

The Rev. CHARLES G. FINNEY'S
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LECTURE LV.
FAITH AND UNBELIEF.

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I. *What evangelical faith is not.*

1. The term faith, like most other words, has diverse significations, and is manifestly used in the Bible sometimes to designate a state of the intellect, in which case it means an undoubting persuasion, a firm conviction, an unhesitating intellectual assent. This, however, is not its evangelical sense. Evangelical faith cannot be a phenomenon of the intellect, for the plain reason that, when used in an evangelical sense, it is always regarded as a virtue. But virtue cannot be predicated of intellectual states, because these are involuntary, or passive states of mind. Faith is a condition of salvation. It is something which we are commanded to do upon pain of eternal death. But if it be

something to be done--a solemn duty, it cannot be a merely passive state, a mere intellectual conviction. The Bible distinguishes between intellectual and saving faith. There is a faith of devils, and there is a faith of saints. James clearly distinguishes between them, and also between an antinomian and a saving faith. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."-- James ii. 17-26. The distinction is here clearly marked, as it is elsewhere in the Bible, between intellectual and saving faith.

One produces good works or a holy life; the other is unproductive. This shows that one is a phenomenon of the intellect merely, and does not of course control the conduct. The other must be a phenomenon of the will, because it manifests itself in the outward life. Evangelical faith, then, is not a conviction, a perception of truth. It does not belong to the intellect, though it implies intellectual conviction, yet the evangelical or virtuous element does not consist in it.

2. It is not a feeling of any kind; that is, it does not belong to, and is not a phenomenon of, the sensibility. The phenomena of the sensibility are passive states of mind, and therefore have no moral character in themselves. Faith, regarded as a virtue, cannot consist in any involuntary state of mind whatever. It is represented in the Bible as an active and most efficient state of mind. It works and "works by love." It produces "the obedience of faith." Christians are said to be sanctified by the faith that is in Christ.

Indeed the Bible, in a great variety of instances and ways, represents faith in God and in Christ as a cardinal form of virtue, and as the mainspring of an outwardly holy life. Hence, it cannot consist in any involuntary state or exercise of mind whatever.

II. *What evangelical faith is.*

Since the Bible uniformly represents saving or evangelical faith as a virtue, we know that it must be a phenomenon of will. It is an efficient state of mind, and therefore it must consist in the embracing of the truth by the heart or will. It is the will's closing in with the truths of the gospel. It is the soul's act of yielding itself up, or committing itself to the truths of the evangelical system. It is a trusting in Christ, a committing the soul and the whole being to him, in his various offices and relations to men. It is a confiding in him, and in what is revealed of him, in his word and providence, and by his Spirit.

The same word that is so often rendered faith in the New Testament is also rendered commit; as in John ii. 24, "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men." Luke xvi. 11, "If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" In these passages the word rendered *commit* is the same word as that which is rendered faith. It is a confiding in God and in Christ, as revealed in the Bible and in reason. It is a receiving of the testimony of God concerning himself, and concerning all things of which he has spoken. It is a receiving of Christ for just what he is represented to be in his gospel, and an unqualified surrender of the will, and of the whole being to him.

