



## HEBR. II. V. I.

*Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

April 25.  
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**I**N the latter end of the former chapter the Apostle exhorts to perseverance, and shewes the great evil and danger of drawing back. Now, to the end this evil might be prevented, he shewes what it is that will deliver us from it. Whatever others doe, or whatever temptations or afflictions we meet withall to draw us back, yet still the just shall live by faith: *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

In this Chapter (therefore) he falls upon this argument, to wit, the opening of the doctrine and practice of faith. And the words read are an excellent description of faith (not an exact definition of it) *It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* The word *substance*; the word in the originall is very full, ~~the substance~~, it hath many significations: the fundamentall, the foundation of things hoped for; the subsistence, the substantiality of things hoped for: those things that in themselves have no reall present subsistence to us, but are things to come, and hoped for; yet faith gives them a present reall substantiall being to us. *The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* The word translated *evidence*, is a Logically terme, and signifieth such a kinde of conviction as is by way of dispute and cleare demonstration, so as it must needs compell one to yeild unto it; that is the propriety of the word, that although the objects of faith are things not seen, either by the eye of sense, or by the eye of reason, yet faith brings such a light with it, and makes them so de-

monstratively cleare, that it even forceth the soul to a beliefe of them: so that it hath the fullest conviction of them that possibly can be.

Two things then (you finde) are here said of faith :

First, that it gives a substantiall reall present being to things hoped for.

And secondly, that it is the evidence of things not seen. In the first of these, we have these two things : First, that there are many glorious things which the Saints hope for, that yet they have not : they are men of hopes. Secondly, that their faith doth give a reall and substantiall being to those things which they hope for.

In the Second of these we have likewise two things : First, that the things of God are things not seen. And Secondly that faith is the evidence of those things that are not seen.

For the first, but briefly, *There are great things that the Saints hope for, that yet they have not; they are men of hopes.* They hope that they shall ere long be delivered from all sinne and sorrows : that they shall never sinne more, never be tempted more, never suffer more, never feare more; they hope that the time is coming when it shall be said of all their finnes, as *Moses* said of the *Egyptians*, These your enemies that now you see, you shall never see them more. They hope that these vile bodies of theirs, these bodies of clay, bodies of vileneffe, bodies of sinne, shall ere long be made glorious bodies; that these pieces of dirt shall (within a while) shine more gloriously then the Sun in the firmament. They hope that the Image of God shall ere long be perfected in them, so as they shall be fully united to God, and be made one with the Father, as the Father and the Son are one. They hope that they shall meet with their blessed Saviour in the aire; and with these their eyes behold him coming in his glory: They hope that they shall be possessed of those glorious mansions which he is gone before to prepare for them. They hope that their eyes shall be blessed with the glorious vision of a deity that they shall see God, and so see him, as to be like unto him. They hope that they shall enjoy full communion with the Lord; that they shall have the immediate and full lettings

out of a deity into their souls and bodies, without any intermission. They hope that they shall joyne with the blessed Angels and Saints in eternall Hallelujahs, and shall be everlastingly admiring and adoring the name of the great God, for those glorious mysteries of redemption by Christ. They hope that they shall keep a perpetuall and eternall Sabbath, and shall no more be combred with naturall things, with the things of the earth, but shall have perfect and everlasting rest in Christ, and shall live in God as in an infinite ocean of all excellency; these things they hope for. I but are not these conceits? are they not notions, pretty fine fancies, with which they please themselves? is there any reallity in these things: indeed if these things were reall and substantiall, if there were as great a reallity and as much substance in the things they hope for, as there is in the things they enjoy in the world for the present, and that they could see them as certainly as they see the things that are before their eyes, it were somewhat like. Well, sayes the Apostle, there is a principle to make all these things substantiall to you; and faith is the substance of things hoped for. These hopes are not conceits and notions, but they are raised up in their hearts by the mighty power of the holy Ghost. *Rom. 15. 13. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the holy Ghost.* There needs not the power of the holy Ghost to raise fancies and conceits in mens hearts; but the hopes of the Saints are such as are raised in them by the power of the holy Ghost: And God himself is stiled by their hopes: *Now the God of hope, &c.* Now God is not the God of fancies and conceits, but he is the God of the hopes of his Saints? And these hopes are given to them, to the end they might be kept from drawing back, and might be upheld for the present in whatever they suffer. Therefore the Scripture compares our hope to an Anchor, and to an Helmet: you know that of all dangers, those are the greatest, of shipwrack by Sea; and of enemies by Land: now our Hope is to helpe against both: against our dangers by Sea, of shipwrack, our hope is an Anchor: against our dangers by Land, of enemies, our hope is a helmet.

