

to find a mind which, when once it was furnished with a principle, could apply it with such precision, with such fine and delicate discrimination of what came under it and what did not.

Add to this an extraordinary power of sympathy, an extraordinary sensitiveness to the emotional atmosphere—if I may so describe it—of the questions and persons with which he was concerned—and you will, I think, understand the unique gift of judgment that he brought to bear on matters public as well as private.

In a single word, he had the gift of *insight*—intellectual insight, and, above all, spiritual insight—beyond any one that I have ever known.

And now I will ask you to go back with me and consider what all this means in the sphere of religion. Think of one absorbed and dominated by this central idea of finding Christ or being found in Him. Think of it as the heart-blood pulsating through every artery and vein. And then ask yourselves in what relation these things that we so often call rather disparagingly ‘forms and ceremonies’ would stand to such a mind? Would it be possible for it to disparage them? Would it be possible for it even to separate them—to think of them separately—from the life within? Rather they would take—as they did take—their true place as the expression of that life, the body of which it was the soul.

If we reflect upon this, I think we shall see that it explains some little traits in our friend that to some perhaps stood rather in the way of complete understanding and appreciation. He had a certain elaborateness of manner, a certain scrupulousness of utterance, which—refined as it was—to some might seem rather in excess. The reason of it was not what in another it might conceivably have

been. It was all absolutely real and absolutely sincere, but it was just a product of the extreme care and the extreme accuracy which were essential qualities of his mind.

‘He nothing common did or mean.’

It was impossible for him to do it. Behind each smallest act or accent there lay the whole weight of a mind and character devoted through and through to the highest ends.

Little things like this—the higher gifts standing in the way of the lower—and a naturally retiring disposition, tended for a time to limit the range of his effective activity. But he was gradually finding his audience. He was gradually stepping into the place that belonged of right to him. His voice was heard, and would, I feel sure, have been listened to more and more in the Councils of the Church. His published books cast their seed upon the waters. He was surrounded by the reverence and love of those who had learnt from him.

We must bow our heads to the dispensation that has taken him from us. We may be sure that it has a meaning, however hard it may be for us to see it. The Master needs him elsewhere, and elsewhere he will be doing the work that the Master has for him to do. We will cherish his memory, and strive to profit by his teaching and his example. None of us can fill that vacant place; but the fact that it is vacant should be at once a call for new workers and a spur to those who are already working.

‘We bless Thy holy Name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear; beseeching Thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of Thy heavenly Kingdom: Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ’s sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.’

The Religious Value of Faith.

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LUTHER’S familiar *dictum* respecting the criterion of a standing or a falling Church may be taken as an indication of the high value and efficiency commonly ascribed, and legitimately ascribed, to the principle of Faith. To the individual soul,

Faith is certainly not less important and vital than it is to the community. In fact, there is no real meaning in the supposed Faith of a Church except in so far as it is the faith of its members.

From a scriptural standpoint, moreover, it

would not be easy to overstate the significance and religious value of Faith. We live by faith. In a very real sense, the achievements and blessings of Religion are all the achievements and blessings of Faith. No one who accepts the teaching of the New Testament will be disposed to question the assertion that Faith is the vital element in Religion. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' Christ could do no mighty works in Nazareth because of the unbelief of the people there. In the system of thought expounded by the Apostle Paul, Faith is evidently the central point. To him it was pre-eminently the element of spiritual character by which the believer is made righteous. He affirmed that it was the only spring of true righteousness—the righteousness which is not a thing of legal coercion, but a free, spontaneous, love-inspired obedience. 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.'

Now, clearly, the more vital the function of Faith is felt to be, the more important it becomes to determine what Faith really is.

In former days, an artificial and unreal value was often given to Faith. It was described as, more or less, a merely arbitrary requirement demanded by God as the condition upon which His favour would be extended to men, and deliverance from the power and penalty of sin would be granted unto them. But in recent years the conception of Faith has become almost universal, which regards it as essential and beneficent because of its own intrinsic ethical and spiritual value.

The aim of the present paper is to inquire how far this view of the nature and function of Faith can be justified and sustained.

