

## ARTICLE VI.

## FAITH AND ITS SEMBLANCES.

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THE diversity of meaning and of opinion as to what is properly to be expressed by this word, is mainly among the philosophers and theologians. The popular notion, presented from the pulpit, trust in God, trust in Christ, in his person and word and promises, meets its demands practically. Often, however, in connection with this, there are additions that involve great confusion. A glance, first, at some of the modes in which it is described in Scripture may aid us in our investigation as to its true meaning.

## I. FAITH IS TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM SIGHT AND SENSE.

“We walk not by sight, but by faith.” “He saw and believed.” “Thou hast believed because thou hast seen.” “We look at the things that are not seen.” “He endured as seeing Him who is invisible.”

Faith, here, is not contradictory or opposed to sight; is distinguished from it, contrasted with it. In some cases sight is preliminary to faith, but does not include it. “He saw and believed.” Others who saw, did not believe. In the former of these cases, through the medium of sight, the new and distinct element of faith found occasions of existence and operation.

So again, while faith sees the unseen, and is occupied with the supersensible, it is not thus occupied with all unseen realities. The unseen things of psychological and ethical, and even of physical science, are matters not of faith, but of knowledge. No physicist ever saw, or expects to see, a molecule or an atom—to touch, to taste, to smell, or to hear it. So, in many

other departments of human investigation and knowledge. There must be a peculiar element in unseen things, which relates them to faith, which properly makes them objects of faith; they are grounded as to their existence, to use the thought of President Hopkins' in the character or mind of some person. "Faith is the substance," *ὁπώρασις*, the substantial reality in the mind "of things hoped for," and the "conviction *ἐλεγχος* of things unseen," not all things hoped for and unseen, but of those revealed in the Divine Word, and coming from or contained in the Divine Person.

Seen things, things of sense, may thus lead to faith, and unseen things may be known where there is no faith. Seen things may reveal a person and produce faith; unseen things misrepresenting or hiding such person, may lead to positive unbelief. The infidel may easily find material for his scepticism in the region of the supersensible; and the believer in that of the seen and visible for his faith.

## II. FAITH IS TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM KNOWLEDGE.

"I know whom I have believed." "Ye both know me and know whence I am." One of these statements describes a knowledge springing out of faith, the other a knowledge without faith. Both imply the distinction that knowledge, like sight, may lead to faith, sometimes may hinder it. But it must be distinguished from it. Knowledge is the intellectual apprehension of truths, or facts, by perception, memory, reflection, or intuition, of which the possessor is rationally certified. Such knowledge may be more or less imperfect. It may rest, in some cases, upon probabilities, in others upon demonstration. But the more imperfect is not faith, and the less imperfect or the demonstrative does not in this include real knowledge of other matters, and through other sources. Just here, it is that we encounter an element of confusion. "Faith," says Riggenbach, "*in regard to the material*, is the reliance that we place in the evidence of our senses with regard to those things that come within their range. Faith *in regard to the immaterial* is

the reliance we place in our perceptions of immaterial reality; a perception not affirmed by the medium of the five senses, but by means of the higher sense of our reason." Faith, according to this, is the spontaneous acceptance of the validity of our perceptions and rational intuitions. So, in the same way, according to this, we live by faith in our acceptance of the consciousness of personality. But if these are not cognitions, if this is not knowledge, what is? Where under such statement is the place of knowledge, as distinguished from faith, in perception and intuition? So, too, as to some of the statements which make faith only an imperfect kind of knowledge. "Faith," says Professor James, "means belief in something concerning which doubt is still theoretically possible." So, too, Thomas Aquinas "makes it of the essence of faith, that the object should not be sufficiently known to the mind to produce conviction by the mind itself, so that the heart or the will must give the turn, whether it inclines to one side or the other." The first of these statements makes all knowledge, coming through probable evidence not knowledge, but faith. The second rather seems to demand that the probabilities to faith should be of a lighter character, so as to admit of the moral wavering between certainty and opinion. "Faith," says Hildebert of Tours, "is certainty in respect of things which fall not under the perceptions of the body." This includes as faith, like Professor Riegenbach already quoted, our rational and moral intuitions, all our knowledge in the region of the supersensible. "Faith," Hildebert goes on to say, accordant with the language of Aquinas, just alluded to, "faith is below knowledge, for to believe is less than to know, and it is above opinion, for to believe is more than to imagine." None of these statements were, perhaps, intended for exhaustive definitions. Those making them, and, probably, in due time and place, have put in needed limitations, and have confined them in their application to a peculiar region of convictions. But they are all open to the perversion that has been made of them, that faith is either an imperfect degree of knowledge or inconsistent with thorough intelligence, *i. e.*, it is the prerogative of ignorance.

