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SERMON XIV.

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THE NATURE OF FAITH.

JOHN 14:1. *Ye believe in God: believe also in me.*

Nothing can be plainer from the word of God than the importance of faith.

We are said to be justified by faith—to have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand—to live by faith—to be saved by faith.

On the other hand, it is written, that without faith it is impossible to please God, and that he that believeth not shall be damned.

There is, however, a faith which is not genuine, which, the apostle James tells us, the devils possess, which is without works, which is dead being alone, which will not save the soul.

It is important, therefore, that the nature of true faith be well understood. And though more, perhaps, has been published from the pulpit and the press on this subject than on any other within the whole compass of theology; yet, I believe it still needs to be discussed; not only because certain opinions continue to be propagated concerning it which are exceedingly false and dangerous, but because it has, by the orthodox, generally been treated so much at large that the simple, elemental nature of faith has been lost sight of, amidst the multitude of remarks which it has been thought necessary to make in order to illuminate its diversified operations.

Faith, in the New Testament, is generally represented as having a special reference to Christ. It is so in the text: and else-

where we read, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son of God shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

The object of faith is always a person. The credit which we give to the truth of any statement is in consequence of our confidence in the person who makes it. Where this confidence is wanting there can be no faith in the statement of a person, though it should be confirmed with an oath: for, according to the ancient saying, it is the man that gives credibility to the oath, and not the oath to the man. We may, indeed, consider a statement as true, though made by one in whom we place no confidence, because we have sufficient evidence, independently of his authority, for the truth of the facts contained in the statement. But we do not, in this case, believe either the man, or his statement. His authority goes for nothing. We know the truth without him: his testimony does not make us the more certain, nor would the want of it render our certainty less.

The confidence which we place in a man, whom we believe, when he states things as matters of fact, regards only his veracity and the accuracy of his judgment; his veracity principally, though not exclusively. For he may be deceived, as was the case with Jacob, when he exclaimed that his beloved son Joseph had been torn to pieces by wild beasts. The declaration was no lie, though the thing was not true.

Faith in relation to matters of fact has been called historical; and it is plainly resolvable, as we have just seen, into confidence in the veracity and accuracy of the narrator. This may be considered the simplest form of faith, because the attributes which it contemplates in its object are the fewest possible.

When statements are made which respect not the past but the future, other attributes, besides veracity and accuracy, are necessary to entitle the person making them to our confidence. Take, for instance, a promise. When we consider a promise as entitled to our regard, we do so, because we repose confidence in the promiser, that he is sincere in making the promise, that he is faithful and will stand to his engagements, that he will live till the time for their fulfilment, and otherwise will be able to make good his engagements. Could there be a concurrence of all these conditions, in the case of any promise made to us by mortal man, we might have full faith in such promise. And here, also, it is manifest, that the object of our faith would be not the promise in itself considered, but the person making it: that is

to say, we expect with certainty that the promise will be fulfilled, because there are in the character of the person promising all those attributes which are necessary to warrant such expectation.

But the promise may be so modified as to depend on something to be done on our part. The promise itself may be a part of a plan in which our concurrence may be necessary. This concurrence may be of different kinds and degrees. The author of the promise may require of us nothing more than merely to commit ourselves to his guidance and protection; or he may require us to be actively employed in certain things necessary to be done, and to be done by us, for the execution of his plan. The plan he may think it improper, in the mean time, to disclose to us; as is the case of the commander of a fleet sailing under sealed orders. In such a case, in addition to all the other attributes of character necessary to justify our faith in the author of the promise as before supposed, wisdom and goodness would be requisite. We must believe that he is kindly affected toward us, and that the concurrence which is required on our part is, in all its extent, necessary and proper. Here it is manifest, that our confidence must be, in part, implicit. We do not understand the plan, in which our concurrence is required: but it is enough for us that its author does, and that he has been moved, in proposing it to our acceptance, by a sincere regard for our welfare. But still, there is yet a further condition behind, which is necessary to our actual concurrence. The part required of us may be contrary to our prevailing inclinations: it may make it necessary that we should forego pleasures which we relish; interests which we value highly; honors which we hold dear—or that we should encounter opposition which we have not the heart to encounter. On this supposition, we will dislike the plan proposed, and be secretly dissatisfied with the author of it. We will not give him our confidence. His promises are now a nullity. We may think them true: but they are not good; they are clogged by hateful conditions. Here we are unbelievers, not for want of evidence but want of will. The sole reason why we have not faith in the author of the plan proposed, and in the promises which it involves, is that our heart is not right with him—there is not a coincidence in our views and feelings.

