

## SERMON XXI.

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OF SAVING FAITH.

*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*—Acts xvi. 31.

THE words are the satisfactory answer of Paul and Silas to their keeper's serious demand; to whose strictest care and custody they were committed by the magistrates of Philippi, upon the complaint of the covetous masters of a gainful servant-maid, possessed with a spirit of divination; upon whom the apostle wrought an undesired and displeasing cure, after eminent testimony borne by her to them and their doctrine. God answereth their courageous singing in prison by an earthquake, shaking the foundations of the house, and the stout heart of the jailor. The doors were opened to, and fetters fell off from, the prisoners; and therewith the door of the keeper's soul was opened, and his fetters of ignorance and corruptions, in which he was holden captive by Satan, were broken. At first, poor man! he was afflicted with fear of his prisoners' escaping, so as to make attempt against his own natural life; not knowing that God intended good by all, and to make his prisoners his releasers and deliverers. But by and by his amazement and trouble strikes the right way: and he is not only willing to keep a natural life, but is desirous of, and inquisitive after, an eternal life: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Verses 30, 31.)

My allotted work at this time is, from this clear and full text, to speak of saving faith; in the entry whereof let me once for all premise:

First. I purposely wave controversies, as wanting both time and fitness to be an umpire, and give a final decision.

Secondly. I shall endeavour to confine my discourse to my subject, without trespassing upon others' ground, by repeating what belongs to preceding, or preventing what belongs to following, subjects.

Thirdly. I am not solicitous about, nor is it possible to please all in method and terms belonging to it (those *τεχνολογηματα*): method and words, I always account, are servants to matter.

Fourthly. In this great part of the body of Christian religion, I can only show the skeleton, without reading an explanatory lecture; or give the bones and sinews, without clothing them with a due proportion of flesh: for that would take up too much room.

To engage attention, consider: This is that great "work of God;" (John vi. 29;) a main part of "the mystery of godliness;" (1 Tim.

iii. 16;) a "principle" and "foundation." (Heb. vi. 1.) At this, when excelling, "Christ wondered;" (Matt. viii. 10;) by this, "glory" is every way "given to God;" (Rom. iv. 20;) to this, "all things are possible," (Mark ix. 23; Heb. xi. 33—39,) it sharing with God in his otherwise incommunicable omnipotency; (Matt. xix. 26;) and accordingly the effects of the Divine power are attributed unto faith: (Matt. ix. 22:) "precious" and "enriching faith;" (2 Peter i. 1; James ii. 5;) though in itself, and to its subject, the most indigent and emptying grace: "Poor, yet making rich; having nothing, yet" entitling to "all things." (2 Cor. vi. 10.) This is that which all the promises, types, and prefigurations of the Messiah did lead the patriarchs unto, and by which they "obtained a good report." (Heb. xi. 2.) This is the "end of the law," subordinate unto Christ, (Rom. x. 4,) and the sum of the gospel; commonly named and pretended to, but little known and rightly understood, less enjoyed and exercised, in the world. (Luke xviii. 8.)

I shall reduce all to these six heads: I. *The nature*, II. *Subject*, III. *Causes*, IV. *Effects*, V. *Properties*, and, VI. *Opposites, of Faith*.

#### NATURE.

I. To open *the nature* of it, I shall remove the ambiguity of phrase, and state what I shall prosecute, by giving the *distinctions* and *description* of it.

#### (I.) DISTINCTIONS.

1. *Fides quæ creditur*, "Faith which we believe," (Gal. iii. 23,) is the doctrine of the gospel, or any word of God; yea, the essential Word of God, the promised Seed, the object of faith, is by that word understood by learned persons.

2. *Fides quâ creditur*, "Faith by which we believe." And this, to begin at the remotest and meanest, is either,

First. *Without knowledge*.—The ignorant, implicit faith and profession of many owning Christ as the Founder of their order and way. But this is not right, which only distinguisheth Christians from others.

Secondly. *With some knowledge without assent*.—Which scarce deserves the name of faith. And this is a profession of the faith, either *customary*, following education and example; or *compulsive*, through fear; or *gainful*, for outward advantages, as theirs that followed Christ for the loaves, and Simon Magus's.

Thirdly. *With knowledge and assent*.—Of which,

(1.) *Some faith respecteth the truth of God*; (for doctrine's sake, I may thus distinguish;) which is called "historical." Thus "the devils believe, and tremble." (James ii. 19.) Wicked men believe, and sometimes tremble, and sometimes rejoice, as if they had enough. The only difference is, the want of applicability to the devils: in neither is affection to the Revealer or things revealed. This is not right, though it believe never so rightly concerning Christ's person, natures, offices, &c.

(2.) *Some faith respecteth the truth and power of God*.—And hath

for its ground ordinarily some special word; (Matt. x. 8;) and this is called "faith of miracles." And this is either *active*, (Matt. xvii. 20,) which is peculiarly the faith of miracles, and that to which the special word refers; or *passive*, (Acts xiv. 9; iii. 16,) and which the woman with the bloody issue had. The promises that were the ground of this faith, were peculiarly suitable to those times; and now not improvable, or not ordinarily. And the faith itself, though grounded on a special word, yet is but a common gift in itself, as opposed to saving: as appeareth in Judas; and those that at last would cry, "Lord, Lord!" (Matt. vii. 22;) and in the nine lepers. Though sometimes indeed it had the actings of the best, even saving, faith twisted with it. (Matt. viii. 10; xv. 28.)

(3.) *Some faith respecteth the truth, power, and goodness of God.*—And this grounded upon general promises, and words of encouragement, of an unlimited truth and concernment to time and persons. (Matt. vi. 25—34.) Now this respecteth either the general love of God to his creatures, and man as a peculiar one, affording support, preservation, provision necessary; or the peculiar love of God to man through the undertakings of Christ, making man to look for better things than the effects of common providence, even God himself for his portion, and full happiness in him. Now, that bold affiance is not true faith, whereby men carry it at that rate of confidence, as if Christ died to save all from hell that are not willing to go thither. For in some, it is without savour and affections suitable; (which I may call altogether "feigned faith;") as in the generality of formalists now, who presume, [that] all is well: God loveth them, and Christ died for them! In others, it is joined with a savoury gust and relish of the word and promise: which, in regard of its continuance, and thereby usefulness to its end,—salvation, (though I make not that the only difference,) is called either "temporary," springing from slighty and perishing causes, as that of the "stony ground," (Luke viii. 13,) and the virgins'; (Matt. xxv. 8;) or else "lasting, durable, altogether true and unfeigned, justifying and saving faith." (1 Tim. i. 5.) This indeed is but "one," as well as the object; (Eph. iv. 5;) (and therefore those [whom] Peter wrote to, had "obtained like precious faith;" 2 Peter i. 1;) yet different in degrees and measure. (Rom. xii. 3.) In some, it is small and weak, as "a bruised reed;" (Mark ix. 24; Isai. xlii. 3;) through dimness and scantiness of knowledge, (as a building laid upon a weak or narrow foundation cannot be strong,) weakness of assent, strength of temptations, natural timorousness, suspiciousness and lowness of spirit: in others, it is strong, (Rom. iv. 19, 20,) and they are "full of faith," as Stephen, (Acts vi. 8,) having clear and large knowledge, &c. Both weaker and stronger may be considered either as habitual in the root and principle, or actual as exercised toward Christ and the promises.

#### (II.) DESCRIPTION.

For the definition or description of faith, I shall not heap up words in mentioning many, but take up with that full and excellent one of

the late judicious Assembly, in their larger Catechism, that Christians may with more readiness and safety entertain it :—

“Faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and word of God ; whereby he being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of that lost condition, not only assenteth to the truth of the promise of the gospel, but receiveth and resteth upon Christ and his righteousness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation.”

It hath here for its genus, or general and common nature, *a grace* ; it being compared with love, hope, &c., they herein agree. The word “grace” distinguisheth it from other habits, even good and virtuous, that are acquired : this is a grace or gracious disposition or habit infused. *A saving grace*, to distinguish it from, and set it above, common grace, and make it one of those “better things that accompany salvation.” (Heb. vi. 9.)

#### SUBJECTUM RECIPIENS.

II. *The subject* is twofold, *subjectum recipiens, et occupans.*

The first, *Subjectum recipiens*, “the subject receiving” it, or in which it is ; most ordinarily called “the subject :” and this is, *the heart of man a sinner elected and called.*

1. It is *man* that believeth, not angels ; for of their faith we have no ground to speak. It is man ; not God, and the Spirit in us ; but man through them. Yea, man singularly ; not of another, but of him that hopeth for life : “The just shall live by his faith,” (Hab. ii. 4.) not by another’s.

2. It is *the heart of man.*—“With the heart man believeth.” (Rom. x. 10.) “The heart” includeth will and affections : it is not the understanding only, nor so much, though that necessarily makes way. Coming to Christ is a spontaneous motion of will and affections renewed ; and this is believing. There is assent to things revealed, as true ; and acceptance of things offered, as good ; receiving, embracing with suitable affections to the Revealer and things revealed. (John i. 12.)