The hope of the Saints for the present is as the corke to the

net that keeps it from sinking to the bottome; though they may be in the water, and the lead of troubles and afflictions may weigh them down, yet their hope keeps them above water; they have great hopes, and they have that which makes their hopes substantiall; for their faith is the substance of things hoped for. And that is the second thing I now come to: Carnall hearts think there is no substantiall reall excellency in any thing, but in the outward excellencies of the world; they think that money, Lands, honours, the pleasures and delights of the flesh, have substance in them; and that there is something of reality in these: Now I beseech you, observe the difference between the judgement of the holy Ghost, and the judgement of a carnall heart: whereas a carnall heart looks upon outward things as the onely substantiall things, (therefore you call your rich men substantiall men: and so the Scripture, speaking in the language of men, calls a mans estate his substance, because men count their estate here their substance,) now the holy Ghost accounts all those things that the world looks upon as substances, to be but meer conceits: and those things that the world accounts conceits, to be substances: (and those that judge according to the judgement of the holy Ghost, doe the like.) For the first, you know St. *John* reckons all things in the world in three ranks; either such as are profits, pleasures, or honours: the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life, and the delights of the eye: now for those things that the world counts their greatest substance, their estates, and riches, marke how the holy Ghost thinks of them, *Prov. 23. 4, 5. Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom: wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?* That which you call your substance, the holy Ghost sayes, it is not, it hath no being at all. Well, but honours and preferments have somewhat in them. Nay, they have nothing in them neither. *Acts 25. 23.* tis said, *Agrippa and Bernice came in great pompe to the judgement seat, glittering in their brave apparel; but the word translated great pompe, is, they came with much fancy: what greater honour is there then for Princes to come in their robes upon the judgement-seat, glittering before the eyes of their subjects? thus did they: and yet their great*

great glory in the judgement of the holy Ghost, was all but a great fancy : And for the lusts of the flesh, *Amos 6.* in verse 5, 6. you have the sensuality of the people set out very fully, *They lie upon beds of Ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the Lambes out of the flock, and the Calves out of the midst of the stall ; they chant to the sound of the violl, and invent to themselves instruments of musick ; they drink wine in bowles, &c.* and in verse 13. it comes all to this, *Ye rejoyce in a thing of naught,* in that which hath nothing in it; there is no reallity, no substantiall excellency in all these things ; neither in riches, honours, or pleasures ; but marke now how the holy Ghost judges of spirituall things : what substance there is in them, which are only conceits to carnall hearts, *Prov. 8. 20, 21.* (sayes wisdom there) *I lead in the way of righteousness &c. that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance ; to inherit that which is ; so Tremelius,* as if nothing had a being, but that which wisdom causeth to inherit. And *Hebr. 10. 33, 34.* *You were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, &c.* (but how came this to passe? marke,) *knowing in your selves that ye have in heaven a better, and an enduring substance.* So that that which was but a conceit and notion to the world, by their faith they saw it to be substantiall unto them : and *Hebrewes 11. 10.* It is said of *Abraham,* that he looked for a City with foundations : there was no City in the world that had foundations in *Abraham's* eye, but only the City that he looked for ; and it was his faith that gave that City foundations. Thus we see the different judgement of the holy Ghost and the world. As now while we live upon the earth, we think the earth to be very great, and the Sun and Moon and Stars to be but little things, and they seem so to us : but were we in heaven, we should then see the Sun and Moon and Stars to be great and vast bodies, and the earth to be but a point in comparison of them : so while men have earthly hearts, they look upon the things of heaven as conceits, and poore small inconsiderable things, not worth looking after : but if by divine principles they were once lifted up to heaven and could converse there, then they would see the things of heaven to be great matters, and

the things here below to be but a point; to be but poor low inferiour things, not worth minding or affecting. Those things that are the objects of faith are substantiall things, and faith gives them that substance.

And they are substantiall things, First, because they have in them more then appeares to be in them: we count that substantiall which hath in it more then it appeares for: those things that make a great shew, and have not that in them which they make shew of, we count them vain, and without substance, as a piece of cloth that hath not that in it which it shewes for, we say it hath no substance in it.

Now the things of God have more in them abundantly then they shew for, and therefore they are substantiall: hence it is that when Christ shall come in glory, the Text sayes, *He shall be admired in all them that believe, 2. Thes. 1. 10.* They see for the present a great deal of excellency in Christ, and they love him, and their hearts are towards him for that they see in him now; but hereafter he shall appeare abundantly more glorious then they thought for: then they shall say, indeed we did see much in Christ, but we see now infinitely more glory and excellency then ever we imagined.

