

gospel, it is true, is not strictly of this moral class, though it was a necessary introduction to a system of moral truths. It is a speculative doctrine, we mean the doctrine that "Jesus is the Christ," that he was an inspired and commissioned messenger from God to man. Jesus himself constantly set forth this as the primary speculative truth. He is constantly arguing it and insisting upon it. He made his miracles bear towards the proving it and the bringing it home to the convictions of men. He generally uses the word Faith in reference to this single truth. In the few instances in which he applies it differently, it means confidence in the providence and promises of God. The Apostles, in their subsequent preaching and writing, took the same course. When by the preaching of Peter three thousand were converted on the day of Pentecost, the only speculative doctrine proposed, the only one addressed merely to the understanding, was this same truth, thus summed up in his own words: "Therefore let all the house of Israel assuredly know that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." When, afterwards, by the preaching of the same apostle five thousand believed, the only speculative article recorded in his sermon, was the same, — that God had raised up his son Jesus, and sent him and glorified him. When Philip discoursed with the Eunuch, and converted and baptised him, the only speculative doctrine was this, "I believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God." In what did the conversion of Paul consist but in the conviction, produced by the miraculous vision on the way to Damascus, that Jesus was from heaven, and was in heaven, was the Christ? as we are told, that, as soon as he recovered his sight, he "straightway preached