

the testimony of the gospel is God's promise and provision of mercy for man, or the conveying to him assurances of good through the medium of intelligible facts; and as faith, all faith, is the simple reception of testimony as what it is, or according to its nature; so, therefore, every man that believes the gospel must necessarily believe it to be God's promise and provision of mercy to him. If there are any, therefore, who are said to believe the gospel, but who at the same time do not feel such impressions, nor experience such consequences, as correspond with the receiving a testimony of such a nature, "such persons," he says, "properly speaking, have no belief at all. Not because they believe nothing, but because they believe not *that* which God intended they should." Respecting the objections that might be raised against this view in reference to unfallen and fallen angels; these, he says, believe the gospel as what it is to them, namely, a testimony of mercy to man; and they are impressed by their belief in a manner corresponding to their several states. Respecting the faith of a sinner and the faith of a saint; these, he says, are one and the same in nature, and differ only in extent. Respecting those who are said to assent to the gospel and systematically to understand it, those to whom it comes in word only, and who, if they do not deny, do not experience the power of it; these, he says, merely believe the proposition, "the gospel is true," while others, those to whom it comes in power, believe the truths of the gospel. Both, he says, have faith in the true meaning of the term, as the reception of what is really before the mind; but that which *is* so is infinitely different in each; and hence the difference in their character and state. This is, and mostly in his own words, a concise representation of Mr. Binney's argument; and, though brief, it comprehends everything in it that is material.

No careful reader can fail to observe that Mr. Binney begins his argument with a radically faulty proposition. He says that the gospel is God's promise and provision of mercy for man; meaning, without doubt,

for the race indiscriminately. This is a fundamental error. As a testimony of fact and truth, the gospel is to be proclaimed the world over, without discrimination of nations or individuals; but the promises and provisions of the gospel are for persons that are everywhere and always, either in direct terms, or by plain and necessary implication, distinctly discriminated. Can the promise and provision of mercy be for the race when God says with a solemn distinctness in so many words, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy"? The testimony of the gospel is just "The record (testimony) that God gave (testified) of his Son. Substantially, this is all contained in the instructions which the angel of the Lord gave to Joseph about the name which he was to give to the Child of his espoused wife; namely, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." Matt. i. 21. Every testimony of the gospel, concerning the Son of God is in conformity with this. This defines the extent of the Saviour's relation, of his responsibility, the object of his advent, and the work which was given him to do and which he perfected. He is the Head of the church. He loved the church, and gave himself for it. He laid down his life for the sheep. He prayed for his disciples; and in doing so he made a solemn distinction between them and the world. Is there, then, any promise or provision of mercy in Christ beyond what is indicated in these and similar testimonies of his relation, responsibility, and work? If not, how then can the testimony of the gospel be a provision and promise of mercy to man indiscriminately? And how, indiscriminately, can men believe the testimony of the gospel to be a provision and promise of mercy to them? As no ingenuity of man can frame an unlimited saving result from the mediation of Christ; so, no man, whose mind is obedient to the truth concerning this great business, can find in the testimony that God has testified of his Son, an unlimited promise and provision of mercy; and he will be a very daring man that shall be bold enough to affirm that the accomplishment of sal-

vation will not be commensurate with the purpose. The testimony of the gospel is a proclamation of intelligible facts and truths to all men indiscriminately; to some men only, who are distinctly discriminated, it is a promise and provision of mercy.

The other leading proposition of Mr. Binney's argument is open to much objection. He, in effect, says, that it is not "metaphysically just" to affirm that a man believes a testimony at all, if he fails to assimilate the object of his belief and act accordingly. Perhaps, among beings whose moral rectitude is unimpaired, we should always and uniformly find what is "metaphysically just" undisturbed by what has been called "the logic of facts;" but it is more than questionable whether we shall find this due order and sequence of things among fallen intelligences. Satan, Mr. Binney allows, is a true believer; but it would seem that, whatever he may feel from his belief, he very often does not act in a corresponding manner. The supposition that men always assimilate what they know and believe, and that they act correspondingly, is to give them a credit which no one of them that is sensible will take; and to affirm that they do not believe at all such and such things because they do not always assimilate what they are said to believe, and to act correspondingly thereon, is to deny the plainest facts; and if this denial were carried to its legitimate consequences in cases of wrong-doing, it would go far to eliminate criminality from transgression. But men, and these none of the worst, are sometimes found confessing errors, which they cannot palliate by any consideration of ignorance or disbelief, in the well-known words, "I see the better, and I approve; I follow the worse:" and one of the most distinguished believers in Christ has said, "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I." Facts put the question beyond doubt that a man may be most certainly persuaded of a truth which he, nevertheless, may fail to assimilate, and may practically disregard. Who has not most certainly believed a