Whereas, in point of fact, it is not necessarily dependent upon either of these conditions. There may be, and often is, the absolute demonstration of mathematical certainty, and the moral demonstration of overwhelming probability, say of the Divine Existence and Perfection, and, as with Kepler, and Newton, and Euler, profound faith in him and his character. So again, there may be a lower form of probability, which gains the assurance of certainty, knowledge of this Divine Existence and perfections, and yet no faith with it, indeed its very opposite. Loosely and popularly men are said to believe, that is to have faith, when evidence slightly preponderant, begets acceptance of an assertion or a fact. And there may, in such cases, really be faith where an element to be noticed further on, the *personality of the witness* or *witnesses* is taken in connection with their testimony. Otherwise it is only a form of knowing with a greater or less degree of certainty.

One of the favorite insinuations of a certain class of writers is that conclusions in physics, chemistry, etc., are reached through demonstrative processes, that those in theology, are reached through probabilities; consequently the irrefragability of the former, the unreliability of the latter. "To believe even the truth without scientific evidence," says Professor Clifford, "is guilt and sin." What a world of sinners we are in our reception, upon the testimony of the scientists, of the conclusions of astronomy, geology, etc., which we have not ourselves scientifically tested. But, if we did thus test and receive them, the reception would be, not faith or belief, but knowledge. Scientific knowledge, indeed, in point of fact, comes largely through probable evidence. The only demonstration, in either case, and common alike to theology, and to physics or chemistry, or biology, is that of induction. But knowledge, whether through probability or demonstrative induction, is not faith. We may know through both of these sources, and yet not believe—may have no faith. The element to which faith is in correlation, and upon which it depends for its essential existence, may in both cases be absent.

Faith is thus to be distinguished, not only from knowing, but

from its processes. Dr. McCosh, for instance, speaks of faith indeed in acts of memory, as to the absent object in space or time as still existing. But memory often reproduces absent objects that are known, in the very moment of the exercise of memory, to have passed away. When there is no reason for such supposition, say of a person or of a building as an object of nature, they are reproduced, as in their continued existence. It is just here, as it is in all of our processes of knowing, in the combined experience of sensation and perception, of consciousness and intuition, of inductive and deductive operations. We know, we do not believe, that we perceive, or remember, or augur, or are conscious. Such knowledge is the basis of all knowledge. But the element which makes faith may, in it, be entirely absent. To involve that, something else is needed. The mind in a healthy condition, unhesitatingly and spontaneously assumes, and acts upon the postulate of the effectiveness of its natural powers, of the validity of their results, as it does upon the uniformity of existing forces in the world around. Loosely it is often said, "I believe I know," or "I believe I remember," when weak intellectual conviction is contrasted with that which is strong. "I think I know," "I think I remember," would be more correct. Faith and its opposite have no necessary relation to such a state of mind.

