

In all the word of God, scarcely a single attempt at a definition has been made; the only one that approaches towards it, is found in Heb. xi 1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." * * It is a word, so simple, and uncompounded, that no comment can make it more so. And to the christian in ancient times, there was no more necessity, for explaining this term, for practical purposes, than it would be now, to explain the term sight. Men believe, and always have believed, whether they could explain the term, belief, or not. Just as men see, and always have seen, whether they could explain the term sight, or not. It would seem therefore extraordinary, that a principle, so common, so universal as that of faith, should involve the absurdity of ignorance in relation to it, and the term by which it is designated. In its commonly received acceptation, faith is credit to testimony, the reliance of the mind upon the statements of another, as true. And thus all the information we receive from others, and repose confidence in, as true, we call faith. Knowledge is the information we obtain by observation, and experience. Opinion the inferences we draw legitimately, or otherwise from our knowledge thus obtained. And faith, the apprehending any thing as true, that may be reported to us by others, it is that invisible link, which connects with the mind, the statements of others, as true. It is related therefore, both to the mind which receives the fact as reported, and to the testimony upon which it rests. There is no law of our nature better understood, or more certain in its operation, than that of credit to testimony.

* * * * *

It as well saves the child from the devouring fire, or the deep pit, into which he would fall, as it does the prince, the merchant, the farmer, from the dangers that beset their path. Indeed, the whole complicated machinery of society, would be unhinged, but for the operation of this principle. When we speak therefore of faith in the testimony of God, we use the term in its commonly received acceptation, because the sacred writers thus use it, for although as we have seen, they scarcely have attempted to explain the term, yet definitions, in fact, are frequently submitted, as in the conduct of the children of Israel in putting themselves under the guidance of Moses, and marching out of Egypt, and through the Red Sea, under the influence of this principle,—and the case of the Apostles, who under its operation, forsook all, and followed Jesus. If a child, accredits the statements of his father, as true, if a juror, receives the testimony of a faithful witness, as worthy of all reliance, and if we exercise the same faculty, in all the inferior, together with the more weighty affairs of this life, what difficulty can there be, in understanding the nature of faith, in the testimony of God. * * The Bible is a practical book, and never in any part of it, does it presume, that a man may be in doubt in regard to the reality, or existence of his faith. It speaks of a "dead