

The latter part of the parable of the Great Supper teaches, that on the repudiation of the claims of Jesus by the bulk of the more wealthy and reputable portion of the Jewish community, His apostles commenced to minister in the Holy Land, (to which "the streets and lanes of the city answer) and wherever they found *consciously* destitute sinners, (whose spiritual condition is *figuratively* presented by the expressive terms, "poor," "maimed," "lame," and "blind,") they would bid them welcome to the great supper—assure them of the mercy of the Gospel.

The parable further teaches that, *subsequently*, the servants of Christ would go forth into Gentile countries, (signified by the "highways" and "hedges,") and, by the urgent preaching of the Gospel, through the power of the Spirit, induce such characters as had before been specified, (namely, men and women whom grace had made sorrowful for their degradation and sin) to apply to God for the rich provisions of His mercy.

The meaning of the expression, "compel" (or constrain, R.V.) them to come in," is determined by the context. The servant would induce these "tramps and squatters," as Dr. Plumptre calls them, to come to the great supper, by dwelling on the sumptuousness of the feast, and the bounty of him who was giving it, and explaining that the invitation was to the absolutely destitute.

This exactly corresponds with the manner of preaching the Gospel for which this Article contends, namely, not extending invitations to all men, irrespective of their characters, but assuring conscious and contrite sinners of the good-will of God in Christ towards them.

The second part of the parable of The Marriage of the King's Son, (Matt. xxii. 8—10,) clearly corresponds in its teachings with the above.

God's anger at the rejection by the Jews of the testimony of those who proclaimed the Gospel of His risen and ascended Son, and who were concerned in the persecution of the Apostles, and the murder of Stephen (Acts viii. 54—60,) and of James, (Acts xii. 2, 3,) is evidently referred to in verses 6 and 7.

The preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and the urgent invitation of any who hungered in their souls for Divine mercy, is as plainly intended in the ministry of the "servants" in the "highways."

That these passages do not support general invitations and offered grace is now, it is hoped, evident. In both parables the hungry, homeless and destitute were to be informed of a repast to which they would be welcomed, and their misgivings were to be removed by the assurances of those who were sent to

invite them. So the invitations of the Gospel are addressed to those whose spiritual condition is analogous to the circumstances of those to whom only these were sent, and *their* fears and misgivings it is the business of the Gospel preacher to try to remove.\*

Acts xxvi. 28. "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." It is supposed that Paul persuaded Agrippa to become a Christian, and almost succeeded in so doing. The Apostle, however, (as a glance at the context will demonstrate) did not urge this unhappy man to profess the religion of Jesus. Agrippa's utterance admits of more than one interpretation. It is literally, "In a little thou persuadest (or dost thou persuade) me to become a Christian." It should be remembered that the word *Christian*, at that time, was a term of contempt. Agrippa, probably desirous of terminating the Apostle's address, exclaimed, "In a little (time)," or, "with little (effort) thou wouldst persuade me," (R.V.) (or dost thou persuade me to become a Christian. He was not in earnest. He did not mean that a conflict was going on in his own mind; but that he conceived it ridiculous for Paul to imagine that arguments so flimsy would affect a person so important as himself.

Paul, however, solemnly rejoined\*—taking up Agrippa's word, and giving his idea an earnest and pathetic turn, "I would to God that, whether in little or in much (whether with *little* or with *great* and *protracted* effort on my part) not thou only, but also all that hear me to-day, might become such as I am—except these bonds."

2 Cor. v. 11. "Knowing therefore the terror of the

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\*On Matt. xxii. 9, C. H. Spurgeon, in his "Gospel of the Kingdom," indeed observes, "As many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.' This indicates no limited call, no preaching to gracious character." He thus shows how little he understood the views of those to whom he was so opposed. A conscious or sensible sinner is, we admit, the subject of a work of grace, or he would be apathetic and callous on the matter, as all unregenerate men necessarily are. But the Gospel (so we contend) does not address such on the ground of their graciousness, but of their sinfulness and peril. The student of Hart's hymns will remember that this idea is repeatedly enforced; notably in hymns 61 and 91.

†Would that every Strict and Particular Baptist Minister felt the same earnestness concerning his congregation. God grant that contention for the truth may never sterilize our feelings in relation to perishing sinners.

Lord we persuade men." Supposed to mean that Paul and his colleagues, aware of the terror of future punishment, persuaded men to be saved. It is, however, evident that his subject is the fact that their commission was Divine, and that they had Christ's authority for acting as His servants. Of this they were assured by the inner witness of the Spirit. "Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord," R.V., not the terror,) or, as Alford happily renders it, "Being conscious of ('no strangers to,) the fear of the Lord," "we persuade men" (in general) of our integrity and the validity of our high office: "but we are made manifest unto God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in *your* consciences."

This was the view of John Hazelton, who observes that, "It has been supposed that the Apostle persuaded men to live, to believe and to turn to the Lord." This, [however] is not the meaning of his words, but that—"We persuade men of our own sincerity, and of the fact that what we preach is the Gospel, or the very Word of God, and that we cannot possibly keep back any portion thereof." Hence, he immediately added, 'We are made manifest to God, &c.'" *Sermons*, Vol. ii. No. 32.

This we submit without fear of contradiction:—That the Master Himself is never recorded to have made an offer or proffer of grace to any one, (pages 28 and 29:) That no record of grace being offered, tendered or proffered is to be found in the Acts of the Apostles; and, That no such offers are contained or referred to in the inspired Epistles, especially in those to Timothy and Titus, in which minute and specific directions respecting the preaching of the Gospel are given.\*

#### OFFERED GRACE IMPLIES CREATURE ABILITY.

NOTE 4.—The Article sets forth that offers of salvation imply that it is within the power of natural men to accept or reject the

\*Bitter things have been said and written about Strict and Particular Baptists, because instead of offering Christ to sinners and urging Faith as a legal duty, they present the invitations and promises of the Gospel in a hypothetical way. This, however, has the highest authority. "On the last day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying,"—what? Come all of you, come at once, to Me? No; but, "Ye have busied yourselves with disputations on religious topics," now, "If (*eum*) any (one of you) thirsts (is vitally concerned about the salvation of his own soul,) let him come to Me, and let him drink." (John vii. 37.)

grace of God. This is indisputable, since to offer to a person in dire necessity, advantages of which he could not by any possibility avail himself, would be to mock and insult him in the cruellest manner. If the Gospel is an effective offer of salvation, the character of God necessitates the belief that man is able to accept it, or it would never have been made.\*

The absolute spiritual impotence of man, apart from the operations of the grace of God, has, however been amply demonstrated in Notes 1 and 6 to Article x. Offers of salvation cannot be preached without implicitly denying these.

It is, therefore, a distinguishing feature of the Creed of the Strict and Particular Baptists to repudiate the doctrine of Offered Grace, not only because it has no authority in the word of God, but because it involves a contradiction to the testimony of the Bible to men's real condition as lost and helpless sinners.

#### C. H. SPURGEON AND JAMES WELLS.

NOTE 5.—A favourite text of the late C. H. Spurgeon's, and from which he frequently preached what was substantially the same sermon was Rom. x. 20, 21:—"But Esaias is very bold, and says (speaking for God) 'I was found by those not seeking Me: I became manifested to those not enquiring after Me,'—(evidently, according to the context, the Gentiles,)—'but to Israel, (and literal, national Israel are incontestably intended,) He saith, 'Through the whole day, I stretched out My hands to a disobeying and contradicting people.'" LITERAL TRANSLATION.

