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1850

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Faith, Philosophy, and Reason.

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BACCALAUREATE SERMON,

DELIVERED AT

WILLIAMSTOWN, MS.

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BY MARK HOPKINS, D. D.

President of Williams College.

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FACTS and opinions have been communicated to me, which have encouraged the hope that the publication of the following Discourse may be useful at the present time. It would have been published sooner, but the nature and limits of the occasion on which it was delivered precluded as full a discussion of some points, particularly if objections were to be obviated, as would be desirable; and I have hoped to find time, either to expand, or to recast and publish it in a different form. Not having been able to do this, it is published as it was delivered. That it may add something to clearness of thought and definiteness of expression on this subject; that it may tend to place Faith, as one of the great natural principles of action, where it belongs; and especially, that it may strengthen the faith of some humble Christian, is the desire and prayer of the Author.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1850,

BY T. R. MARVIN,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

S E R M O N .

HEBREWS, XI. 33, 34.

WHO THROUGH FAITH SUBDUED KINGDOMS, WROUGHT RIGHTEOUSNESS, OBTAINED PROMISES, STOPPED THE MOUTHS OF LIONS, QUENCHED THE VIOLENCE OF FIRE, ESCAPED THE EDGE OF THE SWORD, OUT OF WEAKNESS WERE MADE STRONG, WAXED VALIANT IN FIGHT, TURNED TO FLIGHT THE ARMIES OF THE ALIENS.

THE word 'hero,' does not occur in the Bible. Nothing can be more opposite to its spirit than that self-sufficiency, and recklessness of human rights and sufferings, which are commonly associated with this term. Still, there are no higher examples of a true heroism than the Bible presents. In the text, and the chapter from which it is taken, we have an account of great and heroic exploits, performed indeed in ancient times, but such as we should be glad to see emulated, such as ought to be emulated in the midst of the light and advantages of our day. We have a right to expect, as the stream of time rolls on and pours its accumulated wealth at the feet of new generations, that there shall not only be an increase in the knowledge of nature, but that there shall be, at least, no failure in the breadth and compass of a comprehensive wisdom, or in the might of a true manhood that is ready to do and to suffer in the cause of humanity and of God.

But not only may *we* expect this ; it is also intimated by the Apostle that it is expected and watched for by those who have gone before us. He represents, in the opening of the succeeding chapter, those worthies and veterans who had finished their own course, as gathered into a vast assembly, forming "a cloud of witnesses," and watching with intense interest the bearing of those who follow them. "Seeing then," says he, "that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

This race, my friends of the Graduating Class, I would now invite you to run. *You* are especially called upon to emulate the example of the great and good,—to do deeds that shall not only cause joy on earth, but shall send a new thrill through the vast assembly of those who have gone before you.

But if you are to do the deeds of these ancient heroes you must be girded with the same armor, be controlled by the same principle, must have the same prize in your eye, and be sustained by the same power. Fruitful as the nineteenth century has been in inventions, it yet furnishes none for making great and good men. The great tree must grow now from the same earth, and under the same sun, and by the same processes and ministrations of dew and rain and storms, as the great tree of old ; and so, now, as of old, must the life and might of true greatness be drawn from the same fountains, and work themselves out by essentially the same processes. Were these deeds performed of old only

by faith? then only by faith will they be performed now.

What then is Faith? Avowed by Christianity as its peculiar principle of action, ridiculed by the philosophers, is it indeed some new, or peculiar, or blind, or fanatical principle? Or is it one of those grand and universal principles which underlie human action, which are necessary to true heroism, to a right philosophy, to individual and social perfection, and which must, in the progress of light, come more and more into distinct recognition and general acknowledgement?

Whatever faith may be, it must be conceded that the accounts given of it by its advocates have been neither uniform nor consistent. It has been said to be simple belief, founded on evidence, and not differing from any other belief; to be belief in testimony; to be belief for reasons not derived from intrinsic evidence; to be a belief on the ground of probable, as distinguished from demonstrative evidence; to be a belief in things invisible and supernatural; to be a trust; and more recently, and transcendently, it has been said to be an *organ* of the soul by which it becomes cognizant of the invisible and the supernatural.

