

you ask *how* can God be infinitely present, or powerful, &c., you start a difficulty, we cannot understand—it is not an object of faith—we have no testimony. The *facts* can be believed—the *mode* of God's existence and perfection raises questions that an angel cannot solve, and which we could not comprehend.

So in regard to Christ's two natures; we know he is God, we know he is man, for God has said so; but *how* he can be both in one person, we cannot believe, for we have no testimony. The fact we can believe, the mode my faith has nothing to do with. Man himself is mortal and immortal. That is a simple fact, and can be believed. *How* is he both? is a question that starts a difficulty. If this view were not lost sight of, there would be less discussion, and less difficulty and doubt. It is because men wish to know beyond what is revealed, and to believe beyond what God hath testified, that they become perplexed. It is so in regard to the practical, as well as to the theoretical. "It is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do;" that is simple and easy to believe. If we ask *how* God worketh in us without interfering with our freedom? we start a difficulty, which is not a proper object of faith, for we have neither light nor testimony upon the subject. We are to believe, in religious things, what God has told us; beyond this lies a region which belongs not to faith. Some complain that this puts limits to the exercise of the human intellect. But not a whit more than does natural philosophy, or any other department of human knowledge. We believe ten thousand things as *facts*, which we cannot explain; and we never reject the facts, because we cannot explain the mode of their production or existence. Here, there is an entire equality between nature and revelation.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," and ignorance of any thing to which God gives testimony is a disadvantage; and faith, in its amplest exercise, would embrace the whole revealed counsel of God. But sometimes faith is directed to a single point of the divine statement. Thus the jailor at Philippi was directed to a single object and exercise of faith—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The cross of Christ is the central truth. Sever any doctrine from it, and that doctrine is worthless to us; sever any precept from the cross, and it is *powerless*. Both *motive* and *power* to obey emanate thence, as they centre there! Here the preacher very lucidly exhibited in a brief statement the connection of every thing to be believed in order to salvation, with the central fact in the gospel scheme, Christ and his cross; and proceeded to say—We thus get a view of the *object* of faith—the things to be believed on God's testimony.

Now, continued he, what is the exercise of faith? What does the mind *do* in believing? There are *three* elements of a true exercise of faith. 1st. Intellectual conviction of the truth.

2nd. Heart-approbation of and delight in.

3. *Trust*—personal reliance upon God.

1st. The first element of faith is to perceive the thing to be true. How can the mind decide whether or not a statement is true? By weighing the evidence on one side and the other, and so come to a conclusion. The first thing is to believe that God *hath* spoken. Is the Bible his word? "All Scripture is given by inspiration." This is to be believed; an intellectual investigation of the proof is requisite. This settled, our next and only inquiry ought to be, what is in the Bible? What does God the Lord say? Here we are inclined to make God say what we think *ought* to say. But our business is simply that of interpreters; and to get at the true meaning of the Scripture. Men talk about *reason*, and say they must exercise their reason! What is more *reasonable* than to believe God? All we have got to do is to find out what God has really said. And when convinced that he hath said thus and so, we know what we *ought* to believe. We learn from the Bible that God made man, *what* he made him, and *what* man hath made himself by rebellion. What man *was* and *is*. Then what provision God has made for man's redemption. What Christ is—God and man; what he has done, and is doing for us. This is our *creed*. First discover that God speaks; then what he says. And in this search we need and should seek Divine aid at every step. He who makes a creed should pray all the time he is making it. When we have a creed, and are convinced of its truth, we have *intellectual* belief. Can it save the soul? No! there is nothing either right or wrong in mere intellectual belief. An intellectual creed governs nobody. All men are controlled at last by the state of the *heart*, and through the affections and passions.

God makes his first appeal to the intellect, and *through* it to the heart. Until you reach the heart of a man you cannot control him for good; if the devil has his *heart*, no matter who has his *head*. The heart governs—hence God appeals to the heart. A mere intellectual creed makes nobody better—makes nobody happier. All the happiness of human nature is found in gratified affection; or in the hope of gratified affection. Hope adds to present blessedness by going forward to the land of promise, and bringing back the luscious clusters of the grapes of Eschol. Misplaced affection is the cause of misery. Now if we would have a religion that will make us holy and happy, we must get at the heart. Thus we get at.

2d. What is the second element of true faith—*heart* approval of what God teaches us. Delight in God, and in what he makes known to us. We are here led to get at *how* the man feels. "What think ye of Christ?" "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Acquiescence of the heart in the revelation which God has made of *himself* and of his purpose, plans, working and precepts, is the element of faith.