3. *The heart of man a sinner.*—For man upright is not capable of this faith, which is in God through a Mediator. Believing the word of another concerning restoral and reparation speaketh loss and decay ; acceptance of alms, poverty. Indeed, Adam might, and must, thus far exercise faith in believing and trusting God, (it belongeth to the first commandment,)—that, he continuing upright, there would be a continuation of God’s love and his happiness. But faith, apprehending the promise of God of acceptance through the righteousness of another, necessarily speaketh man a sinner ; as justification which is by faith is of “the ungodly.” (Rom. iv. 5.)

4. *The heart of man a sinner elected.*—“The election obtained it, the rest were hardened ;” (Rom. xi. 7 ; ) and therefore is it called “the faith of God’s elect.” (Titus i. 1.) Remarkable is that expres-

sion: "As many as were ordained unto life believed;" (Acts xiii. 48;) and our Lord saith, "All that the Father giveth" him "come unto" him; (John vi. 37;) and the Jews' not believing was because they were not his sheep, and therefore heard not his voice.

5. *The heart of man a sinner elected and called*, is the subject of faith.—"Faith is by hearing;" (Rom. x. 17;) it is the soul's answer to, and compliance with, God's call; God veiling his omnipotency under, and putting it forth with, words of command. Uncalled and unbelievers are the same; and therefore calling is one of the links of the golden chain of salvation, and goeth before justification by faith. (Rom. viii. 28—30.) In which call, the *terminus a quo* is Satan, sin, misery, death, "we are called from;" and the *terminus ad quem*, "we are called to" Christ, God, holiness, and life.

#### MATERIALE.

*Subjectum occupans*, "the subject about which faith is employed," or object, that which and in which we believe, is not God immediately, though primarily; (Heb. vi. 1;) but Christ immediately, and "the promises" which are "in him yea, and in him Amen," (2 Cor. i. 20,) and God through Christ. (1 Peter i. 21.) He that believeth not in the Son believeth not in the Father; and he that hath not the Son hath not the Father. Repentance is peculiarly referred to God, and faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts xx. 21.) Faith, also, and the promises, or God through Christ promising, are correlates; (Heb. x. 23;) and of all promises, those that concern righteousness and life through the blood of a Mediator, are the peculiar object. (Acts x. 43.) Believing the witness of remission, and the record of giving eternal life, is mentioned 1 John v. 10, 11: it is called "believing the gospel," *ευαγγελιον*, "glad tidings," in the gospel, promises of remission and salvation. (Mark i. 15.) It is true that faith doth believe and apply every word of God. Some things reductively and secondarily are the object of faith, in a sequacious spirit, credulous to whatever is contained in scripture; as that Abimelech had a wife, &c. (Gen. xx.) Some things are more directly the word of God expressed and asserted in the history of the Bible; yet, being believed, have not an immediate connexion with justification and salvation thereby. But the grand testimony of and through Christ faith, as saving, principally respecteth; and, as assenting in the mind, looks upon the promise; as accepting in the will and affections, respecteth Christ.

#### FORMALE.

The ground on which we believe, called "the formal object of faith," shall be referred to the externally moving cause to believe; of which afterwards.

#### CAUSES.

III. Of all *four causes* I shall speak in order.

## (I.) EFFICIENT.

And, First, of the *efficient*, which is either *principal*, or *less principal*.

## I. PRINCIPAL.

The *principal cause* may be considered, as that from which the *beginning, acting, continuance, growth, and perfection*, of faith do proceed; and this is the Blessed Trinity, or God the Father through the Son by the Spirit.

(1.) *The beginning, root, and habit of faith is from God.*—If of every “good work” and “gift,” (Phil. i. 6; James i. 17,) then this; and therefore it is called “the gift of God:” (Eph. ii. 8 :) and, “To you it is given to believe.” (Phil. i. 29.) Jesus also is called “the author.” (Heb. xii. 2.) This is wrought by the Spirit; it is called one of the fruits thereof, (Gal. v. 22,) and He [is] called “the Spirit of faith;” (2 Cor. iv. 13;) for indeed the word and letter is dead, the Spirit quickeneth; and this powerfully and certainly, yet sweetly, making “willing” to believe “in the day of his power.” (Psalm cx. 3.) For it is not “the word of truth” only, but “the power of God,” that made the apostles’ warfare so victorious in subduing souls to the obedience of the faith. (2 Cor. vi. 7; x. 4.) It is so great a thing to bring blind, proud, self-destroying man to own God’s way of salvation by the righteousness of another, to accept all from another, and him a crucified Saviour, that it is a great part of the great “mystery of godliness,” that Christ should be “believed on in the world;” (1 Tim. iii. 16;) so that it needs an “exceeding greatness of divine power, the working of a mighty power in them that believe,” even such as “raised Christ from the dead.” (Eph. i. 19, 20.) *Ισχυς est facultas ipsa; κρατος, ipsius sese exerentis virtus; ενεργεια, ipsius effectus, sive ενεργημα.*—BEZA *in locum*.\* Though other sense is put upon that place, yet by many judicious expositors is this sense followed, which we find in the Greek Scholiast: *Ει γαρ μη ενεργησεν εν ημιν, ουκ αν επιστευσामεν. Μεγιστης γαρ Θεου δυναμεως δειγμα, &c.*† “None can come to the Son except the Father draw them;” (John vi. 44;) in which the Author and powerful manner of operation in causing faith are contained. And all this in effectual calling and regeneration: (before which is no part and degree, no act and demonstration, of spiritual life; for we are dead, Eph. ii. 1 :) which “is not of him that willeth,” (Rom. ix. 16,) not of “flesh” and “blood,” and “the will of man, but of God.” (John i. 12, 13.) And this is spoken of the believer, to whom God “opens the door of faith.” (Acts xiv. 27.)

(2.) *The actings and operations of faith are from God.*—As “in him we live,” so we “move,” (Acts xvii. 28,) and “without him can do nothing.” (John xv. 5.) He “worketh to will and to do,” (Phil.

\* “The power is the faculty itself; the might, the strength of the faculty exerting itself; the working is the effect which it produces.”—EDIT. † “Unless it work energetically in us, we do not believe. For it is a wonderful exhibition of the almighty power of God.”—EDIT.

ii. 13;) (*to velle bonum, æquè ac voluntatem bonam*;) “he worketh habit and principle,” and by supervening grace exciteth to, and assisteth in, acting it.

(3.) *The continuance and perseverance of faith are from above.*—Christ causeth our faith not to fail; (Luke xxii. 32;) and we “are kept by God’s mighty power through faith unto salvation,” (1 Peter i. 5,) and faith is by the same preserved: the faithful God, that effectually calls, will safely keep, (1 Thess. v. 23, 24,) in Jesus Christ, (Jude 1,) and “confirm to the end;” (1 Cor. i. 8;) for this is the desire of the Son unto the Father, (John xvii. 11, 12, 24,) and will of the Father concerning the Son. (John vi. 39.)

(4.) *The growth and increase of faith are from God.*—Who giveth all increase; and therefore it was well prayed for unto the Lord to “help unbelief,” (Mark ix. 24,) and to “increase faith.” (Luke xvii. 5.)

(5.) *The perfection of faith is from God and Christ.*—Jesus is, as the Author, so the Finisher of our faith. (Heb. xii. 2.) And this either by bringing it to its *ακμη*, and “highest degree” it can reach, or is necessary for the saints it should reach to in the world; “fulfilling all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power;” and because he hath begun, “perfecting it,” *επιτελεισας*. (Phil. i. 6;) or by perfecting it in vision: for it is God that gives “the end of our faith, salvation.” (1 Peter i. 9.)

## 2. LESS PRINCIPAL.

The *less principal efficient causes* are either *impulsive* or *instrumental*.

### (1.) IMPULSIVE.

The *impulsive* or *moving cause* is either *external* or *internal*.

First. The *inwardly moving cause*, *προηγουμενη*, *proegumena*, is, (i.) *On God’s part*, his free grace and love, self-moving goodness.—In which sense it is called “the gift of God;” (Eph. ii. 8;) and “the election obtain it;” (Rom. xi. 7;) even those that are “ordained to life believe.” (Acts xiii. 48.) Not improvement of reason, not use of means appointed for the attainment of faith, that merit this gift; but “God worketh” all of “his own good pleasure,” *ευδοκια*. (Phil. ii. 13;) which appears in “that not many noble” and “wise,” but “poor,” receive “the gospel.” (1 Cor. i. 28, 29; Matt. xi. 5.)

(ii.) *On the sinner’s part.*—Who doth believe, and, being quickened, moveth; acted, acteth, and that freely. The moving cause is sense of misery and undoneness without Christ, and interest in the promise through faith; there being no other name, (Acts iv. 12,) and “he that believeth not being condemned.” (John iii. 18.) So that here is the necessary condition, and *causa sine quâ non*, of faith,—sense of misery and inability in self and all creatures to recover a man out of his lost estate; whence ariseth renouncing and throwing away all our own “righteousnesses,” those “filthy rags,” (Isai. lxiv. 6,) not “having” or not depending upon “our own righteousness,” or any thing short of Christ. (Phil. iii. 9.)