The meaning, is, surely, plain. God's sovereign and invincible grace in savingly revealing Himself to the benighted Gentiles, is presented, in a way of contrast with His conduct towards His nationally-favoured people. C. H. S., however, Sermon No. 207—saw here two apparently contradictory doctrines, DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY in verse 20, and HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY in verse 21.

His remarks under the first head few but Arminians would dispute. He rightly urges that God's gracious acts of salvation are *unmerited* and *sovereign*, and insists that these truths ought to be preached.

He then, by way of transition, indulges in a little abuse of

\*The late John Gadsby, in a note to the last edition of the Hymn-book of which he was the proprietor, points out that Watts' well-known line, "Else we had still *refused* to taste," involves the idea of an *offer* accepted or rejected, and contends that it should not be sung by those that love "the truth."

"hypers," and proceeds to preach MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY,—that God *wooes sinners to be saved*, and this *repeatedly*. He warns his congregation against the dangerous men who protest against Duty-faith, and informs his careless hearers that they are "tying faggots for their own burning for ever. If they perish under the sound of the ministry, they will do so more terribly and fearfully than if they perished anywhere else."

James Wells also published a sermon from this text, (SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT, No. 447.)

He shows that verse 20 is a *Gospel declaration*, and beautifully expounds it by a running comment on Isaiah lxxv. from which it is an extract. He then explains that verse 21 is an *old covenant Scripture*, and gloriously combats the idea that Everlasting Love can put forth its hand, and fail to grasp its object.

He concludes thus:—"In this stretching forth of the hand there was nothing spiritual,—and it appears to me to be a serious thing to represent God as a Father, trying to save His children, and yet cannot: the Saviour as trying to save a sinner, and yet cannot: the Holy Ghost as trying to save a soul, and yet cannot—and to bring this verse to father such delusions."

Such was the primitive doctrine of the Strict and Particular Baptists. If the reader is a preacher, does he side with free-grace WELLS, or the universally popular C. H. S.?"\*

\*The absurdity of offered grace is apparent in a hymn cited in Glad Tidings, No. 13, a Tract issued from the Stirling Tract Depôt. The sinner is assured that though, when he commenced reading it, he was "dead in sins," he may this very moment have life if he *believes* God, and accepts the *gift* of His Son.

"There is nothing to do, for, *being born 'dead,'*  
You must have another to work in your stead;  
Christ Jesus in Calvary's terrible hour  
Has done all the work in such marvellous power,  
That, raised from the dead, *He* now offers to you  
Life, pardon, salvation, and nothing to do!  
'No, nothing to do, till you're saved from your sins,  
Then the power of doing good only begins."

Sinners are born "dead," and, therefore, can do nothing. Jesus, however, has done all that was required, and *offers* them life, pardon, and salvation. How an effective offer can be made to a dead person—and how thoughtful preachers can urge such absurdities, is inexplicable! Death which admits of response to an appeal, is not death: or an offer to death is a farce.

#### FUTURE PUNISHMENT NOT AUGMENTED BY REFUSING OFFERED GRACE.

NOTE 6.—It is currently held that while the Gospel is an effective offer of Christ to all men, those, who refuse to accept the mercy it presents, will be punished for this, in addition to the sentence of the Law for their sins. Thus it is believed that while the Gospel is the means of salvation to some, it will be the occasion of increased torment and woe to others. Against the unscripturalness of this, the Article protests.

It is granted that future punishment will admit of degrees, and that its measure will be the greatness and atrocity of sin as estimated by the final verdict of the equitable Judge.

It is also granted that the fuller men's natural and rational knowledge of God's revealed will, the greater their wickedness in continuing in wilful wrong-doing. The idolatry of the Jews as a nation, was more sinful than that of their heathen neighbours, for they had the inspired Scriptures. The sins of men who have been taught the truths of the Bible, are greater than if they were imperfectly acquainted with its moral definitions and distinctions. To disregard the monitions of an imperfectly instructed conscience is sin; but it is greater sin to rebel against the light, (Job xxiv. 13.) It is, therefore, a fearfully solemn thing to know what is right on the authority of the Bible, and to persist in doing what it condemns as wrong. Men will be held accountable according to the measure of their acquaintance with truth. All men have sufficient moral knowledge to warrant their condemnation as sinners. Some men have, however, a more accurate and extensive acquaintance with the distinctions between right and wrong, and their final doom as sinners will be proportionably increased. (Luke xii. 47, 48.)

While admitting this, we deny the theory of augmented damnation for rejecting the Gospel; for

The final rejection which is supposed to lead to this frightful increase of eternal punishment must be either a spiritual or a natural act.

If it is a spiritual act, heaven-born sinners can not only be lost, but doubly damned, which none but Arminians would assert, and with them we have here no controversy.

If this rejection is a natural act—namely, that of a man who has not received the grace of Regeneration—then the doctrine represents God as guilty of the grossest injustice. The elect only can be saved. For their sins only Christ atoned. To none but them is He presented as a Saviour by the Holy Spirit; and through efficient grace, all such will receive Him. It would be

distinctly unrighteous to punish other men for not availing themselves of provisions that were never made for them; for not accepting what was never designed for, or presented to them; and for declining what "they are not able to see," John iii. 3, or apprehend. To torture a blind criminal because he has no sight, would be the refinement of cruelty and to represent a holy God as wreaking vengeance on men for not doing what is beyond their original capacity, is surely the vilest slander on His goodness. "The natural man," who has no higher faculty of understanding than his rational intellect—including both his mental and moral powers—"receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, and HE IS NOT ABLE TO KNOW THEM, because they are spiritually discerned." They can be perceived only by higher faculties than he possesses. Such a man is blameworthy for sin; but not for remaining passive concerning what he knows and can know nothing about. (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

If those who do not yield the "obedience of Faith" to the Gospel are to be eternally punished for their unbelief, in addition to the equitable punishment which will be pronounced on their sins, this will surely be somewhere stated in the Bible. With the exception of 2 Cor. ii. 15, no passage is ever advanced to defend it. It is tacitly accepted by thousands; none attempt to substantiate it.

The subject is discussed in the Author's *MANUAL OF FAITH AND PRACTICE*, in which it is shown that "the claims of the Law of God cover all natural obligations," (page 20,) that "the curse of the Law will be the sinner's final condemnation," (page 23,) and that "the death of Jesus will not augment and intensify the woe of the lost," (page 56.)

Suggestive comments on 1 John v. 10, and Rev. xxi. 8,\* are also given; (pages 23 and 204;) and Psalm ii. 12; Prov. i. 24-26; Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 18, 19, and xvi. 8, 9; and 2 Cor. ii. 15† are explained in Addendum V. to Chapter xv., page 233.

#### GOSPEL INVITATIONS.

NOTE 7.—It is the expressed will of the Lord Jesus that the Gospel should be preached to every creature, (Mark xvi. 15.)

\*It is shown that by the "unbelieving" (*oi apistos*) in Rev. xxi. 8, is not meant those who have refused to believe in Christ and be saved, but such as are "faithless" in the sense of false—in whose characters no confidence could be reposed.