III. *What is implied in evangelical faith.*

1. It implies an intellectual perception of the things, facts, and truths believed. No one can believe that which he does not understand. It is impossible to believe that which is not so revealed to the mind, that the mind understands it. It has been erroneously assumed, that faith did not need light, that is, that it is not essential to faith that we understand the doctrines or facts that we are called upon to believe. This is a false assumption; for how can we believe, trust, confide, in what we do not understand? I must first understand what a proposition, a fact, a doctrine, or a thing is, before I can say whether I believe, or whether I ought to believe, or not. Should you state a proposition to me in an unknown tongue, and ask me if I believe it, I must reply, I do not, for I do not understand the terms of the proposition. Perhaps I should believe the truth expressed, and perhaps I should not; I cannot tell, until I understand the proposition. Any fact or doctrine not understood is like a proposition in an unknown tongue; it is impossible that the mind should receive or reject it, should believe or disbelieve it, until it is understood. We can receive or believe a truth, or fact, or doctrine no further than we understand it. So far as we do understand it, so far we may believe it, although we may not understand all about it. For example: I can believe in both the proper divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ. That he is both God and man, is a fact that I can understand. Thus far I can believe. But how his divinity and humanity are united I cannot understand. Therefore, I only believe the fact that they are united; the *quo modo* of their union I know nothing about, and I believe no more than I know. So I can understand that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God. That the Father is God, that the Son is God, that the Holy Spirit is God; that these three are Divine persons, I can understand as a fact, that each possesses all divine perfection. I can also understand that there is no contradiction or impossibility in the declared fact, that these three are one in their substratum of being; that is, that they are one in a different sense from that in which they are three; that they are three in one sense, and one in another. I understand that this may be a fact, and therefore I can believe it. But the *quo modo* of their union I neither understand nor believe: that is, I have no theory, no idea, no data on the subject, have no opinion, and consequently no faith, as to the manner in which they are united. That they are three, is as plainly taught upon the face of inspiration as that Peter, James, and John were three. That each of the three is God, is as plainly revealed as that Peter, James, and John were men. These are revealed facts, and facts that any one can understand. That these three are one God, is also a revealed fact. The *quo modo* of this fact is not revealed, I cannot understand it, and have no belief as to the manner of this union. That they are one God is a fact that reason can neither affirm

nor deny. The fact can be understood, although the how is unintelligible to us in our present state. It is not a contradiction, because they are not revealed as being one and three in the same sense, nor in any sense that reason can pronounce to be impossible. Faith, then, in any fact or doctrine, implies that the intellect has an idea, or that the soul has an understanding, an opinion of that which the heart embraces or believes.

2. Evangelical faith implies the appropriation of the truths of the gospel to ourselves. It implies an acceptance of Christ as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. The soul that truly believes, believes that Christ tasted death for every man, and of course for it. It apprehends Christ as the Saviour of the world, as offered to all, and embraces and receives him for itself. It appropriates his atonement, and his resurrection, and his intercession, and his promises to itself. Christ is thus presented in the gospel, not only as the Saviour of the world, but also to the individual acceptance of men. He is embraced by the world no further than he is embraced by individuals. He saves the world no further than he saves individuals. He died for the world, because he died for the individuals that compose the race. Evangelical faith, then, implies the belief of the truths of the Bible, the apprehension of the truths just named, and a reception of them, and a personal acceptance and appropriation of Christ to meet the necessities of the individual soul.

3. It implies the unreserved yielding up of the mind to Christ, in the various relations in which he is presented in the gospel. These relations will come under review at another time: all I wish here to say is, that faith is a state of committal to Christ, and of course it implies that the soul will be unreservedly yielded to him, in all his relations to it, so far and so fast as these are apprehended by the intellect.

4. Evangelical faith implies an evangelical life. This would not be true if faith were merely an intellectual state or exercise. But since, as we have seen, faith is of the heart, since it consists in the committal of the will to Christ, it follows, by a law of necessity, that the life will correspond with faith. Let this be kept in perpetual remembrance.

5. Evangelical faith implies repentance towards God. Evangelical faith particularly respects Jesus Christ and his salvation. It is an embracing of Christ and his salvation. Of course it implies repentance towards God, that is, a turning from sin to God. The will cannot be submitted to Christ, it cannot receive him as he is presented in the gospel, while it neglects repentance toward God; while it rejects the authority of the Father, it cannot embrace and submit to the Son.

6. Evangelical faith implies a renunciation of self-righteousness. Christ's salvation is opposed to a salvation by law or by self-righteousness. It is therefore impossible for one to embrace Christ as the Saviour of the soul, any further than he renounces all hope or expectation of being saved by his own works, or righteousness.

