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nigh" — nigh to the commonwealth of Israel, that is, brought into it. For Christ "is our peace" — the author of peace between Jews and Gentiles. He "hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition" between them; "having abolished, in his flesh, the enmity, the law of commandments in ordinances;" that is, having, by the sacrifice of his flesh on the cross, abolished the Jewish system of ordinances, which constituted "the enmity," or ground of separation between Jews and Gentiles, so as "to make, in himself, of twain one new man," — one new spiritual body, which knows no distinction of Jew or Gentile; so that the Gentiles are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."<sup>1</sup>

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## ARTICLE II.

### THE NATURE OF EVANGELICAL FAITH.

BY PROF. EGBERT C. SMYTH, BOWDOIN COLLEGE, BRUNSWICK, ME.

MOST of the readers of the *Bibliotheca* have probably become familiar, through an American reprint, with a series of sermons upon the Mission of the Comforter, preached before the University of Cambridge, in March 1840, by the late Archdeacon Hare. It is not, perhaps, so well known that a little more than a year previous to the delivery of these discourses, their learned author gave, in the same place, a course of sermons upon the Nature, Province, and Power of Faith, which he was called upon to publish, and which were issued from the press the following year, in an expanded

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<sup>1</sup> Eph. 2:11—22. The Apostle occupies a higher position than the Psalmist; for he sees not only the ingathering of the Gentiles into God's church, but also the *manner* of its accomplishment, viz. by the breaking down through Christ of "the middle wall of partition" between Jews and Gentiles.

form, and under the general title of *The Victory of Faith*. These discourses have all the distinguishing excellences of the later series: the same breadth of view, subtlety and vigor of thought, appositeness and brilliancy of illustration, and fervent love of spiritual truth. Some passages are rich in examples of fine philosophical analysis, lucidly exhibiting the nature and province of faith. Others make us feel its power, stirring the soul like a trumpet; as, for example, that in which, after the manner of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the names and deeds of a long catalogue of heroes of the Christian faith are cited. The work is one peculiarly fitted to attract and benefit youthful yet cultivated minds, when beginning earnestly to reflect upon the nature and value of spiritual religion — minds such as are to be found in all our colleges and higher seminaries, evincing, as it does, in the best way, the reasonableness of faith, by showing its necessity in man's natural life, its harmony with the other parts of his being, its power as a practical principle, its influence among the leading historic nations, and its victorious might when it rests in the person and atonement of Jesus Christ. We hope that some one of our publishers, to whom the friends of religion are already largely indebted for the republication of many sterling foreign works, will place this volume more easily within reach than it now is, of the many who would prize it. In the present Essay we would offer a few thoughts, chiefly suggested by these discourses, upon one aspect of their general theme.

Faith is often defined to be belief upon the ground of testimony. By belief is meant a conviction or judgment of the understanding, an intellectual assent to certain propositions which are received as true, not upon grounds of reason, but upon testimony. Religious faith is said to be a belief in religious truth founded upon the testimony of God, particularly as given in his inspired word; saving faith is the assent of the intellect, upon such testimony, to whatever is the contents of this testimony; right affections are supposed to depend upon such intellectual conviction of the truth, and to be its necessary effect. What men need is

light. Let their views of truth and duty be made clear, and their affections and wills will move in harmony with such apprehensions. Let the way of righteousness be made apparent, let the understanding be convinced of the superior claims of goodness, let it open its eyes to the great objects of faith, in their majesty and authority and attractiveness, and such belief will be unto righteousness. It fulfils the condition upon which God justifies the ungodly. It will be the root of a holy life. Right and answering affections and good works will follow in its train, as the tides follow the moon.

