

LECTURE L.

FAITH.

SYLLABUS.

1. How many kinds of faith are mentioned in the Bible? Show that temporary and saving faith differ in nature.
See, on whole, Conf. of Faith, ch. 14. Shorter Cat., Qu. 86. Larger Cat. Qu. 72. Turretin. Loc. xv, Qu. 7, Qu. 15, § 1-10. Ridgley, Qu. 72. Dick, Lect. 68. Knapp, § 122.
2. What is the immediate object of saving faith?
Turretin, Loc. xv. Qu. 12, § 7-11. Dick, as above. Hill, bk. v, ch. 1, near the end. Knapp, § 123.
3. Is faith implicit, or intelligent?
Turretin, Qu. 9, 10. Knapp, § 122. Hill, bk. v, ch. 1.
4. What are the elements which make up saving Faith? Is it a duty and unbelief a sin? Does faith precede regeneration?
Turretin, Loc. xv, Qu. 8. Hill as above. A. Fuller, "Strictures on Sandeman," Letters 2, 3, 7. Alexander's Relig. Experience, ch. 6. Chalmer's Inst. of Theol. Vol. ii, ch. 6. Ridgley, Qu. 72, 73. Watson's Theol. Inst., ch. 23, § 3. Knapp, § 122, 124.
5. Is Christian love the formal principle of faith?
Council of Trent, Session vi, ch. 7. Calvin, Inst., bk. iii, ch. 2, § 8 to 10. Turretin, Qu. 13.
6. Is assurance of belief, or assurance of hope, either, or both, of the essence of saving faith?
Council of Trent; Can. de Justif., 12 to 16. Calvin, as above, § 7 to 14. Dick, as above. Turretin, Qu. 17. Conf. of Faith, ch. 18. Ridgley, Qu. 72, 73. Watson's Theol. Inst., ch. 24, § ii. Dörner's Hist. Prot. Theol. Vol. i, § i, ch. 4 § a. Louis Le Blanc, Sieur de Beaulieu, Treatise on Faith, in reply to Bossuet's Variations of Popery.
7. Why is this faith suitable to be the instrument of justification?
Ridgley, Qu. 73. Turretin, Loc. xvi, Qu. 7, § 19.

AFTER noting those cases, as 1 Tim. i : 19, where Faith is evidently used for its object, we may say that the Scrip-

1. Faith of Four
Kinds. Temporary
Faith not of the Kind
of Saving.

tures mention four kinds—historical, temporary, saving and miraculous. As the only difference among theologians in this list respects the question, whether temporary and saving faith are generically different, we shall only enlarge on this. Arminians regard them as the same, in all except their issue. This we deny. Because: (a) The efficient cause of saving faith is effectual calling, proceeding from God's immutable election. Titus i : 1; Acts xiii : 48; that of temporary faith is the common call. (b) The subject of saving faith is a "good heart;" a regenerate soul: that of temporary faith is a stony soul. See Matt. xiii : 5, 6, with 8; John iii : 36, or 1 John v : 1, with Acts viii : 13 and 23. (c) The firmness and substance of the two differ essentially. Matt. xiii : 21; 1 Pet. i : 23. (d) Their objects are different: saving faith embracing Christ as He is offered in the gospel, a Saviour from sin to holiness: and temporary faith embracing only the impunity and enjoyments of the Christian. (e) Their results are different: the one

bearing all the fruits of sanctification, comfort and perseverance; the other bearing no fruit unto perfection. See the parable of the sower again.