To some, this diversity of statement may seem to indicate that there can be nothing in faith very definite or important. To me it indicates the reverse; for while men do certainly differ about things which are indefinite and obscure, yet it is also found that they come latest, if at all, to the investigation of those principles which are the most

intimate and essential, and that they are no where less likely to come to a uniform and satisfactory result. As in mathematics the truths that are most nearly intuitive are the last and the most difficult to be demonstrated, so here the principles and processes which are so essential that they seem inwoven into our being, are the last to be investigated and the most difficult to be satisfactorily explained. Men are no better agreed what reason is, or what personal identity consists in, than they are what faith is; and yet, as those who think wrongly on these subjects may, and do, exercise their reason, and continue the same persons precisely as they would if they thought rightly, so those who make different statements in regard to faith, all exercise faith, and receive the benefits of faith, in precisely the same way.

That the term faith may not be used loosely and popularly, to designate the ideas just mentioned, and also others, I would not say; but the inquiry now is, What, generically, and specifically, is that Faith upon which the Bible insists as essential to salvation, and by which the great deeds it records were performed? Can this faith be so defined that our idea of it shall be distinct, that it shall harmonize with philosophy and with reason, and that it shall be adequate to the great offices assigned to it in the Bible?

I propose in the following Discourse, first, to answer these inquiries; and secondly, to speak of the offices of faith—more particularly, as adapted

to this occasion, of its office as a principle of action to be adopted by every young man.

The definition of faith which I would propose, and which seems to me to meet the conditions just mentioned, is, that it is *confidence in a personal being*. Faith lives and moves and has its being only in the region of personality. Whatever we may believe respecting things visible or invisible, on any other ground than our confidence in a personal being, does not seem to me to be faith. It implies the recognition of a moral nature, and a conviction of the trust-worthiness of the being possessed of such a nature.

This definition of faith implies a division of this universe into two departments, that of persons, and that of things; and, in connection with this division, will give us a clear distinction between philosophy and faith. The sphere of faith is the region of personality, that of philosophy is the region of things. Each of these spheres addresses our sensibilities and calls for investigation, but in accordance with its own nature and laws.

By things, are called forth, in the region of sensibility, the emotions of beauty, of sublimity, and of admiration; by persons, in addition to these, confidence, affection, passion.

In her investigations in the department of things, philosophy is concerned, not with all knowledge, but chiefly with resemblances in those things that exist together, and with uniformities in those that exist in succession. These are the basis of all classification, of all inductive reasoning — and it is

through these that we get all our ideas of physical order and law.

Philosophy presupposes a knowledge of things as they exist separately. This being given, she neglects all individual peculiarities, and proceeds to group them according to their resemblances, and to give them collective names. In doing this she acquires for man power, and practical guidance, because a resemblance in external signs denotes a resemblance in essential properties. This gives value to the signs of nature, and shows that in the department of resemblances she is constituted on the basis of truth.

But not only does philosophy notice resemblances in beings and phenomena that exist together, she also notices uniformity of succession; and is thus enabled to foretell the future, and to act wisely with reference to it. She believes in a uniformity of succession according to the order that is established. She investigates the laws in accordance with which this succession moves on. As among things that exist together, she knows nothing of individual peculiarities, so in phenomena that exist in succession, she knows nothing of exceptions, and admits with great reluctance, or not at all, that such exceptions really exist.

Such, except as she may be said to investigate causes, is philosophy. She stands in the centre of things that co-exist, and passes onward and outward to the farthest star, stepping more or less firmly as the resemblances, by which alone she proceeds, are more or less perfect; she stands at the present point

in things that succeed each other, and binds the future to the past by what she conceives to be an inexorable law.