†2 Cor. ii. 15, "We are a savour of death unto death," was employed by C. H. Spurgeon to prove that "the Gospel of Jesus

This is often understood to mean that salvation should be offered to every creature, and that ALL MEN INDISCRIMINATELY SHOULD BE INVITED to participate in its benefits. Our article, however, insists that "the invitations of the Gospel are addressed to those who possess spiritual life, and should be presented only to conscious and contrite sinners, whose characters as such are so clearly described in the word of God."

For example, those who spiritually hunger and thirst, (Isa. lv. 1, 2, John vii. 37); those who "labour and are heavy-laden," (Matt. xi. 28); those who look to and call upon God, (Isa. xlv. 22; Rom. x. 12, 13); those who are willing\* to take the water of life, and those who, conscious of danger, flee to the refuge, (Heb. vi. 18.) These expressions incontestably apply only to persons who have a consciousness of need and danger, and a perception of the suitability of the provisions of the Gospel to meet their case. Life precedes sensation. Such are therefore "quickened," (Eph. ii. 1,) or they could not feel thus.

#### OBJECTIONS TO GENERAL INVITATIONS.

NOTE 8.—Strict and Particular Baptists object to General Invitations not only on the ground of their having no support in the Bible, but for three specific reasons.

1. THEY INSULT GOD. Royal invitations are admitted to be tantamount to commands, and cannot be disregarded with impunity. A subject who does not respond to the invitation of his Sovereign is guilty of disloyalty and rebellion. If (as is pleaded) God invites all men to be saved and some only respond, the latter resist His will. This, however, can never occur. In "A MANUAL OF FAITH AND PRACTICE" it is shown

*Christ will increase some men's damnation at the last great day,* because such "men sin against greater light." "This shall be the virus of their guilt—that 'the light came into the world, and the darkness comprehended it not;' for men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Spurgeon's Sermons, vol. i., page 201. The reader is counselled to contrast this with the exposition referred to above.

\*Rev. xxii. 17: "He that wills (*ho thelon*), let him take the water of life freely." Will is the essence of character. What a man wills he is. This, therefore, so far from being a general invitation, is most specific in its delineation of the character of him to whom it is addressed.

Acts xvi. 31: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," was addressed to an anxious enquirer, not to an unregenerate man.

that the words "Who will have all men to be saved," 1 Tim. ii. 4, simply mean men of all classes, agreeably to the context. It follows an exhortation to Christians to pray for all men—friends and foes, Jews and Gentiles, princes and peasants,—the "all" evidently intending all such as might come within the range of their personal observation.

"In the word of a king there is power;" but if the King of kings invites many who arrogantly refuse, His word has exceedingly limited power. The error, therefore, involves serious misapprehension of the character of God.

Again, universal invitations are generally preached in connection with threatenings of Divine anger if they are disregarded. God's patience will be exhausted. Christ's pity will turn into indignation. The insulted Spirit will strive no more, but abandon ungrateful men to darkness and doom. Their "day of grace" will terminate. It will then be too late to pray.

Jesus indeed said, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins," (John viii. 24,) and "He that believeth not shall be damned," (Mark xvi. 16,) and His solemn words demand frequent repetition. These preachers, however, are not content with reiterating them, but add to them by representing that a refusal to come to Jesus will inspire Him with passion and fury against those who spurn His overtures of love. All such statements are misrepresentations of God, and should be earnestly eschewed.

2. GENERAL INVITATIONS ARE A SORE HINDRANCE AND INJURY TO REPENTANT SINNERS. If gracious invitations are to be extended to all men, irrespective of their attitude to God, a preacher has no better news for a contrite sinner than for a contumacious one. This is depriving anxious enquirers of the rich comfort which belongs to them by Divine right, under the plea of a desire to benefit all men. What is this but "hurrying the goats and worrying the sheep," without doing good to either? On the other hand, the faithful proclamation of men's danger as lost sinners, and the gracious invitations which extend to THOSE WHO WANT SALVATION, may benefit all, while broken-hearted sinners *must* eventually be helped.

3. GENERAL INVITATIONS ARE INSEPARABLE FROM OTHER ERRORS. Calvinists who urge them are compelled to advance plausible reasons for so doing. Some (for example) have been driven to the fiction that a distinction should be drawn between the merit of Christ's atoning work—which is, they plead, infinite, and its application, which, they admit, extends to the elect only.\* Yet, if other men are willing to rest in this

\*See Note 4, page 41.

infinitude of unavailing merit, while the elect *must* be saved these *may* be saved. Thus a popular preacher—once a Strict and Particular Baptist—holds "the certain salvation of some men, and the possible salvation of all men."\* On the ground of this truth (†) it is urged that general invitations are consistent with God's covenant order of things. It is hoped that the fallacy of this notion will be evident to every reader, and that he will repudiate the mistaken view of the proclamation of the Gospel which originated it.

General invitations are often the point of departure from the truth of the Gospel—the first false step in the direction of great and grievous error. May we avoid them, whatever sacrifice may be involved by our adherence to the truth.

## Article XII. Spiritual Faith a Grace, and not a Natural and Legal Duty.

### PRECIOUS FAITH.

NOTE 1. This Article consists of two parts—that which affirms the nature and Divine origin of Faith, and that which denies the error of Duty-faith.

In the first part, it is affirmed that upon chosen, blood-bought and heaven-born sinners a faculty or power is imparted called, "precious faith," or, "the faith of (namely, that which is peculiar to, or characteristic of) God's elect;" that this power is manifested in acts of spiritual belief or trust, one of which is specified, namely, believing in the Lord Jesus "to the saving of the soul;" and that salvation, (in its fullest and most comprehensive sense) is conjoined with it.

These weighty words involve many important truths.

That the Faith in question is "precious," inasmuch as it differs, not only in its objects but in its nature, from the ordinary acts of credence and trust, of which the minds of natural or unregenerate men are capable.

That this Faith is not the supreme or highest exercise of the mental powers which belong to men as men, but is a distinct principle or faculty bestowed by the Holy Ghost on chosen redeemed, and heaven-born sinners, who obtain it through the righteousness of Christ.†

\*Thus certain Scotch preachers were wont to speak of the possibility of sinners receiving pardon through "the uncovenanted mercy of God,"—as if there were a scheme of salvation exterior to that which is effected through the Covenant of Grace.

†The doctrine that the believing acts of saved sinners result

That the faculty of Faith, or the ability to believe, and the acts which spring from it, should be carefully distinguished.

That the possession of the principle of precious Faith leads to the act of belief in God, and trust in Jesus as the Saviour.

That Faith in its principle and actions is conjoined with salvation.

That the Holy Spirit who is the Author of Faith must energise this principle before acts of belief and trust can be performed.

These points are amplified and substantiated in the author's Manual, pages 186—253, to which the reader is referred.

How far our convictions on this subject differ from what is currently held and taught by modern Christians, the reader will, it is hoped, be able to judge.

Granting the truth of what is advanced, it is evident that FAITH IS THE FRUIT OF DIVINE GRACE. Grace determined who should believe. (Acts xiii. 48; 2 Thess. ii. 13.) On these Grace confers the principle of Faith, (Eph. ii. 8; 1 Pet. i. 1;) Grace calls forth this principle into acts of credence and trust, (Acts xviii. 27; Phil. i. 29.)

