

all the promises are in Christ, so are all the heirs of them ; nor have any of the unchosen, who are not in Christ, nor ever will be, any right unto the gracious promises of the gospel, which are peculiar to the elect seed in Christ.

2. All promised blessings come to the heirs of salvation through the mediation of Christ. It is, therefore, impossible for those, for whom Christ has not acted as a surety, ever to partake of the promise of life, which is only to be enjoyed in him, by him, and through him.

3. God has not only promised that all who believe in him, and love him, shall be saved ; but he has also promised, that faith and love shall be given and exercised through Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, according as they were given in and to Christ, as the Mediator, by the eternal Father, in the everlasting covenant of grace. “ Thus saith the Lord, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. Unto him shall men come. A seed shall serve him. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me. I will draw all unto me. The other sheep I *must* bring.”

4. To say, as our author has done, “ That the promise is general, applying equally to one sinner as to another,” is highly inconsistent, and incapable of any substantial proof. On the same page he says, “ All that God hath revealed on the subject of interest in Christ, *respects us as characters*, who believe, love, and obey him.” Then how can the promise be general, applying equally to all ? If the promise respects us as characters, then it cannot apply equally to those who answer to the characters specified, and to those who do not answer to them. God’s promise can never apply to any one who is not interested in its contents, and who never enjoys its blessings. His legal threatenings may never be executed, for reasons evident, but his evangelical promises can never fail of fulfilment : they are all yea, and amen, in Christ. How could those promises either glorify God, or benefit men, which never could be fulfilled, until the sinner to whom they are supposed to be given, should cease to retain the character of a mere sinner, and be possessed of a new heart, and a right spirit ? It is certain, that

no unregenerate soul has ever received the promise of God for itself, and when the soul becomes regenerate, it is no more to be considered as a mere sinner. Either, therefore, the promise must apply to the sinner as unregenerate, or, as regenerate; if the *former*, then interest is not revealed to characters, as Mr. F. has said; if the *latter*, then it cannot apply equally to one sinner as to another, as he has declared it does: because all sinners are not regenerate.

5. It is admitted freely, that God has promised that all who believe in, and love Christ, shall be saved; but then it will not follow that, all who believe not have the promise of salvation. Nor will it ever be proved that God has promised faith to all who have opportunity of hearing the gospel; yet, if he gave them not faith, they never can have it, but, must give account of themselves to God, according to the rights of justice, by the law under which man was at first created. It may be also observed, that God's having promised salvation to all that believe, will by no means overturn the definition, which Mr. Weyman had given of faith, which was the work in hand. But, I shall be reminded of the latter part of the quotation, as that which is designed for that purpose; to that, therefore, we must now attend.

6. Mr. F. says, "A persuasion that if we possess these characters we shall be saved, is doubtless faith; but whether we do, or not, possess these characters, is *not* an object of faith, but consciousness." Herein our author aims to exclude a real saving knowledge of interest in Christ from the definition of faith. But it answers not his purpose, for as he could not prove that the lowest degree of faith had not a right of appropriation, and as the definition he arose to overturn, did not assert that, subjective assurance was essential to real faith, the overturn is not effected by Mr. F.'s remark. And wherein does the consciousness he pleads for, essentially differ from the definition he opposes? By consciousness, he must mean an inward knowledge of the thing, of which the person is conscious, an inward perception of what passes in a man's own mind, an internal sense of acceptance with God in Christ Jesus. But all this cannot be without persuasion of the reality and goodness of divine things, nor without the mind's appropriating, and in measure possessing, the things so inwardly

known; which are the very ideas expressed in the definition to be overturned, as the reader may see by looking back to the answer given to a former quotation, where faith is considered as, "*a persuasion upon inward knowledge, being led by the Spirit into the truth: not a knowing more than the word declares, yet such an inward knowledge as no man ever could attain by all the declarations of the word only.*" Our author's distinction, between faith and consciousness, therefore, cannot prevail to overturn the definition; and yet, if it be not overturned, the duty-system must be in tottering circumstances.