Second. The *outwardly moving cause*, *προκαταρκτηκη*, *procatarctica*,

(i.) *On God's part*, to give faith, is Christ and his merit; for "every good gift is through Christ:" *Omne donum gratiæ Dei in Christo est.*—AMBROSIUS in *Eph. i.* As from the Father of lights, so through the Sun of righteousness; none come to the Father, nothing cometh from the Father, but by him; whom by this means the Father will make to be honoured as himself. (John v. 23.) As salvation was purchased by Christ upon terms of believing, so faith also, whereby we lay hold upon Christ for salvation; and therefore that Spirit which is called "the Spirit of faith," is by Christ promised, upon his purchase-making and ascending, to be sent to convince the world of that great sin of unbelief. (John xvi. 9.)

(ii.) The externally moving cause to believe, *on the sinner's part*, which may be called "the formal object," is two-fold:—

[i.] *As to God and his word, God's veracity and infallible truth.* (Heb. iv. 13; vi. 18.)—He can neither be deceived, nor deceive; "God which cannot lie" hath "promised," is joined to hope, and therefore faith. (Titus i. 2.) He that believeth "receiveth the word of God as the word of God," (1 Thess. ii. 13,) and "setteth to his seal that God is true," (John iii. 33,) accounting him "faithful that hath promised;" (Heb. x. 23;) the ground of faith being God's faithfulness, and the object the promise. God's "having spoken," *αυτος εφη*, was enough to Abraham, in a difficult case. (Rom. iv. 17, 18.) Here is the *resolutio fidei* ["the resolving of faith"] into its stable foundation,—God's unquestionable truth; who is *prima veritas, αυταληθεια* ["the first truth and Truth itself:"] so that the believer "hath the witness in himself;" (1 John v. 10;) and his evidence is better, and assent stronger, as to his *πιστα*, ["things to be believed,"] than any one's as to "things apprehended by sense," *τα αισθητα*, or "by reason," *τα νοητα*. Therefore sometimes divine testimony is added to rational discovery, (as in this point, that there is another life, &c.,) because of the certainty and distinctness of knowledge by revelation above all other ways.

[ii.] *As to Christ offered in and by the promise:*—for more full explanation's sake, I sever the consideration of God promising, and Christ offered, which otherwise I would always unite:—the moving cause of faith in the sinner, is *his power, as an all-sufficient Saviour*: "Able to save to the uttermost;" (Heb. vii. 25;) being anointed with authority and abilities, commission and qualifications, for that work, *and his love to sinners*. Having laid down his life for them, he "will in no wise cast them out that come to" him by faith. (John vi. 37.) These are the solid props of a true Christian's faith, which make the former (believing God and the word) not to be a wavering opinion, and the latter (believing in Christ) not an adventurous hazard.

## (2.) INSTRUMENTAL CAUSE.

*The instrumental cause of faith* is either the *begetting or preserving cause*.

First. The instrument by which the Spirit of God *produceth* faith, is *the word of God*, in whatever way coming to us, to be considered



and meditated on by us : (John v. 39 ; Luke ii. 19, 51 :) the word read by us or to us, the word expounded and enforced by the public ordinance, preaching *ex officio* ; [“ according to duty,”] the private ordinance, conference *ex fraternâ charitate* [“ through brotherly charity”]. (1 John iii. 23.) By believing, the soul answereth to God’s call, which supposeth a word ; therefore it is called “ the word and doctrine” of faith. And “ faith cometh by hearing ;” men cannot believe in him of whom they have not heard : (Rom. x. 8, 14, 17 :) Christ must be “ preached,” before “ believed on.” (1 Tim. iii. 16.) For, by the gospel preached, God puts forth his power in making men believe to salvation ; (Rom. i. 16 :) the efficacy whereof, (it being accompanied with that spiritual and powerful demonstration mentioned 1 Cor. ii. 4,) the apostle to the Corinthians explaineth and extolleth, God having in due time manifested his word through preaching. (1 Cor. i. 18, 21, &c.) Now this instrument is all the word of God, (Titus i. 3,) not excluding the law from being the means as well as the object of faith ; (Acts xxiv. 14 :) for “ the law ” is a useful “ schoolmaster ” to prepare us for Christ, (Gal. iii. 21, 24,) driving us out of ourselves, and following us with the lashes of the curse, that we may run to the grace of the gospel, and “ make mention of ” Christ’s “ righteousness only.” (Psalm lxi. 16.) So that knowledge must alway go before faith : we must “ know whom,” what, and wherefore we believe, and “ give a reason of ” our faith and “ hope.” (2 Tim. i. 12 ; 1 Peter iii. 15.) The eyes of the mind enlightening, goes before the working of God’s power in our believing : (Eph. i. 18, 19 :) so Paul’s sending was “ to turn from darkness to light,” before faith in Christ is mentioned : (Acts xxvi. 18 :) every one that “ seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.” (John vi. 40.) A seeing in scripture-light makes way ; inasmuch that the knowledge of the word and Christ, as the means to get faith, is highly advanced, and called “ life eternal ;” (John xvii. 3 :) yea, put for believing, to which it leads : “ By his knowledge,” *objectivè*, or, “ the knowledge of him,” “ shall my righteous servant justify many.” (Isai. liii. 11.)

Secondly. The instrumental causes of faith’s *maintenance and increase* are,

(i.) *The word of God.*—*Causa procreans et conservans : ab hisdem nutrimur ex quibus constamus.\** It is seed to beget, and “ milk ” for growth in “ babes ;” (1 Peter ii. 2 :) yea, “ strong meat ” for strong ones “ in Christ.” (Heb. v. 14.)

(ii.) *Sacraments.*—As seals of the righteousness of faith, *tesserae* [“ tokens ”] and pledges of God’s love superadded to his promise. They *signify* and help to clear the understanding, and so consequently promote faith. They *seal* and confirm : seals are for this end, to confirm the faith of him to whom the deed is delivered. And it is usually said by learned divines, they actually *exhibit* for our growth by feeding.

\* “ The word of God is the procreating and preserving cause. We are thus nourished by the very things of which we consist.”—EDIT.

(iii.) *Prayer*.—As in that man: “Lord, help mine unbelief;” (Mark ix. 24;) and the disciples: “Lord, increase our faith;” (Luke xvii. 5;) and St. Paul, for the Thessalonians. (2 Thess. i. 10, 11.) *Quoties de fidei constantiâ (et incremento) agitur, ad preces confugiendum est.*\*—CALVINUS in *Jud.* 20.

I might add another ternary of means for the increase of faith, inferior to the former:

(i.) *The cross, afflictions, temptations*.—Therefore “the trial of faith” is called “precious,” because it burnisheth and increaseth “precious faith.” (1 Peter i. 7.) “The trial of faith worketh patience;” (James i. 3;) “patience, experience;” (Rom. v. 4;) and that is a good ground for more hope and faith: they are conjoined, 2 Thess. i. 3, 4.

(ii.) *By frequent actings and exercise, faith is increased*.—Though graces’ beginning is different, yet their improvement is, in great measure, after the way of other habits.

(iii.) *By seeing and considering the example of others*, the “cloud of witnesses,” (Heb. xii. 1, 2,) “whose faith” the apostolical command is that we “follow.” (Heb. xiii. 7.) Thus many were of weak made strong, beholding the faith of the martyrs, and the eminent effects of it.

## (II.) MATERIAL CAUSE.

For *the material cause of faith; genus habet rationem materiæ*; “that which is its general and common nature, wherein it agrees with others, is the matter of it.” Now as saving grace in the description was the genus wherein it agrees with other graces; so comparing true saving faith with other faiths, that may tolerably pretend to the name, assent is the common nature and matter of it, even the nearest and immediate genus. Faith historical, of miracles, temporary; all have assent, but not all assent belonging to true faith. There must not only be “knowledge,” *γνωσις*, but also *επιγνωσις*, “acknowledgment,” as necessary and essential to faith; and that arising from “the full assurance of understanding,” *πληροφορια συνεσεως*. (Col. ii. 2; 2 Tim. iii. 14.) There must be a faith doctrinal and assertive, as the foundation of faith applicative and fiducial: if I assent not to the promise of another as true, I cannot rely upon the person for the good mentioned. There is a double acknowledgment: (I mean not verbal profession:) 1. That the things revealed in scripture, and by us known, *are of God*: 2. That they *are true*, (which naturally floweth from the former,) *and shall all be fulfilled*. Abraham was persuaded before he trusted. (Rom. iv. 21.) Now to the end that this full assent and acknowledgment of the mind, which is a necessary ingredient of true faith, may be had, the divine authority of the scriptures, confirmed by miracles and other characters, is to be studied, that we may build our assent, and thereby our faith, upon a stable foundation.

\* “As often as any discussion arises respecting the constancy and increase of our faith, we must instantly betake ourselves to prayer.”—EDIT.

## (III.) FORMAL CAUSE.

The *formal cause*, which doth straiten the general nature of faith, and distinguish true saving faith from all other faiths (*forma vel aliquid formæ analogum ponitur differentiæ loco* \*) in which may be *notitia et assensus*, is [the] *fiducial receiving of Christ, offered by God in the promises of the gospel*. In which are two things formally constitutive of saving faith :

1. *Acceptation of Christ and the promises*.—Faith is that hand which doth touch the top of the golden sceptre, (Esther iv. 11,) or that closeth with and entertaineth what God offereth, receiving Christ. (John i. 12.) Hence a weak faith is true faith and saving, as well as strong; because it indeed receiveth the gift, though with a trembling hand. This is the coming unto Christ, (John vi. 35,) and appropriating what before lay in common; the applying [of] what before was only applicable, making the soul to say, with Thomas, believing, “My Lord and my God.” (John xx. 28.) ZANCHIUS in *Coloss. ii. 6* : *Sicut accepistis—Et quomodo accipitur? Fide.* † So the good things purchased by Christ, and following upon our receiving of Christ, are said to be “received,”—as “the atonement,” “abundance of grace,” “the gift of righteousness;” (Rom. v. 11, 17;) *ελαβομεν et λαμβανοντες, fidei videlicet manu, oblata δεχομενοι* ‡ and expressly remission of sin is said to be received by faith. (Acts xxvi. 18.)

