

### THE PREDESTINATION CONTROVERSY.

*By Wm. M. Moffatt.*

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church.

The Christian character, or vital piety, the only test of fellowship or membership.

The right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience, the privilege and duty of all.

The Holy Bible or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

The doctrine of the Trinity, a confession of faith and practice.

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IN ESSENTIALS, UNITY;

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IN NON-ESSENTIALS, LIBERTY;

IN ALL THINGS, CHARITY.

### THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF FAITH.

*By Rev. James Maple, D. D.*

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Acts 16:31.

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. John 3:36.

Here it is affirmed that faith is the condition of salvation, and that the man who believes in Christ "hath eternal life." An intelligent, well educated, thoughtful young man once asked me how this can be; and said it was impossible for him to see how a man can be saved by faith. Many thoughtful anxious souls are in the same trouble, and we desire to lead such minds into the light.

I. Faith is a rational, and necessary condition of salvation. It is essential in the very nature of things. It is not an arbitrary appointment. This is seen in the very nature of faith itself. Faith embraces two ideas: 1. Assent to the truth, or persuasion. A man may be convinced by argument that a certain statement is true, and is compelled to assent to it. A man may be compelled by the force of wisdom to assent to the idea that there is a God, and that the soul is immortal. This assent may exist in the mind as a dead fact, and have no influence on the heart and life. Jam. 2:19. Thousands are in this state of mind. Rom. 1:18. The heart is unrenewed and sinful. 2. Reliance, or trust. In this state of mind man not only assents to the truth, but trusts in it and is governed by it. You receive a certain document from the President of the U. S., appointing you to an office of profit and honor, and on examining it you find it properly authenticated. You assent to its genuineness, and are governed by it. This is illustrated in the case of the centurion. Matt. 8:5-10. This man had seen evidences of Christ's power to heal the sick, and his mind not only assented to this fact but also trusted in his power.

This distinction is not only stated in the Scriptures, but is realized in our own experience.

Scriptural faith combines assent and trust—assent to the divinity of Christ and reliance on him for salvation. This is a reasonable and essential faith. It is like this: A man is sick, and must die without medical aid. A physician comes claiming to possess the skill necessary to cure him. He examines the evidences of his ability, and finds them satisfactory. His mind assents, and he puts his trust in him. This faith is reasonable and essential. For without it he would not put himself under his treatment. Mar. 5:24-29.

Now you see that there can be no salvation without faith in Christ. A truth can do a man no good if he does not believe it. If a man was assured that by going to a certain place he might make a bargain that would be of great advantage to him, of what use would this information be to him if he did not believe it? A sick man is informed that there is a certain physician who can heal him if he will apply to him, but this knowledge can be of no advantage to him if he does not believe it. Thus it is with the offers of salvation in the gospel. Christ invites the sinner to come unto him, and be saved. Matt. 11:28-30; John. 6:40. We are told how to come. Isa. 55:6-7. This cannot save us unless we believe it, and obey it.

A young enquirer, anxious about his soul, said to a Christian, "I believe the Bible to be true, and every word of it from God. I know I can only be saved by the redemption of Jesus Christ. I feel my misery as a sinner. I believe every thing; but how am I to receive so as to be saved?" Many are in this state of mind. All that you have to do is to put this faith into practice. Go to God and ask forgiveness. This is illustrated in the case of the bitter Israelites. The brazen serpent was lifted up as a remedy. They believed that this was the divinely appointed means of cure, and all that they had to do was to look and live. You must simply take God at his word, and do as he says. Rev. 22:14.

2. Without faith there can be no reconciliation to, and peace with God. Man is unreconciled to God. His heart is opposed to him. Rom. 7:7-8. Before a man can be reconciled to God he must have faith in his willingness to receive and pardon him. It is like this: You have been led to think and feel that a man has injured you, and you feel a bitter hatred towards him and treat him with contempt; but you find that you have been mistaken, and that the wrong is all on your part; that you have grievously sinned against him. Then the thought comes up in your mind that you ought to go to him, confess the wrong and ask his forgiveness. You feel that this is just and right; but before you can do this you must have faith that he will forgive and receive you. Thus it is in your relation to God.