With a view to this investigation, and to the appreciation of what may be described as the Religious Value of Faith, it will be desirable to determine, first of all, what we are to understand by the term Religion itself.

In his sermon on 'What is Religion?' the late Principal Caird has pointed out that, 'In our relations to God there are certain feelings, emotions, aspirations, which are awakened within the devout heart; and again, there are certain notions, ideas, doctrines concerning God, and divine things which we form or accept as true. In which of these two kinds of experience does the essence of religion lie?' And he adds: 'In our own country, it has been in other days, and to

some extent is still in our own, the tendency to confound Religion and Theology, and to reduce Religion in its ultimate essence too much to a thing of knowledge.' 'The analysis and systematic development of the doctrines of religion may indeed furnish fit occupation for the highest intellects; but it is by no such process that the essence of religion wins its way into the soul.' 'The believer no more needs to wait for proof of the reality of God and spiritual things than the musical ear for proof of the sweetness of the song to which it listens, or the sensitive eye of the beauty of the scene on which it is gazing.'

If it may be accepted as a correct definition of Religion that it is the practical recognition of our relation to a supernatural authority and power, it would appear that Religion must, in large measure, rest upon, and have its origin in, the sentiments of Wonder, Veneration, Dependence, and Hope. These sentiments and emotions cannot, it is true, reach definite objects without some help from the intellectual powers; but they owe not only their origin, but also their efficiency, to principles inherent in the soul of men other than those of the intellect.

Similar religious emotions may be associated with very different intellectual conceptions. What the particular conceptions shall be, in any instance, depends, of course, upon the state of the intellectual training and culture of the individual. If the intellectual faculties are feeble or imperfectly developed, the emotions may invest almost anything with the qualities which make it seem worthy of reverence and worship. Fetichism and the lower forms of nature-worship are only possible as types of religious sentiment and worship in connexion with the lowest phases of mental activity and development. Cultivated thought demands, and can only be satisfied with, ideal conceptions of beauty, excellence, and nobility. The conscious recognition of the finiteness and imperfection of all external things, and of all actually known persons, robs them of power to call forth the emotions of reverence and supreme admiration and homage. Rest and satisfaction for the emotional nature of those whose mental faculties have been developed are possible only in an absolute and ideal beauty and sublimity. The highest and most commanding ideals for human beings come, in fact, to be those of personal character—moral beauty and excellence. 'Our

ideals of perfection rise,' as Dr. Harris has said, 'in an ascending series till the mind rests in the All-perfect and All-glorious God.' 'The Ideal!' exclaimed Cousin; 'Behold the mysterious ladder which enables the soul to mount from the finite to the Infinite.'

Further, in all except the very lowest stages of intellectual development, ethical sentiments and feelings have been very closely associated with those of Religion. Religious sentiment, even in its lowest manifestations, can seldom exist without at least an element of ethicality,—in this sense, and to this extent, at any rate, that it calls for and prompts to some kind of active response to the relation which is recognized between the individual and the Supernatural Being in whose existence and in whose power over himself he believes. Apart from at least some form of superstitious observance or ceremony, it would be merely a vague and empty sentimental enthusiasm, a purely otiose emotion, which is a thing hardly possible for any except those who are in an almost infantile condition.

In a fuller and truer sense of the term, religious emotion becomes ethical only when the activity to which it prompts is an effort to realize an ideal of conduct and character which is felt to be morally worthy, alike of the Being by whose authority it is imposed, and of him by whom the effort is made. In this, the highest development of the religious emotion, there is, accordingly, combined with the sense of dependence, the consciousness of our active power, and of freedom to adjust ourselves to the claims which the supernatural is felt to have upon our practical response and service.

In short, the passive and the active elements are inseparably united in the religious sentiment and impulse, and in the expression of religious feeling and homage. In the true religious life, Reverence and Submission are combined with Imitation and Obedience. Both elements are essential. If either is lacking or defective, the result will be a mutilated religious character and life.

The primitiveness of the passive element in the religious nature of man has been well described by Newman Smyth. He says: 'The perennial source of religion, opened afresh in every new-born soul, is the feeling of absolute dependence. We feel our dependence as we come to feel our existence.