Those addicted to intellectual pursuits are especially prone to such a conception of faith. The cultivation of the understanding occupies much of their attention. It is natural to value most, not what is most useful, but what is most used; studious men are likely, unless on their guard, to attach a disproportionate importance to the understanding, to the rank it holds among the powers of the mind; to the truths it elicits, and the processes by which it acts. They are, in a measure, withdrawn from practical life. The even tenor of their lives is comparatively undisturbed by the din and strife of the fiercer passions, and the more turbulent hosts of evil. The desire to measure and weigh and estimate all subjects of thought by the standards and scales of the understanding, becomes almost a passion. There is a stronger desire to be able to give a reason for faith, than to have faith; or rather, it is supposed that the having faith is simply dependent upon being able to give a reason which satisfies the understanding; or, if so narrow a view as this be not taken, if a moral element is at least thought of, the intellectual ingredient of faith is still put first; it is deemed the chief element, that which secures and characterizes all the rest. The effort is, before all and above all things else, fully to satisfy the demands of the understanding; and it is expected that, when this is accomplished, the work will be done; the soul will have gained the heights of faith, it can rest secure that it believes unto righteousness.

Substantially the same notion often creeps into the thinking of those who recognize the necessity of the enlighten-

ment of the Holy Spirit in order to a true and living faith. His work is supposed to be, not that of inclining the heart to do the will of God, — to act faithfully up to the light received; and thus, by the way of obedience, to be led on to knowledge — but, primarily, that of instruction. If he moves the will, it is simply by playing upon the understanding. The cause of the moral result is the perception of truth; the belief of the intellect, through the Spirit's agency, may be deemed necessary to set this cause in motion. Others, again, affirm that, by the agency of the Spirit, not only the intellect is quickened and illumined, but the emotional nature is made sensitive to all virtuous appeals, and the will is inclined to consent to that which is seen and felt to be right and good. Saving faith, however, is still simply an act of the understanding — “but belief, and nothing more,” — although, since it has its seat in a mind, all whose moral mechanism has been, as it were, reconstructed, it invariably produces, by an organic necessity, right affections and a holy life.<sup>1</sup>

Before attempting to controvert this idea of faith, we would invite attention to a few preliminary remarks.

1. In the first place, it is to be noticed that the faith which we wish to consider is that faith which the scriptures affirm to be unto righteousness; the faith which is divinely appointed to be the condition of the soul's justification and salvation. We make this remark, however, simply for the sake of definiteness in our inquiry, and not for the sake of removing what is termed evangelical or saving faith out of the analogy of faith in general. For this analogy, we believe, if it were necessary, might easily be shown to be opposed to the notion of faith which has been stated. That is, as archdeacon Hare has remarked: “even when we speak of faith as manifested in our intercourse with our neighbors — when we talk of putting faith in one another — the moral action of the will is a stronger element in that faith than the

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<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Chalmers's *Institutes of Theology*, Part II. Chap. VI. and *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. XIII. pp. 513, 514.

judicial exercise of the understanding.”<sup>1</sup> But this question need not concern us. The question is not, whether the word *faith* is properly used by the writers of the New Testament, but simply, what notion they attach to it, what meaning they employ it to convey. This must be settled by their use of it. They constantly make faith the condition of salvation. This faith is often affirmed, by men who undertake to interpret the voice of scripture, to have its seat and origin in the understanding. There is much latitude in the expression of this interpretation: some seem to regard faith as exclusively an operation of the intellect; nothing more is necessary to salvation than such an assent of the mind to the testimony of the Bible. Others say, that there must be holy affections in heart, and a consistent life, if there is true faith. But these last are looked upon as the natural effects of faith — not part of it and essential to it, but its necessary or certain results, in the heart and life. The question is, whether this is the idea of faith evidently in the minds of those who have prescribed, with the authority of God, faith as the indispensable condition of salvation.