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

Starting with the utterly unsound proposition that the gospel is a promise of mercy to man indefinitely, and the consequent mistake that every man ought to believe this promise for himself, Mr. Binney arrived at the conclusion that, as all faith is the reception of testimony as what it is, if a man does not believe the gospel as a promise of mercy to himself, he does not believe it at all. Consequently, according to him, there are not among men different kinds of belief of the gospel. For though he admits, that there are some men who systematically understand and assent to the truths of the

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

Substantially, Mr. Fuller had before advanced the same contradictory doctrine. He spoke of faith in the *proper*, and *improper* sense, and designated the latter *conviction*. "It is true," he said, "this conviction is called *believing* ; but it is only in an *improper sense*." That is, as he contended, in a sense in which there is, actually, no believing at all. But is not conviction an element of belief ? Can a man be convinced that a testimony of fact is true without a corresponding belief ? It is readily granted that a man may be convinced that a given testimony of fact is true without taking any procedure corresponding with his conviction ; but can the mind be convinced that a testimony is true without believing it to be true ? Does it not seem that, as a plain thoughtful man long ago said, to apply this reasoning to those passages of the word where some are

said to believe in this sense, is to contradict the Scriptures rather than to expound them? It is more than granted that, in the complete sense of believing, there is a complex exercise of the mind; but may there not be, nevertheless, simple exercises of faith. For instance, it is "A faithful saying, and worthy of an acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." May not this word be accepted as a simple testimony of fact without being received as conveying an important truth to him who accepts it? Shall it be said that those who do receive this word as a testimony of fact, without any second element, do not believe it at all? Mr. Fuller would affirm this; but it ought to be known that he had a favourite opinion to serve, and it is unknown how far, when under the potent influence of a pet theory, any good man's mind may be led astray. Only let it be granted that there is but one kind of faith, and taken as proved that all who have got the testimony of God in their hands ought to believe it, and the opinion that it is the duty of all men, universally, so circumstanced, to believe in Christ unto salvation—the fondly cherished notion of Mr. Fuller—will be established at a stroke. But the establishment of this opinion about human duty would annihilate the principle of grace, and annul the law of faith in the salvation of sinners—so far, at least, as believing is concerned in it. Can anything more decisively prove the unsoundness of the opinion?

CHAPTER XIII.

OF THE DUTY OF BELIEVING.

WHETHER it be a duty that devolves on all men who have the Scriptures to believe in Christ unto salvation, is a question that has long been, and now is, always warmly, and sometimes strongly, disputed. Among the disputants on the affirmative side there have been those who, advancing with consequential airs the undisputed dictum that if faith is not a duty then unbelief is not

a sin, have seemed to imagine that they have hit upon a short argument which must conclusively settle the whole matter to the utter confusion of their opponents. In truth this is, what they seem to fail to see, but a very evident *mistake of the question*. No one disputes that faith in Christ is a duty, nor, so far as this extends, that unbelief is a sin; but there are some who strongly deny and who think that they can clearly disprove, that the salvation of a sinner receives the slightest contribution from, or is in the least degree furthered in anything by the discharge of any human duty. Dispassionate enquirers, prepared, as they will be, to receive the testimony of God as little children, but who will be withal persuaded that there is both an essential and an appreciable harmony in divine truth, will come to the conclusion that faith in Christ is, and is not, a duty; and that unbelief is, and is not, a sin.