2. *Innitency*.—Recumbency of soul upon a Christ received, intrusting him entirely with, and committing to him, the care of soul and salvation, (2 Tim. i. 12,) staying the soul upon him, (Isai. l. 10,) “leaning upon the beloved,” (Canticles viii. 5,) rolling the soul upon him, resting with whole weight upon him, as faithful, able, loving. And this is truly *fiducia* [“trust”]; this is truly *credere in Christum*, “to believe in or upon Christ;” more than *credere Christum et Christo*, “to believe a Christ,” that he is, “and to believe Christ,” or, his word. It is a phrase in profane writers unusual, as the thing itself, “salvation by faith,” was unknown. To this belong those expressions of “the eyes being toward God,” and “looking to him.” (2 Chron. xx. 12; Psalm cxxiii. 2; Isai. xlv. 22.) Even as the serpent was lifted up, to be looked upon with expectation of healing virtue; so Christ, to be looked unto by the soul, with a longing expectation and confident dependence. (John iii. 14, 15.)

## (IV.) FINAL CAUSE.

The *end of faith* is the glory of God in man’s salvation; the one as supreme and ultimate, the other as subordinate. That God might save his creature, to whom he wished well, in a way of demonstration and exaltation of his glorious *justice* and *mercy*, therefore was saving faith, and salvation by faith, ordained. *Justice*.—“That he

\* “The form, or something analogous to the form, is put in the place of the difference.”—EDIT. † For a translation, see page 365.—EDIT. ‡ “The two Greek words signify our eager acceptance, with the hand of faith, of the proffered benefits.”—EDIT.

might be just," that is, demonstrated and declared to be just; (as Psalm li. 6;) both in not pardoning without satisfaction, and therefore punishing sin upon the Surety; (Rom. iii. 24—26;) and then in pardoning the sinner through faith, uniting to, and interesting in, the Surety: therefore saith the apostle, God "is faithful and just to forgive." (1 John i. 9.) *Mercy.*—In that he accepteth the satisfaction of another, and imputeth his righteousness to the sinner, by faith receiving it; and that he found out and provided alone this way of salvation by faith. "It was of faith, that it might be of grace:" (Rom. iv. 16:) "For by grace are we saved through faith;" (Eph. ii. 8;) and thereby works, as meriting, and so man's confidence in, and "boasting" of, himself, are "excluded," (Rom. iii. 27,) and God's glory entirely secured and advanced, by men's "submitting to the righteousness of God by faith;" (Rom. x. 3; Hab. ii. 4;) faith and pride being utterly inconsistent. Indeed, trusting God upon his bare word, not having merit nor human probability, giveth great "glory to God." (Rom. iv. 20.) That man's salvation is an end of faith, all the New Testament witnesseth; even that we "believe to the saving of our souls," and "receive the end of our faith," in "the salvation of our souls." (Heb. x. 39; 1 Peter i. 9.)

## EFFECTS.

IV. *The effects (more proper or less proper) and consequents of true faith.*

1. *Union with Christ.*—"Who is our life:" (Col. iii. 4:) and so we "live by faith." (Heb. x. 38.) What can more necessarily and immediately follow upon the offer on God's part, in the gospel of Christ, to be ours, and our receiving him by faith, than union to his person, though no personal union? Hence having Christ in us, and our being in the faith, are made the same, (2 Cor. xiii. 5,) because Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith. (Eph. iii. 17.) Whatever the Spirit on Christ's part doeth before by way of uniting us to Christ, ("apprehending us for Christ Jesus," as some understand Phil. iii. 12,) faith is the hand on our part that receives, and the band that fasteneth Christ to us. This I take to be the fruit of the first consummate vital act of the quickened soul; and then is the marriage-knot tied.

2. *Hence follow remission of sins, and justification of the person, through Christ and his righteousness apprehended and appropriated.*—This Peter testifies to be the witness of the prophets, even that "through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) The pardoned alone live; for the guilty are dead in law: which the people sensibly bewailed in saying, "If our iniquities be upon us, and we pine away in them, how shall we then live?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 10.) Join this with our living by faith, and you see faith's necessity and efficacy toward pardon. It was St. Paul's ardent desire, that he, having won Christ, (got him, been united to him,) might "be found in him, having the righteousness which is of God through faith in Christ." (Phil. iii. 8, 9.) Nothing more fre-

quent than the assertions and demonstrations of justification by faith, in St. Paul's epistles, especially to the Romans and Galatians: the manner of faith's efficacy wherein, is by a judicious person of our own well expressed, for the cutting off those two eager controversies about the instrumentality and conditionality of faith. "It is," saith he, "the general opinion of the orthodox, wherein all agree, that faith is a means appointed by God, in the use whereof the children of men are made partakers of justification."

3. *Adoption.*—That our receiving into the number, and having a right to the privileges, of the sons of God, (the Spirit of adoption, boldness at the throne of grace, present supply, future inheritance,) is the fruit and product of faith, appears from scripture and consequence: "To as many as received him," or "believed on his name," "gave he power to become the sons of God." (John i. 12.) For indeed we being by faith united to Christ, and the faultiness of our persons taken away through Christ, what more immediately follows from this loveliness in him, and oneness with him, than communication of sonship? Which cannot be in that way that Christ is a Son; and therefore is by "the adoption of children by Jesus Christ." (Eph. i. 5, 6.) Adoption therefore is the effect of faith, through union to and justification through Christ, intermediately caused thereby. *Causa causæ est causa causati.\**

4. *Audience and answer of prayer.*—Our Lord hath given universal proof to this, in assuring that "all things whatsoever shall be asked in prayer, believing, shall be received." (Matt. xxi. 22.) By St. James, asking in faith, without wavering, is required; and "he that wavereth" is bid not to "think he shall receive any thing." (James i. 6, 7.) Yea, the efficacy of "the prayer of faith" is by him asserted, (James v. 15,) and throughout scripture, by remarkable expressions and instances, abundantly confirmed and proved. *Fidelem si putaveris, facies,†* is true as to God, as well as man; and that of the Roman historian: *Fult sibi quisque credi, et habita fides ipsam plerumque obligat fidem.‡* But it doth not produce this eminent effect as to prayer only, rendering it acceptable; but also,

5. *Acceptance to the person in all services, together with the distinction of and denomination of "good" given to habits and actions, flows from faith.*—"Without faith it is" universally and utterly "impossible to please God." (Heb. xi. 6.) By faith our "sacrifices" become "excellent," and we with them; we and they please God; (verses 5, 6;) and therefore it is, not without good reason, usually accounted that "wedding-garment" which renders our presence welcome to the Lord in any ordinance or service. (Matt. xxii. 11.) Faith taketh away the savour of the flesh, (which whatsoever is born of the flesh hath, John iii. 6,) and gives a divine tincture and relish. It is like a vein of gold running through all duties, which makes them precious,

\* "The cause of the cause is the cause also of the effect."—EDIT. † SENECA. "If you account him faithful, you will render him so."—EDIT. ‡ LIVIUS. "Every man is desirous of obtaining credence to what he says; and when confidence in others is manifested, it usually produces in them a correspondent faithfulness."—EDIT.

though still they be somewhat earthly. That it is characteristically denominative of other graces, and distinctive of them from moral virtues, those *splendida vitia*, ["splendid vices,"] may appear, if it be considered, that even that eminent grace of love is nothing without faith, (as no faith without it could be any thing, 1 Cor. xiii. 2,) and doth nothing without it: "Faith worketh by love;" (Gal. v. 6;) not love, but faith by it; faith being first and chief in being and working: humility was eminent in the woman and centurion; yet not humility, but faith, was taken notice of; (Matt. xv. 27, 28; viii. 8—10;) *this* being the main tree, *that* a sprig from its root, receiving its excellency from it, and, by faith accompanying and overtopping it, becoming true humility, and not a degenerate meanness and abject lowness of spirit. Sorrow for sin would not deserve the name of repentance, nor confession be ingenuous, but for the hand of faith laid on the head of the scape-goat. (Lev. xvi. 21.) Faith, believing God's promise concerning the moderation, sanctification, removal of affliction, "worketh" in a way of "patience;" (James i. 3;) and this faith, accompanying, ennobles Christian patience, and makes it not to be obstinacy or insensibility. So it makes a Christian's contempt of the world not to be a vainglorious pretence, or a sullen, morose reservedness. Thus might we run through many more.