3. Faith is necessary to happiness. This is true of all personal relations in life. There can be no happiness in the married relation unless there is mutual faith between husband and wife. If I wished to render the world miserable and had the power I would destroy faith.

There can be no happiness without

abiding faith in the promises of Christ. Take the promise of forgiveness as an illustration: Without faith in it we could not know whether our sins are forgiven or not. Christ has promised eternal life in heaven to all his disciples, and without an abiding faith in this promise we can have no permanent peace on this question. Christ has promised to defend and help the Christian in his struggles with evil. Matt. 28:20; Isa. 43:1-3. Without faith in this promise we will be subject to fear all the time, but abiding trust in it will give peace. This is illustrated in the experience of St. Chrysostom. He said, "I have a pledge from Christ, have his note of hand, which is my support, my refuge, and heaven; and though the world should rage to this security I cling. How reads it? 'Lo, I am with you always,' even unto the end of the world." If Christ be with me what shall I fear? If he is mine; all the powers of earth to me are nothing more than a spider's web."

Saving faith consists in both assent and trust. It is an assent to the truthfulness of the claims of Christ, and trust in him for pardon and salvation. "In his name shall the Gentiles trust." Matt. 23:21. The original meaning of the Hebrew word used for trust is to cling. It is a word used for a child clinging to its mother's breast. Thus the believer clings to Christ. A traveler was ascending the Alps, and excited by the surrounding scenery and absorbed in the exercise of climbing he did not notice where he was going until he found himself standing on a narrow edge of a rock. Looking up he saw that he could go no higher, and looking down saw that he could not return. There he stood helpless, and conscious that his strength was fast failing. It was an awful condition to be in. A friend had been watching him, and going by another way reached the top of the rock, and let down a rope to lift him up. What could he do? Was the rope strong enough and could his friend lift him up? All that he could do was to trust. Thus it is with the sinner. Blinded by the blandishment of sins and excited by the struggle of life he rushes on, but he comes to a point when he finds he cannot advance and it is impossible to return. Christ has been watching and warning him; but he heeded not his tender voice. Now he reaches down and offers to save him, and his only chance is to grasp the Saviour's offered hand.

II. The truth of the Christian in Christ is not a blind unreasoning trust like that of the heathen in his imaginary God; but a rational confidence based on a good foundation. He has every reason to believe that Christ will save him, for this is seen: 1. In his promises and invitations. Matt. 11:28; John. 6:37.

2. In the manner in which he received sinners when he was here on earth. Mark 14:42; Luke 7:36-50.

3. By his death for the redemption of sinners. Rom. 5:6.

These are the considerations on which the Christian bases his trust in Christ, and they are rational. It is good evidence that he will receive and forgive him.

4. His trust in Christ's power to save him is based on the manifestations of his ability while here on earth. He healed the sick and raised the dead. These works symbolized his power to save man from the guilt and power of sin. Luke 7:48-50; John 1:12; John 20:27, 29, 31. Christ has saved millions of sinners, and this is a rational reason for trusting in him for salvation.

There is a presumptuous trust of wicked men, who depend on Christ to save them in their sins. They think that he will save them if they do continue in sin, but this is a foolish presumption. Christ makes submission to his laws a condition of salvation. Matt. 11:28-29. There can be no salvation without deliverance from the love and practice of sin. Man cannot be delivered from the consequences of sin without this, for these are denials from God, a sense of guilt, and unhappiness growing out of this state of mind. Here is where sinners make a mistake. They look upon the punishment of sin as some outward infliction from which they can flee or evade in some way, but this is a fatal error. It brings conscious guilt and remorse. Can a man run away from the punishment of drunkenness? (It strikes his very nature.) It is not an outer hell that you have to dread, but an inward hell more terrible than fire and brimstone. There is no escape from this only by being delivered from the love and power of sin. When a man is delivered from which this appetite holds him, then he can escape the consequences of intemperance, but not till then; for this salvation alone can turn his feet into the path of temperance, and there is no escape from the awful evils of intemperance only in this way.