The special object of saving faith is Christ the Redeemer, and the promises of grace in Him. By this, we do not mean that any true believer will willfully and knowingly reject any of the other propositions of God's word. For the same habit of faith, or disposition of holy assent and obedience to God's authority, which causes the embracing of gospel propositions, will cause the embracing of all others, as fast as their evidence becomes known. But we mean that, in justifying faith, Christ and His grace is the object immediately before the believer's mind; and that if he have a saving knowledge of this, but be ignorant of all the rest of the gospel, he may still be saved by believing this. The evidences are, that the gospel is so often spoken of as the object of faith; [but this is about Christ]; e. g. Mark xvi : 15, 16; Eph. i : 13; Mark i : 15; Rom. i : 16, 17; *et passim*. That believing on Christ is so often mentioned as the sole condition, and that, to men who must probably have been ignorant of many heads of divinity; e. g., Acts xvi : 31; Jno. iii : 18; vi : 40; Rom. x : 9, &c. The same thing may be argued from the experiences of Bible saints, who represent themselves as fixing their eyes specially on Christ. 1 Tim. i : 15, &c., and from the two sacraments of faith, which point immediately to Jesus Christ. Still, this special faith is, in its *habitus*, a principle of hearty consent to all God's holy truth, as fast as it is apprehended as His. Faith embraces Christ substantially in all His offices. This must be urged, as of prime practical importance. Dr. Owen has in one place very incautiously said, that saving faith in its first movement embraces Christ only in His priestly, or propitiatory work. This teaching is far too common, at least by implication, in our pulpits. Its result is "temporary" faith, which embraces Christ for impunity only, instead of deliverance from sin. Our Catechism defines faith, as embracing Christ "as He is offered to us in the gospel." Our Confession (chap. xiv, § 2), says: "the principle acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification and eternal life." How Christ is offered to us in the gospel, may be seen in Matt. i : 21; 1 Cor. i : 30; Eph. v : 25-27; Titus. ii : 14. The tendency of human selfishness is ever to degrade Christ's sacrifice into a mere expedient for bestowing impunity. The pastor can never be too explicit in teaching that this is a travesty of the gospel; and that no one rises above the faith of the stony-ground-hearer, until he desires and embraces Christ as a deliverer from depravity and sin, as well as hell.

The papists represent faith as an implicit exercise of the

3. Faith Must be Explicit. mind, in which the believer accepts the doctrines, not because of his own clear understanding of their evidence, but because of the pious and submissive temper of mind towards the Church; her authority being, to Romanists, the ground of faith. Faith accordingly may be compatible with ignorance, both of the other evidence, (besides the Church's assertion), and of the very propositions themselves; so that a man may embrace with his faith, doctrines, when he not only does not see evidence for them, but does not know what they are! Indeed, says Aquinas: Since *ἀγάπη* is the formative principle of faith, the less a man's acceptance of the Catholic doctrine proceeds from intelligence, and the more from the impulse of right dispositions, the more praiseworthy it is. This description of faith is evidently the only one consistent with a denial of private judgment.

Protestants, on the other hand, hold that faith must be explicit and intelligent; or it cannot be proper faith—that the propositions embraced must be known; and the evidence therefor comprehended intelligently. They grant to Aquinas, that faith derives its moral quality from the holiness of principles and voluntary moral dispositions actuating the exercise; but his conclusion in favour of an unintelligent faith is absurd, because voluntary moral dispositions can only act legitimately, through an intelligent knowledge of their objects. The right intelligence is in order to the right feeling. Protestants, again distinguish between a comprehension of the evidence, and a full comprehension of the proposition. The former is the rational ground of belief, not the latter. The affirmations of many propositions, not only in theology, but in other sciences, are rationally believed, because their evidences are intelligently seen, when the predications themselves are not fully or even at all comprehended. This distinction answers at once all the objections made by Papists to an explicit faith, from the case of the Patriarch, who believed a gospel promise only vaguely stated and of us, who believe mysteries we cannot explain. Nor is it of any force to say, many Protestants could not give an intelligent view of any one sufficient argument for a given point in their creed. We grant that many professed Protestants have only a spurious faith. Again: an humble mind cannot always state in language intelligently, what he understands intelligently.

For an explicit faith, thus defined, we argue: 1. That it is the only sort possible, according to the laws of the mind. A man cannot believe, except by seeing evidence. As well talk of perception of objects of sight occurring in one, without using one's own eyes. But, say Papists: the Catholic's implicit faith is not thus

Affirmative Arguments.

totally blind, but rests on the testimony of the Church. His mind, influenced by *ἀγνοία*, has intelligently embraced this as plenary and infallible. Now, may not a man have a conviction in such case, implicit even of unknown propositions? e. g., you Protestants have your authoritative rule of faith, your Scripture. Once adopt this, and you accept its unknown contents as true; of which there are to you some, until your study of Scripture-exegesis is exhaustive. Ans. Very true. But the Romanist has no right to resort to this case as a parallel; because he does not permit private judgment to exercise itself in rationally weighing the proofs of the Church's authority, any more than of the Bible's authority. He cannot; because then, the individual must exercise his private judgment upon the Scripture; the argument for the Church's authority being dependent thereon, in essential branches. 2. The Bible agrees to this, by directing us to read and understand in order to believe; to search the Scriptures. See Jno. v : 39; Rom. x : 17; Ps. cxix : 34; Prov. xvi : 22; Acts xxviii : 27; Jno. xvii : 3; 1 Cor. xi : 29; Jno. vi : 45. 3. We are commanded to be "able to give to every man that asketh of us, a reason of the hope that is in us." 1 Pet. iii : 15. And faith is everywhere spoken of as an intelligent exercise; while religious ignorance is rebuked as sin.