To illustrate this matter, let us suppose the case of a slave in some one of our Southern seaports. The captain of a vessel about to sail for Africa offers to purchase his freedom, and to

give him a gratuitous conveyance to the land of his fathers, and a happy settlement there:—but he is unwilling to accept the offer. And the reason is, his mind has become debased with his condition. He is in the employment of a master who uses him as the instrument of dishonest gain and of sinful pleasures, in which the slave, to secure his fidelity, is allowed to participate. He, therefore, does not desire greatly to be free. He hears the proposals of the benevolent captain: but, having no experience of such goodness in his own heart, he is slow to trust to the appearance of it in others: and besides, he cannot rise to the dignity of the privileges set before him. Therefore he has no faith in the captain, and does not close with his proposals. Suppose him now, by some means, to undergo a renovation of character,—to put off the slave, and, in heart and desire at least, to become free. He will consider the matter in a different light. The generous spirit which begins to breathe and move within him will seek its like in the breast of the captain, whose benevolence he will think to be real, and the deliverance which it proposes desirable. Still, perplexing doubts might arise in his mind. “The land of my fathers,” he might say, “is far distant: a dangerous navigation is to be tried: is the vessel sufficient? are the crew competent?” These, and a thousand more, perplexing thoughts might arise in the mind of the poor slave, which, by any knowledge he possessed, he could never remove, and which, indeed, no knowledge, in his case, could remove, but that which could be gained in no other way than by making the experiment. But there is one thing which he might possess, and which would serve him instead of all the knowledge he could desire; and that is, confidence, unshaken confidence, or trust, in the sincerity, the veracity, the skill, the goodness, the ability of the captain; or, in other words, faith in him.

The examples of faith recorded in the sacred Scriptures strongly support the position assumed and illustrated in the foregoing remarks. Let the examples of Noah and of Abraham serve as a specimen. When God revealed to Noah his intention to destroy the race of man from off the face of the earth, by a deluge, the prediction was accompanied by a command to build an ark, and an implied promise of safety, by that means. This information was given, not to increase his knowledge, but to influence his conduct: and unless he had put confidence in the truth, power, and goodness of God, his conduct would not have been influenced by it—he never would have built the ark.

For, if the truth were not told him, the ark was unnecessary: and, without the power and goodness of God, it would have been unavailing. This confidence in God, the author of the epistle to the Hebrews calls faith. Heb. 11:7. "By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." When God called Abraham to leave the land of his nativity, promising to make of him a great nation, and that in him should all the families of the earth be blessed, the principle to which the whole communication, the command and the promise together, was addressed, was plainly confidence, or trust in God. The circumstances strongly indicate this. Accordingly, it is said, by the same inspired writer, that, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out unto a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed and went out, *not knowing whither he went.*"

That the elemental nature of faith is confidence or trust in a person, is manifest from the way in which, by all Greek writers, secular as well as sacred, the word ΠΙΣΤΙΣ (the term to express faith) is employed. Joined in construction with a word signifying a person, it always means to put confidence in that person. Instances are too numerous and too obvious to need quotation.