### Biblical Points.

When we come back from the battlefield, weary yet victorious, we may look for our King of Peace coming to meet us with bread and wine and his own priestly blessing, that we may be strengthened and refreshed by himself. —F. R. Haverhill.

The humanity consists not in a squishy ear; it consists not in starting or shrinking at tales of misery, but in a disposition of heart to relieve it. True humanity appertains rather to the mind than to the nerves; and prompts men to use real and active endeavors to execute the actions which it suggests. —C. J. Fox.

Shun evil speaking. It is a mean and dangerous habit. The crucifying, carping, fault-finding spirit is easily cultivated, and alarmingly difficult to shake off. Say good, kind, generous things about people when you truthfully can; when you cannot, hold your peace. —Michigan Advocate.

The world's history is a divine poem, of which the history of every nation is a canto, and every man a world. Its strains have been pealing along down the centuries, and though there have been mingled the discords of warring cannon and dying men, yet to the Christian philosopher and historian—the humble listener—there has been a divine melody running through the song which speaks of hope and halcyon days to come. —J. A. Garfield.

We make a mistake when we spend the main portion of our time on the accessories and incidents of life. The farmer who devotes his attention chiefly to his fences, neglecting the plow, and sow, and care for his stock, will soon be mortgaging and then parting with his lands. The fences are useful, but the odds and ends of time are enough to give them. —United Presbyterian.

He who would see clearly Divine things must maintain a pure heart and a willing, teachable mind. He must come into the school of Christ with the disciple's gentle and docile spirit. He must do in order to know. Experience comes by way of spiritual renovation. Grace opens the eye-sight to wonderful discoveries of truth, love and glory. —Presbyterian Observer.

I plead with you who are parents, to train your children in ways of reverent familiarity with God's Word, God's house, and day. Let them understand that something higher than their taste, or your preference, makes these things sacred and binding, and constrains you to imbue them with their spirit. And that they may do this the more effectually, give them, I entreat you, that mightiest teaching, which consists in your consistent and devout example. —Bishop H. C. Potter.

The Nation is more and more being waked up to the necessity of stronger measures to restrain and even prohibit that prolific mother of all crime, the liquor traffic. Christians are being led to feel the need of a more permanent and perfect rule as a basis of public morals than the will of a fickle majority. This is turning their eyes to the principles of National Reform as the only hope. Altogether the retrospect gives promise of a better day in both the religious and political worlds. —Christian Instructor.

We have turned over the government, whether of the nation, state, or municipality, to men whose only interest is to make money out of its administration. If they were honest and intelligent it would not be so bad that it furnished them a livelihood and honors; and we might satisfy our consciences. But they initiate the most intolerable frauds, practice and encourage dissolute living and make honesty and public spirit a by-word. —Central Ch. Advocate.

What is required in political and social, is no less strongly demanded in religious, polity. In church organizations men feel some local or individual pressure, but it does not follow that the organization is vicious, or evay at fault. It may be, or it may not. Students, thinkers, conservative statesmen, find the highest and richest field for the exercise of their talents in the Church of Christ. In seeking its development, perfection, and largest beneficence, they especially need likeness to Him who is "the Truth"; they have the promise of the Spirit of truth, to guide into all truth. —Zion's Herald.

There is no pleasure so great as the pleasure of doing good—as the satisfaction of knowing that you have lightened some one's burden, comforted some troubled heart, and strengthened and encouraged some one who was ready to faint. Sometimes it takes but a little thing to do this. Some word of counsel or sympathy, some little act of kindness, some small token of regard, when a person is discouraged and cast down, may be the means of cheering and comforting him, and inspiring him with new hope. At this joyous season, while you have every comfort, do not forget the less favored around you, but as you have opportunity, endeavor to make them happy. —Methodist Recorder.

REMARKS.

1. Sinner, you have faith enough to save you if you only obey the convictions of duty growing out of this faith. You believe that there is a God, that the Bible is true, that Christ