But it may be inquired whether philosophy does not extend to the domain of mind. Yes, so far as mind is a thing, and hence under the law of an absolute uniformity, but no farther. The moment a personal being is placed under that law of nature by which that which follows is *necessarily* the product of that which precedes, personality ceases, and you have mere nature—a thing. The very idea of that necessary uniformity upon which philosophy is based, precludes that of personality. It also precludes the idea of faith; for whatever we may believe without the range of personality, and on whatever grounds, there is always wanting that element which enters into faith by which a person may be said not only to have confidence, but to be *confiding*.

The sphere of faith, as opposed to that of philosophy, is, as I have said, the region of personality. Here we find affections, and a moral nature, and a free-will. In the sphere of things we deal with similarities, and uniformities of succession, and laws, and do not necessarily know anything back of these. We *may* indeed refer them all to a personal agent, but for the grounds of our belief we are not necessitated to go beyond the uniformities and laws themselves. We have in these nothing of the great element of character. But in our dealings with personal beings, whatever ground we may have for belief, either of what they say, or of what they will do, must be found, not in any law, not in any

unvarying uniformity conceived of as necessary, but in the *character* of the personal being. This is an element entirely different from any found in the sphere of philosophy, and it is upon this that faith fixes. This is the grand peculiarity of faith; it is confidence in a personal being. Like belief, it admits of degrees. As the highest form of belief is certainty, so the highest form of faith is such a confidence in the character of any being as will lead us to believe whatever he may say *because he says it*, and to commit implicitly into his hands every interest of our being.

And as that without us which calls forth faith, is so different from that which is the basis of philosophy, so it may be remarked, is that within us which is brought into action also different. Doubtless the nature of man is preconformed to the state into which he is to come, and as he naturally conforms himself to the uniformities of nature, so does he, though by a different principle, naturally confide in those to whom his being is intrusted. It is not to be supposed that that feeling of confidence with which the infant looks up into the eye of its mother, with which the new formed angel must look up to his God, is the same as that by which he is adapted to the blind and unvarying movements of nature. It is not to be supposed, as these two great spheres of persons and of things are so distinct, that our nature should not be equally preconformed to each.

If the spheres of faith and of philosophy be thus distinct, it will be obvious that they can come into conflict only at a single point. A personal being may make assertions about facts that lie within the

domain of philosophy, and these assertions may seem to conflict, and may conflict, with evidence respecting those same facts derived from philosophy. But in such a case man is not left to the alternative of a blind faith or a presumptuous philosophy. His reason is to decide. By this he is to ascertain, on the one side, that a personal being has spoken, what he has said, what means he had of knowing the truth, and what confidence is to be placed in his character. On the other side, he is to inquire whether he knows all the facts and their relations, and is sure of his inferences. If, after this, there shall seem to be a conflict, or a contradiction, reason must strike the balance, and say whether, under the circumstances, it is more rational to put confidence in a personal being, or to believe in facts and deductions for which we have another species of evidence. Reason recognizes both these grounds of belief; and she, and she only, can decide in cases of apparent conflict between them.

Having thus considered the relations of faith and philosophy, let us now look at those of faith and reason.

It is strange with what pertinacity the opponents of Christianity have insisted that there is, and must be, a conflict between these; and how readily many advocates of Christianity have assented to this view. So far has this been carried, that a recent and much-lauded article in the *Edinburgh Review* is entitled, "Reason and Faith; their claims and *conflicts*." But such conflict is by no means to be admitted. There is just as much opposition between reason

and faith, as there is between reason and philosophy, and no more.

If we regard reason as giving us only intuitive and necessary truths, then it will act equally in the domain of philosophy and of faith, and there can be no opposition between either of them; unless, indeed, a personal being should assert an absurdity. But if, as is more common, we regard reason as comprising what is rational in man,—those high attributes by which he is distinguished from the brutes, and which must enter into, and preside over, every legitimate act and process of the mind,—then, the sphere of faith and philosophy being different, there can be no conflict between reason as employed in the sphere of philosophy, and as employed in the sphere of faith. Reason presides over both spheres, and can therefore be in conflict with neither. The only possible question is, whether we may, in any case, just as rationally reach conclusions and grounds of action by that process which we call faith, as we can by that which we call philosophy. But on this point there can be no question. We act as necessarily and as legitimately with reference to personal beings by faith, as we do in reference to things by a belief in the uniformity of nature. It is just as *rational* for a man to have confidence in the character and consequently in the word of a personal being, as it is for him to believe in the facts of observation or experience or in those forms and systems of knowledge deduced from these which are called philosophy. It *may*, perhaps, be found to be *quite* as reasonable to believe a fact because it is asserted by God, as to believe one be-