But we now approach an inquiry concerning faith, on which our own divines are more divided. Is faith
 4. Is Faith Simple or Complex? a perfectly simple exercise of the soul, by its single faculty of intellect; or is it a complex act of both intellect and active moral powers, when stripped of all antecedent or consequent elements, which do not properly belong to it? The older divines, with the confession, evidently make it a complex act of soul, consisting of an intellectual, and a voluntary element. Turretin, indeed, discriminates seven elements in the direct and reflex actings of faith: 1. Cognition; 2. Intellectual assent; 3. Trust; 4. Fleeing for refuge; 5. Embracing; and (reflex) 6. Self-consciousness of true actings of faith, with 7. Consolation and assurance of hope. The two latter should rather be named the ulterior consequences of saving faith, than a substantive part thereof. The first is rather a previous condition of faith, and the third, fourth and fifth seem to me either identical, or, at most, phases of the different actings of the will toward gospel truth. Of the old, established definition, I have seen no sounder exponent than A. Fuller. Now, Drs. A. Alexander and Chalmers, among others, teach that saving faith is nothing but a simple belief of propositions; and they seem to regard it as necessary to suppose the act as capable of being analysed into a perfectly simple one, because it is everywhere spoken of in Scripture as a single one. Dr. Alexander also argues, with great acuteness and beauty of analysis, that since the soul is an absolute unit

always, and its faculties are not departments of it, but only different modes it has of acting, the enlightening of the mind in regeneration and the moral renovation of will, must be one simple act of the Holy Ghost and one effect, not two. And hence, there is no ground to suppose that faith, which is the first characteristic acting of the new born, and result of new birth, is complex. Moreover, he argues, since the will always follows the latest dictate of the understanding, it is unnecessary to attribute to faith any other character than a conviction of truth in the intellect, to explain its practical effects in turning the soul from sin to Christ.

Now, in examining this subject, let us remember that the resort must be to the Bible alone, to learn what it means by *πίστις*. And this Bible was not written for metaphysicians, but for the popular mind; and its statements about exercises of the soul are not intended to be analytical, but practical. This being admitted, and Dr. Alexander's definition of the soul and its faculties being adopted as evidently the true one, it appears to me that, the fact the Scriptures every where enjoin faith as a single act of the soul (by the doing of which one exercise, without any other, the soul is brought into Christ), does not at all prove it may not be a complex act, performed by the soul through two of its modes of action. Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Alexander, and every other divine often speak of acts as single, which they would yet analyse into two elements, and those not of the same faculties; e. g., the exercise of repentance or moral approval by the soul, consisting (in some order) of a judgment and an emotion.

In explaining the defect of the other argument of Dr. Alexander, I would remind the student of the distinctions made in defending the doctrine of the immediate agency of the Spirit of regeneration. True, the regenerating touch which enlightens the understanding and renews the will, is one, and not two, separate, or successive exertions of power. True, the will does follow the last dictate of the understanding, on all subjects. But let us go one step farther back: How comes the understanding by its notions, in those cases where the subjects thereof are the objects of its natural active propensities? As we showed, in all these cases, the notion or opinion of the understanding is but the echo and the result of the taste or preference of the propensity. Therefore, the change of opinion can only be brought about by changing the taste or preference. Now, inasmuch as all the leading gospel truths are objects of native and immediate moral propensity, the renovation of those propensities procures the enlightening of the understanding, rather than the contrary. So in faith, the distinctive exercise of the renewed soul (renewed as a soul, and not only as one faculty