### III. FAITH MUST BE DISTINGUISHED FROM EVIDENTIAL CONVICTION, HISTORICAL OR LEGAL.

Such evidence, in one of its adjuncts, does give faith. Without this it gives only knowledge. These results, in the two cases, are usually treated as identical. But they need to be carefully distinguished. "Faith," says Bishop Pearson, "is an assent to that which is credible," or, as expounded by Professor Wace, "it is assent, on the ground of testimony, as distinguished from assent produced by immediate knowledge, or, mediately, by ratiocination." Is the first of these, conviction upon evidence, always properly described as faith? Doubtless it is, in some cases, but is it in all? May not the conviction or knowledge which such testimony gives, be the result of

a process that is strictly scientific—that is, purely an inductive one; such result, in the mind, being, not faith, but certainty—evidential demonstration, legal or historical knowledge? The element of personal confidence, in any particular person or persons, in their personal character or reliability, may, of course, come in, but not necessarily—it need have no place. The process may be as scientific, as morally bloodless, as one in statistical calculation, or in physics, or chemistry. Given so many human units, of certain ages; and we scientifically show, and know, how many will die in a certain period. Given so many human units, in certain collocations of time and place, circumstantiality of agreement and diversity, of antagonism and coöperation, and we scientifically derive from their evidence, conclusions, in regard to which there can be no rational doubt whatever. There is a science—that is, laws and principles, of evidence. Historians, archæologists, and barristers recognize this, although it seems difficult to get it into the heads of physicists and biologists. Results evidentially necessitated, through the application, or in the operations of these laws, are scientific. They belong not to the domain of faith, but to that of knowledge. An asserted fact, for example, an event in history, or one in a court of justice, say the Norman Conquest, or the forgery of a certain document, is presented for investigation. The result is a demonstration, not from the personal character of the witnesses, of their specific personal veracity or untruthfulness, but by the nature, and material, and collocation of their testimony. The known untruthfulness of a witness, the fact that he is a notorious liar, or his general ignorance and stupidity, in many cases, as related to other particulars, may give special value to his testimony. It may, indeed, constitute the needed link to evidential demonstration. The particulars of time, place, circumstance, to which such testimony refers, and under which it is given; its concurrence in essentials, its diversity in incidentals, its congruity with precedents and subsequents, its manifestly undesigned coincidences: all these, under the process of cross-questioning, putting the result beyond and above the control of human intent, or human management, *rationally,*

*scientifically* necessitate its acceptance. It is not a matter of faith, but of knowledge. *Historical* or *judicial* belief is not always and necessarily faith. These words faith and belief are often used as interchangeable, and in certain connections properly. But they cannot always be so. What a change, to use the thought of another,<sup>1</sup> in the significance of the Christianity of the New Testament, if *πίστις* were invariably translated belief, and no hint afforded as to anything in it beyond what that word expresses,

And, just here, and in the cases already supposed, we recognize this distinction. All accepted facts, indeed, in history or in legal proceeding, are not thus matters of simple belief, scientifically verified and converted into knowledge. In a large number of cases, the element of personal confidence, in the personal character of a particular witness, or witnesses, comes in, and controls the conclusion; and thus faith largely helps to shape that conclusion. But such is not the case necessarily. It is not so with many actually accepted conclusions of historical or legal investigation. It is not so with many of the facts of the New Testament, of the Crucifixion, of the Resurrection, of the institution of the Lord's Supper. Through the legitimate application of the laws of evidence, these events may be historically reproduced and certified, to the knowledge of man, now, as they were to those who actually witnessed them. And, yet, with such knowledge, scientifically certified, there may be just as little faith, as there was with many of the original witnesses, that is, none at all. Supposing the same process, applied to Paley's Thirteen Propositions, the result may be of mostly the same character. "If I could have seen the resurrection of Lazarus," was the language of Spinoza, "I would have believed." Believed what? Not the fact. That he would have known. Would he have believed in him who raised Lazarus, in his assertion of divine prerogative? That would have been faith: his own personality recognizing that of Jesus, and by an act of spiritual affiancement and con-

<sup>1</sup> Beard's Hibbert Lectures.

fidence, entering into relations of communion and dependence. The knowledge, in all such cases, may and ought to lead to faith; but in many cases it does not. They are not identical. They are distinguishable, separable; often actually separated.