7. It implies the renunciation of the spirit of self-justification. The soul that receives Christ must have seen its lost estate. It must have been convinced of sin, and of the folly and madness of attempting to excuse self. It must have renounced and abhorred all pleas

and excuses in justification or extenuation of sin. Unless the soul ceases to justify self, it cannot justify God; and unless it justifies God, it cannot embrace the plan of salvation by Christ. A state of mind therefore that justifies God and condemns self, is always implied in evangelical faith.

8. Disinterested benevolence, or a state of good-will to being, is implied in evangelical faith; for that is the committal of the soul to God and to Christ in all obedience. It must, therefore, imply fellowship or sympathy with him in regard to the great end upon which his heart is set, and for which he lives. A yielding up of the will and the soul to him, must imply the embracing of the same end that he embraces.

9. It implies a state of the sensibility corresponding to the truths believed. It implies this, because this state of the sensibility is a result of faith by a law of necessity, and this result follows necessarily upon the acceptance of Christ and his gospel by the heart.

10. Of course it implies peace of mind. In Christ the soul finds its full and present salvation. It finds justification, which produces a sense of pardon and acceptance. It finds sanctification, or grace to deliver from the reigning power of sin. It finds all its wants met, and all needed grace proffered for its assistance. It sees no cause for disturbance, nothing to ask or desire that is not treasured up in Christ. It has ceased to war with God--with itself. It has found its resting-place in Christ, and rests in profound peace under the shadow of the Almighty.

11. It implies hope, as soon as the believing soul considers what is conveyed by the gospel, that is, a hope of eternal life in and through Christ. It is impossible that the soul should embrace the gospel for itself, and really accept of Christ, without a hope of eternal life resulting from it by a necessary law.

12. It implies joy in God and in Christ. Peter speaks of joy as the unfailing accompaniment of faith, as resulting from it. Speaking of Christians, he says, 1 Pet. i, 5-9, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time: wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

13. It implies zeal in the cause of Christ. Faith in Christ implies fellowship with him in the great work of man's redemption, and of course, must imply zeal in the same cause for which Christ gave up his life.

14. Evangelical faith must imply a general sympathy with Christ in respect to the affairs of his government. It must imply sympathy with his views of sin and of holiness--

of sinners and of saints. It must imply a deep affection for, and interest in, Christ's people.

15. It must imply a consecration of heart, of time, of substance, and of all to this great end.

16. It must imply the existence in the soul of every virtue, because it is a yielding up of the whole being to the will of God. Consequently, all the phases of virtue required by the gospel must be implied as existing, either in a developed or in an undeveloped state, in every heart that truly receives Christ by faith. Certain forms or modifications of virtue may not in all cases have found the occasions of their development, but certain it is, that every modification of virtue will manifest itself as its occasion shall arise, if there be a true and a living faith in Christ. This follows from the very nature of faith.

17. Present evangelical faith implies a state of present sinlessness. Observe: faith is the yielding and committal of the whole will, and of the whole being to Christ. This, and nothing short of this, is evangelical faith. But this comprehends and implies the whole of present, true obedience to Christ. This is the reason why faith is spoken of as the condition, and as it were, the only condition, of salvation. It really implies all virtue. Faith may be contemplated either as a distinct form of virtue, and as an attribute of love, or as comprehensive of all virtue. When contemplated as an attribute of love, it is only a branch of sanctification. When contemplated in the wider sense of universal conformity of will to the will of God, it is then synonymous with entire present sanctification. Contemplated in either light, its existence in the heart must be inconsistent with present sin there. Faith is an attitude of the will, and is wholly incompatible with present rebellion of will against Christ. This must be true, or what is faith?

18. Faith implies the reception and the practice of all known or perceived truth. The heart that embraces and receives truth as truth, and because it is truth, must of course receive all known truth. For it is plainly impossible that the will should embrace some truth perceived for a benevolent reason, and reject other truth perceived. All truth is harmonious. One truth is always consistent with every other truth. The heart that truly embraces one, will, for the same reason, embrace all truth known. If out of regard to the highest good of being any one revealed truth is truly received, that state of mind continuing, it is impossible that all truth should not be received as soon as known.