cause it is inferred by ourselves, or even as to believe a fact made known to us by those senses which God has given us.

Is there not then such a thing as faith that is not in accordance with reason? Certainly, just as there are inferences and philosophies that are not in accordance with reason, and perhaps it would be difficult to say whether there has been more folly and absurdity under the name of faith or of philosophy. My reason tells me that I may confide in the facts given me by my senses, that I may classify these, and build up a system of knowledge which we call philosophy. Under this impression, men have built up systems of philosophy which we can now see were exceedingly irrational and foolish, but this does not show that there is any conflict between reason and philosophy; but only that reason is not infallible in this department. My reason also, all that is rational within me, tells me that I may, and ought, sometimes to confide in personal beings, and that such confidence is a rational and sufficient ground of knowledge and of action. We may, indeed, here repose confidence where we ought not, and receive irrational dogmas, and submit to useless or ridiculous rites; but this would only show that reason is not infallible in this department.

So far then from separating faith from reason and bringing them into possible and actual conflict, we would say that the sphere of faith is one of the two great spheres over which reason presides, and that faith itself is one of the great and indispensable methods in which reason is manifested. It is a libel upon religion to say that it requires a blind faith, or any

other than a rational faith, or that it requires us to believe any thing which it is not more rational to believe than it would be to disbelieve it. There is no tendency in faith to a blind belief. It does not say, and has no tendency to say, 'I believe because it is impossible.' That is mere Quixotism and folly. Faith may, indeed, take hold of the hand of a father, and be willing to step where it does not see; but then she is willing thus to step, only because she has a rational ground for believing that her father will lead her right. Christianity discards and repudiates altogether, any faith that can come into conflict with reason.

This view of faith gives it a definite sphere, it shows distinctly its relations both to philosophy and to reason, and removes from it all that mysterious or mystical appearance which has sometimes been thrown around religious faith. As an exercise of the mind it is, generically, no way different from that to which we are constantly accustomed. When a child follows implicitly the directions of its father, when a client puts his case into the hands of an advocate, there is an element in the act that is different from simple belief, it is an element that puts honor upon the father and the advocate. This is faith. Faith, then, generically, is confidence in a personal being. Specifically, religious faith is confidence in God, in every aspect and office in which he reveals himself. As that love of which God is the object, is religious love, so that confidence in Him as a Father, a Moral Governor, a Redeemer, a Sanctifier, in all the modes of his manifestation, by which we believe whatever he says because he says it, and commit

ourselves and all our interests cheerfully and entirely into his hands, is religious faith. Surely there is in this, nothing irrational, or hard to be understood.

The distinctive element of faith, then, is not belief, but it is that perception and appreciation of moral character upon which the belief is based. Involved in this there must always be a belief of the trustworthiness of the object of our faith. Hence, if faith were perfect, it would involve, not merely a belief in testimony, but an obedience like that of Abraham. In his case there was simply a command, and strictly no testimony; yet the faith was perfect.

It is this complex nature of faith that has caused the confusion respecting it. It does imply a movement of both the rational and the emotive nature. In this, sometimes the one, and sometimes the other may predominate, but it is never due either to the intellect simply, or to the feelings simply. When outward appearances, as in the case of Abraham, are opposed to the dictates of faith, it will be an affectionate confidence. When there is no such opposition, it will be a confiding affection in which the confidence may seem to be entirely absorbed and transfigured into love. The belief involved in faith, is based on those very qualities which necessarily call forth emotion or affection; and hence, in this act, the two are fused and inseparably blended. Hence too the moral element in faith, which is not necessarily in mere belief, and hence its power as a principle of action. Nor is there any thing strange or anomalous in this. Pity is a complex act, consisting of sympathy for distress and a desire to relieve

it. These may exist in different proportions, but if either be wanting there is no pity; and yet no one finds any difficulty in understanding what pity is.