This sense of dependence, which we find to be an integral part of our existence, is not merely a feeling of our limitation by outward objects, or of their resistance to our wills; it is a consciousness of absolute dependence for our existence and our individuality, upon something not ourselves, and not the world, which, like ourselves, is finite, and of which we perceive ourselves to be a part. We bring into subjection and become at least partly masters of the outward world; our dependence upon *that* we feel to be but limited; often in fact, and always in thought, we may rise superior to it; but we feel our dependence upon something other than ourselves and the things that appear, over which we have no power even in thought, and with regard to whose orderings we have no will but to obey. This is the religious feeling in its simplest form, the Feeling of Absolute Dependence.'

The active element in the impulses of our nature by which we are constituted religious beings, is the conscious possession of Power, whereby we may, at least to some extent, realize the Ideal of which we are conscious. This also, equally with the Sense of Dependence, is an essential element of the nature of man, by which he is distinguished from the inferior creatures. There is an instinct in human nature which impels men to strive towards the Ideal of Perfection, before which they bow in reverent dependence. The two elements cannot be separated. That upon which we feel our absolute dependence is identified with the ideal which claims not merely our reverence, but also our aspiration and our effort to become practically conformed unto it in a life of appropriation and of living fellowship with it. God, in short, is at once the Power upon which we feel our dependence, and the Authority which demands our reverent service. One part of our religious nature impels to Prayer, and Praise, and Worship; the other to Service, and Loyalty, and Communion.

As Dr. Morell has said: 'The absolute sense of dependence, unaccompanied by any other element, would only give the *analogue* to religion as seen in man, but not, humanly speaking, religion itself. The faithful dog often exhibits perfect dependence on his master, and we say (in metaphorical terms) that his perfect confidence in man is the dog's religion.' But this is not equivalent to religion in man.

Similarly, Reville also contends that, whilst 'Schleiermacher was right in recognizing the sentiment of dependence as forming an integral part of the religious sentiment,' he was 'in error in not having seen, or at least in not taking into account, that, in the religious sentiment, the sentiment of dependence is intimately mingled with the sentiment of union, of reciprocity, and of mutuality, which is no less essential to religion than the former. The analysis of the religious sentiment is complete only when we put on the same line these two primary factors—the sense of dependence in relation to the religious object, and the sentiment of union, real or to become real, between this object and the subject.'

In his *Philosophy of Religion* Sabatier gives expression to the same view in the chapter on 'Religion as the Prayer of the Heart.' He defines the essence of Religion as 'a communion, a conscious and voluntary relation, in which the soul in its need unites with the mysterious Power upon which it feels that itself and its destinies depend. This intercourse is realized by Prayer. Prayer, that is Religion in action, that is to say, real Religion. It is Prayer which distinguishes religious phenomena from all those which resemble or approach them, such as the ethical or the æsthetic sentiments. If Religion is a practical want, the response to that want can be nothing less than a practical action. Religion is nothing if it is not a vital act by which the whole soul attempts to help itself, in attaching itself to its supreme principle. That act is Prayer.'

Assuming, then, that the essential elements of Religion have been correctly stated and described, and that Religion subjectively regarded is a spiritual state in which the ethical principle of Freedom and the Sense of Dependence are blended and balanced, it follows that Faith, being the radical and essential element of a religious life, must itself consist of these two principles in harmonious combination.

The fact of the matter is, however, that this word 'faith' has been one around which, as Matthew Arnold has said, the ceaseless stream of religious exposition and discussion has for ages circled. And, in many quarters, partial and inadequate conceptions of Faith have been propounded and maintained.

The tendency, for instance, referred to by Dr. Caird in the words already quoted,—the tendency

to confound Religion and Theology,—has found practical manifestation in nothing more conspicuously than in the widely prevalent misconception of religious faith, which regards it as virtually identical with belief in creeds or in doctrinal propositions. The grosser forms of this fatal error, belonging to days gone by, are too notorious and too generally acknowledged to-day to require any specific reference. But the mischief still persists, though in more subtle and delicate forms. The excessive importance, for instance, attached in some quarters to orthodoxy of opinions and views is due, in large measure, to this mistake.