IV. *What unbelief is not.*

1. It is not ignorance of truth. Ignorance is a blank; it is the negation or absence of knowledge. This certainly cannot be the unbelief everywhere represented in the Bible as a heinous sin. Ignorance may be a consequence of unbelief, but cannot be identical with it. We may be ignorant of certain truths as a consequence of rejecting others, but this ignorance is not, and, we shall see, cannot be unbelief.

2. Unbelief is not the negation or absence of faith. This were a mere nothing--a nonentity. But a mere nothing is not that abominable thing which the scriptures represent as a great and a damning sin.

3. It cannot be a phenomenon of the intellect, or an intellectual scepticism. This state of the intellect may result from the state of mind properly denominated unbelief, but it cannot be identical with it. Intellectual doubts or unbelief often results from unbelief properly so called, but unbelief, when contemplated as a sin, should never be confounded with theoretic or intellectual infidelity. They are as entirely distinct as any two phenomena of mind whatever.

4. It cannot consist in feelings or emotions of incredulity, doubt, or opposition to truth. In other words, unbelief as a sin, cannot be a phenomenon of the sensibility. The term unbelief is sometimes used to express or designate a state of the intellect, and sometimes of the sensibility. It sometimes is used to designate a state of intellectual incredulity, doubt, distrust, scepticism. But when used in this sense, moral character is not justly predicable of the state of mind which the term unbelief represents.

Sometimes the term expresses a mere feeling of incredulity in regard to truth. But neither has this state of mind moral character; nor can it have, for the very good reason that it is involuntary. In short, the unbelief that is so sorely denounced in the Bible, as a most aggravated abomination, cannot consist in any involuntary state of mind whatever.

V. *What unbelief is.*

The term, as used in the Bible, in those passages that represent it as a sin, must designate a phenomenon of will. It must be a voluntary state of mind. It must be the opposite of evangelical faith. Faith is the will's reception, and unbelief is the will's rejection, of truth. Faith is the soul's confiding in truth and in the God of truth. Unbelief is the soul's withholding confidence from truth and the God of truth. It is the heart's rejection of evidence, and refusal to be influenced by it. It is the will in the attitude of opposition to truth perceived, or evidence presented. Intellectual scepticism or unbelief, where light is proffered, always implies the unbelief of the will or heart. For if the mind knows, or supposes, that light may be had, on any question of duty, and does not make honest efforts to obtain it, this can be accounted for only by ascribing it to the will's reluctance to know the path of duty. In this case light is rejected. The mind has light so far as to know that more is proffered, but this proffered light is rejected. This is the sin of unbelief. All infidelity is unbelief in this sense, and infidels are so, not for want of light, but, in general, they have taken much pains to shut their eyes against it. Unbelief must be a voluntary state or attitude of the will, as distinguished from a mere volition, or executive act of the will. Volition may, and often does, give forth, through words and deeds, expressions and manifestations of unbelief. But the volition is only a result of unbelief, and not identical with it. Unbelief is a deeper and more efficient and more permanent state of mind than mere volition. It is the will in its profoundest opposition to the truth and will of God.

VI. *What is implied in unbelief.*

1. Unbelief implies light, or the perception of truth. If unbelief were but a mere negation, an absence of faith, a quiescent or inactive state of the will, it would not imply the perception of truth. But since unbelief consists in the will's rejection of truth, the truth rejected must be perceived. For example: the heathen who have never heard of the gospel are not properly guilty of unbelief in not embracing it. They are indeed guilty of unbelief in rejecting the light of nature. They are entirely without the light of the gospel; therefore they cannot reject it. The unbelief so much complained of in the Bible, is not ignorance, but a rejection of truth revealed, either by the light of nature, or by Providence or inspiration.

2. It implies obstinate selfishness. Indeed it is only one of the attributes of selfishness, as we have seen on a former occasion. Selfishness is a spirit of self-seeking. It consists in the will's committing itself to self-gratification or self-indulgence. Now unbelief is only selfishness contemplated in its relations to the truth of God. It is only the resistance which the will makes to those truths that are opposed to selfishness. It is the will's stern opposition to them. When these truths are revealed to the intellect, the will must either yield to them and relinquish selfishness, or it must resist them. Remain indifferent to them it cannot. Therefore, unbelief always implies selfishness, because it is only selfishness manifesting itself, or acting like itself, in the presence of truth opposed to it.