The Gospel of Grace encourages and directs these acts, (Rom.

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from the possession of a spiritual faculty or principle, is not (as some imagine) peculiar to ourselves, or even to Calvinists, as such.

Thus A. S. Paterson, A.M., (a moderate but firm Calvinist,) in his work on the Shorter Catechism, page 267, denies it, and contends that "saving Faith is neither more nor less than belief of the Gospel;" that "there is no difference with respect to the manner of believing," between it and ordinary credence and trust—"and that it is distinguished from ordinary faith only with respect to the *object* or *thing* believed."

On the other hand, William Jones, M.A., of Nayland—(1726—1800,) the great Hutchinsonian divine—and a pronounced opponent of Calvinism, writes:

"For an object to be admitted into the mind," it must "find a faculty there which corresponds with its own peculiar nature."

"For spiritual truth there must be a spiritual sense, and the Scripture calls this sense by the name of Faith—which word sometimes signifies the act of believing; sometimes the matter which is to be believed; but in many cases it is used for that sense or capacity in the intellect by which the invisible things of the Spirit of God are admitted and approved." WORKS, 1801, vol. iv. pages 16, 17, and vol. vii. page 287.

x. 17; \* 1 Thess. i. 5.) Grace connects these acts with salvation. Grace must operate ere Faith can exist. Grace must influence ere Faith can act. Grace crowns with the promised blessing, (Rom. i. 16; Heb. x. 39; 1 Pet. i. 9.)

#### OUR SENTIMENTS STATED.

NOTE 2. The Article also insists that the "precious Faith" of "God's elect" "is not a duty incumbent on men as men."

We do not deny that it is the duty of men to believe in God. We denounce Atheism and Agnosticism as sin. We hold that all men should trust in God's providential care, and fear and obey Him.

We do not deny that it is the duty of men to believe in the inspiration of the Bible, and to receive and order their lives according to its teachings; and we regard it as wicked for any man to ignore and neglect God's holy Word.

We do not deny that it is the duty of men to receive, as true, the story of Jesus, as recorded in the New Testament,—to believe in His eternal Deity, His Everlasting Sonship, His mediatorial character, His perfect work, and His present appearing in heaven; and we loathe the sentiments of Free-thinkers, Socinians, and all others who expressly or overtly repudiate the statements of the Gospel of God.

We do not deny that it is the duty of men to employ their mental and moral powers in relation to God and His worship and service, and we contend that every rational man is accountable to Him for the right use of his reason, conscience, time, opportunities, money, and influence. We denounce the abuse of these as sin, and insist that it is every man's duty to live as in the sight of that great and benevolent Being, who is his Creator, Preserver, and continual Benefactor, and will require from all a strict account at last.

We do, however, deny that it is the duty of a natural man to be a spiritual man; to possess the gift of "precious Faith;" to perform acts which are possible to those only who have received that gift; and to believe in Christ Jesus to the saving of his own soul.†

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\* "Faith cometh by hearing, or rather, as in the Revised Version, "belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." A knowledge of the Gospel does not create the principle of Faith, but calls it forth into exercise—and that, not by any inherent efficiency in the report itself, but, "by the Gospel's coming in power, and in the Holy Ghost." (1 Thess. i. 5.)

† Arminians occasionally try to perplex God's "little

## MISREPRESENTATIONS DENIED.

NOTE 3.—Ever since it pleased God to give some of His servants clearer light on this question, others have sought to oppose the truth by misrepresenting the view for which we contend.

Thus the Rev. George Rogers, in "The Sword and the Trowel," vol. ii., page 8, charges us with holding (1) That it is not the duty of men to believe the Gospel; (2) That Faith is in no sense a duty to saint or sinner; and (3) That no man is responsible for its possession or exercise.

William Jay, in his Morning Exercise for November 29th, speaks of some "who condemn and ridicule" ministers for "calling upon sinners to believe."—and dismisses the subject with a few hackneyed phrases, and popular misapplications of Scripture.\*

## HOW FAITH SHOULD BE PREACHED AS A BRANCH OF GOSPEL TRUTH.

NOTE 4. It is the business of an Evangelist to preach the Gospel to every creature—and to state to all the relation of Faith to salvation.

This the inspired preachers of the New Testament continually did. Thus the Lord presented Faith to Nicodemus, (John iii. 14—16;) to the Jews, (chaps. v. 24, and vi. 40 and 47;) and to the man to whom He gave sight, (ix. 35—38.) Plainly also He stated the alternative of unbelief. (John iii. 18 and 36; and viii. 24.)

Thus, also, He instructed His apostles to preach, bidding them tell men that, "he that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

In obedience to His injunction, Peter explained the relation children," who have been led into "the truth," (1 John ii.,) by enquiring, "whose fault is it that sinners are not saved?" The answer is, "It is no one's fault." The fault lies in the presence and practice of sin, not in the absence of grace and *spiritual* Faith.

\*The text is 1 John iii. 23, the author insisting that, because the Father commands His heaven-born children to "believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ," "Faith is a duty," "unbelief is punishable, and destroys the soul;" and that, "under the Gospel nothing else destroys the soul."

Very earnestly would we ask our Christian brethren with whom we are at issue, if they deem it right to refer to our sentiments at all, to quote from our accredited publications, and not to make wild and unprovable allegations.

of Faith to salvation, in his Pentecostal sermon (Acts ii. 21); and Paul, at Antioch, informs his hearers that the blessing of Justification belongs to "all that believe," (Acts xiii. 39.)

These are typical instances. In none of the cases cited are the verbs in the imperative mood. The verses quoted are not commands, but statements of general acceptance. They are simple declarations of the gracious and blessed fact that Faith and salvation are conjoined: that those who believe in His Son, share the pardoning love of God; while the dire condemnation of the Law will be visited on all who live and die without Faith in Christ.

Such testimony should be given by all Gospel ministers in the present day.

When, however, an Evangelist has to deal *personally* with anxious enquirers, or is led to preach the Gospel specifically to those who are awakened to solicitude about sin and its consequences, he should direct and encourage such characters to trust in the Lord Jesus. This is the command of the Gospel. Obedience to it is "the obedience of Faith."

This command is nowhere addressed to men as men, or even to sinners as sinners—but to such sinners as give evidence that they are conscious of their peril, and anxious to be rescued from it by Jesus Christ. It presupposes a gracious change in those to whom it is addressed. It is a merciful reply to the early distress of a regenerated sinner.

Thus Peter enjoined those who were "pricked in their heart" to "repent and be baptised upon the name of Jesus," which involves the idea of trusting in Him. (Acts ii. 38.) Paul and Silas likewise commanded the jailor to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," for it was amply apparent that he was in the proper condition to receive the gracious direction.

This obvious distinction between preaching Faith *declaratively* to all men, and *directly* and *personally* to sensible sinners only, is so apparent in the Bible, that it is a marvel that any fail to recognise it.

## AN OBJECTION ANSWERED.

NOTE 5. It is sometimes urged that Faith in Christ is always in the New Testament represented as preceding and leading to salvation, but that we preach it to saved sinners only. Hence we are accused of keeping from men the glad tidings of salvation through Faith, until practically they do not need them.

The preceding Note answers this. It is not our custom to tell men indiscriminately that "There is life FOR a look at the Crucified One," or bid them, "Only believe, and they shall be saved." We, however, have much to say on the origin, Object

and operations of Faith. We love to simplify, and illustrate, and exemplify this important branch of truth. Faith can be preached scripturally, without unscripturally urging a living act on a dead sinner.