#### IV. FAITH IS TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM REASON.

First, from Reason in the sense of the argumentative capacity, the capacity of deducing particulars from general principles, or inducing principles from collocated particulars (*λογισμός*). This sense of the word reason, or reasoning, is included in the processes already described and describing; such reasoning, in its legitimate exercise, its result, is knowledge. In the process of comparing objects of sense, or particulars of evidence, there is reasoning, more or less; and knowledge is derived therefrom, but not faith. Faith may accompany them, may follow from them; in its own manner, may reach accordant conclusions. But it is not such accompaniment necessarily, is not needed to the result. Secondly, it is to be distinguished from reason, (*νοῦς*), the power of universal conviction, the intuitive beholding of being, and its necessary adjuncts of universal and necessary truths—truths of reason implied in all thinking, necessary to all thinking, known, explicitly or implicitly, in all knowledge. This reason, moreover, whether as pure reason in the domain of ontological speculation, or whether as practical reason in the sphere of doing and enjoying and suffering, must be carefully distinguished from faith. In each of these forms and respects, it may enter into and be included in faith. But faith is not necessarily included in it. Reason may and does exist, and is exercised without it, where faith is absent.

Faith, then, is what?

We have seen what it is not. Are we able to say what it is? It is distinct from sight and sense, from knowledge, from evidential belief or conviction from reason, ratiocination, speculative and practical. As thus distinct from these, and including an element not necessarily contained in any one, or all these combined, it is, additionally and distinctively, the capacity and exercise of spiritual cognizance and conviction. It is thus the



result of personal contact with personality, the intuitive beholding of personal spirit by personal spirit, the exercise of the capacity of knowing and coming into communication with personal spirit as personal spirit, and consequently of affection and re-affection. Its simplest form is that of the little child, prior to his knowledge of deception, whether as recognized in others or practised by himself. Faith is thus, to use the idea of Campbell in his argument against Hume, prior to experience. With all of our experiences of falsehood, whether in ourselves or in others, we are ready to believe and do believe the words of a fellow-man, where there is no reason to suppose that he is actuated by interest or affection. We ask and follow the direction of a perfect stranger on the road; do not think of doubting it. So in many other cases. There is no living in a world of human beings without faith. The exigencies, too, of numberless cases, are that this must be spontaneous. Time is not afforded for the calculation of probabilities. Such calculations in many cases would be impertinent, offensive, a moral outrage. In its simplest and earliest exercise there are probabilities to calculate. It is natural for personality, for one human spirit, to trust in another. As such spirit reveals itself in personal act and character, it becomes, to other human spirit, an object of thorough trust and confidence, or as one to be doubted and tested. When this comes in and we begin to calculate probabilities, derived from personal and individual experience, we are in the transition region of evidential knowledge; it may be of moral demonstration. Faith, as thus related to personality, may include all that has gone before, and is something additional. Just as sight, knowledge, and historic conviction minister to reason, and afford occasion and material for its exercise, so may reason and all preceding it minister to faith. If properly grounded, faith will include all these and go beyond but cannot conflict with them. It moves in a sphere, and takes these others with it, where they cannot go by themselves. "Faith," says Coleridge, "may be defined as fidelity to our own being." This is following our convictions of truth and duty. But is this faith? It is allegiance, says he further on, and com-

ing nearer to what he was seeking, "Allegiance to the moral nature of God, in opposition to all usurpation, and in resistance to all temptation to the placing any other claim above or equal to our fidelity with God." Is not this rather the natural result of faith; and thus going back, not only to "the moral nature of God," but to God himself, personally containing all perfections—intellectual, moral, spiritual? "Faith," says Newman Smyth, "is the sense of the pressure upon our being of the Infinite Being, in whom we live." Would it not be better to say the response of our finite being to the Infinite Being, under the pressure of these his manifestations, whether in nature or in revelation? Faith is the unseen spirit of man seeing the unseen God; the human personality cognizing the divine, and coming into the communion of trust and confidence with him. So, too, in the sphere of human confidence and its human objects. Human faith is the unseen human spirit or personality of one man cognizing and coming into communion—the communion of attraction or repulsion, of faith or its opposite, with the personality of another. There are numberless modes and varieties by which men thus know each other in their personality. It is, however, only as such personality is known, or supposed to be known, that faith, in the true sense of the word, can be exercised. It is thus rationally exercised, within the limitations of the capacity of its object. If that object be an Infinite Personality, its exercise, as its object, transcends reason, and, at the same time, is demanded by, and is exercised in accordance with, reason.