In the writings of the Old Testament it is remarkable, that we seldom find the word, faith; whereas, the word, trust, is every where occurring; and in connection with the same commands and promises, with which we find faith, in the New: "It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes"—"Trust ye in the Lord, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength"—"Blessed is the man who trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is"—"They that trust in the Lord shall be like mount Zion, that can never be moved." In many places in the New Testament, also, the word rendered believe, might, with evident advantage to the sense, be translated, trust. Take, for instance, 1 Pet. 2:6. "Wherefore, also, it is contained in the scriptures, Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." How strangely does this sound! "a corner stone," and "he that believeth on *him*!" Instead of "*him*," read "*it*," which will suit the original equally well; and instead of "believeth" put "trusteth," and you will preserve both the image and the meaning which, undoubtedly, the apostle intended to convey.

The gospel is a persuasive argument, made up of facts, commands, invitations, promises, threatenings: and to believe the gospel can mean nothing short of yielding to the force of this argument. The drift and point of the argument, however, is to persuade us to trust in God, through Christ, for eternal salvation, and for every thing else that we need. Any thing less than this is not faith. And if so, we may believe every one of the facts, doctrines, and precepts of the gospel to be true, and yet have no faith in the Author of the gospel.

Whoever will carefully inspect his own moral nature, and how it is that his mind is influenced by motives and principles of action, will perceive that nothing but trust in God can produce those effects which are ascribed in the sacred scriptures to faith. Trust in God "is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen:" for the character of God—his whole character—is the reason why all holy beings trust in him, and this is what gives validity to all his promises, and thus lays a firm foundation for hope, substantiating and making present future blessings. It is trust in God that "overcomes the world:" for his favor can compensate the loss of the world, and leave a redundancy of eternal advantages. It is trust in God that "purifies the heart:" for it is God alone who knows the heart, and he will patronize no evil thought. It is trust in God which lifts the soul above the fear of evil: for, "if God be for us, who can be against us?" And, there is no other principle which can produce these effects. Faith cannot, if by faith we understand, what some do, a mere assent of the understanding to divine truth. Many, alas! who pride themselves on their orthodox faith, are loose and unprincipled in their lives. Such were the Jews of old who persecuted the prophets. Such, the murderers of "the Prince of life." Such, they who made antichristian Rome "drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus." All these believed much truth, and, according to their respective standards of orthodoxy, they were all orthodox.

There can be no genuine trust in God without some previous knowledge and belief of the truth. For a cordial acquiescence in the will and ways of God, which trust in him supposes and implies, there cannot be, without a knowledge of what *is* the will, and what *are* the ways of God. It is possible—there is reason to fear it is common—for people to impute their own weak prejudices and partialities to the object of their worship; to think that God is "altogether such an one" as they themselves are, and that he will exercise the same sort of indulgence

towards them which they exercise towards themselves. Influenced by such notions, they will trust in God, to patronize them in an evil course. But it is not the true God—it is a phantom of the imagination—that is the object of their trust. Persons of this description are apt to be punctilious and abundant in the performance of the ceremonies of religion, while they are, at the same time, regardless of heart-purity and moral rectitude. They neglect “the weightier matters of the law;” and think to make up for the defect, by tithing “mint, annise and cummin.” They may love to talk of their experiences, be seemingly much engaged in what they think the spiritualities of religion, and deeply concerned for the salvation of the souls of others, while their own souls are far, very far, from being right with God in this essential matter of trusting in him. The truth is, they feel towards God as a partisan towards his leader, a client towards his patron; and imagine, that, whatever position they take, they are always “on the Lord’s side.” They conceive that he, of course, is bound to favor them. His cause cannot well be managed without them. Their prayers and efforts avail much. They affect an indecent familiarity with the “King Immortal, Eternal and Invisible,” and act as if he needed their advice and the aid of their ingenious contrivances, to carry on the affairs of his kingdom: as if he had not, already, prescribed, in a Book, to which no supplement is needed, the whole of what they and all men ought to know and to do in obedience to his will. Where there is much of this arrogance there must be great weakness and little genuine piety; probably none at all. Yet, such persons are usually confident of their state. They profess to trust God; but their character resembles, too much, that of those whom the Master describes, Matt. 7:21,22. “Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess to them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

The gospel, as has been already noticed, is a persuasive argument: and faith in the Author of the gospel is an active principle. It supposes a purpose. He that trusts another trusts him for something which he expects him to perform, or *with* something which he believes will be safe in his hands. The believer does both these things: he trusts God *with* all that he is, and *for* all that he desires.

