

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

P.S.—By inadvertence I have omitted to notice the additional Psalm given by the LXX., and called in the Vatican and Alexandrine MSS. Psalm 151. “This Psalm was written with David’s own hand (*ιδιόγραφος τοῦ Δαυιδ*), and beyond the number, when he fought with Goliath.

“I was little among my brethren, and the youngest in the house of my father; I kept my father’s sheep; my hands made an instrument of music (*ὄργανον*), my fingers tuned the psaltery. And who shall report it unto my Lord? He, the Lord Himself, will hearken unto me. He sent his messenger (*ἄγγελον*), and took me from my father’s sheep, and anointed me with the oil of his anointing. And my brethren were fair and tall, but the Lord was not pleased with them. I went out to meet the Philistine, and he cursed me by his idols; but I drew his own sword, and cut off his head, and took away the reproach from the children of Israel.”

WILLIAM J. DEANE.

FAITH NOT MERE ASSENT.

II.

HAVING shewn, in a previous article, that the primary and natural meaning of the term *faith*, and of its equivalents in the Hebrew, Greek, and other languages, is not assent but *trust*, we propose, in the next place, to shew by an exegetical inquiry that the intellectual theory is opposed to *the prevailing Scriptural use of the term*.

1. We appeal to the representations given of faith as a *general religious principle*.

Scripture contains no formal definition of faith. Being written not with a view to scientific precision, but for distinctly practical purposes, it gives no rigid unvarying defini-

tions even of its most important terms, such as God, Sin, Atonement, Justification, Repentance, but either assumes that they are already sufficiently understood, or describes them in popular and more or less metaphorical language. (a) The nearest approach to a strict definition of faith is Hebrews xi. 1, "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*" That this refers to faith in general is evident from the general character of the objects it is said to contemplate; e.g. the existence of God, his moral government, his creation of all things, his special words of promise and command; though the preceding context shews that the whole of this noble monograph on Faith was written to illustrate the nature and efficacy of that faith which is "unto the *saving* of the soul," and to enforce patient endurance in maintaining it under severe trial. In this verse the objects of faith are represented in a twofold aspect, as "things hoped for" and as "things not seen." The former includes only things future, the latter things past, present, and future. The former, however, involves the elements of desire and expectation, which are not necessarily contained in the latter; a consideration which goes far to establish our position, whatever the meaning we attach to *ὑπόστασις*. This term and *ἔλεγχος* are both remarkable as being, when taken literally, objective and not subjective in meaning. *ὑπόστασις* means properly *substance*, that which stands under or underlies phenomena, a sense it bears in Chapter i. 3 of this Epistle, where Christ is called the express image of God's *person* (*ὑπόστασεως*), i.e. of his real and essential nature. If taken in this sense here, it will mean that faith is that which gives substance or reality to things hoped for, that by which we apprehend them as realities and not fictions or illusions, and even enjoy them as if already in possession of them. Sometimes, however, it means confidence, assurance, or confident expectation, as in Hebrews iii. 14, "holding fast the beginning of your *confi-*

dence," 2 Corinthians ix. 4 and xi. 17, where it is followed by *καυχήσεως*, "confidence of *boasting*," and (Septuagint) Ruth i. 12; Ezekiel xix. 5. This we take to be its signification here, as more natural in itself, and as preserving the symmetry of the two clauses. In the Revised Version it is *assurance*. "Ἐλεγχος properly means *proof*, or evidence; but here it means either the act of bringing to the proof, *proving* (R.V.) or, more probably, a state of conviction like that produced by a process of proof. Conversely *πίστις*, which is properly subjective, is sometimes used in the objective sense of *proof*, or *ground of faith*, as in Acts xvii. 31 and *Arist. Rhet.*, i. c. 1. We have a somewhat similar use of ἔλεγχος in 2 Timothy iii. 16—"profitable for *reproof*." The two clauses then stand related thus: faith and its objects are viewed *generically* in the second, *specifically* in the first. "The conviction of things not seen" is faith in its widest reference; "the confident expectation of things hoped for" is faith in its more specific aspect, as referring to the promises of God. Faith, in the first place, is the mental eye which discerns unseen things, or apprehends them as *truly existing*; but, in the second place, it also apprehends them as *excellent and desirable*, as matters of Divine promise, so that the elements of desire, trust, and expectation, no less than conviction, enter into the idea of faith. It is not only belief in the existence of unseen realities and in the offer of unseen benefits, but it is, specifically, confident reliance on God for the fulfilment of his promise to bestow them. Had intellectual assent been all that this Writer intended to include, he would have lopped off the first limb of the definition and left us only with the second, though even this would still have suggested something more and deeper than assent to propositions, namely, certitude of *realities*, dealing not with notions, but with *things*. Now saving faith is just a particular case of faith viewed in its more specific aspect—it is confident reliance on God or Christ