6. *Conquest over adversaries and hinderances in the way to heaven.*—Faith in "the mighty God," (Isai. ix. 6,) "the Captain of our salvation," (Heb. ii. 10,)—who hath "led captivity captive," disarmed the powers of darkness, and triumphed over them, (Eph. iv. 8; vi. 16,) and we in him, our Head,—makes courageous, and that victorious; for if we "resist," the general of the adverse party "will flee;" (James iv. 7;) only we must "resist him steadfast in the faith," (1 Peter v. 9,) holding up that "shield" that will repel and "quench all his darts." (Eph. vi. 16.) For the life of sense, in "the lusts of the flesh, and of the eye, and the pride of life," (1 John ii. 16,) the life of faith is diametrically opposite thereto; ("For we walk by faith, not by sight;" 2 Cor. v. 7;) and doth necessarily weaken it; as we find in those worthies (Heb. xi.) that by faith denied themselves in so many things pleasing to flesh and blood, and did and suffered so many things contrary thereto. For the world, as that same eleventh of the Hebrews giveth remarkable instance, so St. John beareth testimony in most significant phrase to the power of faith herein, calling it "the victory whereby we overcome the world;" (1 John v. 4;) because certain victory attends and shall crown all that "fight the good fight of faith" against the world; (1 Tim. vi. 12;) as the god and prince of this world; so the pleasures of the world, the honours, the profits, the friendship of the world, with their contrary troubles, and the snares and temptations of both.

7. *Confession and profession of the faith.*—This is an inseparable adjunct and consequent of true faith; though I call it not a property, because this may be where true faith is not; but where faith is, this will be also. All is not gold that glisters; but that is not gold that doth not glisten. "Can a man carry fire in his bosom," and not

discover it? (Prov. vi. 27.) Can a man have the spirit of faith, and believe, yet not speak? (2 Cor. iv. 13.) The apostolical command is, not only that we “stand fast in the faith,” (1 Cor. xvi. 13.) but also that we “hold fast the profession of our faith;” (Heb. x. 23;) for as “with the heart man believeth to justification,” so “with the mouth confession is made to salvation.” (Rom. x. 10.) Let our unchristianly and irrational deriders of professors and profession consider this.

8. *It giveth the soul a sight of things invisible, and an enjoyment of things to come.*—By faith Moses saw him that is invisible, Jehovah, whom otherwise no man hath seen, nor can see and live. (Heb. xi. 27; John i. 18; Exod. xxxiii. 20.) Yea, by the same, St. Paul and others of the faithful looked at those eternal good “things which are not seen;” (2 Cor. iv. 18;) for they walked “by faith and not by sight.” (2 Cor. v. 7.) By this the saints can look within the veil. By faith the soul takes a prospect of the promised Canaan, this being the Pisgah of its highest elevation. By this Abraham saw Christ’s day and rejoiced: (John viii. 56:) it gives a present subsistence to certain futures, and “is the evidence of things hoped for,” and “not seen;” (Heb. xi. 1;) for which cause the believer’s conversation will be in heaven, where he seeth his treasure is, and where therefore his heart is. (Matt. vi. 21.)

9. *Joy and peace in some degree is an immediate effect of true faith; (and no true joy is without faith;) though higher degrees flow through assurance.* There is “joy and peace in believing;” (Rom. xv. 13;) and “a joy of faith,” especially when conjoined with growth. (Phil. i. 25.) It is expressed by “leaning and staying upon the Lord;” which speaks support, fixation, and quietation of mind: for which cause a child of God under desertions prefers his life of dependence, before the worldling’s life of enjoyment; and finds some satisfaction in present unsatisfiedness, hath some glimmerings of light in the dark night of unassuredness. God hath promised to “keep him in peace, in peace,” translated “perfect peace,” “whose mind is stayed on” him, “because he trusteth in” him. (Isai. xxvi. 3.) Believing in the Lord brings establishment, (2 Chron. xx. 20,) not only as to the condition and state of the person, but also as to the disposition and frame of the mind. We find it in other cases; believing the promise, and relying on the power and love of another, afford a great calm, and some secret joy, to a mind otherwise disturbed and perplexed: thus faith in its own nature and direct tendency. But still understand, faith as acting faith, as exercised, produceth this effect; the Christian, so far forth as he lives by faith, and in the improvement of faith, enjoys this quiet, sedate mind, even when he wants the full-blown joy of a life of spiritual sense. And not only from the nature of faith doth this arise; but also as faith’s hand casts out the anchor of hope which keeps the soul steady; and also as it represents and foretastes the recompence and joy to come. This leads to the next effect of faith.

10. *Assurance and further joy thereby.*—I make not this constitutive of faith, nor inseparable from faith, lest I condemn and sadden

causelessly the generation of the just ; but wherever it is, it proceeds from faith. Unbelief is shut out from the promise, and can have no true hope, much less assurance. Therefore it is called "the full assurance of faith ;" (Heb. x. 22 ;) and that *παρρησια και προσαγωγή εν πεποιθησει*, "boldness and access with confidence and assurance" is by faith in Christ. (Eph. iii. 12.) And thus believing doth, through assurance, (the soul by a reflex act perceiving its own faith, and thence interest in the object of faith,) bring "the joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter i. 8.) This, though not absolutely necessary, all believers should labour after, that the comfort of it may *confort* (according to the notation of the word) and "strengthen" them ; "for the joy of the Lord is our strength." (Neh. viii. 10.) The apostle Peter bids [us to] "give diligence to make our calling and election sure," even to ourselves, rather than in itself. (2 Peter i. 10.) And St. John wrote to those that believed, that they might know they had eternal life. (1 John v. 13.)

11. And lastly. *Salvation* is the effect and inseparable consequent of true faith, according to the text.—Now this being that great and last effect which the others made way for, the object of our desires, the reward of our endeavours, the only and perfect happiness of man, I shall speak more distinctly to the connexion between faith and salvation under these three heads,—*that, how, why.*

First. *THAT faith and salvation are conjoined.*—And this is peculiarly one of those things which are called *εχομενα σωτηριας*, "having," "accompanying," "laying hold of salvation." (Heb. vi. 9.) It is the testimony of truth itself, that this is God's great end in sending his Son into the world,—"that whosoever believeth might have eternal life." (John iii. 16.) The Purchaser of salvation declares this to be the "will of him that sent him,"—"that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, might have eternal life." (John vi. 40.) Accordingly he that hath all power committed to him, giveth commission and command to his disciples to preach, that "whosoever believeth shall be saved ;" (Mark xvi. 16 ;) and ascertains their salvation by his prayer for all that should believe through his disciples' word. (John xvii. 20.) St. Paul testifies, [that] he that believeth in his heart shall be saved ; (Rom. x. 9, 10 ;) declares that they that have the gift of righteousness (which he defends to be by faith) "shall reign in life ;" (Rom. v. 17 ;) and accordingly conjoins "justified" (namely, by faith) and "glorified ;" (Rom. viii. 30 ;) and asserteth this to be according to God's design in election, and terms in vocation ; (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14 ;) sets forth himself as an encouraging example of the "exceeding abundant grace of our Lord *through* faith," to all, though great sinners like himself, that "should believe on Christ to life everlasting." (1 Tim. i. 14—16.) *Και τοις εισαγαγαν μεμολυσμενοις, και τοις επ' ελαττον τουτο νεοσηκωσιν, αρκσει προς αποκαθαρσιν η διαπιστεως χαρις.*—CYRILLUS.\* This St. John accounts so clear and unquestionable, that he writes to them that believe, that they "may know that they

\* "The grace of God which is through faith will suffice to purify those who are deeply steeped in pollution, as well as those who are but slightly defiled."—EDIT.



have eternal life." (1 John v. 13.) So unlimitedly true is that of Habakkuk : "The just shall live by his faith." (Hab. ii. 4.) *Deus oleum misericordiæ (et gloriæ) ponit in vase fiduciæ.*\*—BERNARDUS.

Secondly. How *salvation is the effect of faith.*—Here consider these three things :—

(1.) *The natural aptitude and fitness of this grace of faith, to be made use of in the way of saving man that had broken the first covenant, and could not be saved thereby.*—Yea, so fit is faith, as to be necessary upon supposition of God's saving sinners by a new covenant in the hands of a Mediator and Surety, and his righteousness. There must be an appropriation of that to the sinner, and making all his own ; and this must be by voluntary acceptance ; self-confidence and boasting must be prevented. Now faith alone could do this, as before hath been shown.

(2.) *The institution of God making this fitness of faith useful and effectual to this end,—salvation.*—For be it never so fit, yea, necessary, so that salvation could not be brought about without it ; and suppose, (*per hypothesin impossibilem*,) ["by an impossible hypothesis,"] which yet could not be, that man had believed upon the Redeemer, and God had not said, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved ;" faith had not reached salvation : therefore it is called "the righteousness of God," which is by faith in the Son of God, even of his finding out and appointing. (Phil. iii. 9.) Even as sacramental signs are and must be fit to represent what they are appointed for ; (as AUGUSTINUS, epist. 23, *ad Bonifacium* : *Oportet similitudinem habeant earum rerum, quarum sunt sacramenta ; quam si non haberent, non essent sacramenta* ; †) yet they work not naturally, but by divine institution, as a means of faith's maintaining and increase : so faith to salvation.