Now, there is nothing in the character of God to encourage, much less justify, the expectation that he will favor, or even connive at, iniquity. The wicked—those who allow themselves in an evil course—those who are careless even, as to purity and integrity of their principles—cannot, therefore, really trust God. They may, indeed, so far mistake his character, or their own, or both, as to *imagine* that he will be their friend. But they will be disappointed. It is giving a representation of the matter infinitely below the truth, to say that their confidence is unauthorized:—it is, in the highest degree, insulting to the Almighty. It implies the opinion that he is accessible to corruption, and may be gained over to the side of injustice and iniquity!—What a blasphemous imputation to be cast upon the character of the thrice holy God! Holiness confederate with sin! Iniquity on the throne of the universe! Omnipotence and infinite Wisdom pledged to the cause of universal and eternal disorder and misrule! Such a supposition involves in it the sum and substance of all moral absurdities: and yet it must be verified in fact, or else the confidence of the wicked will be disappointed. The government of the Eternal is fixed. “Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. Righteousness and truth go before his face.” He is not subject to partialities. He has no favorites. He cannot be bribed or flattered. The prayers of the wicked are an abomination to him. He delights in goodness, and the entire system of things throughout the universe he will so move and direct, as to secure its interests.

So deeply fixed in the human heart is the truth of these sentiments, that fear is always the companion of guilt. The enlightened sinner finds it the most difficult of all things to trust or believe in God. The majesty and purity of the divine character repel him: a sense of unworthiness dashes his rising hopes. Hence the necessity for some strong manifestation of mercy, made in such a way as to preserve the character of God from the imputation that he might connive at sin—an imputation which the unqualified and indiscriminate exercise of mercy would seem to justify. Such a manifestation only can encourage the confidence, and “revive the spirit, of the contrite ones.” Here, precisely, lies the glory of the gospel, that it gives such a manifestation—soothing to the penitent, by the hopes of pardon which it inspires; repulsive to the light and inconsiderate expectations of the careless, and the hypocritical, by exhibiting the claims of justice not abated, not neutralized, but sustained and preserved in their utmost vigor on the principle of vicarious atonement. How full of authority, blended with the most at-

tractive, overwhelming kindness, is the language of the text, considered as proceeding from the lips of the Author of this atonement, or as I should rather say, from his heart—from the heart of Love—the seat of infinite benevolence and compassion—and addressed to the guilty and the helpless! And, when the heart has been brought to feel its guilt and helplessness, and is made to *hear* this language—that is the “joyful sound”—that is the “hearing” by which “faith cometh.” Then trust in God, and in his Christ, springs up in the soul—working by love—purifying the heart, giving strength for work and for warfare and for suffering, till this state of trial and discipline is ended, and faith gives place to vision, and hope to enjoyment.

The principle, then, or essential element, of faith is trust in God. This one principle may be acted out in various ways. One, and a principal one, of these is “a belief of the truth.” The credit we give to the statements of any person in whom we have confidence, is one of the ways in which that confidence exerts itself. Yet, some truth must be believed respecting God, before we can trust him: “He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him.” If it be asked, Is there no more than this necessary to be believed in order to faith, and therefore, to salvation? the safest answer would be, That we should, on such points, confine ourselves to “what is written.” Infants are saved without the actual belief of any truth. Cornelius had faith before Peter was sent to preach to him. For, before that, his prayers and alms came up with acceptance before God: and without faith, we know, it is impossible to please God. The saints of the Old Testament had faith: but they did not believe *all* the truths of the gospel, for these truths were not all then revealed. That the heathen world, generally speaking, are out of the way of salvation, is a lamentable *fact*, made manifest by their atrocious vices. But, that many orthodox *assenters* to the truths of christianity are in the same deplorable condition—is not this a fact, made manifest with equal certainty, and by the same means? That it is impossible for any individual living, on who ever did live, beyond the sound of the gospel, to have such a knowledge of the character and will of God as to lead to faith in him, I would not take upon me to affirm. Neither the Bible nor our standards would warrant such an affirmation. But the question, How much truth is necessary for a man to believe in order to faith or trust in God? is widely different from this other question with which it has sometimes, strangely, been confounded, How much truth must a man believe, in order to his becom-