2. Again, we would remark, it is conceded that there is an intellectual element in faith; and it may also be allowed, that, as matter of experience, and in the order of time, this intellectual element is primary. As far, at least, as concerns the faith demanded in the Bible, it may be fully admitted, that nothing can be believed but what is known. By this is not meant that nothing can be believed but what is understood or fully comprehended. Mysteries, or truths which transcend the finite reason, may be known, and are properly objects of faith. What is meant is, that in saving faith there is found, as an ingredient, an intellectual apprehension of its object. The Romish church teaches that it is enough, in order to salvation, to put faith in the church; there may be entire ignorance of the doctrines of the church. But if the church holds the truth of the scripture, and if the individual member believes in the church, he has an implicit faith in all that the

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<sup>1</sup> *Victory of Faith*, p. 18. See also Bishop Berkeley's *Min. Phil. Di. VII. § 13*, and Bishop Barrow's *Complete Works*, Vol. II. p. 98.

church believes. For the mass of men, it is said, this implicit faith is all that is possible. Now, as against this view, it is affirmed that the faith which is required in the scriptures, cannot consist with ignorance of its object. It implies knowledge, in which knowledge there is an act of the understanding. And this is plain from the nature of the case. There cannot be any exercise of the affections and will except in some kind of connection with the understanding; nor any assent of the understanding without something which is assented to: an intellectual apprehension of the truth. It is plain, also, from the powers and effects attributed to faith, which imply the presence and agency of truth. How can a blind assent to we know not what, sanctify the heart, give peace to the conscience, produce good works, and give maturity to Christian character? Faith, too, it is expressly affirmed, comes by hearing, or report, by instruction, by attention to the truth. The gospel is adapted to the entire man. Those who would banish the intellect from its necessary functions in the religious life, are as foolish as those who would seek to kindle a fire without fuel.

In the order of time, moreover, the action of the intellect may be said to precede the full belief of the heart. There must be, for example, a certain kind of intellectual perception and recognition of Christ and his work before that which is moral and spiritual.

It is at this point, especially, that confusion has come into the discussions and opinions of men upon the nature of faith. Because the intellectual condition of faith thus has priority, in time, to that element which is moral, the former has been assumed to be the *cause* of the latter. Antecedence in time, it has well been said, has been confounded with antecedence in causation;<sup>1</sup> and so those, especially, who are inclined to view all subjects rather in their speculative than in their practical aspects, have been led to regard knowledge as the chief and formative ingredient in faith, and to make this their chief care.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Victory of Faith*, p. 41.

3. Once more, we would remark, it is conceded that faith is a simple and single act of the soul. Those who would restrict the definition of faith to an operation and act of the understanding, make much account of the simplicity which it introduces into the subject. The attempt, it is said, to include in an act of faith an exercise of the affections and will, as well as of the understanding, introduces confusion. We crowd into what we must regard as a simple act of the mind, elements which destroy its unity, and which, in such a relation, are incongruous.

This last statement, that the ingredients, knowledge and trust, are inconsistent one with the other, we must regard as gratuitous and unfounded; at least, no attempt has been made to prove it. And if it should be made to appear that the word *faith*, in the teachings of Christ and his apostles, covers both ideas, of assent and confidence, we should not hesitate which to sacrifice, simplicity or truth; at least, we should be inclined to suspect that our psychology may not as yet have become infallible. Still, we freely concede that the demand for simplicity in our conception of faith is a natural and pressing one; one, we also believe, authorized by the scriptures and by Christian experience. But this simplicity is not that of bare, bald oneness, but of unity. Faith is a single act, not because it is restricted to one department of the mind, but because it is an act of the whole mind, and of that mind in the unity of its personal life. It is one, as the person who believes is one. It is one, as being a total act of the soul; and so, while it is single, it has a variety and fulness of contents. For the sake of accurately observing the history of our mental processes, of analyzing them, and of gaining clear conceptions of their modes and uses, we classify the various operations of the mind. To different classes of exercises we give different names, and treat them as distinct departments or powers. Unless we are on our guard, the names come, in our apprehension of them, to stand for independent, substantive things, bound together, like separate fagots tied up in one bundle.