(3.) *The dignity and merit of the object of faith* is to be considered.—For though it be said, "Receiving" (*τελος, mercedem*, as Beza rendereth it) "the end," "the reward," "of your faith ;" (1 Peter i. 9;) yet is it not of merit ; for the way of salvation by faith is altogether of grace, as St. Paul industriously and abundantly proveth. Faith therefore may be considered either *qualitativè*, or *relativè* ; in itself, or with respect to its object. Now not as a habit in us, or act exerted by us, (though acting, not dead, faith saveth,) not as a work of the law required in the first commandment, doth faith save ; but through the righteousness of Christ, which it apprehends and appropriates. In itself it is the most indigent and soul-emptying grace that is, and cannot by its own merit do this ; for it is due, being by God commanded ; (Luke xvii. 10 ;) imperfect in itself ; (for who attains the highest degrees of faith ?) and if perfect in its kind, yet but an imperfect righteousness, being the fulfilling but of one gospel-command.

Thirdly. *WHY there is this undivided connexion between faith and salvation.*

(1.) *The prime reason*, and that which it must be ultimately resolved

\* "God places the oil of mercy and of glory in the vessel of trust and assurance."—EDIT.

† "They must bear a similitude to those things of which they are the sacraments. If they had not this likeness, they would cease to be sacraments."—EDIT.

into, is, the "good pleasure" of God, according to which he worketh all things. (Phil. ii. 12.) There is nothing in faith bearing proportion to this effect and attainment; so that we may admiringly say, "Even so, Father, because it pleaseth thee." (Matt. xi. 26.)

(2.) *Secondary or subordinate reasons* :

First. *On God's part*, upon supposition of his institution.

(i.) *His justice*.—Having received a valuable price for salvation; and this price being made the sinner's own in the way of God's own appointment. So that believing sinners may humbly plead with God, as a "righteous Judge," for their crown; (2 Tim. iv. 8;) God's justice being not only secured, but obliged, (in a sense,) by faith. (Rom. iii. 26.)

(ii.) *His faithfulness*.—Having in his word promised salvation to faith, as hath been shown.

Secondly. *On faith's part*.—The reason why God hath conjoined certain salvation with it, is, because it giveth most "glory to God" of any thing; (Rom. iv. 20;) therefore God entails glory on it peculiarly; it honoureth God, and God will honour them that have it. (1 Sam. ii. 30.) He that believeth, "sets to his seal that God is true," and every way justifieth and advanceth him. (John iii. 33.)

#### PROPERTIES.

V. *Properties and notes of trial*, convertible with true faith, and reciprocal, (where faith is, there is this and that; where this and that are, there is faith; where faith is not, there these are not, &c.,) and farther differencing it from other faith, which is a needful work; for there is true and false, feigned and unfeigned, alive and dead. (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) Of these some indeed belong to the former head of effects; and some of them seem not altogether unsuitable to be referred to this head.

The first shall be a more general note. True and saving faith *receiveth a whole Christ, upon judgment and choice, on God's terms*.—"Lord" to rule, as well as "Jesus" to save, the object of faith in the text. No separating what God hath joined; and to have a divided Christ, not a whole Christ; salvation, but not self-denial, &c. True faith is a considerate thing; (that which hath least depth, springs up most suddenly, Matt. xiii. 5;) the soul sits down, and weigheth, and casteth up all accounts, and compareth all things together;—misery by sin; undoneness in self; terms of salvation, self-denial a fundamental one, taking up the cross, following Christ; universally-sincere obedience; and what the world, lust, or Satan can say to the contrary;—and saith "Content" to God's terms. And here the bargain is made; the soul trusts God contentedly for his part, even privilege; and resolutely sets about its own part, even duty. Hence true faith, proceeding deliberately upon God's terms, is willing to be tried by the word declaring those terms. Which farther trial according to the word follows.

Secondly. True and saving faith *is ushered-in by godly sorrow and humility, in a good degree, though they are farther completed after-*

ward upon the sense of God's pardoning and accepting love.—“Then shalt thou remember thy ways, and be ashamed,” &c., (Ezek. xvi. 61—63,) “Repent, and believe,” (Mark i. 15,) “Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,” (Acts xx. 21,) this is gospel-order. The inconsistency between faith and pride, is evident in that opposition of the soul's lifting up, and living by faith; (Hab. ii. 4;) and the hinderance of the Jews' believing. (John v. 44.) The centurion's and woman's faith were attended with eminent humility. (Matt. xv. 27, 28; viii. 8—10.) Did not humility and godly sorrow accompany and bring-in faith, “the law” could not be “our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.” (Gal. iii. 24.) This shutteth out that easy, merry, proud faith, that springs up without the dunging of humility, or watering of sorrow according to God.

Thirdly. True and saving faith is *abiding and perseverant*.—And this upon supposition of temptations and assaults. For otherwise a mock faith may have a continuance, and men die in a pleasing dream of ungrounded presumptuous confidence. Now it must be such, or cannot be saving; for as it is said, “He that believeth shall be saved,” (Mark xvi. 16,) so, “He that endureth to the end shall be saved.” (Matt. xxiv. 13.) They that have true faith, have the seed of God abiding in them, the prayer of Christ for them, are kept by the power of God; for “He that hath begun a good work will finish it,” (Phil. i. 6,) his gifts being without repentance. Believing and sealing for security are conjoined. (Eph. i. 13.) The true believer is the wise man that built on the rock, his house therefore stood; (Matt. vii. 24, 25;) the good ground that hath depth of earth, that what springs may not wither. (Matt. xiii. 8.) “The just shall live by his faith,” continue therein, and so “believe to the saving of his soul,” (Hab. ii. 4; Heb. x. 38, 39,) “being rooted and established” therein through Christ. (Col. ii. 7.)

See more of this before under the efficient cause, principal and instrumental.

Fourthly. True and saving faith is *growing, though this growth be not always discernible or alike*.—That prayer for increase of faith (Luke xvii. 5) flowed from the very nature of faith. It is “the good fight,” (1 Tim. vi. 12,) which must be carried on to a complete conquest; running a race, speaking progress to the finishing [of] our course; (2 Tim. iv. 7;) for the way “of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more to a perfect day.” (Prov. iv. 18.) Whatever hath life hath growth, till it reach a state of consistency. St. John wrote to those that did believe, that they might believe; (1 John v. 13;)—*Ut credatis, credere pergatis*, (which belongs to the last head,) *et fide crescatis*—BEZA *in loc.*; \*—that is, “grow in faith,” according to the general apostolical precept of growing in all grace. The same author accounts this the most plain and natural interpretation of that of Paul, “From faith to faith:” (Rom. i. 17;) *Fide*,

\* “That ye may believe—That ye may proceed to believe; that ye may grow in faith.”—EDIT.

*quæ quotidie incrementum accipiat* ;\* confirming it by that of Clement of Alexandria : “ The apostle speaks not of a double faith, but of one, and that receiving growth and perfecting.” The apostle’s *προκοπή της πίστεως*, “ furtherance of faith,” (Phil. i. 25,) and *βεβαιούμενοι εν τη πίστει, και περιρροούντες εν αυτή*, “ establishing and abounding in the faith,” (Col. ii. 7,) speak increase and growth in root and branches ; more fixed habit, more frequent acts. They therefore that have believed ever since they were born, and alway alike, never believed at all truly.

Fifthly. True and saving faith *is purging*.—“ Purifying their hearts by faith.” (Acts xv. 9.) Believing, and walking not after the flesh, are joined : (Rom. viii. 1, 4 :) where there is faith, (and much more, assurance of faith,) there will be heart and body cleansed and washed, pollutions of flesh and spirit taken away, by faith. (Heb. x. 22, 23 ; 2 Cor. vii. 1.) Receiving the promise of the “ undefiled inheritance,” (1 Peter i. 4,) the believer will “ purify himself, as He is pure,” (1 John iii. 3,) in whom he trusteth and hopeth. Living flesh will purge out the *sanies* and “ corruption ” in it ; a living fountain, the mud that is stirred up ; so living faith. And indeed hereby it is permanent ; for purity preserveth : pure faith cannot be kept but in a good, even a clean, conscience. (1 Tim. i. 19.)

Sixthly. True and saving faith *hath other graces accompanying it*.—In a good measure, with a proportionable increase, strength, and activity.—I know [that] some are more eminent for this, others for that, grace : as Moses for meekness ; Job, patience ; Abraham, faith, &c. ; yet in good measure must other graces accompany ; for this is an indispensable duty,—to “ add to your faith virtue ; and to virtue knowledge ; and to knowledge temperance ; and to temperance patience ; and to patience godliness ; and to godliness brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness charity.” (2 Peter i. 5—7.) Faith with many other graces, are called in the singular number, *καρπος*, “ the fruit of the Spirit,” because connex and inseparable. (Gal. v. 22.) Beside that, the growth, and strength, and activity of other graces have dependence upon it ; both as it pleads with Christ in prayer for all, and pleads with the soul to act, stir up, and abound in all. Abraham’s faith had self-denial accompanying it : there will be patience ; for “ he that believeth ” will “ not make haste.” (Isai. xlviii. 16.) See more tending to this under the fifth effect of faith. Let not men speak of their faith then, when other graces are no way suitable.