3. Unbelief implies a state of present total depravity. Surely there can be nothing but sin in a heart that rejects the truth for selfish reasons. It is naturally impossible that there should be any conformity of heart to the will and law of God, when unbelief, or resistance to known truth, is present in the soul.

4. Unbelief implies the rejection of all truth perceived to be inconsistent with selfishness. The unbelieving soul does not, and, remaining selfish, cannot receive any truth, but for selfish reasons. Whatever truth is received and acted upon by a selfish soul, is received for selfish reasons. But this is not faith. Whatever truth the selfish soul cannot apply to selfish purposes, it will reject. This follows from the very nature of selfishness.

5. On a former occasion it was shown, that where any one attribute of selfishness is, there must be the presence of every other attribute, either in a developed state, or waiting for the occasion of its development. All sinners are guilty of unbelief, and have this attribute of selfishness developed, in proportion to the amount of light which they have received. Heathens reject the light of nature, and sinners in Christian lands reject the light of the gospel. The nature of unbelief proves that the unbelieving heart is not only void of all good, but that every form of sin is there. The whole host of the attributes of selfishness must reside in the unbeliever's heart, and only the occasion is wanting to bring forth into development, and horrid manifestation, every form of iniquity.

6. The nature of unbelief implies that its degree depends on the degree of light enjoyed. It consists in a rejection of truth perceived. Its degree or greatness must depend upon the degree of light rejected.

7. The same must be true of the guilt of unbelief. The guilt must be in proportion to light enjoyed. But as the guilt of unbelief is to come up for distinct consideration, I waive the further discussion of it here.

8. Unbelief implies impenitence. The truly penitent soul will gladly embrace all truth when it is revealed to it. This follows from the nature of repentance. Especially will the true penitent hail with joy, and embrace with eagerness the blessed truths of the glorious gospel. This must be from the very nature of repentance. When unbelief is present in the heart, there must be impenitence also.

9. Unbelief is enmity against God. It is resistance to truth, and of course to the character and government of the God of truth.

10. It implies mortal enmity against God. Unbelief rejects the truth and authority of God, and is, of course, and of necessity, opposed to the very existence of the God of truth. It would annihilate truth and the God of truth, were it possible. We have an instance and an illustration of this in the rejection and murder of Jesus Christ. What was this but unbelief? This is the nature of unbelief in all instances. All sinners who hear and reject the gospel, reject Christ; and were Christ personally present to insist upon their reception of him, and to urge his demand, remaining unbelieving, they would of course, and of necessity, sooner murder him than receive him. So that every rejecter of the gospel is guilty of the blood and murder of Christ.

11. Unbelief implies supreme enmity to God. This follows from the nature of unbelief. Unbelief is the heart's rejection of and opposition to truth. Of course, the greater the light, unbelief remaining, the greater the opposition. Since God is the fountain of truth, opposition to him must be supreme. That is, it must be greater to him than to all other beings and things.

12. Unbelief implies a degree of wickedness as great as is possible for the time being. We have seen that it is resistance to truth; that it implies the refusal to receive for benevolent reasons any truth. Entire holiness is the reception of, and conformity to, all truth. This is, at every moment, the highest degree of virtue of which the soul for the time being is capable. It is the entire performance of duty. Sin is the rejection of the whole truth, this is sin in the form of unbelief. The rejection of all known truth, or of all truth perceived to be inconsistent with selfishness, and for that reason, must be present perfection in wickedness. That is, it must be the highest degree of wickedness of which the soul with its present light is capable. It is the rejection of the whole of duty. It is a trampling down of all moral obligation.

13. Unbelief implies the charging God with being a liar. "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he hath not believed the record that God gave of his Son." Unbelief is the treatment of truth as if it were falsehood, and of falsehood as if it were truth. It is the virtual declaration of the heart, that the gospel is not true, and therefore that the Author of the gospel is a liar. It treats the record as untrue, and of course God, the author of the record, as a liar.