Moreover, the objection is as delusive as it is disingenuous. Those whom we bid trust in the Saviour, though as we hope saved essentially, are not saved *experimentally*, till they have fled for refuge and laid hold upon the hope which it is our prayerful endeavour, by our testimony, to "set before them."

We do not command men, who obviously have no concern for their souls, to come to that Christ of whose personality they may be ignorant, and in whose character and grace they feel no interest; but to assert that we bid none to trust in Christ who are not consciously and joyously the recipients of salvation (for this is really what the objection in question means) is wholly untrue. Joseph Hart's well-known hymn, "Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched," exemplifies how, we judge, conscious sinners should be addressed. Their characters are beautifully described: poor, wretched, weak, wounded, sick, sore,—yet they "feel their need" of Christ, since the Spirit has shown them it by the first beam of light He has darted into their hearts. To such, exhortations to believe—to come—to venture—are scriptural and appropriate.

To sinners, however, who are not thus concerned, simple instruction about Faith is all that a preacher has scriptural warrant for advancing; while commanding them to believe,—or to close with Christ—or to take Him at His word,\* is as irrational as it is contrary to the Gospel.

#### DUTY-FAITH IS DENIED BY ALL STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS.

NOTE 6.—Duty-faith is the doctrine that it is the duty of natural men to exercise spiritual Faith in the Lord Jesus, and so to obtain salvation. Its emphatic denial is a distinguishing

\*When addressing the unregenerate, unsound preachers in our own pulpits often urge texts of a certain class upon their hearers, and entreat them not to trouble themselves about their own condition and feelings, but to do as Mr. Hart says, "only take Him at His word." This is an exemplification of the "craft of men, who lie in wait to deceive;" for simple hearers are apt to think that, as the preacher quotes Hart, he cannot be preaching error. The poet's words, however, do not carry the above sense. He is addressing (Hymn 56,) "tempted souls," whom he bids take their "dying Lord" at His word,— "It is finished."

feature of the Strict and Particular section of the Baptist denomination.

It is variously expressed by different moderate Calvinists, but the following extract from the "Declaration" of the "Truths believed and held" by the "HOME COUNTIES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION," formed at Guildford, in October, 1877, may be accepted as embodying the belief of most of the brethren who differ from us on the point.

8. "The duty of all men to whom the Gospel is made known to believe and receive it."

The view of the Strict and Particular Baptists is thus expressed in the statement of the Doctrinal Basis of the "Metropolitan Association of Strict Baptist Churches," which has also been adopted as expressing the principles of the "Strict Baptist Mission:"—

6. "Regeneration and sanctification by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of Divine truth; and that saving Faith is not a legal duty, but the sovereign and gracious gift of God."

These declarations are evidently meant to be decisive and final. A preacher who does not insist that it is the duty of unregenerate persons who hear the Gospel from his lips to believe and receive it, has no right to associate with the estimable brethren who are connected with the "Home Counties Baptist Association." On the other hand, a minister who believes that spiritual Faith is a duty incumbent upon all natural men who hear the Gospel, is not a Strict and Particular Baptist, (according to the received usage of the term) and ought not, in common honesty, to call himself one.

#### REMARKS ON THE ARTICLE OF "THE HOME COUNTIES ASSOCIATION."

NOTE 7.—This asserts that it is the "duty" of all to whom the Gospel is made known to "believe" and to "receive" it. It is, however, expressed with little exactness. The phrase, "Believing [in] the Gospel" is used but once in the New Testament, Mark i. 15, where, (as shown, page 28,) the word "Gospel" is used, not in its later and technical sense, for the glad tidings of the Saviour's finished work, but for the announcement of His benevolent designs towards the Jewish nation at a crisis in their history. For this only the Lord here craved credence.

The expression is not appropriate to the Faith with which



Salvation is conjoined—which has a Person for its object, credence in the testimony leading to trust in Him.

Again, the distinction between “believing” and “receiving” the Gospel is not obvious. It may simply mean that all to whom it is made known, ought to “believe” in its truth, and “receive” it with respectful attention,—namely, the word “receive” should here be regarded as synonymous with “believe,” or, perhaps, as expressing the same idea in a more emphatic manner; or, our brethren may intend that it is the duty of all such persons as they describe, to exercise “the Faith of God’s elect” and believe, to the eternal salvation of their souls?

Once more, our brethren are vague in identifying individuals as those to whom the Gospel “is made known” The word **know** in relation to the Gospel is used in the New Testament in two senses. It sometimes stands for a mere intellectual acquaintance with the letter of Divine truth, without any spiritual apprehension of its moment, (Matt. xxii. 29; Rom. i. 21, 32; Jude 10.) More often, however, it describes that peculiar knowledge of the truth of God, which is the result of the operations of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of elect and blood-bought sinners, and which is a special blessing of the New Covenant, (Psa. li. 6; Heb. viii. 11; John x. 32; 1 John ii. 23, 27, 29.)

In which sense are we here to understand the term?

If the meaning is, that all who gain a fair knowledge of God’s gracious way of saving men, ought to believe the Gospel which declares it, we have no controversy with them. The Gospel is “a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation,” (1 Tim. iv. 15.) Having such authority, it demands a candid and cordial *reception* (*apodoche*) from all to whom it is “made known.” Whether it comes to a man “in power and in the Holy Ghost,” or, in “word only,” (1 Thess. i. 5,) it is his duty to give it attention, and to order his conduct by the information he receives from it.

Probably, however, our brethren intend that it is the duty of all who become acquainted with God’s plan of salvation, not only to assent to the veracity of the Divine record, but to approach the Lord Jesus by spiritual Faith, and accept salvation at His hands.

#### DUTY-FAITH, AN AWFUL DOCTRINE.

NOTE 8. Rightly understood, how fearful is the import of the above Article!

As long as a man is uninformed as to the character, capacity, and claims of God’s Son, spiritual Faith is not his duty.

The moment, however, this knowledge reaches him, he becomes the subject of a new, paramount, and imperative obligation, which binds him, at his eternal peril, to perform a duty of the most solemn character.

Have our friends duly considered this. Obligation is admitted to spring from relationship. Does the fact that the Gospel becomes known to a man alter God’s relation to him, or his relation to God? He was a sinner before; he is a sinner still. He was under the Law before; and is under it still. He was destitute of the principle from which the act of Faith springs. A mere knowledge of the letter of the Gospel incontestably does not impart this principle, or all who read the New Testament, or hear an evangelical sermon, would be saved. Nothing, therefore, in the cause assigned, accounts for the perilous obligation, under which such a man is alleged to come. Surely the condemnation of the Law is terrible enough, without the introduction of a Gospel, which, while “it is the power of God unto salvation to those that believe it,” is the occasion of increased woe to the myriads that do not.

#### DOES THE LAW COMMAND NATURAL MEN TO EXERCISE SPIRITUAL FAITH?

NOTE 9. It may be urged that the obligation from which the duty to believe springs, is not created by a knowledge of the Gospel, but springs from the natural and moral accountability of men, on whom it is incumbent, as rational creatures, to believe the message of Divine mercy, and so act as to ensure their personal participation in its provisions of grace. Men ought to believe God; therefore they ought to believe the Gospel of God, and accept the grace therein tendered to sinners.