thereof,) it is more correct to regard the element of active moral propensity (now towards Christ and away from sin) as source, and the new state of opinion concerning gospel truth, as result. But now, the understanding apprehends these objects of natural moral propensity, according to truth, because of the correct actings of the propensity towards them; and according to the soul's customary law, this apprehension according to truth, is followed by right volitions: the first of which, the embracing of Christ for salvation, is in the Scriptural, practical account of faith, included as a part of the complete act. If that which the Bible represents as a single, may yet be a complex act of the soul, exerting itself in two capacities (which I have proved), then it is no argument to say the embracing of Christ by the will is no part of saving faith proper, but only a consequence; because it is a natural consequence of the law that the will follows the last dictate of the mind. Grant it. Yet why may not that very act of will, thus produced, be the very thing the Bible means by saving faith? (According to the Confession.) Then, to settle this, let us resort to the Bible itself. Be it remembered that, having distinguished the two elements of belief and embracing, it is simply a question of fact, whether the Scriptures mean to include the latter as a part of that exercise, by which the sinner is justified; or a result of it. Then,

1. The very object proposed to faith implies that it must be

The Object of Faith an act as well as a notion: for that object is not an Opinion, but a Good. not merely truth but good, both natural and moral good. We often determine the character of the soul's actings by that of their object. Now, the exercise provoked or occasioned by an object of appetency, must be active. Here, we may remark, there is strong evidence for our view in this, that the Scriptures often speak of faith as trust. See Ps. ii : 12; xvii : 7; *et passim*; Matt. xii : 21; Eph. i : 12, &c. Chalmers most strangely remarks, that still faith does not seem to be anything more than simple belief; because when we analyse trust in a promise, we find it to consist of a belief in a proposition accompanied by appetency for the good propounded; and the belief is but belief. I reply yes; but the trust is not mere belief only. Our argument is in the fact that the Scriptures say faith is trust, and trust is faith. Chalmers' is a strangely bald sophism.

2. The Scriptures describe faith by almost every imaginable active figure. It is a "looking," (Is. xlv : 22,) a "receiving," (Jno. i : 12, 13,) an "eating" of Him, (Jno. vi : 54,) a "coming," (Jno. v : 40,) an "embracing," (Heb. xi : 13,) a "fleeing unto, and laying hold of," (Heb. vi : 18,) &c. Here it may be added, that every one of the illustrations of faith in Heb. xi (whose first verse some quote as against me) come up to the Apostle's

Faith always Active in Scripture.

description in the 13th verse, containing an active element of trust and choice, as well as the mental one of belief.

3. The manner in which faith and repentance are coupled together in Scripture plainly shows that, as faith is implicitly present in repentance, so repentance is implicitly in faith. But if so, this gives to faith an active character. Mark i: 15; Matt. xxi: 32; 2 Tim. ii: 25.

4. The Scriptures represent faith, not only as a privilege, but a duty, and unbelief as a sin. 1 Jno. iii: 23; Jno. xvi: 9. Now, it seems clear that nothing is a sin, in which there is no voluntary element. The mere notion of the understanding arises upon the sight of evidence involuntary; and there is no moral desert or ill-desert about it, any more than in being hurt when hit. And the reason why we are responsible for our belief on moral subjects is, that there is always an active, or voluntary element, about such belief. The nature thereof is explained by what has been said above on the order of causation between our disposition or propensities, and our opinions concerning their objects.

5. If we make faith nothing but simple belief, we are unable to give a satisfactory account of the difference between historical and saving faith. Chalmers, in the summary of his 6th chapter, as good as acknowledges this. But surely that must be a defective theory, which makes it impossible to see a difference, where yet, it admits, a substantial difference exists! Some would get out of the difficulty by denying that, in strictness of speech, there is any historical faith where there is not saving faith—i. e., by denying that such persons truly believe, even with the understanding. Many candid sinners will declare that their consciousness contradicts this. Says Dr. Alexander, the historical faith does not differ in that it believes different propositions; but in that it believes them with a different and inferior grasp of conviction, I would ask, first, whether this statement does not give countenance to that radical Arminian error, which makes saving differ from temporary faith, only in degree, and not in kind? And I would remark, next: This is a singular desertion of a part of the strength of his own position, (although we believe that position includes only a part of the truth.)

It is certainly true that historical faith does not believe all the propositions embraced by saving faith, nor the most important of them. Cat. que. 86. It believes, in a sense, that Christ is a Saviour, but does it believe that all its best works are sins; that it is a helpless captive to ungodliness; that sin is, at this time, a thing utterly undesirable in itself for that person; and that it is, at this moment, a thing altogether to be preferred, to be subdued unto holiness and obedience in Jesus Christ? No, indeed; the true creed of historical faith is: that "I am a great sinner,

Unbelief a Sin.