14. Unbelief implies lying. It is itself the greatest of lies. It is the heart's declaration, and that too in the face of light, and with the intellectual apprehension of the truth, that the gospel is a lie, and the Author of it a liar. What is lying, if this is not?

15. It implies a most reckless disregard of all rights and of all interests but those of self.

16. It implies a contempt for, and a trampling down of, the law and demands of the intelligence. Intelligence in its relations to moral truths is only a trouble to the unbeliever. His conscience and his reason he regards as enemies.

17. But before I dismiss this part of the subject, I must not omit to say that unbelief also implies the will's embracing an opposite error and a lie. It consists in the rejection of truth, or in the withholding confidence in truth and in the God of truth. But since it is naturally impossible that the will should be in a state of indifference to any known error or truth that stands connected with its duty or its destiny, it follows that a rejection of any known truth implies an embracing of an opposing error.

There are multitudes of other things implied in unbelief; but I cannot with propriety and profit notice them in this brief outline of instruction. I have pursued this subject thus far, for the purpose of showing the true and philosophical nature of unbelief; that whosoever will steadily contemplate its nature, will perceive, that being what it is, it will and must develope, as occasions occur in the providence of God, every form of iniquity of which man is capable, or in other words, that where unbelief is, there is the whole of sin.

VII. *Conditions of both faith and unbelief.*

1. The possession of reason. Reason is the intuitive faculty of the soul. It is that power of the mind that makes those *à priori* affirmations concerning God, which all moral agents do and must make, from the very nature of moral agency, and without which neither faith as a virtue, nor unbelief as a sin, were possible. For example: suppose it admitted that the Bible is a revelation from God. The question might be asked, why should we believe it? Why should we receive and believe the testimony of God? The answer must be, because veracity is an attribute of God, and his word is to be accredited because he always speaks the truth. But how do we know this? This we certainly cannot know barely upon his testimony, for the very question is, why is his testimony worthy of credit. There is no light in his works or providence that can demonstrate that veracity is an attribute of God. His claiming this attribute does not prove it, for unless his truthfulness be assumed, his claiming this attribute is no evidence of it. There is no logical process by which the truth of God can be demonstrated. The major premise from which the truthfulness of God could be deduced by a syllogistic process, must itself assume the very truth which we are seeking to prove. Now there is no way for us to know the truthfulness of God, but by the direct assumption, affirmation, or intuition of reason. The same power that intuits or seizes upon a major premise, from which the truthfulness of God follows by the laws of logic, must and does directly, irresistibly, necessarily, and

universally, assume and affirm the fact, that God is truth, and that veracity must be an attribute of God.

But for this assumption the intellect could not affirm our obligation to believe him. This assumption is a first-truth of reason, everywhere, at all times, by all moral agents, necessarily assumed and known. This is evident from the fact, that it being settled, that God has declared anything whatever, there is an end of all questioning in all minds whether it be true or not. So far as the intellect is concerned, it never did, and never can question the truthfulness of God. It knows with certain and intuitive knowledge, that God is true, and therefore affirms universally and necessarily, that he is to be believed. This assumption, and the power that makes it, are indispensable conditions of faith as a virtue, or of unbelief as a vice. It were no virtue to believe or receive anything as true, without sufficient evidence that it is true. So it were no vice to reject that which is not supported by evidence. A mere animal, or an idiot or lunatic, is not capable either of faith or of unbelief, for the simple reason that they do not possess reason to discern the truth, and obligation to receive it.

2. A revelation in some way to the mind of the truth and will of God must be a condition of unbelief. Be it remembered, that neither faith nor unbelief is consistent with total ignorance. There can be unbelief no further than there is light.

3. In respect to that class of truths which are discerned only upon condition of divine illumination, such illumination must be a condition both of faith and unbelief. It should be remarked, that when a truth has been once revealed by the Holy Spirit to the soul, the continuance of the divine light is not essential to the continuance of unbelief. The truth, once known and lodged in the memory, may continue to be resisted, when the agent that revealed it is withdrawn.