ing a member of the Presbyterian church under the care of the General Assembly? The former of these questions no man can answer. No answer that could be given would apply in all cases. The same quantity of truth, which might suffice in certain circumstances, might not, in others. But the latter of these questions let our standards answer. Break down these standards—and our sanctuary would become a Babel. Good people cannot all meet together for worship in the same church, at any rate. Let those meet together who can agree. Paul and Barnabas had a contention; and they separated, to end it. Some think they have found “a more excellent way.” For one, I must approve of the conduct of Paul and Barnabas, not for their dissention, but for their agreeing to separate, rather than prolong the dispute. But their separation was not a separation of Christian fellowship, nor of church fellowship. That is a very different matter. Alas! for the divisions into communions—separate, hostile communions, which have taken place in the church of Christ! And yet, it seems, they are too few! What is the cause? What is the cause! Does not every body see, that it is the unhallowed, the absurd fondness of too many theologians for carrying the spirit of light, flippant, superficial speculation into every thing sacred. In theology there can be no discoveries. Practical theology has been settled long ago: mystical theology never can be settled by disquisition. It is not a matter for disquisition, but for implicit credence. The Homousians and the Homoiousians, had they lived and disputed incessantly till this day, (as, by the help of Aristotle, they might,) would have been no nearer an agreement than when their discussion began. They discussed—the essence of God!

In like manner, the circumstantials of Christianity never can be settled by disputation. Were the Christian world prepared to receive the truth, many particulars here might be specified. But the Christian world has not yet learned that the “kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Plain, practical things are neglected, because we would be profound! Paul, discoursing on a certain subject, stopped short, as if on the brink of an unfathomable abyss, and exclaimed, “O, the depth!” But, now, there are those—thanks to “the march of mind”—who can fathom these depths!

In the mean time, the plain facts, precepts and doctrines of the Gospel—rich mines of glory and beauty—themes which “the angels desire to look into,” and which it were worthy the eloquence

of an angel's tongue to preach—are contemptuously passed by! And some miserable Shibboleth is taken up instead. And this it is, which has divided the church—yea, and threatens still further to divide the church!

Opposites illustrate each other. The opposite of faith is unbelief. Unbelief were a venial sin, compared with what it is, did it consist in withholding the assent of the understanding from any one truth, or from all the truths, contained in the Bible. But in this—in any thing like this—it does not consist. It lies deep in man's moral nature. No amount of evidence can conquer it. The wicked do not believe in the good. There are those among us, who think themselves wiser than common people, and possessed of stronger thinking faculties than the most—because their understandings are balanced in sceptical equilibrium on the question, whether there is a God! Why? Has nature no voice to them? Is there no earth for them to see, teeming with fruits, and clothed in beauty? No succession of day and night!—no revolving seasons!—no varying winds and flying clouds!—no stars, glittering in the azure sky!—no moon, walking in brightness, to cheer the night!—no sun, with floods of golden radiance, creating the day? Are they incapable of discerning, throughout all nature, a perfect harmony and adjustment of one thing to another—the signatures of power, wisdom and goodness in every thing around them, especially in every thing that lives and moves? No. They are not idiots. Why, then, not recognize a Presiding Mind? Because one of the attributes of that mind is Goodness, and they do not believe in goodness, on earth, or in heaven. It has been justly said, that if reason be against a man, he will be against reason. So here: if goodness be against a man, he will be against goodness. Unbelief, like faith, belongs not chiefly or primarily to the head: it consists in the estrangement of the heart from God and moral excellence, and its consequent supreme devotion to the world and self. The reason why unbelief rejects the truth of God, is because it belongs to its nature to withhold its confidence from goodness when it speaks, as well as when it exerts itself in any other way.