for the promised blessings of salvation; and hence the relevance of this definition and what follows to the topic which directly suggested it. Should it be objected that this is to confound faith with hope, the answer is that while faith, strictly speaking, regards the person promising as its object, hope regards the thing promised. The two, no doubt, run into each other in practice, but they are clearly distinguishable in thought; and no less clearly does faith involve such an appreciation of the promised blessing and such confidence in the character and power of the promiser as the heart alone is capable of.

(b) Again, an examination of some actual instances of general faith, or the want of it, yields a similar result. If we take any of the first fourteen instances in which the word faith or its opposites are used in the New Testament, it will be found that in all of them the plain and natural import of the words is confidence or a want of confidence.¹ The first is Matthew vi. 30: "Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, . . . shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" In these words our Lord does not mean to ask the disciples, "Do you not admit that there is a God, that He is powerful and kind, and that He cares for you?" He assumes that they assent to these elementary truths; but what He means to say is—"Knowing and acknowledging the existence, power, goodness, and providential care of God, why do ye place so little confidence in Him?" In like manner, when, in Matthew viii. 26, He rebukes them in the storm—"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" He does not mean to put in question their orthodoxy, but their confidence in Himself and in the protecting care of God. And when He commended the faith of the centurion and of the Syro-Phœnician woman—a faith which, while it certainly *involved* saving faith, had special

¹ Matt. vi. 30; viii. 10, 13, 26; ix. 2, 22, 28, 29; xiii. 58; xiv. 31; xv. 28; xvi. 8; xvii. 17, 20.

reference to a temporal blessing, being what is called "the passive faith of miracles"—it was not so much their assent to any statement that He so highly eulogized as their strong confidence in Himself, especially in his boundless mercy and power. The woman's master-stroke of faith—"Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters' table"—was not the mere utterance of a cold intellectual assent to a great truth, but an expression of unwavering confidence in the all-embracing love and care of God, which secures a place and due provision for the humblest of his creatures.¹

The examples of faith in Hebrews xi. point to the same conclusion. When, *e.g.*, it is said that "by faith the Israelites passed through the Red Sea as by dry land," and that "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down," can this faith have been anything less than trust in the power and faithfulness of Him by whom they had been commanded to act as they did? Or, to take the case of Abraham, the great prototype of all the faithful, what else was it but confidence in the character of God, in his veracity, wisdom, power, and love, that led him to leave country, home, and kindred, and to set out on a long and perilous journey, not knowing whither he went? He no doubt assented to the truth of God's word, but he first trusted in God Himself: trust was the animating and informing principle of his belief, and it carried with it the spirit of submission and self-surrender.

It thus appears that faith, as a general religious principle, has for its object a personal God, and consists in confidence in his infinite greatness, goodness, and faithfulness. Schleiermacher² reduces religion ultimately to the feeling of absolute dependence on a power not ourselves, and not the finite world, and over which we have no power. The faith of Scripture is this vague feeling realizing itself as

¹ O'Brien: Sermon I.

² *Der Christliche Glaube*, sec. xxxii. 2.

trust in an infinitely powerful, righteous, and merciful Ruler.

2. But if faith as a general principle is trust, so also emphatically is saving faith. Confining our view to the New Testament, as having already said all that is necessary regarding the force of *he'emin*—

(a) We point, first, to the pregnant use of *πίστις* and *πιστεύειν* with *ἐν*, *ἐπί*, and *εἰς*, as emphasizing the idea of trust. While *πιστεύειν τινί* and *πίστις τινός*, or *περὶ τινός*, are the ordinary classical expressions, both verb and noun are frequently, though not always, used with these prepositions in the New Testament, as the verb sometimes, though rarely, is in the LXX.,¹ the preposition being probably a Hebraism corresponding with the ׀ after *he'emin*. II. *ἐν* is used in the exhortation, "Believe *in* the gospel"² (R.V.). This means more than to assent to it: it is to repose confidence *in* it; it is, according to Robinson, "to believe and embrace the glad tidings." More frequently we find it used with Christ Himself as its object,³ which points still more emphatically to trust. "*Faith in his blood*"⁴ could only mean trust in his propitiation, though the Revisers are probably right in detaching "*in his blood*" from "*faith*," and connecting it with "*propitiation*." II. *ἐπί*, to believe *on* or *upon*, points still more significantly to the idea of reliance. It is used chiefly in the Acts and Pauline epistles,⁵ its object in every case being *Christ* Himself, except twice where it is *God*.⁶ In all these passages the idea is unmistakably conveyed of trust or reliance upon Christ or God for salvation. To believe *upon* Christ is surely much more than to believe this, that, and the other thing *about* Him. What can believing *on* (*ἐπί*) the stone of stumbling mean, except reposing

