

FAITH AND SPECIAL INFLUENCE.

That faith is the belief of testimony, is admitted by all persons of reflection, on the subject of faith properly called human.—But many contend, that that faith so often spoken of in the Christian Scriptures, is something more than the belief of the testimony of God—what that something is has never been intelligibly defined or settled—with most it is the *effect* of regeneration, something irresistably inwrought in the heart of man either before or with the word—hence so much mysterious and contradictory reasoning, and so many questions of strife on the subject of “*saving faith*.”—As nothing of this kind of reasoning or definition appears in the inspired volume—and as it is manifestly opposed to every declaration and every example of faith which it reveals; from Adam’s hearing and believing God’s promise—to the revelation of the Spirit made to John at Patmos to be sent by him to the Churches—that they thereby might hear and obey what the Spirit saith to the Churches. We must leave its advocates to contend for the truth and use of their doctrines, not with us, but with the revelation of God on the subject.

That faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, whether by immediate and special revelation to the individual as to the Prophets and Apostles—or through these divinely inspired men, as God’s appointed means of revealing his testimony and will to others; that those who hear and obey these—hear God—are taught of God—are influenced by God; and that those who despise or reject the message of inspiration, despise God, and resist the authority and teaching of the Spirit of Inspiration, is the plain and unequivocal teaching of the Bible, and is not inconsistent with any statement or promise respecting the Holy Spirit, which it contains, and when duly considered, is systematically opposed by much of human teaching of the present day considered highly orthodox. But the scriptural statements on the subject are too simple, and will not satisfy those of a metaphysical taste, and who are philosophically inquisitive into the doctrine of causation.—But this is not the worst of it—one believer contemns another because he cannot soar as high as himself, he dislikes him too, not because he is not as good a christian, but because he is not so wise a philosopher as himself—hence one christian philosopher terminates his inquiry here “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed,” or “ye believe not because ye are not my sheep”—another who is not so strong, or perhaps stronger, terminates his inquiries here, “they searched the scriptures daily with all readiness of mind, therefore, many of them believed.” The theory is considered as the *truth* itself—and texts are dissevered from their connexion, and strung together according to the martial skill of each belligerent to defend their several opinions—though perhaps not one of the texts were ever intended to prove any such thing as they are made to do:—thus is the war protracted—the strife maintained, which every Christian should desire to see terminated.—That the evidence of truth does not arrest the attention of all, is equally true of things human and divine—as it is, that men easily assent to what they wish to be true, or