Having thus considered the nature of faith, we now proceed to its offices.

Of faith in general, the great office is to underlie all the social intercourse of personal beings. It is to this higher and distinct sphere of personal intercourse, what a belief in the uniformity of nature is in our intercourse with nature. Without confidence society is impossible. It is the great element and condition of social prosperity and happiness. Universally it will be found that all the ends of society are reached, in proportion as there is mutual confidence between husbands and wives, parents and children, rulers and subjects, buyers and sellers, friends and neighbors. Remove but the single element of distrust, and who does not see that the great cause of human wretchedness would be taken away. Let but the one element of a general and perfect confidence be poured into the now heaving mass of human society, and its agitations would subside, and it would be at once aggregated and crystalized into its most perfect forms. In connection with this, every form of human attachment would strike deep root, every mutual affinity would have free play, and every capacity of man for happiness from intercourse with his fellow-men would be filled.

Of the more specific offices of religious faith we will first consider that, so much insisted on in the Scriptures, by which it accepts a gratuitous salvation.

From the nature of faith as now stated, it is easy to see that its relation to such a salvation is a necessary and not an arbitrary one. To be accepted, a gift must first be appreciated, and desired *as a gift*. This, in the case of salvation from sin, involves repentance. And then there must be full confidence in the sincerity of him who offers the gift. This is faith, and, the gift being desired, there can be a completion of the confidence only in its acceptance. In this view of it faith is not that in consequence of which we receive the salvation, as if the faith existed first and accepted the salvation afterwards, but faith is the very act of confidence by which the salvation is accepted. It is a confidence which can become complete only as it accepts the offer, because it is only as He makes the offer that the Saviour offers himself to our confidence. Faith then, in its relation to salvation, is that confidence by which we accept it as a free gift from the Saviour, and is the only possible way in which this gift of God could be appropriated. How simple! how rational! how strange it should fail to be understood!

A second office of religious faith, as stated in the Scriptures, is to unite man to God, and in so doing, to give him power with God. To this, faith, as now explained, is perfectly adapted. As our relations to God are so numerous and intimate, and as confidence in him can be based only on a perception of those perfect attributes which would call out the highest affection, it must be an affectionate confidence. But it is only by an affectionate confidence that such a being as man can be united to God, or,

indeed, that any one moral being can be united to another. Let this exist and every thing in the relations of the two beings must be pleasant, the relation itself will be the ground of the highest satisfaction which our nature can know, and will lie at the foundation of a higher and nobler idea of being and of order than any other. What is the idea of myriads of orbs circling in harmony together, compared with that of myriads of intelligent and moral beings united to God and to each other in a mutual and affectionate confidence? Here we find the true end of this universe—an order of which all other order is but the symbol.

And while faith thus unites us to God, it is natural and rational to suppose that it should have the great power ascribed to it in the Scriptures. It is one of the strongest impulses and principles of a rightly constituted nature never to disappoint any confidence that is justly reposed in it. This seems to be even the instinct of a generous nature without reference to principle. Who is there that would not protect a dove that should come and nestle in his bosom? An appeal by innocence, by helplessness, by distress, in which the individual abandons himself with entire confidence to *us*, is one of the strongest that can be made to our nature, and will often be met by the greatest sacrifices, not only by individuals, but by whole nations. Let Kossuth escape and come to this country, and confide himself to our protection, and let him be pursued by the combined power of Russia and of Austria, yea by the power of the world, and the nation would rise as one man, would form a living wall around him, and he would