Secondly, the things of heaven that are the objects of faith are substantiall, because there is most of God in them. Now God is the infinite first being of all, and gives being to all: that therefore which hath most of the first being in it, must needs be the most substantiall and reall good: Now though it be true that all creatures are filled with Gods excellencies, yet spirituall and heavenly things are above all other most filled with God: the very divine nature of God is in them, and there is the very life of God, and the Image and glory of God, and there God doth especially communicate himself. God hath two wayes of his communication: the one is to his Son, and that is in an infinite way that we understand not: and the other is to his creatures: and his speciall communication of himself to his creatures is in spirituall and heavenly things: therefore they must needs be the most substantiall and reall things to the soul.

And then Thirdly, they are substantiall things and not notions

tions and conceits, because they are the very center of the thoughts and intentions of God himself, and that which he aimes at in all his workes towards his creatures, and the very center of the happinesse of the most excellent creatures that ever God made. Now that which is the very issue of the great designe of God in making the world, and of all the workes he doth in the world, and the highest good any creature is capable of, certainly it is no conceit, but hath a great deal of substantiall being in it : but the good we have in spirituall and heavenly things, is the very issue of Gods designe from all eternity, in his full communication of himselfe unto his creature; and it is the highest good any creature is capable of : therefore spirituall things are reall and substantiall.

Again, reall and substantiall things they are, because we finde they have a reall and substantiall operation upon the souls of those that are acquainted with them. O the mighty work that appeares upon the hearts of the godly from the apprehension of spirituall things, that are the objects of faith ! how doe spirituall things tune and raise the hearts of men that were low, and base, and droffy, and vile before, to converse with God in the highest way and kinde that it is possible for a creature to converse with God in; and what great things doe they enable the soul to doe ! those things that have such a substantiall operation, must needs be reall and substantiall.

Lastly, they have an eternall subsistency, that shall never vanish or fade away, that when all other things shall wither as the grasse, spirituall and heavenly things shall abide forever : therefore they are the only substantiall things.

But then, as they are thus in themselves, so how come they to be thus to the soul ? why it is by faith ; faith gives them the bottome, the foundation, the substantiallity of their being. And I note this the rather, because the great reason why our hearts are not taken with spirituall things, is, because we doe not see into the reallity and substantiallity that is in them, and into the presentnesse of the good they have.

Now faith gives them this their substantiall being :

First, because it is faith that carries the soul to contemplate upon

upon God himfelfe, and enables the foul to difcerne the excellency and glory that there is in God, to know much of God in his own effence and being; and elevates the foul to converfe with God in a higher way abundantly then reason can doe (though it is true, a great deal of God is understood by reason.) And then by faith the foul comes to know what riches there are in thefe excellent and glorious things of God. It firft fees them in God, and then after that it fees this God to be infinitely willing to communicate and let out himfelf to his creature; And then by faith the foul converfeth with the deep and glorious counfels of God, between himfelf and his Son: It fees into the great defigne God had in fending his Son into the world for the working and bringing to paffe thofe high and glorious intentions he had in communicating himfelf to the children of men through a mediator. Again, faith converfeth with the great things of the covenant of grace, and there fees into thofe unfearchable riches (as the Apoftle fpeaks) that have no footfteps in the creature; fo the word fignifies; we cannot fee them by reason, or the creature. A fpeciall object faith works upon, is the covenant of grace in the Gofpell, and it fees the riches that are revealed there: And faith receives the testimony of the holy Ghoft; the holy Ghoft is appointed by the Father and the Son to witneffe thefe great things, to manifefte to the foul the deep things of God; thofe things that are but meer notions otherwife to the heart of a man, the fpirit of God discovers thefe to the foul; and fo faith working upon thefe objects, and clofing with them as the proper fphere for it to move in, it makes all thofe glorious things that are revealed concerning the happineffe of thofe that God intends eternall good unto, fubftantiall and reall to the foul; fuch things as the foul can build upon, and dare venture its felf, and its eternall eftate upon; and we had need have a good foundation in thofe things we are content to venture our eternall eftate upon: and becaufe it muft be the work of faith (when God intends to fave the foul) to have fuch apprehenfions of the Gofpell as to be willing to venture its eternall condition upon it, therefore it had need have a fure foundation: and hence faith is the fubftance of things hoped



hoped for, and gives a reall being unto these things.