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 22.

² Mark i. 15.

³ John iii. 15; Gal. iii. 26; Eph. i. 13, 15; Col. i. 4.

⁴ Rom. iii. 25.

⁵ With the *dative* in Rom. ix. 33; 1 Tim. i. 16; with the *accusative* in Acts ix. 42; xi. 17; xvi. 31; xxii. 19; Rom. iv. 5, 24.

⁶ Rom. iv. 5, 24.

and relying on Christ, as the stones of a building rest upon, and are sustained by, the foundation-stone? *II.* *εἰς* is the favourite expression of John,¹ though it also occurs elsewhere.² It is generally used with *Christ* as its object, but sometimes with his *name*. It conveys the idea of the movement of the soul *towards* Christ, or the attaching of one's self *to* Him as a disciple and follower, adhering or surrendering one's self to Him either as witness for the truth, or as the Son of God, or generally as Saviour, as the case may be. The allusion to the brazen serpent in John iii. 15 defines the attitude of *π. εἰς* as that of wistful trustful expectation. We have only to contrast the saying in John xiv. 1, "Ye believe in (*εἰς*) God, believe also in (*εἰς*) me," with that in xiv. 11, "Believe me (*μοι*) that I am in the Father and the Father in me," to see the marked difference between the full conception of faith as a believing in God or Christ, and the partial notion of it as a simple belief of his testimony. It seems an arbitrary dilution of the meaning of John xiv. 1 on the part of Weiss,³ when, in his exposition of the Johannean view of faith, which he regards as mainly conviction of the truth of testimony, he reads the *π. εἰς* exclusively in the light of the "*I would have told you,*" in ver. 2. Scarcely less arbitrary is his interpretation of chap. ix. 35-38, and his application of it as the key to all similar passages. Even if *πιστεύω* in ver. 38 refers to Christ's testimony, in ver. 37, the difference between this absolute use of the word, and the *πιστ. εἰς* of vers. 35, 36, is not without significance. But we rather think its object is Christ Himself. Even when *π. εἰς* is followed by *μαρτυρίαν* (1 John v. 10), believing *on* the testimony seems to express more than bare assent to it; namely, *leaning on* it, or *surrendering* one's self

¹ John i. 12; ii. 11; iii. 15, 16; ix. 35-38; xiv. 1, etc.

² Acts x. 43; xx. 21; Phil. i. 29; Col. ii. 5.

³ *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 364, note 2.

to it. According to Winer, π. εἰς or ἐπί is "to resign one's self to any one as a believer in him, to profess one's self a believer in one, *fide se ad aliquem applicare.*"¹

(b) We point to certain passages in which *saving faith* and *hope* are used interchangeably with each other. In Ephesians i. 12, 13 they are associated in a manner significant of the closest correspondence: "that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first *trusted* in (προηλπικότας ἐν, Revised Version, 'who had before *hoped* in') Christ, in whom ye also, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom having also *believed* (ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες) ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Here the "ye also having *believed*" is the exact counterpart of the "we who had before *hoped*," the one verb being expegetical of the other, and *trust* being the intermediate reconciling term. A parallel passage is 1 Timothy iv. 10, "We *trust* (ἠλπίκαμεν, Revised Version, 'have our *hope* set on') the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that *believe* (πιστῶν)." And the statements in Romans viii. 24, "We were (not *are*) saved by *hope*," and chap. xv. 12, "On him shall the Gentiles *hope*" (Revised Version), can only be reconciled satisfactorily with the doctrine of salvation by faith, by regarding faith as containing the element of *trust*.

(c) The fiduciary character of faith is brought out in 2 Timothy i. 12, "I know whom I have *believed* (ᾧ πεπίστευκα), and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed (τὴν παραθήκην μου, lit. my deposit) to him against that day." The committing of himself to Christ is obviously intended to explain what the Apostle had done when he *believed* in Him, shewing that in his view faith was, not only a conviction of Christ's ability to save, but an act of self-surrendering trust.