God having been pleased to deliver to the world a testimony of fact and truth which bears in itself appreciable evidence of its verity, no argument is needed to prove that the divine record ought to be believed by all who may become cognisant of it. Equally clear will it appear that, being delivered to the world as a testimony of fact and truth, he that receives the record, as such, sets to his seal that God is true, and discharges the obligation which, in this matter, lies upon him; and that he that rejects the word fails in this duty, and commits the sin of making God a liar. But can any one fail to see that this obligation to believe springs out of man's original relation to God; that the claim arises from the first table of the law; that obedience is purely a work of law; that the reward of this duty forms no part of the promise of life in Christ; that the obligation and obedience, and reward, all fall under the law of works, according to which no man can be justified and saved; and that this belief, therefore, in nothing furthers a sinner's justification and salvation? Everybody must perceive that whatever is a man's duty is a due from him to his Sovereign, and that this is prescribed by law. So, also, that in every case where a

duty is done, and a due is rendered according to law, that there a debt from the Sovereign to the subject will arise, and that the dutiful and obedient man will become invested with a right of reward. But how anything of this kind can become blended in any mind with, so as to form a part of, the doctrine that a sinner is justified and saved altogether of grace, passes all knowledge. What can be clearer than that a duty can only obtain where, and in respect of what, the law of works is the governing principle between the Sovereign and the subject? And what can be more evident than that the law of works has no place in the justification and salvation of a sinner; or than that by works of law no flesh can be justified and saved?

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

Salvation, in that case, would not have been wholly of the Lord. Men would have been partly their own saviours. They would have discharged a duty, and have acquired an economical right of reward. At least, then, they might have congratulated themselves, and, probably, boasted over others, that they had rendered a due and reaped a reward of right; and, possibly, they might even have had somewhat of which to glory before God himself. But how foreign and far from the truth all such notions are, must be apparent to every believer in Christ; and they must be, too, as revolting to him as they are disparaging to the grace of God in his salvation. And such sentiments ought to excite his abhorrence and indignation. Against those that promulgate these doctrines, for many sufficient reasons, he ought to be angry, and to withstand them. What of the amenities of life he cannot preserve with them without unfaithfulness to principle, he had every way better let go. The retention would be a certain loss; the sacrifice will be a sure gain to estimableness, to truth, to honour, and to conscience before God. Bandyng compliments with them, so far from being a Christian charity, would not be a sincere courtesy, but would be unfaithfulness to them and treason against Christ. On the authority of an apostle, an angel should be anathematized that lays the basis of salvation on the doctrine of works. Let men and things have attributed to them the distinguishing titles which belong to them. Let it be faithfully said of every man that he is in error in principle who is aside of, or has fallen from the doctrine of the grace of God in the justification and salvation of a sinner. Yea, as this is no matter in connection with which men should be spoken of with honeyed euphemisms in strained courtesies, so neither should plain terms be used with bating apologies; therefore, on this point, let every man be a liar in so far as he contradicts the truth of God, which declares, in every form by which meaning can receive an utterance, that sinners are saved by grace.

The notion that it is the duty of unbelievers to

believe in Christ in order to their salvation receives no countenance from the general testimony of fact and truth about this wonderful deliverance in the Scriptures. This general testimony may be taken as completely represented in the well-known words of the apostle found in 1 Tim. i. 15: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." While no one can overrate the importance of the truth taught in these memorable words, it is quite possible to give them, and very probable that they often receive, a meaning that is entirely foreign to them. However this may be, it may be safely affirmed that they make the salvation of every self-justifier impossible, and that they declare that of any sinner possible, nevertheless for any unfavourable conclusion that may be formed about this matter from any view of the evil of his sins; but that, at the same time, they contain nothing of the certainty of an assurance that any particular person shall be saved. If any man imagines, from any consideration of his moral and religious virtues, or what not beside of this kind, that he may be saved, these words completely annihilate his pretensions and refute his conclusions. If any sinner thinks, from the evil of his sins, or what not of this kind, that it is doubtful whether he may be saved, his suspicions are fully contradicted, and his fears met. But if, again, any man thinks from these words, because he is a sinner, that he shall be certainly saved, he is wholly mistaken. From these words, the possible salvation of any sinner may be assuredly gathered, whatever may be his sinfulness; but it can neither be justly imagined by, nor predicated of, any sinner, personally, that he shall be saved from what is taught in this testimony. If then, these words, albeit they express in sum the general testimony of God about the salvation of sinners, contain no evidence of the personal salvation of any sinner, no sinner can, by them, be under the obligation to believe that he, personally, shall be saved. No duty, then, is taught here.