Finally, If Mr. F.'s opinion be worthy of esteem, and that he was a man of a powerful mind is not to be now questioned, I have the advantage of having him on my side. For he first says, "Whether we possess the characters of believing, loving, and obeying, *is not an object of faith.*" Then in the next page, he contrarily assures us that, "*to believe ourselves interested in Christ, is the same thing as to believe ourselves the subjects of special grace.*" Again, "*To believe ourselves in a state of salvation, however desirable, when grounded on evidence, &c.*" Again, "*If I believe myself to be a child of God, it is either a truth that, I am what I believe myself to be, or it is not. If it is, then my being persuaded of it from scripture evidence is the belief of the truth, is faith.*"* Thus reader, you may see that, Mr. F. has affirmed and denied the same thing repeatedly; so that his testimony was both *yea* and *nay*, and therefore, unlike to that of the Apostles. Such inconsistency, however, has a tendency to convince the prudent, that a contradictory system will expose the weakness of its advocate. And we may safely conclude that, the definition our author undertook to overturn, remains in its station with undiminished firmness. He that believeth *hath the witness in himself*. Faith is the *evidence* of things unseen. Had he reasoned on faith, and consciousness, as he has done on perception and faith, and on faith, hope, and love, in his *Appendix*, he must have seen and admitted that, the distinction he has here made, was unap- propriable to his purpose.

Quot. "The scriptures *always* represent faith as terminating on something without us; namely, on Christ, and

* 1st Edit. page 19, and 2nd Edit. page 7.

the truth concerning him ; but if it consists in a persuasion of our being in a state of salvation, it must terminate *principally* on something within us ; namely, the work of grace in our hearts.”*

Answ. How was it that our author said, it must terminate *principally* on something within us ? His arguing required him to say *entirely* on something within us ; especially as he had just said that, the scriptures *always* represent faith as terminating on something without us. The fact is that while faith receives the testimony of the outward word, the truth is also inwardly revealed by the enlightening presence of the Holy Spirit of truth, and faith comes *to stand in the power of God*, which is called *the power that worketh IN us*. Therefore, “faith as an act, is a believing upon an inwrought persuasion, a persuasion upon inward knowledge, being led by the Spirit into the truth.” This is that definition which was to have been overturned, but which must be approved, by those who can, and will judge by the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shineth into the heart, to the endearing of the person and character of Christ, who is the head and Saviour of his chosen people. Mr. F. has written, as though the external and internal revelations, could not both pertain to the exercise of special faith, which they certainly do. And he himself, has said, relative to faith’s terminating on something within, “Those who are born of God, and have evidence of it, it is their duty to examine and *believe that evidence*.” On the same page, he says, “My being persuaded that I am a child of God from scripture evidence is the belief of the truth, is faith.”

Christ is formed in the hearts of his people by the Holy Spirit, as their new life, and as the author and object of the faith of the gospel, that the new born soul may, in the inward knowledge of which it is made partaker, embrace Christ as precious, in his person and mediation. Special faith, therefore, does not terminate on Christ, as he is revealed in the word only ; but as he is manifested in the mind by the Holy Spirit, who takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to his regenerate people. It is a truth, that it looks to, and apprehends Jesus Christ ; but then, this is the immediate effect of the understanding

being enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and *cannot possibly precede an internal revelation of Christ in the heart*, by the powerful shining of the glory of God.* But, over this internal revelation, the will of man has no controul: that kind of act, therefore, to which this revelation is essential, cannot be the duty of any, to whom such revelation is denied. And Mr. F. says, "It is not by means of a spiritual perception, or belief of the gospel, that the heart is, for the first time, effectually influenced towards God: for spiritual perception and belief, are represented as the **EFFECTS**, and not the *causes* of such influence."† Now, if God himself cannot produce these effects, but by such influence,‡ which influence necessarily must originate with himself, surely, the condemned sinner is not to be damned for not producing them without such influence, over which necessary influence he has not command, nor ever had. The attentive reader will perceive that the definition remains in perfect safety at present.

SECTION VI.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

Quot. "A persuasion of Christ being both able and willing to save all them that come unto God by him, and consequently to save us, *if we so apply*, is very different, from a persuasion that we are the children of God, and interested in the blessings of the gospel."||

Ans. It is true, these two persuasions are different, and it is easy to distinguish them; but who can make any thing like gospel of the former of them?

1. Our author's supposed believer in Christ, is one who has not yet applied to him, or one who has not yet come unto God by him. He has, however, made himself partly ready for the approach; for he is persuaded that Christ is able and willing to save him, *if he do but apply* to him. This is much the same as supposing, a man, who cannot save himself, may yet empower his Maker to save him!