With this conception of the mind, it is impossible to see



how faith can be at once in the understanding and the will, — at once knowledge and trust. But the truth is, that there is one, indivisible, individual, personal spirit, which thinks, and feels, and chooses. Man was made a living soul. Analyze a seed : you find a stem, a leaf or a pair of leaves, and nourishment for their growth. And is this all ? Then were there no movement, nor verdure, nor beauty, nor fragrance, nor fruit. There is in all, the life : you have the understanding, the sensibilities, and the power of choice ; and is this all ? Then were there no continuous, personal, spiritual, and responsible life. Then is the living soul, the deathless spirit, which reveals itself, now in the processes of the understanding, now in the emotions and resolves of the heart, and now in all, together, wielding them as it will, in coincident activity — the personal, living spirit, which was made to love, at once, with all the mind and with all the heart ; and no less, but rather, as the root of this, to believe, at once, with the understanding and the will. It is because faith is thus central that, while it is susceptible of analysis, it is nevertheless single as a power, and simple as an act. It is because it is thus central that, when the Author of man's being would redeem him from the disorder of his powers, thrown into direct confusion and anarchy by sin, he pronounced, as the healing, harmonizing word — BELIEVE.

And this brings us to the consideration of some of the evidence which the scriptures afford, that they include, in the idea of faith, as properly pertaining to it, as essential to it, an act of the will, as well as of the understanding.

The language of the apostle Paul, in Rom. 10 : 10, is a direct proof of this. The apostle is speaking of saving faith. The faith which justifies, he affirms, is with the heart : *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*: The word *heart* is often used, in the Bible, to denote the whole man — the person. It is the seat of life. It gives character to all that proceeds from it ; thought, feeling, desire, are attributed to it. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, as well as evil passions and evil deeds.

Faith is attributed to the heart, in this sense of the word : it springs from that which gives life, character, activity, and progress to the soul. True faith is from the heart.

The same thing is indicated, also, when we look at the word which we render, and from which we derive, our word *faith*. Its primary idea is, holding fast ; and, as applied to acts of the mind, trusting, confiding, relying ; and this sense the proposition, connected with it, often settles as its meaning in the New Testament. Of like import is the corresponding Hebrew word ; which, indeed, is almost always rendered, in our version, by the specific word *trust*. To the same effect are the phrases by which the act of faith is described ; it is expressed by the terms, " coming to Christ ; looking to Him ; receiving Him ; eating the flesh of the Son of Man, and drinking His blood ; trusting in Him ; and being fully persuaded of his truth and faithfulness."

Notice, also, the powers and effects attributed to faith : it is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It is a firm reliance upon the truth and faithfulness of God. It is the victory that overcometh the world. Through it is remission of sins, justification, sanctification, spiritual light, spiritual and eternal life, access to God, adoption, the inheritance of the promises. Without it, it is impossible to please God. Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. It works by love. It unites the soul to Christ, as branches are united to the vine. It is an evidence of regeneration. By it Christ dwells in the heart. By it saints live, stand, walk, obtain a good report, overcome the world, resist and conquer the devil, are delivered from sin, are made joint-heirs with Christ.

Even when faith is spoken of as knowledge, the moral element still predominates. The knowledge which the scriptures commend, and which they identify with faith, includes, in its very essence, an ardent purity of the affections. It is " a loving, adoring, and ever-growing recognition " of the infinite and inexhaustible perfections of God.

Let it be further noticed, that the great object of faith is a person. Faith is receiving Christ : *To as many as received him,*

gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name. Here personal trust in Christ is what is meant by faith, and no other idea can be substituted. No belief in abstract facts, no mere operation of the intellect, can be expressed by the words "receiving Christ." They imply a spiritual perception of his excellence and glory; a love for his moral perfection, a sense of the guilt and ill desert of sin, of need of pardon, purification, entire renewal, of a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as an almighty, an all-sufficient, an infinitely-gracious Saviour, and a willingness to submit to him in obedience to all his commands. Saving faith has to do immediately and directly with the Lord Jesus Christ. A mind in the exercise of such faith, concentrates its regards upon him; the understanding, affections, will — all are drawn forth, in lively exercise, in one whole act of acceptance.

It is a good evidence that we have a true idea of any subject if we find that the idea is *light-giving*; that it illumines parts and relations of the subject otherwise obscure.