And as it makes them reall and substantiall, so there is another thing included in this word, It makes them *present*; though they are but things hoped for, yet by faith they have a present subsistence to the soul; they are lookt upon by faith as now subsisting, though in themselves they doe not: faith partakes much of the nature of God, it hath a kinde of omnipotent power in it, out of nothing to create something: there are many excellent works of faith, and amongst the rest this is a speciall one, to give a being to that which in it self hath none, to make it for the present a substantiall reall being to the soul: the work of faith in this kinde is very observable: for evill things that are very nigh, faith can make them at a mighty distance; and for good things that are never so far off, faith can make them to be as present to it. Observe what the Scripture speakes of it this way: first for evils that are very nigh, and encompass us round about, when we are in the midst of them, faith can put the evill at a distance, as *Psalm. 91. 7.* *A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee; nor come nigh thee:* If he had said, it shall not be upon thee, it had been somewhat; but to say, it shall not come nigh thee, this is a strange kinde of expression; how could it be said not to come nigh him, when thousands fell on both hands, and he was in the midst of it? it was by faith: faith put that at a distance which was just upon him. The strength of reason will help one, when the plague is a great way off, then a man thinks, I am safe enough, because farre enough from it: but suppose the plague come into thy house, into thy chamber; now to believe a promise, it shall not come nigh thee, here is a mighty work of faith; faith puts evils present at a farre distance. And then on the other side, for good things that are absent, & a great way off, faith can make them as if they were really subsisting: therefore (*Heb. 11. 13.*) It is said of the Fathers, that they saw the promises a-farre off, and *embraced* them: the word in the originall is *saluted* the promises; now friends when they salute, must be nigh one another; their faith made the promises which were a great way off to be with them as if present: therefore it is

said of *Abraham*, that he saw Christs day; and rejoyced; and the Scripture speaks of taking hold of eternall life, and that we doe by faith; and of being in heaven, *receiving the end of your faith*: Tis not, you shall receive, but now you are receiving. *Psal. 108. 7. 8. God hath spoken in his holinesse, I will rejoyce, I will divide Sechem &c. Gilead is mine, Manasseth is mine: marke, is mine*: he presently concludes, as if the thing were already done, for it was so by faith: faith gives a present subsistence to things. Reason it self hath a great deal of power to make things that are future, to be as present, both in evill things and in good. In evill things, a man that is a contemplative man, and hath a wicked heart, he will fetch the sweetnesse of his lust and sinne which is a great way off, and make it as present by meditation, and roling it up and down in his thoughts in a way of discourse; and so acts his sinne contemplatively, though he may be in hell before he act it really; Now as reason and discourse can fetch in a lust, and make it as if it were present: so reason can goe a great way in making a future good thing as if it were present. And this is the difference between a rationall creature, and a sensuall: a sensuall creature is only for the things that are before it; but now reason can fetch things that are absent, and make them as present: and in regard of this, God hath a mighty advantage of mankinde, either for the bringing of his wrath upon them, or for bestowing happinesse upon them: as you can fetch in your lusts that are absent, and make them as present to you in your thoughts, by the work and discourse of reason: so by the worke of this faculty, God can make ~~ills and plagues~~ though future, yet to be as present with you. And in this respect the wofull evill of those that perish eternally may be set out dreadfully: namely thus, they being reasonable creatures, by the work of their reason they may fetch in all the misery that they shall indure to eternity, to fill up every moments misery, that all the misery they shall indure to eternity, they shall possesse it presently and together: and therefore the torment of a brute creature is infinitely short of a reasonable; suppose a brute beast were in hell, yet its misery would come infinitely short of a mans, because a brute creature apprehends no more misery,

misery, then that instant : but now , if a reasonable creature be in torment, and knowes it shall be in it eternally , by thought and discourse it can fetch into that very instant, all the paine that it must endure for ever. And so for happinesse, those that are saved , shall be infinitely happy every moment, because they shall fetch in all the happinesse they shall have to eternity to make them every moment happy : this is the work of reason. Now if reason can make future things to be as present, how much more can faith, that is not only reason elevated, but is a principle higher then reason ? as it is in dispaire, a man that dispaire brings hell to himself before he is in hell, and makes hell that is absent, as if it were present. Hence some in their dispaire have cryed out, they were in hell : as *Francis Spira*, he said he was in hell , and hell fire was upon him, because by dispaire that which is future hath a reall kinde of subsistence in the heart of a man , as if it were now present. Now as dispaire brings in the reallity of Gods wrath that is future, and makes it as present, so faith brings in the reallity of Gods love and mercy that is to come , and makes it as present : and it is as genuine a work of faith , to make future things present , as any work of faith. Now I should have shewn you in what respects faith makes things present, that are to come, and what is the work of faith in them. But briefly, it makes all things present that are to come :

First, because it sees all things as certain as if they were already ; if a man have a bond of one for a hundred pounds, that he is sure off, he sayes here is a hundred pounds , because of the certainty of it.

