

Acts xviii. 24—27. are found in the Acts: Apollos required only to be taught *the way of God more perfectly*; and the Ephesian Twelve were prepared for the full Christian baptism which they had long waited for. Then said Paul, *John verily baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on Him that should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.*

Legal and Evangelical. 3. Hence, finally, while the evangelical element is not wanting in this repentance—it has a presentiment of the Gospel—it is yet under the law. All that has been said may be summed up thus. The Holy Spirit of conviction applies the law to the conscience, and thus works His reproof. The effect is sorrow before God as the Lawgiver rather than as the Father, or before the Father as the Fountain of moral authority; acceptance of the righteous sentence pronounced upon transgression; and sincere though imperfect, necessary though not meritorious, endeavours to make reparation to the dishonoured majesty of right. Beyond this the repentance which is the condition of salvation does not go. But it does not fall short of this: it is in all its processes the soul's tribute to the law from the condemnation of which the Gospel, received in faith, can alone save the transgressor.

Faith.

FAITH.

Faith as the instrument of appropriating salvation is a Divinely-wrought belief in the record concerning Christ and trust in His Person as a personal Saviour: these two being one. It must be distinguished, on the one hand, from the general exercise of belief following evidence which is one of the primary elements of human nature, and from the grace of faith which is one of the fruits of the regenerating Spirit. As Divinely wrought, it is attended by assurance; as human, it works by love. And thus, while belonging to the state of prevenient grace, it passes insensibly into the regenerate life.

Divine and Human.

Faith, viewed here more comprehensively as the condition and instrument of personal salvation, is a state or an act of the human

spirit as under the influence of the Divine Spirit. The Divine and the human elements meet, but they cannot be so clearly defined and separated as in the case of repentance. We must view them as united in relation to the principle of belief, generally, on which saving faith rests; to the passive and active trust that enter into that faith; and to the assurance of acceptance and salvation which follow it in the regenerate life.

I. BELIEF, or the principle of faith generally, belongs to human nature: it is the faculty of accepting the unseen as existing, by which we admit as knowledge what is received only on evidence or authority internal or external. Now this common faculty of faith, which involves trust in what we believe, is Divinely directed to the Gospel in order to personal salvation.

Belief.

1. Man lives and moves and has his being, as a spiritual creature, in an element of belief or trust in the unseen; in that sense also *we walk by faith, not by sight.* **Belief is a primary condition of all knowledge and of all reasoning on knowledge.** It may be said that without it there can be no full assent given to any proposition that deals with other than matter of sense. Hence the propriety of Anselm's CREDE UT INTELLIGAS, in opposition to Abelard's INTELLIGE UT CREDAS; the two watchwords of Christian Faith and Rationalism respectively. **Now all faith that leads to action has in it an element of trust.** The being of God, the guilt and punishment of sin, the mission of Christ for redemption, the Christian revelation as a whole, may be assented to by intellectual belief without exerting any influence on the life. But this kind of belief is not, as alone, referred to in Scripture. Faith is there always connected with the practical trust which makes these truths more or less operative. **The object of this faith, not yet a personal Saviour, may be generally apprehended: the compass of the Christian Faith is often accepted without the experience of salvation.** To whatever extent the truths of religion are known and embraced, faith in them is the healthy and legitimate exercise of the human mind, receiving the evidence, internal and external, which authenticates revelation. **But that faith cannot be without the element of trust, latent it may be and unconscious, suppressed by sin and hindered from the attainment of its end.**

Human.

2 Cor. v
7.

2. This belief or trust of which we speak is exerted under a
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Divine.