The appreciation of faith as rather moral than intellectual, as having for its chief and formative element an exercise of the affections and will rather than of the understanding, will afford this sign of its truth. It shows us:

1. In the first place, why the influences of the Holy Spirit are made so much account of, in the Bible, in the production of faith. Faith is the gift of God. It is the work of the Spirit. He produces, nourishes, and maintains it. It is founded upon the witness of the Spirit, with and by the truth. Now that which is the work of the Spirit, in the souls of men, we should expect would be spiritual. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; in which enumeration, every word denotes that which is moral. So in the description of the wisdom which he bestows, every quality ascribed to it is moral. It is set forth as pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.<sup>1</sup> If, now, we restrict the notion of the faith which the Spirit

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<sup>1</sup> See James 1: 5 and 3: 15, 17, and The Victory of Faith, p. 20.

begets, to a mere assent of the understanding to truths which it receives upon testimony, simply intellectually apprehended, we are in a sphere into which we have no reason to suppose the Spirit's ordinary and immediate operations extend ; and we are at a loss to understand why his peculiar and special agency is of such momentous consequence. The laws of the understanding are unchangeable ; and, upon all subjects properly before them, in which the heart is free from wrong bias and prejudice, men's intellects work correctly. As matter of fact, thousands of men are intellectually convinced of the truth and divine authority of the Christian religion, whose lives show that their hearts are strangers to its power. It is said that they do not have a convincing apprehension of what they profess to believe. This is true ; but why do they not realize this ? The *evidence* is *clear*. Why, when men are told of the truth, and justice, and love of God, and believe in these things with the understanding, is there no attractiveness, no constraining power, over them, of these august, and authoritative, and living verities ? And what is it to appreciate moral and spiritual things ? Can it be merely to perceive them with the mind ? Can it be merely that assent of the mind which is founded upon an intellectual apprehension of their existence ? That to which faith assents is their holy and sacred qualities, their divine authority, loveliness, and perfection. Assent to qualities such as these, *moral* and *spiritual*, must be of the heart, a moral and spiritual act : *whosoever loveth, says the apostle, knoweth God. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.* In order to faith, there must be, to the mind, some demonstration of the spiritual ; and to this the understanding is, of itself, incompetent. It would be incompetent even if there were not so much bad teaching in the world ; if men's intellects, through the conception of their hearts, had not become bewildered in the mazes of error. In order to be seen, known, appreciated, the truth must be loved. So long as the heart is wrong, all the learning and knowledge of the highest archangel might be poured into the human understanding, until it was filled

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<sup>1</sup> Shepard's Works, Vol. III. p. 439.

and flooded, and there would be no faith. Something more than reasoning, even though the reasoner be the Spirit of Truth, is necessary to communicate divine knowledge, to open the eyes to the divinity of truth, to the unspeakable preciousness and majesty of him who is the Truth. "I have seen a God by reason," writes one of the most eminent Puritan divines, "and men were amazed at God thus apprehended; *but I have seen God Himself and been ravished to behold Him.*"<sup>1</sup> If faith be simply an exercise of the understanding, why this vast difference between knowing things by reason, and by faith or the spirit of faith? If the agency of the Spirit, in the production of faith, be necessary simply because there is so much ignorance, and error, and bad teaching in the world that men's minds are bewildered; because he can reason with a power and cogency beyond that of the human teacher, why should this agency be absolutely and alike necessary to the production of faith in *every* human soul? Why are, often, those who have sat, all their lengthened lives, under the teachings of the sanctuary, as really destitute of a genuine faith — a faith which overcomes the world, a faith unto righteousness — as are the most degraded Bushmen? Why to all men, the refined as well as the uncultivated, the learned as well as the ignorant, the masters in Israel as well as the publicans and sinners, must it be said, alike: *Except ye be born again, ye cannot see the kingdom of God; ye must be born again; whosoever believeth, is born of God?*

But if faith is with the heart — a submission of the will to the will of God, a personal trust in the redemptive act of his Son — then must it be spiritual in its very essence, and the appropriate fruit of the Spirit. For it is with the heart that men *sin*. And when sin has thus once gained a lodgement at the very seat and centre of personal life, it cannot be dislodged but by the *renewal* of the *heart*, by a change in the man; so that the affections and the will, once sold under sin, may become free to love and choose the truth. Such a change, no amount of light in the understanding can, of itself, beget; nor any more dispense with its necessity.