But this peculiarity of faith, as the affiancing and communion of personalities, of personal spirit with personal spirit, as the result of personal, spiritual cognizance, implies another thing, which brings out its full character. It is a personal act, not in effect wrought in a passivity, as sometimes misrepresented in mistaken efforts to magnify the power of divine grace. It involves the elements of emotion and volition. "Faith," says Stuckenberg,<sup>2</sup> reporting Dörner's Ethical System of Chris-

<sup>2</sup> Homiletic Review.

tianity, "faith in this sense," a sense described in sentences preceding, "involves emotion, intellect, and will, especially the latter. Faith is a yielding of the entire person to Christ, in order to receive from Him salvation and life." Distinguished in contemplation, but inseparably coinstantaneous in fact, the object is known, approved and chosen as one of reliance and communion, or rejected and repelled, as unworthy of confidence. The last fact in the analysis of faith is that also in its opposite disbelief. "With the heart," the inner man, the inner being, the core of the spiritual personality, "man believeth unto righteousness." If the object is pure and good the faith is good, purifying, and elevating. If of an opposite character, the faith will correspond in itself, in its operations.

Faith thus finds its possibility of existence, and to some degree its character, in the personality of its subject.

As a man is, so he believes. His own character, and motives, and principles of action, as well as the quality and quantity of his intelligence, constitute his measure and gauge of the motives and principles of others. Just so far as he can be trusted, as he knows himself properly to be an object of faith to others, just so far can he trust and have faith in others. The doubtful actions of others find their explanation in his own controlling motives; sometimes it may be in lower, but never in those that are higher. "The spiritual man," says the apostle, "judges all; yet he himself is judged of none." The spiritual man, in his spirituality, has an element additional to what is possessed by others merely natural. Having thus all that they possess, and the higher light of the spirit, he judges all; as, moreover, in this higher sphere of knowledge and movement unknown to them, "he is judged by none." So, in the opposite direction, our Lord asks: "How can ye who receive honor one from another believe in me," in my life of self-sacrifice? And, so again, elsewhere he speaks of "the honest and good heart," the morality, if not the grace, of congruity, which constitutes the receptive condition to truth in its revelation. Truth produces its proper effect only upon its proper recipient. Dis-

honesty, levity, prejudice are all partial forms of falsehood, disturbing forces to the appreciation of truth, especially of truth embodied in personality—in personal character. It was said of the first Napoleon that he could never understand a man of genuine principle and integrity. If he wanted to use one for his purposes he would present the inducement of reward. If that did not succeed, he would threaten him. If both failed, he set the man down for a fool or a madman. Probably if the book of Job had gone on to tell the conclusion of Satan as to the trials of the patriarch and their failure, he would have admitted the fact of the failure. But, not that he was wrong or mistaken as to his estimate of Job's character. He had only failed in finding out how to expose it. So as to his subjects and their opposites. A man is morally worthless and unfaithful. His faith as such, therefore, is, Every man has his price and every woman her enticement. Another man knows himself to be true, honest, and chaste. He can believe, therefore, in the honesty and chastity of others. "The fidelity to a man's own moral being," which as we have seen has been identified with faith, is really one of its conditions. The god of one of these men, if he have one at all, will be an immense devil, having all the elements of his worshipper's character, plus the almighty power of doing mischief! The god of the other will be one of holiness and truth; one trusted and loved as true and holy. In both of these directions we find the capacity of faith in the character of the individual.