Then, again, there is a type of teaching, for which it is sometimes claimed that it is pre-eminently gospel preaching and teaching, which apparently rests upon the notion that all that is needed for the commencement and maintenance of religious life is the acceptance of certain historical facts, or of certain propositions founded upon those facts, or upon the interpretation of them. The exhortation to 'Believe the gospel' often covers and implies the affirmation that mental assent to the facts and truths proclaimed is the sole essential qualification for a religious life.

We find, moreover, one-sided and distorted conceptions of the principle of Faith arising from the illegitimate severance of the two elements in the life of Religion—the spirit of dependence and the personal effort towards conformity and fellowship. The Pietist and the Moslem freely surrender and submit themselves to the Divine will, but feel called upon to make no effort towards the realization of an ethical ideal. The Rationalist and the Humanitarian, on the other hand, sneer at the idea of trustful reliance on Divine help, and proclaim an *autosoteric* doctrine of strenuous self-reliance.

Then, in yet another direction, the influence of erroneous ideas as to the nature of Faith is very manifest: the popular Protestant conception of Justification by Faith hesitates or refuses to credit Faith with any real ethical or religious value, and treats it as merely an arbitrary condition imposed as the ground on which the Divine Judge will pronounce a sentence of Justification. In his sermon on 'Is Unbelief a Sin?' Dr. Caird says that 'in the judgment of many it is difficult to see how faith, whether it be simply assent to facts or the acceptance of certain doctrines contained in

inspired books, can be made the condition of salvation. The doctrines which men educe from the informal and unsystematic language of the Scriptures depend largely on the canons of interpretation which they adopt, and these on the measure of their general enlightenment and comprehensiveness of mind. If the religious inquirer falls into doctrinal error more or less grave, if plausible arguments should betray his judgment into Pelagian or Arminian or Socinian opinions, or if he have the misfortune to come to the conclusion that the Athanasian dogmas concerning the Trinity and the Person of Christ are only meaningless metaphysical subtleties,—does this result, however much you may deplore it, prove anything more than the intellectual difficulty of forming correct theological opinions and the liability of the human mind to mistakes and errors—mistakes and errors for which neither God nor man can justly condemn us?’

What, then, is the Faith for which it can be claimed that it does possess religious value in that it secures to the believer the essential content of Religion, namely, the synthesis of Dependence and Freedom?

In the first place, such Faith must include the sincere adoption of the spiritual attitude which is appropriate to a being who is truly conscious of his absolute dependence; and, in the second place, it must include true desire and earnest effort to become completely conformed to the character of the Being upon whom he depends, and who constitutes for him the embodiment of his noblest ideals. In other words, Faith is, on one side, humble, reverent, trustful surrender; and, on the other side, willing, faithful, practical loyalty. As the principle of personal Religion, Faith is trust in the Divine Ideal, and loyal aspiration and struggle towards the personal realization of that ideal.

No doubt, Faith assumes a special aspect in the case of sinful creatures—that, namely, of Faith in the Divine Mercy and Grace. It is only in virtue of a Faith which recognizes the loving and forgiving character of God that those who are consciously guilty can surrender themselves to Him, in the hope that He will receive them and help them in their efforts in the future to reach the standard and ideal of obedience and goodness set before them. But this Faith in the forgiving love of God is only one aspect of that which is

the abiding and universal principle of humble, reverent dependence upon God. Forgiving mercy is part of the nature and character of a Being who embodies ideal excellence; and the spirit of unreserved dependence and trust towards such a Being implies Faith in His forgiveness of sin. Such Faith is therefore an essential element in the attitude and conduct towards God which Religion prescribes. Faith acknowledges our own insufficiency and need, and utterly relies upon God in every relation, and in every department of experience, and for grace and help according to all our need.