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<sup>1</sup> Shepard's Works, Vol. III. p. 439.

II. In view of the truth which has been set forth — that faith depends more upon the will than upon the understanding — we see, secondly, why a genuine faith is so often the possession of the poor and unlearned, while the learned and cultivated are destitute of it. If the grounds of faith were the decision of the understanding, the results of a balancing and weighing of arguments, a sifting of testimony, then the best judges as to human legislation, would be the best as to the divine: those most skilled in earthly wisdom, would be most competent to appreciate the heavenly. Faith would increase in proportion to the expansion of the understanding. He who is most conversant with human science, would most easily apprehend the things of God. The philosopher would attain to faith more easily than the peasant. Among men of science we should find a readier apprehension, a fuller reception, of the divinity and atonement of Christ, than among those whose intellects are less keen and disciplined. Whereas the fact, it has with truth been said, is “very often exactly the reverse: the philosopher, beguiled by the phantoms of his understanding, finds it difficult, if not impossible, to raise his spirit beyond the moral teacher, the man Jesus; while the poor and humble acknowledge and adore him as their ever-present Saviour and God.”<sup>1</sup>

III. Again, if faith be a property of the heart rather than of the understanding, we see how it is that men are accountable for their faith. It is a work of the will, an act of that within us to which responsibility immediately attaches. So far as it involves an exercise of the understanding, there is not entire freedom from accountability; for in every intellectual operation there is personal agency. Though men cannot make truth, nor alter the laws of evidence, they can attend to that evidence with a simple, single-hearted desire to know the truth; and for all that is otherwise, in forming their opinions, they are accountable.

But the real ground of the faith which the gospel requires, is not simply nor chiefly that apprehension of truth to which the understanding, of itself, is competent. Whosoever be-

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<sup>1</sup> *Victory of Faith*, p. 27.

lieveth that Jesus is the Son of God, hath the witness in himself. Faith is founded, not upon the belief or testimony of those about us; not because the mind can state the historical and rational grounds of its belief, important as are these in their place, but because it sees the excellency and feels the authority and power of truth; because, with and by the truth, there is the witness of the Spirit. If the mind within whose reach this truth is placed, does not discern its true character, if it has not this evidence, the difficulty lies deeper than its understanding. It is responsible for not believing. Hence the gospel enjoins faith upon all who hear its call. If faith were founded upon the testimony of the church, none could be under obligation to believe, to whom that testimony should not be afforded. If it were founded on historical testimony, it could not be required of those who have not the time and ability to examine and appreciate that evidence. But since it rests upon the divine character of the truth, the obligation to believe is universal. If there is not convincing evidence, evidence which forms a sufficient and ample basis for an unwavering faith, it is because sin blinds the mind, because the heart is wrong.

IV. Finally, we see that all faith which is not moral and practical, is wanting in the essential characteristic of the faith required in the gospel. If faith is of the heart, it must influence the life. There are the fountains of life. As a man believeth, in his heart, so is he. Hence we find so often, in the scriptures, obedience, works, made the condition of salvation; while it is affirmed, with unqualified distinctness, that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. It is faith *only* which justifies, which is the condition upon which we become one with Christ, in all the benefits and triumphs of his redemption. Yet faith can never exist *alone*, no more than the sun can climb the azure vault of the sky, and shine in his meridian splendor, and not pour his light upon all that he beholds. Faith brings Christ into the soul; and this light of the knowledge of the glory of God chases away its darkness, and purifies every fountain of feeling, and makes it fruitful as the garden of the Lord.