Historical Faith Differs How?

It does not Accept the same Propositions.

but not utter; that I shall initiate a rebellion against ungodliness successfully some day, when the 'convenient season' comes, and I get my own consent. That the Christian's impunity and inheritance will be a capital thing, when I come to die; but that at present, some form of sin and worldliness is the sweeter, and the Christian's peculiar sanctity the more repulsive, thing for me." Now, the only way to revolutionize these opinions, is to revolutionize the active, spiritual tastes, of whose verdicts they are the echo—to produce, in a word, spiritual tastes equally active in the opposite direction. We have thus shown that historical faith does not embrace the same propositions as saving; and that the difference is not merely one of stronger mental conviction. But we have shown that the difference is one of contrasted moral activities, dictating opposite opinions as to present spiritual good; and thus procuring action of the will to embrace that good in Christ. See also, 2 Thess. ii: 10; Rom. x: 9 and 10.

It is very clear, that if this account of faith is correct, it can only be an exercise of a regenerate heart. The moral affections which dictate the opinions as to moral good and evil, according to truth, and thus procure action, are spiritual affections. To this agree the Scriptures, See Rom. viii: 7; 1 Cor. ii: 14; Eph. i: 19, 20; ii: 8; Ezek. xxxvi: 26, 27; Phil. i: 29; Gal. v: 22; Tit. i: 1; Heb. xii: 2. To this representation there are three objections urged:

1. "That of the Sandemanian, that by giving faith an active and holy character, we virtually bring back justification by human merit."
2. "That by supposing regeneration (the very germ of redemption) bestowed on the sinner before justification, we make God reconciled to him before He is reconciled."
3. "That we tell the sinner to go to Christ by faith in order to be made holy, while yet he must be made holy in order to go."

The answer to the 1st, is that we define faith as a holy exercise of the soul; but we do not attribute its instrumentality to justify, to its holiness, but to the fact that it embraces Christ's justifying righteousness. It is neither strange nor unreasonable, that a thing should have two or more attributes, and yet be adapted by one special attribute among them, to a given instrumentality. The diamond is transparent, but it is its hardness which fits it for cutting glass. True faith is obediential: it involves the will: it has moral quality: but its receptive nature is what fits it to be the organ of our justification. Hence it does not follow that we introduce justification by our own moral merit.

To the 2d, I answer, it owes its whole plausibility to assuming that we make a difference in the order of time between

regeneration and justification by faith. But we do not. In this sense, the sinner is justified when he is regenerated, and regenerated when justified. Again, God has purposes of mercy towards His elect considered as unregenerate. For were they not elected as such? In the Covenant of Redemption, Christ's vicarious engagement for them did not persuade the Father to be merciful to them. On the contrary, it only enabled His original mercy, from which the gift of Christ Himself proceeded, to go forth compatibly with His holiness. Hence, at the application of Redemption, God justifies in the righteousness of Another, in order that He may consistently bless, with regeneration and all other graces; and He regenerates, in order that the sinner may be enabled to embrace that righteousness. In time they are simultaneous; in source, both are gracious; but in the order of production, the sinner is enabled to believe by being regenerated, not *vice versa*.

To the 3d, I reply, that this is but to re-affirm the sinner's inability; which is real, and not God's fault, but his own. True; in the essential revolution from death to life, and curse to blessing, the sinner is dependent on Sovereign grace; (it is the virulence of sin that make him so;) and there is no use in trying to blink the fact. It is every way best for the sinner to find it out: for thus the thoroughness of legal conviction is completed, and self-dependence is slain. Let not the guide of souls try to palliate the inexorable fact, by telling him that he cannot regenerate himself and so adapt himself to believe; but that he can use means, &c., &c. For if the awakened sinner is perspicacious, he will answer, (logically), "Yes; and all my using means and instrumentalities, you tell me, will be adding sin to sin; for I shall use them with wholly carnal motives." If not perspicacious, he will thrust these means between himself and Christ; and be in imminent risk of damnation by endeavouring to make a Saviour of them. No, let the pastor only reply to the anxious soul in the words of Paul, (Acts xvi: 31) "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," while he also refuses to retract the truth, that "no man cometh unto Christ, except the Father draw him." The healing of the withered arm is here a parallel. Matt. xii: 10-13. Had that afflicted man possessed the spirit of this cavil, he would have objected to the command, "Stretch forth thy hand;" that it must first be miraculously healed. But he had, instead, the spirit of faith: and He who gave the command, gave also the strength to obey. In the act of obeying he was miraculously enabled.