Divine influence. A merely intellectual assent, such as rests upon tradition and education, is not enough for salvation: *The devils also believe, and tremble.* Seldom does this belief withstand the assault of sceptical attack. Never does the trust inherent in it become influential. *No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.* A firm belief in the Christian revelation, and trust in Him Whom it reveals as God and man, is the very precious gift of the Spirit, Who acts upon the elements of belief and trust in human nature, and directs them to their appropriate Object. Belief is often made perfect in the exercise of personal trust; and personal trust often leads to the strengthening of mere belief. Sometimes the clear revelation of the truth in Jesus to the mind leads to an entire reliance on His work; and sometimes the personal trust with its confidence of faith brings in the full assurance of understanding as to the outward revelation: speculative or historical faith thus, through Divine grace, deepens into that spiritual faith, which in its last exercise is the gift of God to the soul by Himself prepared for its exercise.

Saving-Faith. II. The Faith that is the condition and instrument of salvation may be regarded as fiducial belief in the Redeemer, Whose Person and Work are one as a revelation of God, and of all saving truth. This trust is both negative and positive, or passive and active: it renounces every other object, and relies only on One. It is the act of the whole man, but under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost.

Trust. 1. The formal notion of all Faith, and that which makes it the appropriate condition of salvation, is personal trust in a Person. Its efficient cause is the operation of the Spirit on the human faculties; its instrumental cause is the revelation of the truth concerning the Saviour; and its formal cause, which makes it what it is, is trust in the Person of that Saviour.

The Original Words. (1.) This important truth is taught by the very term that is everywhere used in the New Testament: πιστεύειν is equivalent to πιστὸν ἔχειν; the equivalent of the Hebrew יִשְׁמַח, which in almost every instance of its use includes the idea of reliance on the Jehovah of the Ancient Covenant.

In a Person. (2.) It is also seen in the fact that this principle is almost always connected, directly or indirectly, with a Person, and that

even when the acceptance of Christian truth by the understanding is made prominent. First, the ground of faith is the authority of God Who is believed: ἐπίστευε δὲ Ἀβραὰμ τῷ Θεῷ, *Abraham believed God*, and accordingly trusted in Him. Throughout his history, as that of the Father of the faithful and their exemplar, we find nothing required or imposed on his belief as truth which did not demand the unlimited trust of his heart in God: indeed, in some cases it might be hard to accept as credible to the understanding what nevertheless was acted upon in desperate confidence. In the New Testament the Saviour speaks of a credence in His words; on His own authority: *Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?* Here Jesus is arguing with unbelievers, and the matter is one of belief on authority. But, most commonly, He uses the word concerning trust in Himself; though, in this case, the word is varied and a large variety of synonymous expressions is used, such as coming to Him and seeing Him and surrendering self to Him. Hence, secondly, a Person is the substantial Object of all saving faith, to Whom it turns, on Whom it relies, and in Whom it finds rest: according to the three currently used prepositions, εἰς, ἐπὶ, ἐν, of each of which it may suffice to give one example. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life*: εἰς τὸν Υἱόν, which is opposed to the unbeliever's simple disbelief of the word of Christ, *he that believeth not the Son*, ἀπειθῶν τῷ ῥήματι. This passage represents many which make Christ the Object to Whom faith as it were stretches forward. *Whosoever believeth on Him, ἐπ' αὐτῷ, shall not be ashamed*: a preposition used also with the accusative, *but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly*, ἐπὶ τὸν δικαιούντα. Here the Person is the foundation on which faith rests. *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*. Here, as in many other passages, the Person of Christ is the Object, on Which faith indeed rests, but also in Whom as its element it lives and moves. But in this case the penitent is already saved.

(3.) This Object of trust is in Christianity directly or indirectly the Founder of our religion in His own Person: its Ἀρχηγός, or **AUTHOR of the faith Himself**. Hence the usual expression, *by faith*

Gal. iii. 6.

John v.
46, 47.He
John iii.
36.ἐπὶ
Rom. x. 11
Rom. iv. 5.ἐν
Gal. iii.
26.In Christ
Heb. xii.
2.
Rom. iii.
22.