To this is owing its damning malignity. Men “choose darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” To say, that a man's belief must necessarily be according to the evidence, is as shallow in philosophy, as it is false in theology. Except in abstract science, the intellect never acts independently. In all other cases it is in the power of taste and passion to dethrone reason, and usurp her place. In common life this is

seen and acknowledged every where. When bad men accuse the good with hypocrisy, they are sincere in their allegations; otherwise, they must be supposed to believe in moral excellence, and stand self-condemned for the want of it; like Satan when rebuked by the good angel Zephon:

———“ Abashed the Devil stood
And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
Virtue in her shape how lovely; saw and pined
His loss.”

The exercise of faith—trust in God—is peculiarly appropriate to our condition in this world. Every thing here is fluctuating; nothing stable; nothing exempt from change. Prosperity is deceitful: riches take wing: friends die: enemies lurk in ambush: our strength decays: the light of life declines apace—soon heart and flesh shall fail. How happy, in such circumstances, to say, “Thou, O Jehovah! art the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.”

God is entitled to our highest confidence. We, indeed deserve his displeasure. But, in Christ, he is reconciled. His justice is appeased in the atonement, and now his love and mercy salute and embrace the returning sinner. Trusting in him we shall not be disappointed. The event will verify his promises. “The Lord is a sun and shield: he will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from such as walk uprightly.” How cheering to the honest heart are these gracious, comprehensive promises! From the exercise of faith in the Author of them may we not derive consolation in the severest afflictions, knowing that “the trial of our faith being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, shall be found unto praise and glory and honor at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

In the uncertainties of life and the decline of earthly comforts, we best glorify God, by trusting in him. When appearances are all in our favor, we thank none for their confidence: but when they may be so construed as to give plausibility to the malicious accusations of our enemies, who insolently begin to sing over us an anticipated triumph, then it is that we feel peculiarly gratified and honored, by the confidence of our friends. The character of God is traduced, and his name blasphemed, in this present evil world. The ways of his providence are often mysterious, and seem to countenance the suggestions of the enemy, who, tauntingly, asks the tempted believer, “Where is now your God?” This is the time when the believer should show himself

“strong in faith, giving glory to God”—when he should say with Job, “Though he slay me yet will I trust in him”—when he should sing, with David “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want”—or with Habakkuk, “Although the figtree should not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

Faith is the true principle of moral courage. It gives the spirit of the soldier and the martyr. The believer is enlisted under the banner of Him who leads “the sacramental host of God’s elect” and set upon “the straight and narrow way”—a way leading up the steep of difficulty, and in the face of armed legions. Faith only can inspire him with resolution to advance. The supposition that any thing can be gained, by a violation of duty, or lost, by adhering to it, is bottomed in a virtual denial of a just moral government over the universe; yet, appearances are often such as to countenance such denial. The wicked are not only seen to “prosper in the world and to increase in riches,” but their wealth and prosperity often seem to be, and in fact are, the fruit of their wickedness. Affliction and poverty are often, not only the *lot*, but the consequence, of virtue. Yet, it is certain, that the Author of our nature could not have so constituted the plan of things, as to place interest and duty in opposition. He surely designed that we should move in the path of duty under the *united* influences of the love of virtue, and interest. But this can take place only on the principle of “walking by faith and not by sight;” since it is faith alone which can assure us, that whatever pain or loss we may endure here, in the cause of virtue, shall be compensated hereafter. Faith gives to the cause of virtue the character of service done for God, and encourages the mind of the devoted to that service, with the reflection, that their Heavenly Master regards their honest efforts with complacency, and has prepared for them, when they shall have finished the course of patient obedience, “a crown of glory which fadeth not away.”

Whoever supposes that there is, now that the times of bloody persecution have passed away, no more scope for the exercise of christian courage, knows but little of the matter. There are duties, still, to be performed, which require patience, zeal, self-denial, and indifference to the obloquy, not only of the evil and censorious, but of the unthinking part of the good.