be taken only as his pursuers should pass over the dead bodies of those who would stand in his defence. Shall *men* do thus, and shall not God defend those who come to put their trust under the shadow of his wings? Shall any *innocent* creature of God that is in distress come to him and confide in him, and shall not the resources of Omnipotence be held ready for his deliverance? Shall any guilty creature of God, however debased and wretched, yea though he were dyed and steeped in sin, come to him with a confidence authorized by the death of Christ, and cast himself upon him for pardon and adoption, and shall he not be received even as the prodigal son? Shall any servant of God, in this world of conflict, be hardly beset, and, feeling that his own strength is weakness, look up to God with an eye of filial confidence, and shall he not send him succor? Shall his servants say, in the very face of the flames, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us, O king," and shall he not deliver them? What are the laws of nature in a case like this? They are but as a technicality compared with a mighty principle. One glance of a confiding eye is mightier than all the laws of nature. Heaven and earth may pass away, but not a hair of him who puts confidence in God shall "fall to the earth." Sooner, far sooner, would God sweep this material framework, with all its laws, into utter annihilation, than he would disappoint the authorized confidence of the most inconsiderable of his creatures. How different is this universe when thus viewed by the light of faith in its relation to a controlling personal being,

a Father, and a Friend; and when viewed in the light of philosophy, as mere nature—as an unvarying, indiscriminating, crushing uniformity!

The third office of religious faith is to be a principle of action. And if there be any one thing which a young man about to enter upon life ought to consider thoroughly, it is his principles of action. Upon these his own character, and that of his enterprises will depend. As you, my friends, adopt, from this time, right principles of action, so, and so only will you promote your true usefulness, and permanent good.

But certain it is, referring to the distinction already made, that the highest principles of action cannot be found in the sphere of things. The study of these may train the intellect, and make men mere philosophers; they may awaken the desire to possess them as property and make men misers; they may call forth the emotions of beauty and sublimity; and that is all. There is here no confidence, no affection, no sympathy. But bring man, now, into intercourse with free, personal and moral beings, and every high faculty of his nature will come into play. The intellect, and the heart, and the moral nature will act together and strengthen each other. And as the basis of all such intercourse must be faith, so the basis of all intercourse with God must be religious faith.

As a principle of action, religious faith is contrasted with those adopted by the heroes of this world, because it tends to form a complete character. Recognizing an omnipresent and omniscient God, it acts equally at all times, and bears as well upon the

minute, as upon the greater actions of life. Minute actions and details must make up the whole life of most men, and the greater part of the life of all men ; and what we need above all things, is a principle of action that shall embrace all acts equally, as the law of gravitation embraces the atom and the planet, and that may dignify the smallest act by the principle from which it proceeds. Such a principle is religious faith ; and nothing but this can carry the life-blood of principle into those minuter portions of human conduct on which our happiness here chiefly depends. This would attune the chords of domestic life and make them discourse sweet music ; it would substitute the freshness of sincerity, and the flush of benevolence, for the paint and frigidity of a false and conventional politeness. Carrying out such a principle, an individual may be truly great, however humble his sphere ; and this greatness will bear the test, and grow as it is examined ; while that which takes human opinion as its standard and reward, dwindles and becomes contemptible the more it is known. This latter cultivates the art of concealment ; it is great, and generous, and kind, in public, and mean, and selfish, and unamiable, at home. Long enough has the world been filled with pretences, and shows, and fair seemings, and whited sepulchres ; but the remedy for these is to be found, not in any ridicule or denunciation of hypocrisy, nor in any splenetic or contemptuous decial of ‘shams,’ but only in the cultivation of a true religious faith.