- of *Jesus Christ*, which indicates that He gives its specific character to the principle generally. This distinguishes Christianity as the full revelation of an object of trust which was partially hidden before. Faith in God, or Jehovah, the God of the covenant, was the condition and instrument of Old-Testament salvation; but
- 1 Tim. iii. 16. **Jehovah is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.** That God is now
 John xiv. 1. **MANIFEST in the flesh**, and He says, *Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.* Of those who believe not, He says, *Ye neither know Me nor My Father: if ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also.* And the final testimony of St. John is: *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.* **Rejection of Christ was rejection of the ancient God.** Faith in God apart from His Son is now a species of unbelief. Our Lord as the object of confidence is more specifically Himself or His Person. This is its supreme definition: *believe also in Me!* It is only indirectly His blood; the propitiation is in *His blood*, *ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ*, through faith, but it is He who is *set forth*. It is confidence in His cross, or rather in *Christ crucified*; that is, in His death and resurrection; as to the latter of which, however, the trust is rather referred to the Father: *If we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.* Hence it is the LIVING CHRIST in the unity of His Person and His Work. The God Who delivered up Christ and raised Him is Christ Himself. The tone of the entire New Testament is to the effect that He that seeth and believeth in the Son seeth and believeth the Father. But the specific relation of the Redeemer's Person to justifying faith must be considered hereafter.
- Passive and Active. 2. Faith is both passive and active, in opposition, that is, to a state of undue action and to a state of indolent waiting: only by so viewing it, and combining the two, can we understand the general strain of the New Testament as to its operation in the penitent and contrite spirit.
- Receptive (1.) As passive or receptive it is that trust or repose of the heart on the promises given in Christ, which in the New Testament is opposed to works of every kind, and throughout the Bible to any trust but in God. Assent to a moral truth, especially such as is here supposed to be wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, engages in its exercise the understanding and

heart and the will. Faith in its negative aspect is that of the understanding affecting the heart chiefly: the soul rests on the Saviour, abstains from every act, and only waits upon His promise. Only in that posture is it ready for the salvation ready to be revealed. As limited to one branch of it, that is, justification, this element of faith is of great importance: *To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.* Rom. iv. 5.

(2.) Active faith is the assent of the understanding actuating the will more particularly. Faith goes forth as well as waits; gives as well as receives. The act is to be understood in two ways: it is the energy which gives up the soul to the Lord, and that which receives Him in return; though these are not to be separated. *As many as received Him* and those that *believe on His name* are synonymous. *He that followeth Me* is a definition of the believer; whose faith is a coming to Christ, and a receiving of Him, *παράλαβε*. His Gospel is preached *εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως* for the obedience of faith. Many other expressions are used which represent a saving relation to Christ as the active energy of the soul: such as its flying for refuge to the only Hope, seeking Him and laying aside every impediment, committing the soul to Him, and other similar phrases. This is the kind of faith which is exhibited throughout the Gospels. Active. John i. 12. John viii. 12. Col. ii. 6. Rom. xvi. 26.

(3.) It must be remembered, however, that these two are always one. The passive waiting and the active seeking unite. *The Lord is good unto them that WAIT FOR Him, to the soul that SEEKETH HIM.* And both are undoubtedly the act of God's Spirit in the soul; as is shown in the passage of St. Paul which speaks of our being buried and risen with Christ *through the faith in the operation of God, διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ Θεοῦ.* One Faith Lam. iii. 25. Col. ii. 12.

3. Faith is the act of the whole man under the influence of the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit.

(1.) It is not an assent of the understanding merely, nor a feeling merely of the sensibility, nor an act of the will, but belongs to the centre of human personality, to the heart: *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, καρδίᾳ γὰρ πιστεύεται.* The language of the Creed is, I BELIEVE: the man himself is the believer; there is no act in which he more absolutely gathers up his whole The Whole Man. Rom. x. 10.

being to act, while he goes out of himself, and appropriates Another. As passive and receptive, faith makes the whole soul empty for the reception of Jesus; as active and energetic, it puts forth all its powers to embrace Him and His salvation. Hence this principle, after conversion, still continues to characterise the regenerate soul. The Christian is a πιστός; he stands in this character, τῇ γὰρ πίστει ἐσθίκατε; and his faith, working by love, becomes the spring of his new life. The act by which he entered salvation becomes the law of his being as saved.