And in reference to these duties, the question will have to be answered "What have ye done more than others?" Let us prepare, by a good life, a life devoted to the service of God, an answer to this question. Thus shall we show our faith by our works. Trusting in the Lord and doing good, we shall "dwell in the land"—whatever hell may threaten—"and verily" we "shall be fed." In the path of duty, for the honor of God and religion, let us be undaunted. To the timid Christian, in God's great name, let me say, "Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man who shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth." Let the unbeliever quail: "But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."

[Contrary to expectation, it was ascertained after the manuscript of the foregoing sermon had in part passed through the hands of the printer, that there would be a deficiency of matter to complete 16 octavo pages. As the author lived so remote from the place of publication, it was deemed advisable to present several extracts somewhat on the *same subject*; which it is hoped, will give some idea of the views of a dangerous errorist on *one point*, and at the same time correct them.]—Ed.

EXTRACTS FROM DR. JENNINGS'S "DEBATE ON CAMPBELLISM," RECENTLY PUBLISHED.

"In confirmation of his doctrine Mr. Campbell proceeded to state, that in his youth he had read '*three histories*,' one of Asia, one of Africa, and one of these United States. That he believed them all; of this he was assured. But his belief of the other two, had not the same effect upon his mind, and did not lead to the formation and execution of purposes, in any degree, like his belief of the history of this country. That his belief in this history, was fully equal to the faith of the gospel which is connected with salvation, and was productive of similar results. For he was thereby induced to leave the country of his nativity, (Ireland,) to forego all the bright prospects and advantages which were there presented to his view; in a word, to forsake all, and risk the dangers of the mighty deep, to seek a settlement in this country, with a view to the enjoyment of the privileges and advantages which he believed it was calculated to secure. And what better or higher faith could the gospel require than this, which had exerted such a powerful influence on his mind?"

"With regard to the illustration of the nature of faith, drawn by Mr. C. from his own conduct and experience, it was replied, that neither the appositeness nor force of it was perceived. Besides, it was confidently believed, that, in the estimation of the public at large, Mr. C. would not be considered as having acted a very adventurous, meritorious, or even disinterested part, in exchanging Ireland—a land groaning under the pressure of taxation, and the heavy hand of oppression, where the poorer classes of society frequently suffer for the actual necessities of life—for this fair land of plenty and freedom, which presents so many flattering prospects to the virtuous and the enterprising from every country and every clime; and where Mr. C. himself had, it was believed, more than realized all his expectations. I would, nevertheless, add, that the illustration of Mr. C. seems very aptly to elucidate the principles upon which, it is apprehended, too many (whether Mr. C. is embraced among the number I will leave every one to judge for himself,) make a profession of the religion of Christ, whilst they are historical believers, but have not "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine," which God has given in his word and gospel. Whether they be conscious of it or not, it is often too evident, that the real motive whereby they were induced to confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus, was the hope of temporal advantages, such as wealth, reputation, or influence over their fellow men; whereas, had no such prospects presented themselves to their view, their historical faith, however sincere and perfect in its character it may have been, would no more have influenced them publicly to profess Christ, than did Mr. Campbell's *belief* of the history of Africa induce him to take up his residence among the Hottentots. This leads me to observe that it was farther, in reply to Mr. C., urged as a decisive objection to his view of faith, that, in thousands of instances, it was evident it had no abiding practical influence upon the hearts or lives of such as *historically* believed the word of God and the gospel of his Son. And therefore, it might be fairly argued or inferred, that in no case, was a mere historical faith productive of a permanent and universal *change* of the human character, similar to that produced by the 'faith which worketh by love.' "