Seventhly. True and saving faith *is working and fruitful*.—Though love and good works are not the form of it, as the Papists plead ; yet it alway hath love accompanying, (Eph. i. 15,) and “ worketh by love,” (Gal. v. 6,) and without “ works is dead.” (James ii. 17.) *Per opera consummatur fides, non ut formatum per suam formam, sed ut forma per suas operationes, actus primus per actum secundum*.—ALTINGIUS.† Faith alone justifieth ; but faith which justifieth is

\* “ With a faith which receives daily increase and accession.”—EDIT. † “ Faith is perfected by works, not as the thing formed by its form, but as a form by its own operations, a first act by a second.”—EDIT.

not alone. *Bona opera non præcedunt justificandum, sed sequuntur justificatum.\** They that are in Christ Jesus by faith, are described by walking in Christ, and according to the Spirit: *Quomodo accipitur? Fide. Quomodo ambulatur in eo? Ad præscriptum voluntatis ejus vitam instituendo, et ex ejus Spiritu vivendo.*—ZANCHIUS in *Col. ii. 6.*† Faith is obediential; (Rom. xvi. 26;) and cannot but be so; for he that believeth really, his labour shall not be “in vain in the Lord,” (1 Cor. xv. 58,) cannot in reason and holy ingenuity, but think it meet [that] he be fruitful and “abounding alway in the work of the Lord;” (1 Cor. xv. 58;) for others, they do but think, not know, the greatness and certainty of the reward.‡ Yea, indeed, that assurance I before spake of, proceeds from faith through obedience: “By this we know that we know him,” (“know” put for “believe,” ZANCHIUS in *loc.*, as Isai. liii. 11,) “if we keep his commandments.” (1 John ii. 3.) I shall therefore, according to St. Paul’s command to Titus, “affirm constantly this” as “a faithful saying, that they which have believed must be careful to maintain good works.” (Titus iii. 8.)

Eighthly. True and saving faith, *trusting God for the greater, will trust him for lesser, mercies.*—To them that through Christ “do believe in God,” (1 Peter i. 21,) this will seem forcible arguing, and a necessary inference: “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up,” I believe, “for me, how shall he not with him also freely give me all things?” (Rom. viii. 32.) God hath made all sorts of promises to true faith, and accordingly many of the servants of God have expressed confidence in God when things have gone worst with them: they would “not be afraid what man can do unto” them, nor “of evil tidings;” their “hearts” were “fixed trusting in the Lord.” (Psalm lvi. 11; cxii. 7.) The just’s living by faith is true in this sense also; and that of Paul’s living “the life in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God,” hath much in it. (Gal. ii. 20.) Though, I know, natural timorousness, and living too much the life of sense, may occasion some worldly fears in a believer; (as boldness of temper, carelessness, false confidence, may much bear up an unbeliever;) yet in great measure *their* pretences to faith are questionable (I might say, their faith is but pretence) *who* say they can trust God with their souls, but will not trust him with bodies and estates.

Ninthly. True and saving faith *makes Christ very “precious” to them “that believe;”* ἀπειθουσι δὲ. “*but to the unpersuadable,*” he is “a stone of stumbling,” without “form or comeliness.” (1 Peter ii. 7, 8; Isai. liii. 2.)—They ask the believer, “What is thy beloved more than another beloved?” (Canticles v. 9.) And no wonder; for none but the believer hath a cleared eye to behold things that are “spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. ii. 14.) None but he hath that special interest which enhanceth the price and valuation. None but

\* “Good works do not precede the act of justification; but they follow him who is justified.”—EDIT. † “How do they receive Him? By faith. How do they walk in Him? By ordering their lives according to the prescript of his will, and by living through his Spirit.”—EDIT.

‡ *Alii cogitant, pii credunt.*—AUGUSTINUS. “Others only think; the pious believe.”—EDIT.

he hath that experience, by which it is "tasted and seen that the Lord is good." \* (Psalm xxxiv. 8.) But sight, propriety, and experience will make him inestimably precious, and the "meditation of him sweet." (Psalm civ. 34.) Faith, that seeth his necessity, seeth also his excellency; and takes him not upon constraint, but choice.

## OPPOSITES.

VI. Those things that are *opposite* to true faith, are of two sorts.

(I.) Such as speak the soul void of it, and are simply inconsistent with it.

(II.) Such as actively war against it, and repel it.

These I shall call *contrarily opposite*; those, *privatively opposite*; though the terms may seem not fully suitable to all the particulars.

## (I.) PRIVATIVELY.

Some things are *privatively opposite* to true and saving faith as relating to *the understanding*; others, as to *the will*; others, as to *the life*.

First. As to *the understanding and assent*.

1. *Ignorance, blindness, darkness*.—(Of the inconsistency of which with faith, see before of "the word," the instrumental cause.) This either is *invincible ignorance*, where means of cure are wanting; (Acts xvii. 30;) or *vincible*, which carelessness, sloth, or affectation causeth; for there are some persons willingly and wilfully ignorant, and "love darkness." (2 Peter iii. 5; John iii. 19.)

2. *Unpersuadableness to assent to the truth of the word and promise*.—*Ἀπειθεια, impersuasibilitas*. (Rom. xi. 30, 31.) When men are not satisfied in the grounds of believing, and so assent not: wherein yet sometimes there is a battery shaking the assent, and by parley bringing near a surrender, an almost persuasion, which yet is ineffectual. (Acts xxvi. 28.)

3. *Error in fundamentals*.—Especially those that concern faith, Christ, the promises, justification, and salvation. "Corrupt minds" are "reprobate concerning the faith." (2 Tim. iii. 8.) Therefore "doubtful disputations," where on one side is error, are dangerous to the weak. (Rom. xiv. 1.)

Secondly. As to *the will, affections, and consent*.

1. *Unbelief*.—Not accepting the good things promised, through ignorance or careless "neglect of so great salvation." (Heb. ii. 3.)

2. *Disbelief*.—When men, through dissatisfaction with the reasons to believe, or through pride, stubbornness, uncompliance of spirit, will not come to Christ for life, will not submit to the righteousness of God. (John v. 39, 40, 44.)

Thirdly. As relating to *life, practice, and profession*.

1. *Heresy* is privatively opposite.—Such as join obstinacy and promulgation to their errors, whose "words eat like a gangrene," are to be rejected, as men void of, and enemies to, the faith. (2 Tim. ii. 16, 17; Titus iii. 10.)

\* *Tolle meum et tolle Deum*. "Take away my from 'My Beloved is the chief among ten thousand,' and you take away my God." — EDIT.

2. *Apostasy from the truth and profession of the gospel*; called "denial," namely, after knowing and owning.—These never were of the faith, else would they not have gone from it. (1 John ii. 19.) This is a dangerous thing, drawing back to perdition; in such God hath no pleasure: (Heb. x. 38 :) "It had been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." (2 Peter ii. 21.) This commonly ends in bitterest enmity to the faith and true professors of it.

3. *All sins laying waste the conscience are inconsistent with faith*.—Because faith and a good conscience are inseparable companions. (1 Tim. iii. 9.)

## (II.) CONTRARILY.

By way of *contrariety*, there may be considered these things (possibly some also under the former head, in part) as opposite to true faith.

First. *Flesh and blood*.—These "cannot" enter into "the kingdom of God," (1 Cor. xv. 50,) and oppose faith that would bring thither. I name this first, because it is the greatest enemy, and gives advantage to all others; and then indeed are we tempted, (to unbelief, or any thing else,) when we are drawn aside of our own hearts. By "flesh and blood" is meant "sense:" living by sense is the great hinderer and supplanter of faith. (2 Cor. v. 7.) Also carnal reason judging every thing by its own unsuitable apprehensions, and so misrepresenting the things of God,—to it the gospel is "foolishness," though it is "the wisdom and power of God" to them that believe. (1 Cor. i. 23, 24.) This taketh notice of the meanness of the faithful in the world, and stumbleth at it, &c. Abraham left both these servants below when he went up into the mount to the Lord, to exercise that eminent faith of his. (Gen. xxii. 5.) Yea indeed, sense and reason appeared eminently contrary to him in his entertaining the promise at first; else had not the great strength of his faith been manifested, nor God glorified so much. (Rom. iv. 18—22.)

Secondly. *Satan's assaults*.—He not only at first keeps out faith, by blinding men's minds, (2 Cor. iv. 4,) but afterwards doth with faith as the king of Syria charged his captains to do with the king of Israel. (1 Kings xxii. 31.) He knows what an enemy to his kingdom faith is; by it we "resist" him, and consequently put him to flight, and "quench his darts." (1 Peter v. 9; Eph. vi. 16.) He knows, [that] if our faith fail, all fails; and therefore he desires to winnow the soul, (Luke xxii. 31,) and get the good seed "out of our hearts, lest we should believe and be saved." (Luke viii. 12.)

Thirdly. *The world is a great adversary*.—Why else is faith called "the victory over the world." (1 John v. 4,) but that there is hostility between the world and it?

Fourthly. I might add *men's own delays*.

1. *Causing hardness in their hearts from themselves*.—"To-day, to-day" believe; unless you would "harden your hearts." (Heb. iii. 15; John xii. 38—40.)

2. *Provoking God to seal men up under their injudicious, unpersuadable minds, for their long opposition to the light and word of faith.*—The Spirit of faith will not “always strive,” when men still “resist” him. (Gen. vi. 3; Acts vii. 51.)

## USES.

I shall improve all that hath been spoken, by some few USES, and conclude.

## I. INFORMATION.

The first sort of uses shall be corollaries for INFORMATION.