4. Intellectual perception is a condition of the heart's unbelief. The intellect must have evidence of truth as the condition of a virtuous belief of it. So the intellect must have evidence of the truth, as a condition of a wicked rejection of it. Therefore, intellectual light is the condition, both of the heart's faith and unbelief. By the assertion, that intellectual light is a condition of unbelief is intended, not that the intellect should at all times admit the truth in theory; but that the evidence must be such, that by virtue of its own laws, the mind or intellect could justly admit the truth rejected by the heart. It is a very common case, that the unbeliever denies in words and endeavours to refute in theory, that which he nevertheless assumes as true, in all his practical judgments.

VIII. *The guilt and ill-desert of unbelief.*

We have seen, on a former occasion, that the guilt of sin is conditioned upon, and graduated by, the light under which it is committed. The amount of light is the measure of guilt in every case of sin. This is true of all sin. But it is peculiarly manifest in the sin of unbelief; for unbelief is the rejection of light; it is selfishness in the attitude of rejecting truth. Of course, the amount of light rejected, and the degree of guilt in rejecting it, are

equal. This is everywhere assumed and taught in the Bible, and is plainly the doctrine of reason.

Light is truth; light received, is truth known or perceived. The first truths of reason are universally known by moral agents, and whenever the will refuses to act in accordance with any one of them, it is guilty of unbelief. The reason of every moral agent intuits and assumes the infinite value of the highest well-being of God and of the universe, and of course the infinite obligation of every moral agent to embrace the truth as the necessary condition of promoting this end. Viewed in this light, unbelief always implies infinite guilt and blame-worthiness.

But it is a doctrine of mathematics, that infinities may differ. The meaning of the term infinite is simply the negation of finite. It is boundlessness, unlimitedness. That is, that which is infinite is unlimited or boundless, in the sense in which it is infinite. But infinities may differ in amount. For example: the area contained between two parallel lines of infinite length must be infinite in amount, however near these lines are to each other. There is no estimating the superficial amount of this area, for, in fact, there is no whole to it. But we may suppose parallel lines of infinite length to be placed at different distances from each other; but in every case, the enlargement or diminution of the distances between any two such lines would, accordingly, vary the space contained between them. The superficial contents would, in every case, be infinite, and yet they would differ in amount, according to the distances of the lines from each other.

In every case, unbelief involves infinite guilt in the sense just explained; and yet the guilt of unbelief may differ, and must differ, in different cases, indefinitely in amount.

The guilt of unbelief under the light of the gospel must be indefinitely greater, than when merely the light of nature is rejected. The guilt of unbelief, in cases where special divine illumination has been enjoyed, must be vastly and incalculably greater, than where the mere light of the gospel has been enjoyed, without a special enlightening of the Holy Spirit.

The guilt of unbelief in one who has been converted, and has known the love of God, must be greater beyond comparison, than that of an ordinary sinner. Those things that are implied in unbelief show that it must be one of the most provoking abominations to God in the universe. It is the perfection of all that is unreasonable, unjust, ruinous. It is infinitely slanderous and dishonourable to God and destructive to man, and to all the interests of the kingdom of God.

IX. Natural and governmental consequences of both faith and unbelief.

By natural consequences are intended consequences that flow from the constitution and laws of mind, by a natural necessity. By governmental consequences are intended those that result from the constitution, laws, and administration of moral government.

1. One of the natural consequences of faith is peace of conscience. When the will receives the truth, and yields itself up to conformity with it, the conscience is satisfied with its present attitude, and the man becomes at peace with himself. The soul is then in a state to really respect itself, and can, as it were, behold its own face without a blush. But faith in truth perceived is the unalterable condition of a man's being at peace with himself.

A governmental consequence of faith is peace with God:--

(1.) In the sense that God is satisfied with the present obedience of the soul. It is given up to be influenced by all truth, and this is comprehensive of all duty. Of course God is at peace with the soul, so far as its present obedience is concerned.