2 Cor. i.
24.

Divine.

John xvi.
9.

John iii.
18.

Col. ii. 12.

Energy of
Regene-
rate Life.

Gal. v. 6.
Gal. v. 22.
Heb. xi. 1.

Assurance

(2.) Such and so great being the prerogative of faith, it is obvious that no power less than Divine can inspire it. It is essentially a moral act; for unbelief is reckoned to be specific guilt: the Spirit's reproof of sin is *because they believe not on Me*. The only or the supreme sin is now rejection of Christ; and the act or state of not believing is itself condemnation: *he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*. But if the faith that saves has this moral character it must be wrought in the soul by God the Holy Ghost: there is nothing right in man towards God that comes not from His influence; and the primary feeling after a Saviour, as well as the trust into which this is elevated, is of Him. Hence our faith is said to be *of the operation of God*. How it is that the emphasis is laid upon our salvation being independent of works connects our subject with the doctrine of Justification. The faith that lays hold of Christ is the highest moral act of a state of penitence: nothing more, but nothing less. It is the last and best of the fruits meet for repentance.

(3.) Hence it is plain that the faith which is saving passes insensibly while we are studying it into the state of regeneration to which it leads. As it is itself a sanctification of that original principle of belief which belongs to our nature, so itself is sanctified into the energy of the regenerate life. It becomes the law of that life, *faith which worketh by love*; it is the seventh *fruit of the Spirit*, and as such is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. As conscience is the consciousness of the soul as touching ethics, so faith is the consciousness of the regenerate spirit as touching all its unseen and future objects.

III. Assurance belongs to this trust only in an indirect manner,

as its reflex action and its gracious result, and its abiding privilege in the regenerate life. As faith is the highest negative work of repentance and passes into the energy of regeneration, so confidence in its Object, relying upon it as objective, passes into the faith of subjective assurance. But the assurance is the fruit, and not the essence, of faith. As such it will be hereafter treated. Meanwhile, a few points may be noted.

1. Though a distinction must be made between naked faith and assurance, it is obvious that perfect trust must in some sense be assured of the reality of its object. Saving faith in God must believe that *He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*; also that Christ is and that He is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. That He is my actual Saviour, and that my belief is saving, cannot be the object of faith direct; it is the reflex benefit and gift of the Holy Ghost. It is the *full assurance of faith*, the *πληροφορία πίστεως*, in which worshippers are exhorted to draw near. As faith, however, is *the substance of things hoped for*, its full assurance is to be expected in diligent devotion: *diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end*. The internal assurance of faith is a privilege that all may claim and expect: seasons of darkness and depression and uncertainty are only the trial of that faith of assurance; they test it, and therefore imply its presence; or, if absent, its absence is thus declared to be the result of its own failure.

2. Among the objects of St. Paul's prayer for us is *the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, even Christ*. The confidence of saving faith is, strictly speaking, limited to the Person of the Saviour, Who is revealed to the understanding, the affection, the will—that is to the penitent man—by the Holy Ghost, Who at the same time opens the spiritual eye to behold Him. But the faith which is the energy of the new life is also the spiritual eye which beholds all truth, and is assured of it. As it respects the Holy Ghost this is the *unction from the Holy One*, by which we *know all things*; as it respects the believer this is the certain belief which makes faith knowledge.

Objective.

Heb. xi. 6.

1 Tim. iv. 10.

Subjective

Heb. x.

22.

Heb. xi.

1.

Heb. vi

11.

Col. ii. 2.

Assurance
of Know-
ledge.

1 John ii.

20.