(d) And further, the familiar representations of faith as a

¹ *Grammar of New Testament Diction*, 6th ed., p. 226. See also Robinson.

coming¹ to Christ, as a *fleeing*² or *running*³ to Him for *refuge*, forcibly indicate the active and trustful attitude of the soul in believing, its energetic trust in Christ for mercy and salvation.

Weiss, we may here observe, to whose account of John's conception of faith we have objected, emphatically maintains that the Pauline conception, especially in connexion with the doctrine of justification, is trust, firm reliance on the salvation proclaimed in the gospel.⁴

3. But our main contention here is, that the proper object of saving faith is not a truth, but a *person*; namely, *Christ Himself*, or *God in Christ*. The passages in which it is so represented are too numerous to require citation. They occur with special frequency in the writings of John, but they abound elsewhere. No expression is more familiar to the reader of the New Testament than that of believing in or on Christ. The prevailing reference of faith is not to a proposition, but to a person; not to a testimony, but to the testifier or the testified to; not to the doctrine of atonement, or of the resurrection, or of justification, but to the person of Him who died and rose again, and who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. It is true that God is sometimes represented as the object of saving faith, especially in the writings of Paul, as, *e.g.* throughout Romans iv., where faith is described as believing "on him that justifieth the ungodly," and again "on him that raised up Jesus from the dead."⁵ But this does not affect our present argument, first, because it turns upon the personal reference of faith, and holds good equally whether the reference is to Christ or to God; and secondly, because the reference in these passages is to God *in and through Christ*, either as speaking through Christ's words, or as re-

¹ Matt. xi. 28; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 6; John v. 40; vi. 44; vii. 37; Rev. xxii. 17.

² Heb. vii. 18.

³ Prov. xviii. 10.

⁴ Vol. i. p. 444.

⁵ Rom. iv. 3, 5, 17, 24; Tit. iii. 8.

vealing Himself in Christ's life, or as exerting his almighty power, vindicating his righteousness, and unfolding his redemptive purposes in Christ's death and resurrection. Christ and his Father are one. It is also admitted that there are many other passages in which saving faith has for its object propositions or statements of truth. We read of "believing the gospel,"¹ "believing" and "belief" "of the truth,"² "believing the testimony which God testified of his Son,"³ "believing that Jesus is the Son of God,"⁴ "that God raised him from the dead,"⁵ "that he died and rose again."⁶ In these passages the object of saving faith is truth or testimony, and therefore acknowledgment of the truth is the special aspect under which faith is viewed. But as the passages in which faith terminates on Christ are more numerous than those in which it terminates on truth, it is sounder exegesis to interpret the latter by the former than *vice versa*. It is more probable that in the fewer passages the part is used for the whole than that in the many the whole is used for the part. Even if faith literally and strictly meant mere assent, it would not follow that it could mean nothing more. By metonymy, to "hear" or "hearken" is often used for to *obey*, attentive hearing being regarded as the necessary antecedent to obedience, or as a necessary part of it; and it would be almost as reasonable to insist on a literal interpretation in the one case as in the other, as reasonable to conclude that obedience must be nothing more than hearing or attending, as that faith must be mere assent. In either case the meaning must be determined by the nature of the object *hearkened* or *assented* to, and the claims it makes. Belief may have the more restricted meaning when the truth believed is such as appeals only to the understanding; but when, as in the case of the gospel, the truth is such as powerfully addresses itself to the

¹ Mark i. 15.² Thess. ii. 12, 13.³ 1 John v. 10.⁴ John xi. 27, etc.⁵ Rom. x. 9.⁶ 1 Thess. iv. 14.

needs and affections of the heart, then the term "believe" may reasonably be interpreted so as to include the whole mental act or exercise involved in the acceptance of such a revelation. The content of belief must in any particular instance be determined by the nature and content of its object. And as its object here is truth regarding the person, character, and work of Christ, the faith which fully accepts this truth is a faith which in its very exercise necessarily passes over and terminates on Him.