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

Again, nothing, it is admitted, can be more evident than that, according to God's economy, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ is requisite in order to salvation. But this faith stands up in high distinction, as the special gift of God, from that which is commanded to unbelievers. To believe as commanded requires but the exercise of powers already possessed to weigh appreciable evidence of fact and truth. To believe in Christ in order to salvation requires a special enlightenment of the understanding that is purely the work of God to enable to receive appreciatively the relative excellence of the Saviour's character. This distinguished faith, side by side with the Saviour's mediation, is, economically, necessary to salvation. Just as when a gift is to be bestowed, receiving is collaterally requisite with giving, so this faith is necessary to the appreciation and appropriation of God's unspeakable gift; but the reception is as little a duty devolving on the recipient as the precious bestowment itself is a due

from the Divine Giver. For, seeing that all sinners are saved wholly by grace, it will follow that that which may be even only collaterally requisite in order to salvation in them that are saved, cannot be to them of the nature of a work, and that the least constituent element of their deliverance cannot be of the nature of a reward for a due rendered. In the whole business of salvation, from first to last, the least commixture of works is inadmissible, and the doctrine that teaches the contrary, in the lightest form, should be unequivocally condemned.

Those Scriptures, therefore, which indicate the connection existing between faith and salvation, cannot be justly interpreted as enjoining a duty. In the words, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned;" Mark xvi. 16; we have simply, a most important instruction, given to all whom it may concern, of what shall be to believers and unbelievers. By this, to use a favourite expression of the apostle John, we know who will be saved, and who will not. Substantially, the same interpretation is to be given to the words, "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." John iii. 18. We learn here that every one who with the heart believes in Christ unto righteousness is passed from a state of condemnation, and that he who does not, is already condemned. If the conjunction (*oti*) "because," which connects the concluding parts of this sentence, creates a difficulty in any man's mind, let him compare this occurrence of the word in its relation to the verb believe here with that which is found in John xvi. 27. Nothing more can be needed to set any understanding at rest; and it is unnecessary to pursue this part of the subject any further.

John vi. 29, it may be observed parenthetically, has considerably perplexed some expositors; but believing here is not connected with salvation at all. Mr. Haldane, speaking on the term, "law of faith," in Rom. iii. 27, says, "The word law is here used in allusion to the law of works, according to a figure usual in the

Scriptures. By the same figure Jesus says, 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' Here faith is called a work for a similar reason." But this is altogether a mistake; for, indeed, there is no figure at all in either of these texts. The words "law" and "work" in these instances are to be taken in their usual meaning, according to Scripture usage. Law, in the one case, means a principle of government; and work, in the other, that which earns a reward. Although, it is presumed, Mr. Haldane took it that faith unto salvation is intended here, and that this is a duty, he yet seemed to feel that, spoken of as the work of God, some softening explanation was required, and this he found in a figure of speech. Bengel says of the work of God, "That which is approved by God." Olshausen takes a long step further, but wide of the mark. This expositor says, "With a fine allusion to the 'works' he terms it (faith) the work of God, faith being not only pleasing to God, but also performed by his grace, and thus being a work of God in the soul of man." Gill, who was far enough from making faith unto salvation a duty, falls into a similar mistake. He says, "This as a principle is purely God's work; as it is an act, or as it is exercised under the influence of divine grace, it is man's act." But surely it will be plain to the most superficial observer that all ideas of what God works, mediately or immediately, must be fetched from afar in expounding this text, and that, when brought, they have in them no affinity whatever with what is here taught. "Works" and "work" are to be taken in their usual and well-understood sense in the Scriptures. "That ye believe," here, is simply a divine command and a human duty, according to the law of works, neither more nor less. God had sent his Son into the world, and he demanded then, as he demands now, upon sufficient evidence, that men should believe on him. The belief here required, being a human duty, can have no connection with salvation, for this is wholly of God, and so of him that his grace is all in all.

Another Scripture relating, not, indeed, to the duty of unbelievers, but of believers to believe in Christ, may here receive a passing consideration. In 1 John iii. 23, it is said, "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ." Commandment, whatever may be the relation of the parties commanding and commanded, is unquestionably a law term. That which is commanded is, without doubt, a work, and must fall under the law of works. As has been observed, this law obtains under the economy of grace; for we everywhere find appropriate precepts enjoined on the subjects of the spiritual kingdom of God, together with fit rewards and penalties severally promised and threatened. One of those precepts, we here learn, is to believe in the name of Christ. But it should be distinctly borne in mind that this "work of God" is not identical with that mentioned in John vi. 29. For that relates to unbelievers, this to believers. That respects such a belief in Christ as is due from an unbeliever; this such a faith as is due from a believer. That has to do with the original rational act of belief of fact and truth; this with the habitual exercise of the spiritual faculty which is peculiar to regenerated persons. Alford teaches us that the *aorist*, which is the tense used in John vi. 29, imports one act of receptive faith; but that the *present*, which is the tense he decides for here, conveys the idea of a continuing habit. God having given this precious power, then, to regenerated persons, simply demands its habitual exercise. No one can read the Scriptures with intelligence about faith who does not perceive these distinctions. Every one that reads the Word with understanding on this subject must be able to see that there is a faith in Christ which is not unto salvation, and which all unbelievers, who have the testimony of God concerning his Son, may exercise. He must also perceive that there is a belief in Christ which is unto salvation, and which is never, and never can be, exerted, but through the exceeding greatness of the divine energy working in them that so believe: Eph.