If this is our brethren’s view, to state it is surely to refute it. The range of all natural duty is unquestionably defined by the Law, or it would be an incomplete enforcement of the claims of God on man, and insufficient for the purpose of the Divine Judge at the great final assize. If there were one natural duty which it did not enjoin, or one sin which it did not forbid, it might not suffice for the equitable condemnation of the guilty at last.

The Faith that brings a lost sinner to Christ, therefore, if a duty incumbent upon him as a natural man, must be commanded by the moral Law. Our brethren must then admit that (if their Article is read in this light) the Law commands all men to whom the Gospel is made known, to believe its testimony, and come to Christ to be saved.

But “the Law is not of Faith, (Gal. iii. 12;)” “is not a matter of Faith; nor does it relate to it, or require it. It deals

in other matters, and pertains to another system." Albert Barnes.

Yet, if our brethren take this ground, God by the Law commands spiritually dead creatures to become living Christians; natural men to become spiritual men; and those who are under the curse to grasp at the highest favours Heaven itself can bestow.

Yet again, duties which arise from our natural relation to God, and which are commanded by the Law, are "works." Spiritual Faith, if incumbent on men, as men, is a command of the Law, (or a legal duty) and is, therefore, a "work." The salvation of God (which the Gospel asserts to be of grace) can only be obtained by legal obedience. Duty-faith thus really means that sinners must inaugurate their salvation by an act of creature merit, or be for ever lost. A legal work is the condition of grace.

If these things seem absurd, the absurdity originated with the framers of the Article.

#### DUTY-FAITH—TEXTS WHICH DO NOT DEMONSTRATE IT.

NOTE 10. We have seen that, if spiritual Faith is the duty of natural men, it must be commanded either by the Law or the Gospel. If, however, it is commanded by the Law, it is a "work," having in it the element of human merit, and men are saved for performing a legal duty. If it is commanded by the Gospel, the Gospel has the force of a law binding on natural and unregenerate men, and which not only exacts duty from them, but exposes them to increased punishment for disobedience. This is so foreign to its admitted nature, that it is idle to refute it.

In spite of these considerations, religious persons in a careless way cite texts in proof of this popular error.

The majority of these are examined in the Author's *Manual of Faith and Practice*.—Up to the present time no portion of God's word has been advanced, which, *under any circumstances*, imposes spiritual Faith as the duty of a natural man.

1. Texts which command men, to believe in God, or commend them for so doing, do not establish the disputed doctrine: such as *exempli gratiâ*, "The people of Nineveh believed God," (Jonah iii. 5.) Thou *believest* that there is one God, (or that God is one, R.V.); thou doest well. The demons also *believe*, and shudder," (James ii. 19, R.V.) The absence of such faith is sin. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God," (Psa. xiv. 1.) See Acts xiv. 15—17. Portions like these have no bearing on the matter before us.

2. Nor may texts which commanded Jews, as Jews, to

believe in God as their Divine Benefactor and King, in accordance with the Covenant which He had made with them as a nation, (see page 29.) "Believe in the Lord your God," (2 Chron. xx. 20.) "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established," (Isa. vii. 9.) They are often rebuked for the absence of this form of trust in God. "Children in whom is no Faith," (Deut. xxxii. 20.) Also Deut. i. 32; Num. xxii.; Psa. lxxviii. 22; Jer. xiii. 25; Rom. xi. 20. Such texts do not touch the present question.

3. It will, again, be in vain to cite portions which refer to the time of Christ's residence on earth, and relate to Faith in His person and power at this period." "Believe ye that I am able to do this," (Matt. ix. 28.) "Be not afraid, only believe," (Mark v. 36.) "Many believed in His name", (John ii. 22,)—where the context makes it plain that the Faith was not spiritual and saving. "Of sin, (that is the sin of the Jewish world" in rejecting the Messiah) because they believe not in me," (John xvi. 9.) "How are ye able to believe (i.e., it would be a moral impossibility) while ye receive (or court) honour (or glory) one from another," (John v. 44.) Such portions, do not bear on the present discussion.

4. Neither must texts be advanced which enjoin acts of belief on chosen, blood-bought, and heaven-born men. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," (Acts xvi. 31.) "This is His commandment, that we should believe in the name of His Son," (1 John iii. 23; John xiv. 1; John xx. 31.) Such texts do not refer to unregenerate men, with whom we are now solely concerned.

5. Nor must the texts advanced be simple statements of the relation of Faith to salvation.

Thus Mark xvi. 16 is not a command to believe, but a doctrinal statement that "he that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved."

In conversing with Nicodemus, the Lord neither commands nor solicits Faith in Himself—but simply states that whoever feels spiritually like a serpent-bitten Israelite, and believes in the Son of God, whatever his nationality, shall not perish; and conversely, that he that believeth not, is under the condemnation of the holy Law of God, (John iii. 14—18.) John vi. 29 is not a command to unbelievers to trust Christ, but a declaration that God would regard the reception of His Son by the Jewish nation with pre-eminant favour *as a good work*, and that trust in Him by men as sinners is viewed with Divine approbation. Acts xiii. 39 is not a command to the men in the Synagogue at Antioch to accept Christ, but a simple statement of the vital truth that "by Christ all that believe are justified."

In some cases the privileges and immunities of Faith are presented hypothetically. It does not appear from Acts viii. 37 that Philip commanded the Eunuch to believe; but when the latter requested to be baptised, said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest."\*

In Rom. x. 9, which reads like an extract from an apostolic sermon, the hypothetical method is again adopted. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Somewhat similarly, statements of the relation of Faith to salvation are introduced by the word "whosoever." Acts x. 43, "Through His name whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." Rom. x. 11, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be put to shame."

Passages of this class indisputably do not enjoin Faith as a human duty.

If proof texts to our brethren's Article are to be produced, they must either be the words of Christ, or His apostles which command people who were indisputably unregenerate to believe spiritually, or they must be passages in the Epistles which clearly state this doctrine—or directions to preachers like Timothy and Titus thus to command unregenerate sinners to believe and be saved.

See Note 4, page 76, on the preaching of Faith.

#### DUTY-FAITH, WHY MAINTAINED, THOUGH UNSCRIPTURAL.

NOTE 11. So often has Duty-faith been shown to be unscriptural, so plainly have its tendencies been pointed out, that it is marvellous that honest and earnest students of the Word of God do not abandon it.

Reasons may, however, be assigned for its retention. Such are:

1. The prevalence and popularity of interpretations which have no authority but tradition. Dead lips used certain texts in a wrong sense. Living lips repeat the ancient errors. Dead hands wrote false expositions. Living hands endorse these. Thus Christ is still said to stand knocking at

\*This verse is wanting in several of the best manuscripts, and is not only regarded as of doubtful authority by many scholars, but omitted in the Revised Version. "Its genuineness is, however, recognised by Irenæus, Tertullian, and other primitive writers." Trollope's Note. If we must part with it as a proof text, it is still valuable as showing how Faith in its relation to Baptism was regarded in the early Church.

the door of unregenerate hearts, (Rev. iii. 20.) Paul is still asserted to have persuaded Agrippa to become a Christian, (Acts xxvi. 28.) The Spirit is said to strive with men in order, if possible, to make them pious, (Gen. vi. 3.) God is represented as intreating sinners to give Him their hearts, (Prov. xxiii. 26.) Our Lord is accredited with having commended men for being violent in their creature efforts to obtain salvation, (Matt. xi. 12.)\* The Apostle's assertion that he and his colleagues were "a savour of death unto death," (2 Cor. ii. 16,) is tortured to mean that the Gospel which saves some, occasions augmented torment to others. These and many other portions which are explained in this book, and in the Author's *Manual of Faith*, continue to be misquoted and misapplied, and in support of ideas which are not only unscriptural, but positively anti-scriptural.

