his belief is a mere empty conceit. Although he may have a creed, and this be of unimpeachable orthodoxy, and though he may repeat its terms ever so devoutly and frequently, he never believes in the complete sense. Not only because he is not a disbeliever is he therefore not a believer, but his mind may be in a state of non-belief although it be not in that of disbelief; and, whether ignorantly or intelligently, simply crediting the truth of a testimony is not faith in the complete sense, and will never constitute him a believer in the full meaning of the word. Many entertain no sentiment or thought of disbelief about the testimony concerning Christ in the Scriptures; yea, there are, it may be, not a few that would repel in the most scornful terms, and be prepared to disprove by cogent arguments, anything that might be advanced against the credit of the truth of the Word concerning Christ, although they themselves never dreamed of exerting any trust in him. Altogether persuaded these are, and that intelligently, of the verity of the testimony of Christ, yet have they none the more ever at any time committed anything to him. Herein all such are broadly distinguished from Paul, (2 Tim. i. 12,) and all other believers, in the full sense of the word, and this distinction arises out of a radical difference of state.

We are now brought to a question of considerable importance and some difficulty; namely, whether there are different kinds of faith. This question is strongly affirmed and denied. So far as our observation has extended, no one has more elaborately discussed this question, nor more strongly defended the negative side of it, than the late Mr. Binney, in his Discourses on the Practical Power of Faith. Reduced to a sentence his whole argument would stand thus:—As the nature of