i. 19. And he must understand that believers, God having bestowed upon them the spiritual faculty of believing, should habitually believe on Jesus Christ. Moreover, he should know that the first and third of these beliefs are explicitly enjoined duties under the law of works. That the first is the duty of man in his original relation to his Creator and Governor; that the third is the duty of a special people in a new relation to God; and that the second is not, and cannot be, the duty of any man; for that salvation, from first to last, in every particular, is wholly of God, and so of him as to be altogether of grace. But it is time to return from this digression.

When the testimony of God concerning his Son takes a promissory character, it may be as decisively asserted that there is no more than a duty enjoined to believe unto salvation than there is when the record is a simple declaration of fact and truth, or than there is when the Word simply teaches us that there is a particular and necessary connection between faith and salvation. Obviously, this question can only be determined, according to the terms upon which the promises are made. Promises may and may not have their fulfilment suspended upon some conditions to be performed by the promisees. Both these kinds of promises, as we have already seen, were made in reference to the inheritance of Canaan by the Jews. "God gave it to Abraham by promise." The original grant was unclogged by a single condition to be performed by the grantee. The promise to give the land being wholly unconditional, its possession was secured to those for whom it was granted nevertheless for all their disobedience and unbelief. Highly culpable and justly punished as was the unbelief of the descendants of Abraham, yet their sin did not make God's engagement with him without effect to them in the least degree. Nevertheless for, and as it were in contempt of, all their wickedness, God redeemed his unconditional pledge to their father, and put them into possession. The covenant to give the land was established upon unconditional promises and

was fulfilled accordingly. But the promise to retain possession and enjoyment of the heritage was wholly different, for it was entirely conditional. God made a covenant with the fathers of Israel, when he brought them out of Egypt, to give them the enjoyment of the good of the land, (which he had already granted unconditionally as a possession to Abraham,) established upon promises the fulfilment of which was suspended upon conditions that were clearly laid down and afterwards enforced, and the enforcement has resulted in the dispossession and dispersion of the Jews. About no two things could the terms of an agreement be more unlike than were those of these two covenants; and about nothing, it is thought, do Christian teachers blunder more egregiously than in their references to, and their uses of the terms of these two most dissimilar instruments. For while it seems impossible that any careful reader of the Scriptures can mistake the different principles upon which the covenant made with Abraham and that made with the heads of Israel were established, nor which of them stands in contrast to, and which in comparison with, the covenant of salvation; it is nevertheless clear, and monstrous as evident, that not a few, whose utterances are accepted with a submission as complete as can be claimed for an oracle, are, with perpetual self-contradiction, constantly confounding the promises of these radically distinct compacts. The day yet seems to be far distant when men will see and leave off the folly of attempting to teach the doctrine of faith in the language of works.

Now, that the principles of the covenant of salvation are in agreement with that made with Abraham, and in contrast to that made with the heads of Israel, the apostle has everywhere taught; and this is the point to be noticed here. Among other noteworthy instances of contrast to the latter, that in Heb. viii. 6—12, may be mentioned. There the apostle calls the covenant of salvation a new one, and better than the other; and better because "established upon better promises." But it will be a great mistake if the betterness of these

promises is interpreted merely of their subject matter. No doubt they have a superior excellency in this respect; but the true idea of their superiority intended by the apostle lies in their unconditionality. That this is the correct view will be plainly apparent to every mind which can see that nobody of ordinary intelligence requires the authority of inspiration to persuade him that the promises of salvation in Christ are, as to their subject matter, better than those which only assured the enjoyment of an earthly heritage. But it is quite clear that mankind have required, and still need, to be authoritatively taught that the promises of the new covenant have the superiority over those of the old of being unconditional. For no truth of the gospel from the beginning until now has been received at first with more disfavour than this, nor submitted to afterwards with more unwillingness, nor held in esteem less generally, nor fallen from more commonly; and at the present time the sphere in which this truth is accepted and taught with anything like consistency and a loving conviction of its excellency is, comparatively, almost infinitesimally narrow.