2. Many ministers maintain the doctrine of Duty-faith because of the opportunities it gives them of effective oratorical display. It is pleasing to a speaker's vanity to present pictorial representations of Christ's weeping over the hardness of men's hearts; of His patience in endeavouring to woo and win them; the anger with which He will shortly abandon them; and the bitterness of their ultimate reflections in Hell that they would not let Him save them. Mediocre preachers can easily terrify their congregations into transient religious feeling by dwelling on such startling themes. A reputation for earnestness attends their enforcement, and brethren who "love the praise of men more than the praise of God," will not abandon what so cheaply secures popularity.

3. Many uphold Duty-faith because it is so generally maintained, and because, never having gone closely into the question, they are vaguely persuaded that it is somewhere taught in the Bible, though they cannot say where. The doctrines of Grace they (as they assert) believe and preach,—but they also hold that the Gospel is a *bonâ fide* offer of Salvation to all who hear it, and that sinners are responsible for accepting or rejecting it.

That Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility contradict each other they all admit—though the difficulty is met in different ways.

\*This is simply an historical statement, that, during a specified period—"from the days of John until now,"—unwonted interest had been evinced by earnest persons in the solemn matters of salvation. The verse is difficult to translate—many different renderings being proposed by scholars of equal reliability.

Some, like the earlier Fullerites, attempt by ingenious arguments to harmonise them, though this is rarely now done.

Others, like the late C. H. Spurgeon, evade the tremendous difficulty by a joke, and *refuse* to try to "*reconcile*" the conflicting testimonies, on the ground that they "*never quarrelled.*"

Many are content to plead that it is a mystery, inexplicable indeed, but so amply revealed that it must be believed.

A few—for want of Scriptural proof—employ natural similitudes, forgetting that an illustration is not a demonstration. The contradictory doctrines, they allege, resemble the two pictures which, when viewed in a stereoscope, appear as one,—or the two ends of one vast chain, the middle of which is submerged in the ocean,—or two discordant notes in music, which a third will resolve into harmony.

Of this, however, all claim to be persuaded: that both have equal support in the Word of God. This was, twenty-six years ago, the conviction of the writer; but he was brought to reflect "that truth must be evermore consistent with itself," and that, since Human Responsibility and Divine Sovereignty do not simply involve a paradox, but are destructive to each other, one must be untrue. He remembered that the meaning of the word "mystery" in the Bible has a wholly different meaning from that in which it is often employed in reference to this subject.\* He saw that a poor jest, or a few fancied

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\*The word "mystery," in its ordinary use, conveys the notion of something which we cannot understand; and into which it were fruitless to inquire. Thus our dictionaries tell us that it means (1) "anything which is very obscure; or, (2) beyond human comprehension." But, if we so interpret the word when it occurs in the Bible, we shall be misled.

The heathen had certain *rites*, which expressed secrets which were carefully concealed from the uninitiated, but were privately made known to a select few. Each of these was called, in Greek, a *mysterion*, and the Apostle Paul, in employing the word, naturally used it in this sense. With him, therefore, it denotes those designs of God's providence, and those doctrinal truths which had been concealed from mankind "till the fulness of time" was come, but were now made manifest to regenerated and believing men.

Thus we employ the term in reference to those from whom the cause, occasion, or explanation of a fact is *withheld*, and therefore *unknown*. Paul uses it in reference to those to whom such things are *revealed*, and therefore known on Divine authority.

Thus we say, "who the man in the iron mask was"—or "who

analogies, were by no means, proofs, and he subjected all the texts pleaded in favour of Human Responsibility to close and careful consideration. He was at length convinced that the doctrine is destitute of Divine authority; and that the Gospel, so far from being a contradictory system, is one in which harmony and consistency are apparent from first to last. His *Manual of Faith* and this little book are largely the results of those labours.

4. Perhaps the real reason of the all but universal maintenance of Duty-faith among evangelical Christians is a subtle mistrust in the power of the Gospel to effect the work for which God has given it.

There is an unquiet feeling that the full and faithful declaration of the gracious message, and a simple statement of the relation of Repentance and Faith to salvation, are not sufficient. True, that God's chosen and redeemed people "who are ordained unto eternal life will believe," (Acts xiii. 48,) but surely the unregenerate ought to be told to do something? To assure them they will continue spiritually dead till it pleases God to quicken them, and legally doomed unless He deliver them, does not suffice. Should not some effort be pressed on them, though it is admitted that they can do nothing? Hence the easy duty of *only just* believing is urged on dead sinners as a concession to the restlessness of the fleshly energy of such natural men as do these preachers the honour of coming to hear them.

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was the author of the letters of Junius,"—"will be *mysteries* to the end of time," meaning that no one will ever discover and disclose the full truth concerning these singular historical facts.

But when Paul speaks of "the mystery of the Christ," (Eph. iii. 3-5,) he means something which had been kept secret in the Divine mind "in other ages," but had then been revealed to the Apostles and New Testament prophets, (or inspired teachers,) and through them to all Christians, who were therefore called upon to contemplate and study it.

Thus when a Fullerite—with pretended humility and piety—tells us that he holds the lie of Human Responsibility and the truth of Divine Sovereignty, but how these can be harmonised "is a mystery," he employs this word, not in its Scriptural sense (as he appears to do) but its popular sense, in order to delude the simple-minded. The Gospel presents many *mysteries*, but this is not one of them. See Archbishop Whateley's "*Essays on the Writings of the Apostle Paul*" Seventh Edition, pages 163 and 176. Also *The Gospel Pulpit*, by J. C. Philpot, No. 151, Sermon on *Spiritual Mysteries*, (1 Cor. xiv. 2.)

THE SILENCE OF STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS CONCERNING THE ERROR OF DUTY-FAITH.

NOTE 12. Among the Strict and Particular Baptists there is at present a strange silence on the error of Duty-faith, which strongly contrasts with the opposition it received from our predecessors. John Stevens' *Help for the True Disciples of Emmanuel* was designed to refute it. John Foreman's *Duty-faith* fully shows its unscriptural character. James Wells rarely preached without denouncing it, and his *Letters to Theophilus* cogently disprove it. William Palmer was writing a series of Tracts which expose its evils, when his death brought them to a sudden termination in 1873.

The writer of this book has observed with pain that in the *Articles of Faith* recently issued by an historical church, the first pastor of which was one of Andrew Fuller's opponents,—no clause distinctly denying Duty-faith is included.

In this it presents a contrast to those of the majority of the earlier Churches of our Faith and Order. For example :

14. "We believe that there is a common and [a] special Faith: the first which devils [also] exercise, (James ii. 19.) and [which] is every man's duty, (1 John v. 11); the latter is the gracious gift of God, (Eph. ii. 8,) and is so, and only so, obtained, (2 Pet. i. 1.)—FAITH AND PRACTICE OF EDEN CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE.