If the sinner recalcitrate against the gospel paradox, the triumphant answer will be: that the root of the reason why he cannot embrace Christ in his own strength is, that his own spontaneous preference is for self-will and ungodliness. So that if

he fails in coming to Christ, why does he murmur? He has followed precisely his own secret preference, in staying away. If the minister feels responsible and anxious for the successful issue of the case entrusted thus to his tuition, let him remember: (a) That after all, it is sovereign grace that must regenerate, and not the separate efficiency of any views of truth, however correct; and that he is not responsible to God for persuading the sinner to Christ, which is God's own work; and (b) That God does in fact make the "sinner's extremity His own opportunity;" and where we see Him thus slaying carnal self by this thorough law-work, it is because He intends thereby to prepare the way for His sovereign regenerating work. Let not the minister, therefore, become disbelieving, and resort to foolish, carnal expedients; let him simply repeat the gospel condition; and then "stand still and see the salvation of God."

This difficulty is presented in its most interesting form, by the question, whether an anxious sinner conscious of an unrenewed state, may begin to pray with an expectation of answer. Some professed Calvinists have been so embarrassed, as to give a very unscriptural answer. They have argued that "without faith it is impossible to please God;" and as faith is a result of regeneration, it is the unrenewed sinner's duty to abstain from praying, until conscious of the saving change. But Scripture commands sinners to pray. See Acts viii : 22 ; Rom. x : 13. Man's logic is vain, against God's express word. Again: it is wrong to command any one to abstain from prayer (or any other duty) because he is in a state of unbelief, because it is wrong for him to be in that state. It is preposterous reasoning, which makes a man's own sin an exemption for him. Do we then, in commanding the unbeliever to begin praying, tell him to offer an unbelieving prayer? By no means. We intend that he shall so begin, that by God's grace that prayer, begun in the impotency of nature, shall instantly transform itself into the first breathing of a living faith. We say to him; Begin praying; "and be no more faithless, but believing." It is most instructive to notice how Christ Himself encourages the anxious sinner to pretermitt the obstacle of this seeming paradox. The parables by which He inculcates prayer are evidently constructed with a view to encourage the awakened soul to waive the question whether it is renewed or not. In Matt. vii : 11, the tenderness of parents for their hungry children is the example by which He emboldens us. But in applying it, He actually breaks the symmetry of His own comparison, in order to widen the promise for the encouragement of sinners. We at first expect Him to conclude thus: "If ye then, though evil, know how to give good things to your children: how much more shall your Father in heaven give His Holy Spirit to His children." But no: He concludes: "to them that ask Him;" thus graciously authorizing us to waive the question whether we have become

His children. So, in Luke xviii : 14, the parable of the publican shows us a man who ventured to pray in the profound and humble conviction of his unrenewed state; and he obtained justification, while the confident professor of godliness was rejected. These instructions authorize the pastor to invite every sinner to the mercy-seat, provided only he is hearty in his petition; and to direct him to the free mercy which comes "to seek and save that which is lost." Yet it is certainly true, that the prayer of abiding unbelief will not be accepted. But Prayer is God's own appointed means for giving expression to the implanted faith, and thus passing out of the unbelieving into the believing state.

Rome teaches that historical faith is the substance of saving; (*fides informis*;) which becomes true faith by receiving its form, love. (Thus *fides formata*.) Her doctrine of Justification is accordant, viz: a change of moral, as well as legal state, consisting not only in pardon and acceptance of person, but in the inworking of holy love in the character. Now, in this error, as in most mischievous ones, we find a certain perverted element of truth, (without which errors would not usually have life enough to be current.) For faith, as an act of the soul, has moral character; and that character, holy. But the sophism of Rome is two-fold: (a.) Her *fides informis*, or historical faith, is not generically the same act of the soul at all as saving faith; being an embracing of different propositions, or at least of far different apprehensions of the gospel propositions, being the acts of different faculties of the soul; (historical faith, characteristically of the head; saving faith, essentially of the heart. Rom. x : 10;) and being prompted by different motives, so far as the former has motive. For the former is prompted by self-love, the latter by love of holiness and hatred of sin. (b.) Faith does not justify in virtue of its rightness, but in virtue of its receptivity. Whatever right moral quality it has, has no relevancy whatever to be, of itself, a justifying righteousness; and is excluded from the justifying instrumentality of faith; Rom. iv : 4, 5; xi : 6. But faith justifies by its instrumentality of laying hold of Christ's righteousness, in which aspect it does not contribute, but receives, the moral merit. (c.) Love cannot be the "Form of faith," because they are co-ordinate graces. See 1 Cor. xiii : 13. Rome virtually concedes this fatal point, by pleading that love may be metaphorically the form of faith. To the modern mind a conclusive general objection remains: this Peripatetic mode of conception and definition, by matter and form, is wholly irrelevant to a spiritual exercise or function: it is only accurate when applied to concrete objects.