It is a distinguishing characteristic of the gospel that its Author is at the same time its theme. Other systems of belief may for the most part be taught and accepted without much reference to their founders, and especially without a personal attitude or relation being assumed towards them. Faith in Confucianism, or Mohammedanism, or Judaism, or Stoicism is clearly separable from personal faith in Confucius, or Mohammed, or Moses, or Zeno. The truths of physical science may be grasped and applied without a knowledge of the person of Newton or of Faraday; and those of political economy without a memoir of Adam Smith. There is no doubt a natural desire to know something about the personal character and life of such men, and therefore their biography usually accompanies their works. But in the gospel it is the memoir itself that constitutes the grand discovery. It is in the person and life of Christ that the gem of Christianity is set. Christianity does not merely say, Here is a system of truth which Christ has revealed, but rather, Here is a person regarding whom the most momentous truths and facts have been made known. It exhibits Christ, not merely as the Revealer of truth, but as Himself the Revelation of God; and all the truth it teaches is truth as it is in Jesus. It is not a mere system of abstract doctrine or speculation regarding God, virtue, and immortality; it is not a mere moral ideal or pattern outlined and manufactured in heaven and sent

ready made to earth ; still less is it a mere poetic mythus created by the heated imagination of an adoring Church, mistaking for realities the floating spectra of its own illusions. It comes to us enshrined in an actual historical personality, and in a series of palpable and well attested facts ; in the person, character, life, and work of an historic Christ, of whom it could once be said by living men, " And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." ¹ All Christian truth, therefore, is " Christocentric," as it has been aptly described ; it all centres in Him. Is it the truth about God ? He Himself said, " He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." ² Is it the truth about man ? He is " the Son of man." Is it the truth about salvation, atonement, justification, sanctification, and redemption ? He is Himself " the Way, the Truth, and the Life " ; ³ " the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world " ; ⁴ our " Righteousness " ; ⁵ our " Sanctification," ⁵ the motive and model of all holiness and virtue ; and our " Redemption." ⁶ Is it the truth about the history and destiny of humanity ? He is Himself the philosophy of history—" the Messiah " of Israel—" the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world " ⁶—the goal and the hope of humanity as He is its ground and root. ⁷ Is it the truth about immortality and resurrection ? He is Himself " the Resurrection and the Life " ; ⁸ and heaven has no need of any other light, because " the Lamb is the light thereof." ⁹ " Personality," says Bunsen, " is the lever of the world's history." ¹⁰ Of no one is this so true as it is of Jesus, whose divine-human personality is the omnipotent lever of the world's regeneration, and the cardinal principle of whose spiritual dynamics is *Faith in Himself* as the realized Ideal and divinely con-

¹ John i. 14.² John xiv. 9.³ John xiv. 6.⁴ John i. 29.⁵ 1 Cor. i. 30.⁶ John i. 9.⁷ John xii. 32 ; Eph. i. 10 ; Heb. ii. 6-9.⁸ John xi. 25.⁹ Rev. xii. 23.¹⁰ Flint's *Phil. of Hist.*, p. 559.

stituted Head of the kingdom of God, embodying its royalties of Truth, Righteousness, and Love in his own Person, and pre-eminently in his sacrifice, whereby all men are drawn unto Him, and through Him to the Father He represented and the eternal realities He enshrined.¹

But after all, it may be asked, Is it not the case that faith in Christ has often an explicit reference to belief of his *testimony*? and may it not therefore in every case be resolved into this? Now it may be admitted that this may in certain instances be the prominent reference, as in the "Believe me" of John xiv. 11; or in 1 John v. 10; or, though not so evidently, in the "I believe" of John ix. 38; or in the "Abram believed God" of Genesis xv. 6, quoted and commented on by Paul in Romans iv. 3: but it does not follow that it is the sole reference even in these passages, still less that it exhausts the full conception of faith in Christ. For (a) the idea not unfrequently conveyed by such passages is that his testimony or that of his Father is credited because He or his Father is already accepted as trustworthy. If the statement that "Abram believed God," is to be interpreted, "believed *God's promise*," his belief in the promise was grounded on or resulted from his trust in God Himself. Weiss himself admits that even in John's view the acceptance of Christ's person by the turning of the heart to Him in love is the presupposition of faith in his testimony. Then (b) Christ's testimony, as Weiss also allows, is self-testimony, and therefore faith in

¹ The impotence of mere ideas, as contrasted with the power of a living personal embodiment of them, is thus set forth by our great psychological novelist: "Ideas are often poor ghosts; our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them; they pass athwart us in their vapour, and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad sincere eyes, and speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living human soul, with all its conflicts, its faith, and its love. Then their presence is a power, then they shake us like a passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion, as flame is drawn to flame."—*Scenes of Clerical Life*, p. 288.