This will be the more obvious if we notice a second, and grand peculiarity of religious faith, which is, that it can work only in harmony with the

moral nature. No man can expect to be aided or sustained by God, when he is doing any thing which he is conscious is not well pleasing to him. Confidence in God must imply a constant endeavor to know his will, and must hence, quicken the conscience, and, as the Scriptures express it, purify the heart. I have already spoken of the essential connection between faith and love, and it is by its intimate alliance with conscience on the one hand, and love on the other, that religious faith is capable of becoming a principle of action so ennobling and so mighty. It is rational and intelligent as recognizing, sometimes the plans of God, and always the grounds of trust in Him; it quickens the conscience as necessarily adopting the law of God for its rule of action; and it gives full play to the affections, by drawing its very life from the holy and infinitely amiable character of God. Thus, he who is actuated by this principle must have the strength that comes from the consciousness of acting rationally, from peace with God, and peace of conscience. Thus has it every element that can be needed to sustain great and heroic action. Let a man feel that he is in sympathy with God in the object of his pursuit, that God approves the means he adopts, and let him have a filial confidence in him, and what deed of a true heroism is there, whether of action or of suffering, which he may not perform? Thus moved and sustained, is it any wonder that they of old "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in

fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens"? And what this principle was of old, it is now. The same God is above us, and his response to any confidence reposed in Him will not be less full. This only can support the martyr, the moral hero, the hero of meekness, and righteousness, and love unconquerable. This only can lead men to originate and sustain those great moral enterprises, on the success of which the welfare and progress of the world must ultimately turn. It cannot be that man should set himself fully against the wickedness of his own heart, and the wickedness of the world around him, and resist the allurements of temptation, and defy the powers of nature wielded by persecution, and endure to the end, and overcome, except as "seeing him who is invisible." "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Only this can enable the true missionary to forsake country and friends, and devote his life, in a heathen land, to the good of those whom he knows but as redeemed by the blood of Christ; only this can sustain him in attacking forms of sin that seem as ancient and firm as the hills; this alone can enable him to labor on till death, and die in hope, while yet the darkness of midnight lies upon the mountains. Such a faith has nothing to do with nature. She comes down from above into the sphere of nature, she contemplates objects of which nature knows nothing, and when she acts rationally with reference to these objects—to a kingdom and laws that are above nature—nature says she is mad. She is not mad;—the might of the universe is with her; God is with her; eternity shall vindicate her. This, not money, not

machinery, or confidence in them, but this it is that the church needs. Let her come directly to God in the strength of a perfect weakness, in the power of a felt helplessness and a child-like confidence, and then, either she has no strength, and has no right to be, or she has a strength that is infinite. Then, and thus, will she stretch out the rod over the seas of difficulty that lie before her, and the waters shall divide, and she shall pass through, and sing the song of deliverance.

From the view of faith now taken, it is easy to see that every system of negations, and distrust, and skepticism, must tend to lower the tone of human action and enjoyment, and must be uncongenial to our nature. Such systems may be useful in pulling down error, but have no constructive power. Their effect must be like that of withdrawing the vital element from the air; and not more certainly will languor and feebleness creep over the physical system in one case, than over the spiritual in the other. There can be no robust and healthy life, either social or spiritual, without a strong faith.

Let me then first counsel you, my friends, to place a generous confidence in your fellow men. Not that you should be weak, or credulous, but, if you must err at all, let it be on the side of confidence. For your own sakes repress the first risings of a suspicious and distrustful temper. It will unstring the nerves of your energy, and corrode your very heart. Far from you be that form of conceit which attributes to itself shrewdness and wisdom by always suspecting evil. Far sooner would I make it

a part of my philosophy and plan, to be imposed upon and cheated, up to a certain point. Let not even intercourse with the world, and the caution of age, congeal the spring of your confidence and sympathy. So doing, you may find much that you would wish otherwise, some you may find that will be as a briar, and sharper than a thorn-hedge, brethren that will supplant, and neighbors that will walk in slanders; but you will also find answering confidence, repose for the soul, green spots, and fountains in the desert.