It is impossible to conceive of anything more flagrantly irreligious than a self-conceited, self-reliant spirit, even though it be shown in the attempt to live an upright and worthy life. It is the very antipodes of that Sense of Absolute Dependence, in which, as we have seen, Religion fundamentally consists. True progress in goodness and religious culture is only possible to those who are fully conscious of their weakness, and who realize their constant need of help and strength from above. Humility and reverence before God are the vital nerve of all true Religion.

It has, indeed, been asserted by the late Dr. Mackintosh, in his *Natural History of the Christian Religion*, that the doctrine which Jesus taught was the precise opposite of this. He says that Christ's conviction and teaching were that ‘man, at the bidding of the Ideal, has a power within himself to lay the cross upon his strongest inclinations, to practise self-renunciation, to enter the strait gate; to make righteousness the first object of his pursuit, to subjugate the tendencies of his lower nature, and so to become a member of the kingdom of God.’ ‘All true help,’ he adds, ‘could in the last resort come only from within in the form of self-help; not from the God above us, but from the God within us.’

Now, apart from the proved practical worthlessness of this doctrine of self-help,—proved by the experience of uncounted numbers who have put it to the test,—such a spirit of proud self-sufficiency, if to any extent it did succeed in producing apparently satisfactory results in outward conduct, would, at the same time, encourage and develop an intolerably offensive self-conceit. The true ideal of human character must needs include, on the contrary, such qualities as modesty, meekness, humility, and grateful recognition of indebtedness

to others. In short, Faith is the appropriate manifestation of the Sense of Dependence, natural and becoming on the part of a finite creature, towards the All-mighty, All-perfect, and All-gracious Being to whom he feels himself related.

Then, on the other hand, the reverent recognition of an Ideal Being to whom we are constrained to render admiring homage cannot but be accompanied with a desire to become conformed to the Ideal we honour. If God is felt to be really worthy of our reverent trust, in that He embodies our highest ideal of moral excellence, then conformity to His likeness must become the supreme object of our ambition and practical effort.

Of the New Testament writers, the Apostle Paul, owing doubtless to his early training, as well as to his natural disposition, has most clearly and strongly emphasized this, the practical side of the value and result of Faith. As Sabatier has said, 'The prime necessity of Paul's consciousness was righteousness.' As a Pharisee, the dominant aim and ambition of his life had been to establish his own righteousness. He had thoroughly tested the value of the autosoteric doctrine, and had proved its insufficiency. And when, as a Christian, he had come to realize how utterly futile his efforts had been, the conviction that Christ was to him the end of the law for righteousness became the key-note of his life and of all his teaching.

For Paul, therefore, whatever other aspect and element Faith possessed, it was, first of all, a principle standing in most vital connexion with righteousness. 'Israel,' he says, 'following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works.' 'We establish the law through faith.'

The law itself was unable to secure the righteousness which it demands. 'Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them.' But there is no man that keepeth the law. Moreover, obedience to a mere law of duty, however complete, falls short of true righteousness. Those who make it simply their aim to obey conscience, and to live a life of integrity and virtue in compliance merely with law and duty, are striving, in the apostle's phrase, after justification by the deeds of the law. The law makes nothing

perfect,—not even the obedience to its requirements to which it may constrain men. The true righteousness is the righteousness which is by Faith, not a product of legal coercion, but a free, spontaneous, love-inspired service and obedience. As Schiller has said, 'The grand distinction of Christianity is, that it secures the observance of outward law by the inspiration of an inward life.'

Such a notion of Faith, on the other hand, as that which regards it as 'the giving our consent to the covenant of grace, so as to receive the benefit of justification, whereby God accepts us as righteous for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us,' is, as Matthew Arnold has said, 'mere theurgy.'

The Faith which has religious value is an active principle. It is no idle æsthetic admiration of ideal excellence; but it is a reverent, admiring homage which constrains to eager and unflinching imitation. Neither is it a selfish reliance upon Divine Mercy and Help, but a surrender of self in loyal devotion to One who is felt to be worthy of service as well as homage. In short, Faith as the essential principle of religious life is reverent dependence upon One who, as a Living Person, embodies our Ideal of Perfection; together with enthusiastic longing and effort to become completely conformed to that Ideal.