The solution of Rome's favourite proof-texts is easy; e. g., in 1 Cor. xiii : 2, the faith is that of miracles. In Gal. v : 6, faith is the instrument energizing love, and not *vice versa*. In

Jas. ii : 26, works (loving ones of course), are not the causes, but after-signs of faith's vitality, as breath is of the body's. 1 Cor. vi : 11 ; Titus iii : 5 ; Eph. i : 13 ; Luk. xv : 22. &c., refer to the sanctification following upon justification.

By assurance of faith, we mean the certain and undoubting conviction that Christ is all He professes to be, and will do all He promises. It is of the essence of saving faith, as all agree. See Heb. x : 22 ; xi : 6 ; Jas. i : 6, 7 ; 1 Tim. ii : 8 ; Jer. xxix : 13. And it is evident that nothing less than full conviction of the trustworthiness of the gospel would give ground to that entire trust, or invoke the hearty pursuit of Christ, which are requisite for salvation. The assurance of grace and salvation is the assured conviction (with the peace and joy proceeding therefrom) that the individual believer has had his sins pardoned, and his soul saved. Rome stoutly denies that this is a part of faith, or a legitimate reflex act, or consequence thereof, (except in the case of revealed assurance.) Her motive is, to retain anxious souls under the clutch of her priest-craft and tyranny. The Reformers generally seem to have been driven by their hatred of this odious doctrine, to the other extreme, and make assurance of hope of the essence of faith. Thus, Calvin says, in substance : "My faith is a divine and spiritual belief that God has pardoned and accepted me." The sober view of the moderns (see Conf., ch. 18) is, that this assurance is the natural and proper reflex act, or consequence of true faith, and should usually follow, through self-examination and experience ; but that it is not of the essence of faith. 1st. Because, then, another proposition would be the object of faith. Not whosoever believeth shall be saved ; but "I am saved." The latter is a deduction, in which the former is major premise. 2d. The humble and modest soul would be inextricably embarrassed in coming to Christ. It would say : "I must believe that I am saved, in order to be saved. But I feel myself a lost sinner, in need of salvation. 3rd. God could not justly punish the non-elect for not believing what would not have been true if they had believed it. 4th. The experience of God's people in all ages contradicts it. Ps. lxxiii : 13 ; xxxi : 22 ; lxxvii ; 2, 9, 10. 5th. The command to go on to the attainment of assurance, as a higher grace, addressed to believers, shows that a true believer may lack it.

God has chosen faith for the peculiar, organic function of instrumentally uniting the soul to Christ, so as to partake of His righteousness and spiritual life. Why? This question should be answered with modesty. One reason, we may suppose, is, that human glorying may be extinguished by attaching man's whole salvation instrumentally to an act of the soul, whose organic aspect is merely receptive, and has no procur-

6. Assurance Distinguished.

7. Faith Suitable Organ of Justification.

ing righteousness whatever. Rom. iii : 27. Another reason is, that belief is, throughout all the acts of the soul, the preliminary and condition of acting. See 1 Jno. v : 4, 5. Everything man does is because he believes something. Faith, in its widest sense, is the mainspring of man's whole activity. Every volition arises from a belief, and none can arise without it. Hence, in selecting faith, instead of some other gracious exercise, which may be the fruit of regeneration, as the organic instrument of justification, God has proceeded on a profound knowledge of man's nature, and in strict conformity thereto. A third reason may perhaps be found in the fact that faith works by love : that it purifies the soul ; and is the victory which overcomes worldliness. See Confession of Faith, ch. xiv : § ii, especially its first propositions. Since faith is the principle of sanctification, in a sinner's heart, it was eminently worthy of a God of holiness, to select it as a term of justification.