1. *Of the certain and unspeakable misery of the unbeliever, from the sure happiness of the believer.*—*Contrariorum contraria est consequentia.\** Remember what hath been spoken before of the excellent effects and consequents of faith, union with Christ, justification, adoption, &c., and that great and everlasting fruit, salvation; upon all which we may conclude with the apostle, “Blessed are they which be of faith” (or believe) “with faithful Abraham:” (Gal. iii. 9:) yea, therefore “blessed is he that believeth, because there shall be a performance of all those things which have been spoken of the Lord.” (Luke i. 45.) Now turn the table, invert the sense, read all backward, understand all contrary of the unbeliever. No union with, but separation and distance from, Christ. No pardon of sin, reconciliation, and justification; but guilt in full force, the curse of the law, (and so he is left to stand or fall by himself,) and “the wrath of God” are upon him. (John iii. 36.) No adoption of sons: but rejection as spurious, and a sonship to the devil: “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, which is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (2 Cor. iv. 4.) No salvation; but inevitable condemnation: “He that believeth not shall be condemned,” yea, “is condemned already, because he believeth not in the name of the only begotten Son of God:” (Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 18:) that is, his present state is a state of certain damnableness, as sure as if he were condemned already. Not that there can be no believing afterward, and recovery thereby; for who then should be saved? (Luke xviii. 26.) For “such were some” (yea, all) of them that “are justified by faith in the name of the Lord Jesus,” (1 Cor. vi. 11,) as the apostle speaks of other sinners. “He that believeth not God hath made him a liar;” (1 John v. 10;) but he shall find him exactly true, to his cost, in such words as these: “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life.” (John iii. 36.) “The unbelieving,” as well as more carnal sinners, “shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (Rev. xxi. 8.) Men by “unbelief depart from the living God;” (Heb. iii. 12;) “will not come for life;” (John v. 40;) “and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life;” (Acts xiii. 46;) and bring a kind of impotency upon the Omnipotent as to the doing them any good. (Matt. xiii. 58.) No wonder then if Jesus wondered “at their unbelief,” that held his

\* “The consequence of contraries is itself contrary.”—EDIT.



hands from helping them. (Mark vi. 5, 6.) O, how much better were it for them among us that believe not, that they had never had offers of salvation, never heard the gospel of the grace of God!

2. *It is no small matter to be saved, since faith is such a thing as before described, and without it there is no salvation.*—Should Christ now come, should he “find faith on the earth?” (Luke xviii. 8.) Alas, the small number of those that shall be saved! there being so few believers, though so many professors of faith, among Christians! This is sadly manifest in the gross ignorance of the most, and suitable apprehensions in the doctrine of faith of very few; in the errors, heresies, apostasies of many, even “denying the Lord that bought them;” (2 Peter ii. 1;) in the altogether contradictory life of most to that faith they pretend to have; which, as well as repentance, should have fruits meet for it brought forth, and accordingly it is known. (Luke iii. 8; Matt. vii. 20.) No wonder if they that take true saving faith to be no more than assent, and a professed owning the doctrine of the gospel, a confidence, at all adventures, of God’s love, &c., or some such thing, think the way to heaven broad, and wonder at any speaking of the paucity of those that shall be saved. (Luke xiii. 23.)

3. Hence take notice of *the reasonableness of the Christian religion.*

(1.) *That God requireth no more but “believe.”*—Other things indeed are required; but they naturally flow from faith, are inseparably linked with faith, and faith cannot be without them. Faith is the great work of God, and command of the gospel.

(2.) *That this is so suitable.*—Without faith no salvation can be apprehended as attainable by the new covenant. By it comes union to, and interest in, the person of the Mediator. By it is the appropriation and application made of what he hath done and suffered in sinners’ behalf. By it is acceptance given to God’s gracious offers in the gospel. What more meet, and just, and necessary? Are not God’s ways in requiring faith equal?

4. *Behold the danger of ignorance or mistake in this great fundamental point, upon which salvation or damnation have such immediate and necessary dependence.*—In other matters, not so great danger. How justly censurable then is the folly of those that cannot patiently hear the doctrine of faith, but think of time laid out upon it; as Judas, of the ointment’s expense!—“What needs this waste?” (John xii. 5.) But, truly, if you are ignorant of God’s righteousness, which is by faith in the Son of God, (Phil. iii. 9,) you will take other ways in which ye cannot find salvation; ye will “go about to establish your own righteousness.” (Rom. x. 3.)

5. *The usefulness and needfulness of a gospel-ministry is hence manifest.*—“Faith cometh by hearing.” (Rom. x. 17.) “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful upon the mountains are their feet, that bring the glad tidings of salvation,” and, as workers

together with God, build up precious souls in their holy faith! (Rom. x. 14, 15; Isai. lii. 7.)

## II. EXHORTATION AND ADMONITION.

The second sort of uses shall be made up of conjoined EXHORTATION and ADMONITION: admonitory exhortations.

First. *Labour after this faith.*—And “take heed lest there be in you an evil heart of unbelief.” (Heb. iii. 12.) Evil it is to God; it dishonoureth him, and disappointeth him: evil to us; deprives us of our offered happiness, and bringeth upon us “swift destruction,” (2 Peter ii. 1.) certain and aggravated condemnation. Take heed of this gross self-murder of unbelief; make use of the means before prescribed for the begetting and increase of faith; and beware and oppose those things that are opposite unto faith. This exhortation is to all.

Secondly. To those that pretend [that] they have faith. *Try whether your faith be right or no.*—And, to this end, make use of and apply those notes and properties of faith before handled. Yet spend not so much time in trying whether you have it, as in exercising it; (in this many weak Christians are very faulty;) and this will be the way to make all sure for you, and in due time clear to you.

Thirdly. To those that, upon trial, find they have this excellent grace of faith.

1. *Rejoice and comfort yourselves against all your sins, fears, the world's troubles, Satan's temptations.*—For as to all thou art more than conqueror. (Rom. viii. 37.) If thou believest, “rejoice in hope of the glory of God;” (Rom. v. 2;) for “he that believeth shall be saved.” (Mark xvi. 16.)

2. *Bless God, and boast not.*—There is no cause of boasting; faith is the gift of God. There is cause of thanksgiving; it is the hand to receive all other gifts. If ye hope for salvation by faith, be humble, and glory not; for boasting is excluded by the law of faith, (Rom. iii. 27,) the constitution of faith for the salvation of sinners thereby. If ye stand by faith, be not high-minded; if ye abound in faith, “abound therein with thanksgiving;” for ye owe the more. (Col. ii. 7.)

3. *“Live by faith.”* (Rom. i. 17.)—Paul, from Habakkuk, asserts, “The just shall live by faith;” and propounds his own example of living “by the faith of the Son of God.” (Gal. ii. 20.) Be much in the actings and exercise of faith, and make your lives full of the fruit and efficacy of faith: yea, peculiarly exercise faith in dependence upon God for the support and perseverance of your faith. Draw down to practice what you know of faith, and ye shall know more satisfactorily the doctrine of faith, than the wisest in the world according to the letter. “Live by the faith of the Son of God;” (it is not notion, but action; not word, but life;) and then wait till faith shall be turned into vision, and, being perfected, be abolished, having done its work; and then at least ye shall be fully satisfied concerning it.

4. *Labour to "be strong in the grace" of faith that is in Christ Jesus.* (2 Tim. ii. 1.)—Not only for your own sakes, to avoid those anxieties which weakness of faith causeth; but for God's sake, that by strong faith ye may, with Abraham, the father of the faithful, give much glory to God, who hath annexed glory to believing. (Rom. iv. 16—20.)

5. *Pity them that do not believe, and labour to propagate your faith.*—Whose soul, that by faith are themselves secured, would not bleed in consideration of the dangerous, yea, certainly miserable, estate (as before described) of unbelieving friends, relations, acquaintance? Warn them; exhort them "while it is called to-day;" (Heb. iii. 13;) pray for them; yea, strengthen the weak in faith, and offend them not by going to the utmost bounds of your Christian liberty.

6. *Esteem them precious that have this precious faith; and "have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Lord of glory, with respect of persons."* (James ii. 1.)—Let "the poor of the world" that are "rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom," be honourable in your esteem, as they are in God's. (James ii. 5.)

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## SERMON XXII.

BY THE REV. ZACHARY CROFTON, A.M.

REPENTANCE NOT TO BE REPENTED, PLAINLY ASSERTED, AND PRACTICALLY EXPLAINED.

*Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.*  
—Acts v. 31.

REPENTANCE being the subject of this day, in the course of this month's Exercise, to be discussed, I must wave the coherence and connexion of the text; only desire you to note, that the apostles assert the prerogative of Christ, as their apology for their disobedience to human commands. When they, forbidden, did proceed to preach, and a reason thereof is demanded, the answer is made in short: "Whether we ought to obey God or man, judge ye: Jesus Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour," to subdue his enemies by 'repentance,' and support his subjects by 'remission of sins.'" (Verses 29, 31.)

The text presents us with two parts considerable:—

1. *A Donor.*—Jesus Christ, "exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour."
2. *The donation.*—And that is double: "Repentance;" "Remission of sins."

Answerable to the parts of the text, the DOCTRINES which might be inferred to our instruction, would be two.