Such Faith obviously demands and implies the real existence of the Ideal admired, trusted, and imitated. It assumes an objective reality corresponding to the subjective Ideal. There cannot indeed be, in any true sense, dependence on a merely abstract Ideal. It is impossible for a person to rely upon anything less or lower than a Person. The existence, therefore, of a Personal God may be affirmed to be a postulate of the Faith which is normal and germane to us as human beings. The sense of Absolute Dependence, so generally acknowledged as a fundamental element of the Religion which is natural to man, presupposes—unless it be sheer illusion—a Being in whom the Ideal is real.

The full and perfect Ideal of moral excellence is for us the supremely worthy of loving admiration, loyal service, and reverent worship; and we cannot but believe in the existence of a Being in whom that Ideal is actually realized. By our very nature itself we are constrained to seek after, if haply we may find, such a Being; and we cannot but welcome the manifestations of the Divine Ideal

in whatever measure they may appear to us. 'We needs must love the Highest when we see it.' In the lives of true and noble men we catch some glimpses of a principle and a power which are, we are persuaded, of God and from God. In the person, character, and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth we recognize the fullest exhibition of the Divine Ideal; and in a life of daily imitation of Him we feel that we most nearly approach the Ideal that we are bound to set before ourselves, and most truly enter into real and living fellowship with the Divine.

Our initial confidence in these spiritual impulses

of our nature is subsequently verified and confirmed by the many happy results of surrender and obedience to their guidance and control. For, although the blessedness of a life of Faith is not the primary ground upon which we recognize its title to our loyalty and devotion, yet it is an endorsement and a seal to that title, and supplies a strong confirmation of our persuasion of the supremacy, the divinity, and the real, living actuality of the Ideal which we have made the object of our homage and pursuit. 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.'

Recent Foreign Theology.

The Future of Norwegian Theology.

THE present issue of *Norsk Theologisk Tidsskrift* is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Fredrik Petersen, Professor of Systematic Theology in the National University, whose recent death is a grievous blow to the Norwegian Church and theology. The number contains only three articles—namely, a eulogistic tribute to Dr. Petersen by his friend and colleague, Professor Lyder Brun; 'The Influence of the Nineteenth Century on the Doctrine of the Atonement,' the last pages of which had not received Petersen's revision for publication; and a brief article by the deceased Professor on 'The Future of our Theology,' written only a day or two before his death, and with this note accompanying it: 'I cannot go to my grave without letting my views on this subject be known. Necessity is laid upon me to speak out now.'

Professor Fredrik Petersen was one of the most influential men in the Norwegian Church. During the last twenty-five years no Norwegian professor possessed such a power as he of influencing his students, of awakening Christian life and religious interest among them, and of getting them to tackle the study of theology in a scientific spirit. His predecessor, Gisle Johnson, was a great personality in Norway, with magnificent powers, but he had riveted on his students a cast-iron orthodoxy, with the result that theological interest almost died out in the land, and for long years there was a painful poverty of Norse theological literature

and a sad looseness of theological thought in the preaching of the ministers of the State Church. But Petersen was himself a fearless thinker, and he exercised a liberating influence on the men who sat at his feet; he awakened their scientific sense, and called them to independent Christian thought.

Petersen was a gift of God to Norway, in an age when free-thinkers were making Christianity synonymous with stupidity and narrow-mindedness, and, along with the late Dr. E. F. B. Horn, he managed to drive back the assaults of free-thought that were threatening the whole religious and moral life of the land. Petersen's book, *How the Church ought to meet the Unbelief of the Present Day* (1880), opened a new era in the Christian thought of Norway, and broke definitely away from the trammels of the Johnsonian system. It conceded that the unbelief of the age met something more than the evil inclinations of the human heart. It also met an ideal longing—the longing for knowledge and for progress. The book appealed with fervour and power to Christians, that they should not first and foremost complain of the errors of unbelief, but should immediately remedy their own shortcomings.

But his most important contribution to theological science is *On Creation, Providence, and the Government of God*. Here he not only maintains the Christian faith in God in the face of all the arguments of natural science and philosophy, but also widens the traditional conception of God, that had been ossified in the age of orthodoxy.