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

One example of the promise of salvation will serve to illustrate and confirm this teaching as well as a hundred. If, it is presumed, any part of the divine record can make it to be the duty of every man, in order to his salvation, to believe the promises of God, it will be some such passage as that in Joel ii. 32, which is quoted once and again in the New Testament, thus: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." No one could desire this promise to be spoken with less limitation. No union with any outward association, no hereditary succession, and no genealogical descent helps or hinders fulfilment. Gentiles stand on equal terms with Jews. Nothing is mentioned of nationality, of civil standing, of natural parts, nor of moral excellency. Individuals, as such, independently of all such distinctions are spoken of, and that to an extent as wide as the world.

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

Further, what constitutes this particular exercise ought not to be mistaken. As every true spiritual

character has its spurious resemblance, as there are foolish virgins as well as wise ones, it ought not to be taken for granted that everything which looks like a calling upon the name of the Lord is such in truth. Certain it is that to call on the name of the Lord is something more than to say prayers, and, indeed, more than to pray. It may also be safely asserted that this sacred exercise can only proceed upon a previous appreciative knowledge of some of the forms of remedial character which God has graciously assumed by name in his Word, which he embodies in his great work of salvation, and which, in the experience of enlightened minds, are happily appropriate to man's ruined condition. If there is not an appeal in petition, or an offering praise in thanksgiving to God under some one of his characteristic excellencies, whatever there may be of devout feelings and of fervent utterance, there is not a calling upon the name of the Lord. On the one hand, this sacred exercise may be wholly absent from the deepest utterances of the most supplicating litany, from all the forms of the most complete liturgy, conducted as this may be with profound devotion, and with whatever costly and ostentatious accessories, and from the most eloquent expressions of impromptu prayer and praise; and, on the other hand, a tear may be the voiceless sign of this blessed employment in its truest character and highest degree.

But further. If to believe in Christ unto salvation is not a doctrine of salvation, it is nothing. If it is a doctrine of salvation, and not a theological delusion, it will necessarily enter somewhere into the experience of the saved. For it may be laid down as a self-evident proposition, that every doctrine of salvation which has a basis of truth will ever have an exemplification in fact in the experience of some one or other of them who are saved. No corroborative argument, therefore, of the unsoundness of this supposed doctrine of salvation can be stronger than is the simple fact that it has never been known to enter into the experience of any one sinner who has been saved by grace. Of this

fact itself there can be no doubt. For who has ever been heard to profess that he had discharged this supposed duty when relating the circumstances of his conversion? Who was ever heard to make a profession of any saving benefit or right which had at any subsequent time arose to him from the performance of this supposed duty? Absolutely no one. Now if to believe in Christ unto salvation were a duty, and the obligation had ever been discharged, somebody would most certainly have heard of some saving benefit or right arising from its discharge somewhere in the experience of the saved; but of any such thing the whole history of what sinners saved by grace have experienced is altogether silent.

Equally self-evident is it that every doctrine of salvation which has a basis of truth will ever be found entering into and variously influencing the worship of them who are saved. Tried, again, by this test, the doctrine that it is a duty to believe in Christ unto salvation will be proved unsound to the core. We never meet with it in the personal worship of the saved, either in private or public. When they worship God in direct reference to themselves it is never mentioned in their prayers. Never, in any view of it, does it form a subject of their thanksgiving nor a theme of their praise. Hymnologists, so far as I know, have never embodied it in verse, either for the home or the sanctuary; save, indeed, when here and there some of them, forgetting to worship and affecting to preach, may have dropped the devotional strain and picked up the didactic. None of them ever breathe a hint of it when expressing the lofty sentiments of gratitude and love, nor the loftier ones of thanksgiving and praise; and we never meet with the slightest suggestion about it when they are uttering the lowly feelings of reverence and fear, or the lowlier ones of confession and prayer. Liturgists, save when any of them may have forgotten to confess, or pray, or praise, and have affected the evangelist or the homilist, have never embodied this doctrine in any service for the closet, the hearth, or