"It was urged in reply to Mr. C., on this part of the subject in debate, that if it was thus characteristic of historical faith to be unproductive of good and lasting fruit, much more palpably would this be the case, if it consisted, as Mr. Campbell asserted, in the historical belief of the facts related in the New Testament, separated from the doctrines with which such facts stand connected. Thus, if it were possible to strip the facts contained in the gospel history of the doctrines with which they are not only intimately, but inseparably, connected, so as simply to believe the facts, that Jesus Christ, of Nazareth, was born under the reign of Augustus Cæsar, and was crucified as a malefactor under Pontius Pilate, upon Mount

Calvary, near Jerusalem,—how would this belief influence the heart of any man to the exercise of right affections towards God and his neighbor; or his life, so that it should be habitually conformed to the law of God, any more than would the belief that Julius Cæsar was assassinated at Rome?"

"Thus he makes the genuineness of faith to depend, not upon its *properties*, but upon its supposed *quality* or strength. What would be the estimation of the skill of the professed metallurgist, who should pretend to assay gold upon a similar principle? As every particle of gold, however small it may be, is intrinsically valuable, and can be distinguished, not only from dross, but any other metal, however it may happen to be mixed with one or the other; so, it is not only evident from the word of God, but in accordance with the enlightened judgment of every impartial man, that every *degree* of true or genuine faith is, intrinsically, and, as it regards the cardinal point of our justification in the sight of God, and our acceptance with him, equally valuable. Thus we are not only said by Paul, to be justified by faith, (be it weak or strong,) whereby we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, but the same apostle directs such as are weak in the faith to be received, but not to doubtful disputations. As this seems *confessedly* not to be the case with historical faith, it follows that it cannot be the faith whereby Abraham was justified, and the elders obtained a good report: or the faith whereby Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, who, it would seem, in the offering which he made, was actuated by something very similar to the historical faith of Mr. Campbell.

"The unscriptural character, as well as absurdity of Mr. C.'s view of faith will further and still more palpably appear, from the position which he attempts to maintain, that a sinner is not justified by faith, or *that* exercise of the heart whereby a sinner flees for refuge to lay hold of Christ as the hope set before him, but by or through immersion, which as has been seen, he calls an *act* of faith. It would seem, from this view of justification taken by Mr. C., as though he himself was doubtful of the sufficiency of his historical faith, and therefore immersion is brought in to aid its efficacy. But be that as it may, we not only are clearly taught in the scriptures, that "being justified by faith (not by any supposed act of mere external obedience) we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" but that it is "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Can it then be doubted, that the instant a man thus believes "with the heart unto righteousness;" or that in the same moment that he truly, by faith, *receives* or lays hold of the Lord Jesus, as the LORD, or Jehovah his righteousness, he is justified freely, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, according to the riches of his grace?

"Now let us apply these remarks, or rather the clear passages from the word therein cited, to the case of the eunuch, whereby we shall be enabled to determine not only the nature of his faith, and whether he was justified before, or in consequence of his baptism, but also, and that upon safe grounds, to pronounce a judgment upon the whole subject of this *historical* faith of Mr. C.

"It is then most clearly manifest that Philip did not baptize the eunuch upon his profession of a mere *historical* faith, or such a profession as Mr. C. and his followers would deem sufficient; for if he and they be not grossly misunderstood, they exclude all supposed exercises, at least religious exercises of the heart, alleging that we might as well speak of the religion, not only of the head, but of the hand or the foot, as of the heart. But it evidently appears that the eunuch received baptism, in consequence of the reason which Philip had to conclude, that he had believed; or, at least, that he did then, before his baptism, receive the Lord Jesus and did believe on him, not merely *historically*, but with his heart, nay, with *all* his heart. "See, here is water," said the eunuch, "what doth hinder me to be baptized? If thou believest with *all* thine heart thou mayest," was the evangelist's reply. But if the eunuch believed with the heart, as Philip had, and as we have, just ground to conclude he did, then it is not only evident that his faith was of a higher and nobler character than that which is simply *historical*, but that he thereby was forthwith justified, or believed "unto righteousness," even "the righteousness of faith;" and that too before he received baptism, which he afterwards received, as the "seal of the righteousness of faith which he had," while as yet he was unbaptized."