But there is another fact, in this matter, of no less striking significance. While it is true that as a man is, so he believes; it is no less true that as he believes so he is, and so he becomes. As he is led to exercise faith in the domain of personality, so is he more fully developed in his own personality morally and spiritually. There may, as we have seen, be a faith in the devil, in the permanent sovereignty and control of evil. There is, again, the honor and faith which prevail among thieves; and needed for anything like successful thieving. And then, again, there is the purer and higher faith in each other, of men of truth and integrity. As is the character of such faith, so is its

influence, not only receptively but reflexively, upon those by whom it is exercised. "*A sociis noscitur.*" And this, for two reasons. Like spontaneously selects like, for such association; unlike becomes like, and like more like, as the result of such association. So far as the object of confiding trust and association is possessed of powers and elevating influence, they are appropriated and pass over into the moral spiritual system of the subject by whom the faith is exercised. As is this object, and the faith in correlation with it, so is its power and influence. We thus find in Christianity full and adequate provision for thorough testing of character, as also for its highest moral and spiritual development and elevation. This high spiritual principle of faith, which includes sight, knowledge, conviction, and reason, but which is something more and higher, is here presented with a perfect object. "Faith," says Naville, "does not result from the isolated action of the understanding, but from the encounter of the entire spiritual being, mind, conscience, heart, and will, with the promises, the hopes, and the certainties which attach themselves to Jesus Christ himself, and we may add the perfect and satisfying object of confidence and spiritual aspiration. Christian faith thus takes its character, intellectual, emotional and volitional, and works its result, from the character of its object. Jesus Christ, in the revelation of his personality and work, is this satisfying object, in which faith of the will and heart, as well as the intellect, finds its perfect exercise, and exerts its elevating influence. Real faith in God, in God in Christ, revealed in the person, and words and work of Christ, has no limit to its transforming, and purifying, and elevating power. To such faith all things are possible. Its measure, or rather its immeasurability, is that of the infinitude of its object. Its limit of exercise is that of the capacity of the nature of its subject. "We shall be like Him," "According to our faith," that is, as in this faith, we see Him ever more, "we" become "like Him."

Such faith, moreover, in such object, cannot conflict with reason, whether speculative or practical, whether intuitive or the result of ratiocination. All reason and all reasoning that

deserves the name, lead to such an object as rationally one of faith. That object to which reason leads, in its moral cognizance and contemplation, gives a new product belonging to a region into which reason cannot enter, but to which it gives its sustaining affirmative. All faith is not rational. Faith as related to irrational or unworthy objects will partake of their defects and imperfections. "Faith," says Victor Cousin, "is the work of enthusiasm. It attaches itself to symbols; its grandeur and its strength consists in seeing in them what does not exist, or at least exists there, in only an indirect manner." If what is thus described deserve the name, it is little more than the blind religious instinct occupied, it may be, with a fetich—the faith of superstition and credulity. Even such faith, however, seeing the reality, imperfectly, indeed, but truly, through the symbol, may and will exert, to some degree, its transforming influence. Much more, as it sees that reality, in the full and perfect revelation of the divine character. Such faith in God, while beyond reason, includes reason, is the highest necessity of reason, that which by reason is imperatively demanded. "Religion," to use the language of a great thinker of this century already quoted, "Religion passes out of the ken of reason only when the eye of reason has reached its own horizon, and faith is then its continuation; even as the day softens away into sunset, and twilight, a twilight hushed and breathless, steals into the darkness. It is night, sacred night! The upraised eye views only the starry heaven, which manifests itself above; and the outward beholding is fixed on the sparks, twinkling in the awful depths, though suns of other worlds, only to preserve the soul steady and collected, in its pure act of inward adoration, to the Great "I Am" and to the Filial Word that reaffirmeth it from eternity to eternity, whose choral echo is the universe.

*ΘΕΩΙ ΜΟΝΩΙ ΔΟΞΑ.*