2. Mr. F. says, "Unconverted sinners are not interested in Christ;" but they who have not yet come to

Cor. iv. 6. with I Cor. ii. 9. 10. Gal. i. 16. John xvi. 14. 15.

† Page 212. ‡ Page 206. || Page 9.

God by Christ are unconverted sinners : therefore, they who have not yet come to God by Christ, are not interested in Christ. Now, they who are not interested in Christ, can never be saved. No man, possessing rationality, and acknowledging the word of God to be true, can be persuaded, that though he be not interested in Christ, yet Christ is interested in him, and is able and willing to save him with an everlasting salvation. Christ has no more ability to save those who are *not* interested in him, than justice has to finally punish for ever those who *are* interested in him.

3. Those for whom Jesus obeyed the precept and endured the penalty of the divine law, are eternally interested in him, as their surety and Saviour. Interest does not spring from the act of believing, though it is manifested by it; but it arises from the electing love of God. Neither does salvation depend upon our applying to Christ for it, as the effect depends upon its own proper cause. But we are redeemed and regenerated to come to Christ, as truly as we are saved in and after coming to him. He is not merely able and willing to save his people *if they apply* to him; but, he is willing to save them though they do not apply, or before they ever do apply. He is able and willing when they are unwilling, or their unwillingness must for ever remain. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” It is said, “He *shall* save his people from their sins.” We may, therefore, observe that, they are *his people* before he so saves them. Here is no *if they apply*.

4. It is not credible, that the eternal, immanent acts of God the Father stand for nothing, till the carnal creature applies to him. He has loved and chosen his people in his beloved Son, according to his foreknowledge, nor will he ever cast them off: his love is everlasting and inseparable. Drawn by this love, they come to him; while the rest are left to their own free will, and perish for their sins. It is not left with them to apply, for he applies to them.

5. Christ has said, “No man can come to me except it were given to him of my Father.” Now it is absolutely impossible that his words should prove untrue; therefore, it must be equally impossible that any sinful man should come to Christ, prior to his regeneration by the Holy Spirit. But Christ is able to cause them to come to him,

whom his Father has committed to his hands: *they shall come*; and none others ever will come. *If they apply*, is language that cannot be harmonized with absolute election, real redemption, and spiritual regeneration by the Holy Comforter.

6. Jesus when on earth finished the important work which his Father had given him to do. Was he not willing when he engaged as a surety, and laid down his life as a sacrifice for the sins of a peculiar people; Christ has redeemed all his people, and delivered them from the wrath to come. He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, therefore, his ability and willingness do not wait for *their applying to him*. But Mr. F. has written as if Christ had only brought all mankind into a salvable state, and made salvation certain to none, until the guilty creature by his puny acts, adds validity to the work of him, who by his own arm brought salvation.

7. A persuasion that Christ is both able and willing to save all that come unto God by him is a sound and scriptural faith: and he will remain able to save all such, unto the day of his final appearance in the clouds of heaven. But whether a man believes that Christ is able to save him, or others; still he must reckon that Christ has absolutely redeemed them of whom he entertains such a persuasion; for no reasonable being can imagine, while he reveres the scriptures, that Christ can in future save any one efficiently, whom he has not saved meritoriously.

8. If the ability of Christ be *of himself*, and not of the creature on whose behalf he is able, then the creature's *applying* has no causal influence on that ability: but the ability of Christ is of himself, and not of the creature on whose behalf he is able; therefore, the creature's applying has no causal influence on that ability. This argument shows the conditional clause: "*if we so apply*," to be utterly inapplicable and fairly excluded by allowed principles. For, if the ability of Christ be of himself, the conclusion is unavoidable, and our author's favourite IF must be abandoned as an opposer of the almighty Saviour.

9. If the persuasion of Christ's ability and willingness to save all them that come unto God by him, be spiritual, then it supposes the subject of it to be a child of God, and interested in spiritual blessings; but the persuasion of Christ's ability and willingness to save all them that come

unto God by him is spiritual; therefore, it supposes the subject of it to be a child of God, and interested in spiritual blessings. Hence it is proved that, whatever difference there may be between the persuasion which Mr. F. pleaded for, and the one he opposed; the former included a right of appropriating Christ, and an evidence of interest; yet, this was the very idea which he undertook to overturn, but it is still firm in its place: yes, sirs, the definition defies its assailants.