(2.) Faith governmentally results in peace with God, in the sense of being a condition of pardon and acceptance. That is, the penalty of the law for past sins is remitted upon condition of true faith in Christ. The soul not only needs present and future obedience, as a necessary condition of peace with self; but it also needs pardon and acceptance on the part of the government for past sins, as a condition of peace with God. But since the subject of justification or acceptance with God is to come up as a distinct subject for consideration, I will not enlarge upon it here.

2. Self-condemnation is one of the natural consequences of unbelief. Such are the constitution and laws of mind, that it is naturally impossible for the mind to justify the heart's rejection of truth. On the contrary, the conscience necessarily condemns such rejection, and pronounces judgment against it.

Legal condemnation is a necessary governmental consequence of unbelief. No just government can justify the rejection of known truth. But, on the contrary, all just governments must utterly abhor and condemn the rejection of truths, and especially those truths that relate to the obedience of the subject, and the highest well-being of the rulers and ruled. The government of God must condemn and utterly abhor all unbelief, as a rejection of those truths that are indispensable to the highest well-being of the universe.

3. A holy or obedient life results from faith by a natural or necessary law. Faith is an act of will which controls the life by a law of necessity. It follows of course that, when the heart receives or obeys the truth, the outward life must be conformed to it.

4. A disobedient and unholy life results from unbelief also by a law of necessity. If the heart rejects the truth, of course the life will not be conformed to it.

5. Faith will develop every form of virtue in the heart and life, as their occasions shall arise. It consists in the committing of the will to truth and to the God of truth. Of course as different occasions arise, faith will secure conformity to all truth on all subjects, and then every modification of virtue will exist in the heart, and appear in the life, as circumstances in the providence of God shall develop them.

6. Unbelief may be expected to develop resistance to all truth upon all subjects that conflict with selfishness; and hence nothing but selfishness in some form can restrain its appearing in any other and every other form possible or conceivable. It consists, be it remembered, in the heart's rejection of truth, and of course implies the cleaving to error. The natural result of this must be the development in the heart, and the appearance in the life, of every form of selfishness that is not prevented by some other form. For example, avarice may restrain amateness, intemperance, and many other forms of selfishness.

7. Faith, governmentally results in obtaining help of God. God may and does gratuitously help those who have no faith. But this is not a governmental result or act in God. But to the obedient he extends his governmental protection and aid.

8. Faith is a necessary condition of, and naturally results in, heart-obedience to the commandments of God. Without confidence in a governor, it is impossible honestly to give up the whole being in obedience to him. But implicit and universal faith must result in implicit and universal obedience.

9. Unbelief naturally, because necessarily, results in heart-disobedience to God.

10. Faith naturally and necessarily results in all those lovely and delightful emotions and states of feeling, of which they are conscious whose hearts have embraced Christ. I mean all those emotions that are naturally connected with the action of the will, and naturally result from believing the blessed truths of the gospel.

11. Unbelief naturally results in those emotions of remorse, regret, pain, and agony which are the frequent experience of the unbeliever.

12. Faith lets God into the soul to dwell and reign there. Faith receives, not only the atonement and mediatorial work of Christ as a Redeemer from punishment, but it also receives Christ as king to set up his throne, and reign in the heart. Faith secures to the soul communion with God.

13. Unbelief shuts God out of the soul, in the sense of refusing his reign in the heart.

It also shuts the soul out from an interest in Christ's mediatorial work. This results not from an arbitrary appointment, but is a natural consequence. Unbelief shuts the soul out from communion with God.

These are hints at some of the natural and governmental consequences of faith and unbelief. They are designed not to exhaust the subject, but merely to call attention to topics which any one who desires may pursue at his pleasure. It should be here remarked, that none of the ways, commandments, or appointments of God are arbitrary. Faith is a naturally indispensable condition of salvation, which is the reason of its being made a governmental condition. Unbelief renders salvation naturally impossible: it must, therefore, render it governmentally impossible.