it is necessarily faith in *Him*. If the idea of the *person* is resolved into that of the *testimony*, the latter resolves itself back into the former. So that whether assent is viewed in relation to its antecedent, or to its consequent, it resolves itself into faith in the *person*. It is difficult, however, to see how assent can be both the result and the condition of the acceptance of Christ's person, or how it can find for itself a separate place between such a presupposition and such a consequent. (c) Viewing the teaching of the New Testament as a whole, the reference to the person of Christ undoubtedly preponderates, as already observed, and therefore we must regard the testimony as the subsidiary though inseparable reference. And (d) there are certain representations given of faith which specially emphasize this personal reference. *Coming, fleeing, committing one's self*, already referred to as significant of *trust*, are equally significant of trust in Christ's person. But, besides these, two others may be instanced. First, it is expressly called a "*receiving*" of Christ,¹ by which is meant a receiving not merely of his testimony but of Himself, and that not as a prophet merely delivering a testimony, but chiefly as rightful Lord of God's heritage: "He came unto his own (*property*) and his own (*people*) received him not. But as many as received him" (*i.e.* in the character in which He came, not as prophet merely, but as Heir and Owner of God's kingdom), "to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Secondly, it is strikingly described by our Lord Himself as "*eating his flesh and drinking his blood.*"² That it is faith that is so described is evident from the fact that it is the express aim of the discourse, as indicated in ver. 29, to recommend faith, and from the fact that what is affirmed of eating is also affirmed of believing (cf. 40, 54). No doubt this language finds partial explana-

¹ John i. 12.

² John vi. 53.

tion when understood of Christ's words, those words or truths of his which, He said, were spirit and life; but this explanation does not exhibit the full strength of this most pregnant metaphor, which points, not only to Christ's words, but to Christ Himself as the object of faith, yea, to that which is most characteristic of Him, the most vital essential elements of his personality, his very flesh and life blood—his life, soul, and spirit—especially as given or poured out for the life of the world. Truth and knowledge, no doubt, are sometimes spoken of as food and drink to the mind, both in Scripture¹ and elsewhere;² but nowhere is the teacher himself said to be our food, still less to give us his flesh to eat and his blood to drink, except in the case of Christ. Were a teacher of virtue or of religion to inform his audience that it was necessary for them to eat his flesh and drink his blood, for his body was meat indeed and his blood was drink indeed, they would assuredly conclude that he was employing a most incongruous and offensive metaphor. But as used by Christ, such language is not felt to violate truth or propriety; and the reason is, because the substance of his teaching and the great object of saving faith is Himself, his person, character, life, and especially his sacrifice. The metaphor accordingly signalizes in the most striking manner the nature of faith as that which appropriates Christ Himself as the life and blessedness of the soul, which binds heart to heart, will to will, personality to personality, of believer and Redeemer, which receives and incorporates Christ into the inmost life and being, so as that Christ may be said to dwell in the believer's heart by faith, yea, to become his *alter ego*, his true and deepest self, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me."³

We have now shewn, by an examination of terms and

¹ Prov. ix. 1-5; Heb. v. 12; 1. Pet. ii. 2.

² Petronius (Arb. Sat.), c. 5. "Mæoniumque bibat felici pectore fontem, mox Socratico plenus."

³ Gal. ii. 20.

passages, that the ruling Scriptural idea of faith corresponds with its primary and natural idea, namely, *trust*; that as a general religious principle it denotes *trust in God*, and that as saving faith it is *trust in Christ, or God in Christ*, based upon conviction of the truth, and carrying with it, by the nature of the case, the elements of personal union, appropriation, and self-surrender. Cremer is not far from the truth when he says: "Thus the New Testament conception of faith includes three elements, mutually connected and requisite, though according to circumstances sometimes one and sometimes another may be more prominent; viz. (1) a fully convinced acknowledgment of the revelation of grace; (2) a self-surrendering fellowship with and cleaving to Christ" (so especially in John); "and (3) a fully assured and unswerving confidence in the God of salvation, *i.e.* in Christ" (so especially Paul). "None of these elements is wholly ignored by any of the New Testament writers." If to these we add, as a fourth element, what Weiss regards as the characteristically Petrine and Hebrew conception, namely, obedience—not, indeed, the sum of all obedience, but the *spirit* of obedience—though this is perhaps involved in Cremer's (2), we shall probably be in possession of the complete Scriptural idea of saving faith.

ROBERT WHYTE.