10. He must be a self-righteous person who is persuaded that his own conduct, in applying to God, causes Christ to be able and willing to save him; but Mr. F.'s believer, who has not yet applied to God, is persuaded that his own conduct in applying to God causes Christ to be able and willing to save him; therefore, he must be a self-righteous person. The former argument proved Mr. F.'s believer to be a spiritual man, and interested in spiritual blessings; this proves him a self-righteous person, from the same quotation. Now, as a plain contradiction is the result of fair reasoning on his words, it shews us, that his system is contradictory, and founded in error. This conclusion cannot be avoided, but by abandoning the conditioning clause, so essential to the *yea and nay* system; I mean the four favourite words; *if—we—so—apply*.

The quotation thus answered, was meant to overturn Mr. Weyman's definition of faith; but the desired object is by no means realized.

Quot. "The gospel warrants *every* sinner to believe in Christ for salvation; but none to conclude himself interested till he has believed: consequently, such a conclusion, even where it is well founded, cannot be faith, but that which follows it."*

Ans. Mr. F.'s eagerness to exclude faith from being that by which the new-born soul knows its interest in Christ, by no means proved successful. The soul, in believing, becomes sweetly conscious of its interest under the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit; and so immediate may this sense of interest be, that no difference of time may be distinguished, so as for the mind to be conscious of its *following* the act of believing. Now, if we suppose the conclusion respecting a personal interest, to be an act

of faith, it will not follow that, there is no true faith where interest remains a matter of doubt; because faith may be real where it is very feeble. But Mr. F. has reasoned as though the greatest degree of faith did not include a persuasion of being interested in Christ, in hope of thus getting rid of the definition that stood in his way. It surely cannot be questioned, whether he, who is "Strong in faith, giving glory to God," is persuaded of his interest in Christ. And what reason can be assigned, why one degree of faith should be the duty of sinners and not another? Nor can any man be warranted to believe in Christ, without being warranted to believe himself interested in Christ. Coming to Christ as a Saviour, is not making him a Saviour: it is not a determining cause, but an evidential effect of his being our Saviour.

Quot. "True faith does not include an assurance of our interest in Christ."*

Ans. It is freely granted that there are many persons who have true faith in Christ, who at the same time cannot say with Thomas, *My Lord and My God*: or with Paul, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." Yet, it cannot be proved, I believe, that the weakest act of special faith, hath not the *nature* of appropriation in it. The Lord declares his people shall say, "The Lord is my God." Zech. xiii. 9. It is the nature of that faith, which is born of God, to *aim* to cry, Abba, Father. And those, who have but little faith in degree, have a faith which is perfect in its nature, and it disposes them to seek for a greater degree of it: that Christ, who, by the Holy Ghost, is the *author* and *finisher* of it, would, by his *exceeding great and mighty power*, cause it to act to its proper height, according to its nature and end. Hence the apostle, in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, says, "We pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and FULFIL all the good pleasure of his goodness, and THE WORK OF FAITH with POWER: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ." The Lord puts forth a greater power in the new nature, or *spirit of faith*, which his children possess, when he causes them to enjoy an assurance of faith; but he does

* Def. page 24.

not then give a new faith, therefore special faith, which is given in regeneration, must surely include the *nature* of assurance in it, though it may not be so strong as to enable the soul to claim its own interest in Christ without great disputings and jealousies about the matter at certain times. It is manifest that the weakest act of saving faith, stands inseparably connected with a living and (more or less) a lively hope of interest in Christ, and hath an undoubted *right* to claim interest in its object, Christ Jesus. How such a faith can be the duty of all men I cannot comprehend; nor do I expect ever to see it clearly proved.

SECTION VII.

MR. F.'S DEFINITION OF FAITH, AND HIS REASONINGS FOR IT EXAMINED.

It should be remembered that, as Mr. Fuller's opponents, in the general, have allowed that all who hear the gospel, ought to believe it to be true, he has endeavoured to prove, that a belief of the gospel is saving faith, and that there is but one kind of faith, properly speaking: that those persons do not believe the truth who do not act accordingly, or are not saved thereby, but he has not proved the point.