"That [the] Faith which is connected with Salvation is not the duty of men in an unregenerate state, but is the gift and operation of the Holy Ghost, by which the sensible sinner discovers his misery, and then looks solely to Jesus Christ for Salvation. This Faith is emphatically styled "the Faith of God's elect."—ARTICLES OF FAITH OF PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, ISLINGTON; also of MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL, and several others.

XIV. "..... We deny Duty-faith... We deny offers of grace, and every Doctrine and Sentiment which tends to rob the Lord Jesus Christ of His glory."—ARTICLES OF FAITH, PARTICULAR BAPTIST CHURCH, ST. IVES, HUNTS.

DUTY-FAITH AND ITS RETICENT ADVOCATES.

NOTE 13. Several living ministers who once denied Duty-faith, now hold and preach it, and thus "build again that which they destroyed," (Gal. ii. 18.)

None of these, however, have made public how they were delivered from what they now see to be error, what text was "opened up to their minds, or laid on their hearts by the Holy Spirit," and what religious emotions accompanied their conversion to their present views.

"This only would we learn of them," did *they* themselves receive the life of God into their souls at their regeneration, and were *they* favoured with the pardon of their sins at first, because of the conscious performance of a duty? If so, what text commanded it, and how did they feel when obeying it?

Surely the method employed by Paul in Gal. iii. 2 may be legitimately employed in this discussion. Truth is learned in two ways, from the "counsel" or testimony of the Lord given through the Word; and from the instruction of the "reins," that is to say, the experience of the heart of the heaven-born and heaven-taught man, (Psa. xvi. 7.) These concurrently confirm and corroborate each other. Thus Hart says of the Holy Ghost:

"Now what in Holy Writ He says, in parts or through the whole,

The self-same truth, in divers ways, He teaches in the soul."

And, conversely, what "He teaches in the soul," He explains and confirms in the Word, (1 John ii. 20, 27.)

These brethren must have been brought to see the importance of the error they have abandoned. This conviction must have been originated by, at least, one passage in the Bible. Their changed views *must* have stirred solemn and deep feeling, and led to much prayer ere they left their former associates.

Will no one tell "those who fear God" what "He hath done for their souls" in this matter? (Psa. lxvi. 16.)

IS NOT DUTY-FAITH PRACTICALLY A HARMLESS ERROR?

NOTE 14. It is sometimes urged that—even granting that Duty-faith has no direct support in the Word of God—it is practically harmless, and often appears to be attended with good results in the more rapid conversion of sinners.

But good men, with holy David, should "hate and abhor lying," (Psa. cxix. 163,)—and the substitution of falsehoods for the Gospel is surely the worst form of untruthfulness.

Duty-faith is objectionable; for

1. Baptists who hold it, cannot plead that the Bible and the Bible alone, is the basis of their theology. They blame others for enforcing unscriptural tenets, and freely quote the Bible in denunciation of their errors. With what consistency can they do this, when they know that one distinguishing article of their own creed has no support in the Word of God?

2. The late John Andrews Jones, in the *Earthen Vessel* for September, 1863, conclusively shows that the Fullerian system

of Duty-faith "tends to overthrow the distinguishing and glorious doctrines of the Gospel." History substantiates this. The churches which adopted it at the close of the eighteenth and the early decades of the nineteenth centuries never contemplated abandoning the truths of the sovereignty of God in the election, redemption, and effectual calling of saving sinners. In how many of these churches, however, are these truths held to-day? The Down-grade is the natural and inevitable result of the departure from the truth which Andrew Fuller inaugurated.

3. It is a cause of the most deplorable division among Calvinistic Baptists. Till it was introduced, the Particular section of the Denomination was harmoniously united in the interests of the truth. This error severed them. Duty-faith *mainly* kept J. Stevens and J. H. Evans, J. Wells and C. H. Spurgeon apart. Duty-faith prevents all true Strict and Particular Baptists from active intercourse and fellowship with the brethren of the "Home Counties Baptist Association," whereas they and ourselves would be one on all evangelical questions, but for this most unscriptural error.

How, then, the lie of Duty-faith can be practically harmless we cannot conceive.

### Article XIII. Final Perseverance. Page 7.

As our convictions on this Doctrine do not differ from those of ordinary Calvinists, it will suffice to refer the reader who may wish to give it his attention, to accessible books of acknowledged merit. An Antidote to Arminianism, by Christopher Ness, A Handbook of Revealed Theology, by Rev. John Stock; Divine Sovereignty, by Elisha Coles; Hodge's Outlines; Macpherson and Shaw on the Confession of Faith; and Paterson on the Shorter Catechism are all, in their way, admirable.

On a few passages only will remarks be made.

"And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, (better perhaps jailors,) till, etc. (Matt. xviii. 34.)

Quoted to prove that, just as this "certain king," angered by the pitiless rapacity of the servant, whose debt he had forgiven, revoked his forgiveness, and consigned him to prison: so God may recall the pardons He has extended, and consign once-forgiven sinners to hell. So Whitby, in his Paraphrase and Commentary.

This, however, assumes that all the circumstances of a parable may be pressed to teach points of doctrine; whereas the comparison should be drawn only between the main drift

of the narrative, and the great spiritual lesson it is designed to illustrate. This parable is evidently intended to enforce the truth that those whom God has pardoned should themselves manifest a forgiving spirit.

It is doubtful whether the absolute and eternal forgiveness of sins is here intended at all. The reference is rather to sins committed after regeneration and conversion, which are forgiven after confession, (1 John i. 9,) and on account of which God may continue to frown on His children, and withhold from them the assurance of His forgiveness. (See the Author's Manual, "A forgiving spirit shows that we are forgiven," page 271.)

Thus a Christian, though accepted in Christ and "justified from all things," may, if he cherishes a vindictive spirit toward a Christian brother, who, as he imagines, has sinned against him, bring his soul into fearful darkness and bondage—to which (though this exposition is *not pressed*.) verses 34 and 35 may be answerable.

If the difficulty (in the reader's judgment) is unremoved, this principle of exposition is assuredly indisputable. Passages which are hard to understand should always be explained in the light of others which are plain and clear. The Final Preservation and Perseverance of God's people are unmistakably taught in the Bible—nor should obscure passages shake our Faith in what is clearly revealed.

Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away. (John xv. 2.)

Quoted by Arminians to prove that if Christians who are vitally united to Christ relax their endeavours and become unfruitful, they will be cast off by God, and consigned to everlasting burning.

Strenuous efforts have been made by Calvinists to refute this, by contending that this fruitless branch is only professedly, and not vitally in the Vine. Others suggest an inversion of the words, and read, "that bringeth not fruit in Me,"—as a mistletoe may grow on a plum tree, but produce poisonous berries. This, however, is playing with the text. The words are: "Every branch in Me not bearing fruit, or, that does not bear fruit."

The explanation of Charles Drawbridge claims consideration. He rightly contends that the verb rendered "taketh away"\* primarily means to "take up," (as in Matt. ix. 6;) to "lift up," (as in Luke xvii. 13;) and to "bear up," (as in Matt.

\*Airo. (1.) To take, lift or bear up; (2.) To bear away or remove; (3.) To take away, the idea of lifting, &c., being dropped.