Let me also warn you especially against all those pantheistic views, virtually atheistic, which are setting in upon us in these days in connection with certain forms of a transcendental philosophy. The great result, if not the object of all such schemes, is to obscure and exclude the idea of personality in God; and hence, of accountability in man. It is around this banner, more than any other, that the migratory hordes of infidelity are gathering, and uniting against the religion of the Bible. These schemes assume the garb of a high philosophy; they put on the sheep's clothing of a religious phrasology. In their outward aspect, they are contemplative, reverent, and especially philanthropic. Their advocates believe in God—but then all things are God, and in the working of all things hitherto, nothing higher than man has been produced. They believe in inspiration—but then all good books are inspired. They believe in Jesus Christ—and so they do in Confucius, and Socrates, and Mohammed, and Luther, and in all *earnest* and *heroic* men. They be-

lieve in progress—but in a progress which neither springs from, nor leads to moral order. They make the ideas of guilt and retribution a bugbear, redemption an absurdity, repentance unnecessary, and faith impossible. Making such pretensions to philosophy, and giving such license to passion, these schemes have great attractions, and form the chief speculative quicksands which the currents of this age have drifted up, and on which the young are in danger of being wrecked. They merge personality into laws, the operations of a wise agent into necessary uniformities. They make the order and stability of God's works testify, not to his wisdom and immutability, but to his non-existence. They change the truth which the creatures thus tell, into a lie, and say, "No God." Thus are the heavens disrobed of their glory, and infinite space becomes a blank, and faith finds no object, and the tendrils of affection find no oak, and human life is without a providence, and conscience is a lie, and death is an eternal sleep. To all such schemes, and their abettors, how appropriate and overwhelming are the reproof and the argument framed expressly for them long ago: "Understand, ye brutish among the people; and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?"

And now, my beloved friends, in bringing to a close my relations to you as an Instructor, what can I wish better for you personally, or for the world in your relations to it, than that you should take for

your actuating and sustaining principle, faith in God. Without this, you will lack the highest element of happiness, and the only adequate ground of support; life will be without dignity, and death without hope. Only by faith can you run that race which is set before *you*, as before those of old. In this world your courses may be different; you will choose different professions, and diverge widely in your lines of life. To some of you, the race here may be brief. One whom I addressed the last year, as I do you to-day, now sleeps in death. But whatever this may be, and whether longer or shorter, before you all there is set the same race under the moral government of God; to you all is held out the same prize. Why should you not run this race? Never was there a time, in the history of the world, when moral heroes were more needed. The world waits for such. The providence of God has commanded science to labor and prepare the way for such. For them she is laying her iron tracks, and stretching her wires, and bridging the oceans. But where are they? Who shall breathe into our civil and political relations the breath of a higher life? Who shall couch the eyes of a paganized science, and of a pantheistic philosophy, that they may see God? Who shall consecrate, to the glory of God, the triumphs of science? Who shall bear the life-boat to the stranded and perishing nations? Who should do these things, if not you—not in your relations to time only, but to eternity, and to the universe of God?

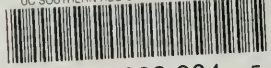
And as seen in the light of faith, what a race! what an arena! what a prize!

Faith places us under the inspection and care of the eternal and omnipresent God, and accepts of him as a Father, a Redeemer, a Sanctifier, and Portion. She enthrones Him above all laws, and to that utterance which she hears coming as the voice of many waters from around the throne, saying, The Lord God omnipotent reigneth, she says, Amen. She introduces us to a spiritual family of our own race, and of superior orders of beings, before whose numbers and capacities the imagination falters. She accepts the suggestions of analogy, that the moral and spiritual universe is commensurate with that physical universe which night reveals, the outskirts of which no telescope can reach ; and for the unfolding and sweep of a government embracing such an extent, she has an eternity. Such is the scene in the midst of which this race is to be run. What is the prize ? It is likeness to God—sonship—the inheritance of all things to be enjoyed forever. That such a prize might be offered, Christ died ; that it may be striven for, as the one thing needful, the Holy Spirit pleads. Gird yourselves, then, for this race ; run it with patience, “looking unto Jesus.” The world may not notice, or know you ; for it knew Him not. It may persecute you, for it persecuted Him ; but in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. He will be with you ; He will sustain you ;—the great cloud of witnesses will encompass you ; they will wait to hail you with acclamation as you shall reach the goal, and receive the prize. That goal may you all reach,—that prize may you all receive.

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