Quot. "That *the belief of the truth* which God hath revealed in the scriptures, concerning Christ is saving faith, is evident from the following passages: Mat. xvi. 17. Mark xvi. 16. John xx. 31. Luke viii. 12. Rom. x. 9. 1 John v. 1. 5. and iv. 15. John iii. 33. 1 Cor. xii. 3. John xii. 36. and v. 33, 34. 2 Thess. i. 10. and ii. 13.—If the foregoing passages be admitted to prove the point, namely, that a *real* belief of the truth is saving faith, the duty of unconverted sinners to believe in Christ cannot fairly be called in question: for, as before said, it is admitted on all hands, that it is the duty of every man to believe what God reveals."*

Ans. I think by a real belief of the truth, Mr. F. appears to mean a *spiritual* belief of it, or such a belief as is the certain effect of regeneration by the Holy Ghost, *in* and

through Jesus Christ. That such a belief of the truth is saving faith, is readily granted; but to infer from hence, that there is *no other kind* of faith, but this, is inconsistent and contrary to scripture. It is not *merely what* a person believes "concerning Christ," that makes him a true christian, but also *how* he believes the truth. Although the greater part of the scriptures above cited by Mr. F. may serve to prove that a belief of the truth, through the operation of the Holy Ghost from Christ, the *living head* of the church, his body, is saving faith; still it does not follow that there is no such thing as a natural, common, or historical faith in the gospel of Christ, effected by the common operation of the Holy Ghost, working upon the principles of nature in the exercise of reason. "By natural and common faith (said one) I mean such a faith as is attained in the natural and ordinary way of our knowing and believing; and I call it common, because men may have it who perish, or whilst in unregeneracy, as well as those who are saved by grace, *being born again*; Simon *Magus* as well as *Peter*: then Simon himself believed also, and devils are said to *believe also* and tremble. And this faith hath for its object that, which is equally evident to all who have the same natural and external advantage and opportunity of knowing and believing."—"To receive a testimony human or divine, may be called human or divine common faith, according to the testimony it receives and yields assent unto."—"Let men assume what air of assurance they please, to deny the distinction of faith is either, first, to deny that they who are said to believe, as *Simon*, and the *many* (who our Lord said) *believed in his name, when they saw his miracles*, had any kind of faith at all, which is not to expound, but to contradict the word of God; or, consequently they are all gone to heaven, having that faith which always accompanies salvation. Or, else, to deny the distinction, is, to deny the necessity of any supernatural work upon the soul, to make it *meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light*, i. e. to deny the necessity of regeneration; or, it must place regeneration in the power of nature, and make our salvation, as to the application of it, to be of nature, not of grace, contrary to the apostle: 'Ye are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.'"*

* Weyman.

Quot. "The remorse of Judas is called repentance, and the convictions of the Jewish rulers, of Simon and Agrippa, and the fearful apprehensions of apostate angels, from what they had already felt, is called *faith*. But as we do not infer, from the application of the term repentance, to the feelings of Judas, that there is nothing spiritual in real repentance, so neither ought we to conclude, from the foregoing applications of the term believing, that there is nothing spiritual in a *real* belief of the gospel."*

Ans. If, by *real belief*, is meant such belief as necessarily rises out of eternal and vital union in Jesus Christ, the head and Mediator of the everlasting covenant of sovereign grace, it is readily granted, that such a belief of the gospel cannot be said to have nothing spiritual in it.

But still I presume it is possible for unregenerate persons to be persuaded in their own minds by the power of the Holy Ghost working in them, by common operation in the light of reason (without regenerating them, or forming Christ in them, as a living and abiding principle of internal sanctification), that what God hath said in his word is true. This is I think sufficiently evident from scripture.† Now, though such belief is not saving faith, yet it is called faith in the scriptures, and I conceive the term is *properly* used also, even though the persuasion be nothing more than a natural one, produced without any internal saving change of heart.

Quot. "It is true, this conviction is called *believing*; but it is only in an *improper* sense—it was not that faith which is connected with justification or salvation. Whatever conviction any man may have of the truth, while it is against the grain of his heart, he is not a believer in the *proper* sense of the term, nor do the scriptures acknowledge him as such."‡

Ans. Perhaps it may be fairly disputed, whether the term believing is always improperly used, when justification or salvation is not connected therewith. It rather appears as if Mr. F. wished to substitute the word conviction, in the above passages, in the room of the term believing. He most likely could have found a set of words to suit his sentiments much better, than those which the scriptures

* Page 21. † Exod. iv. 31. and xiv. 31. Psalm cvi. 12. Jonah iii. 5. John xii. 42. Acts. viii. 13. James ii. 19. Luke viii. 13. ‡ Page 200, 201