Secondly, because faith lookes upon the possession of things, that not only they shall be, but that now there is a possession of them, and that two wayes ; *First*, Christ our head is gone before to prepare mansions for us , and in our name to take possession of heaven , therefore we have taken possession in our head ; and then *Secondly*, we have the first fruits of the spirit, the first fruits of the glorious things of heaven ; and in that regard, we our selves have taken possession, and therefore they are as present to faith. *Thirdly*, there is such an infinitenesse in eternity, that the time that is to be before we have full possession

is not considerable: therefore faith lookes upon them as present.

IV And then Fourthly, faith eyes the things of heaven continually, and they are therefore present, because they are alwayes in the eye of faith.

V And Fifthly, the presentnesse of them is seen in this, because the Saints enjoy all in God: for this is the happinesse of heaven, to see all glory and blessednesse in God: Now faith doth something of this here; faith inables us to see great things in God. Now the enjoying communion with God for the present, and beholding of heaven in God, and seeing all things in him, this must needs make a present reall subsistence of them to the soul. Thus I have spoken briefly of faiths, being the substance of things hoped for.

For the use: If faith be the substance of things hoped for, and gives being to things so high and glorious as the things of God are: First, then certainly faith it self must needs be a very substantiall thing; faith is not a conceit and notion, for it gives reality and substantial being to those things the world counts conceits: faith is the most substantiall glorious thing in the world: It is that, in the working of which, the power of God appeares more then in any thing in the world: therefore in *Ephes. 1.19,20.* there are some six or seven gradations of the wonderfull power of God that appeares in the working of faith: Now that must needs be an exceeding substantial thing, that hath such a mighty power of God in working of it: God doth not use to put forth extraordinary power for the doing of ordinary things. Now when he speaks of faith, he sets out his power in a glorious manner, and in an extraordinary way; and thereby tells us, that faith hath some great matter in it. And indeed faith hath much in it; though it be a grace that empties us of our selves, yet it is that whereby the believer is enabled to doe one of the most glorious workes that ever creature was enabled to doe: as now for a poor soul to see its self in its own filth, under sinne and guilt, and to see the wrath of an infinite deity incensed against it; to see the infinite justice of God requiring satisfaction, and the infinite holinesse of God hating of sinne; to have the accu-

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sations of conscience, of Satan, of the world, and being sensible of all this, yet to lay hold upon a mediator between God and man, and to trust in a righteousness beyond it self, and to tender it up to God the Father for a full attonement and satisfaction, and to venture its self, and eternall estate upon it; and being unholy and filthy in it self, yet to unite it self to God in as neer a union (for the kinde of it) as possibly a creature can have with the Creator, next the hypostaticall union of the humane nature of Christ with the divine: I say; for faith to be able to doe this, it is a high and most glorious work, and there is an abundance of the power of God appears in it.

By this how may we discover the vanity of the faith of the greatest number of people in the world, who have nothing but meer emptinesse in them, their very faith is only a notion, and no marvell then if all things they believe be but notions, they can doe nothing with their faith. You say you hope and believe and trust in Gods mercy, but what can you doe with your faith? what reall substantiall work of faith is upon your hearts? when faith comes, there comes the mighty power of God and his wonderfull glory into the soul, that creats (as it were) and gives substantiall being to the most high and glorious objects in the world: therefore know, that faith is not a dead slight empty thing in the soul, but it hath a mighty operation upon the hearts of men and women: and certainly that faith that must save a soul must have high and glorious operations in the soul.

Againe if faith gives a substantial being to things hoped for, then we must learne to strengthen and exercise our faith in the things we hope for: which of us doe not hope for great and glorious things (as I gave you a hint of them?) Now let faith be exercised and strengthened in these things; if all those blessed things we spak of were present to the soul, O how would our hearts be above the creature, how should we look upon all things here below as dung, filth, drosse, how would our thoughts be raised in the admiration of spirituall and heavenly things, how would our spirits be taken up in wondering at the glory of God that appears in these things, how

would our hearts be enflamed with love to God! how would our conversations be in heaven for the present! what heavenly thoughts and heavenly affections would be in us in all our ways! and how would we venture to go through fire and water for God! to doe any thing, suffer any thing, be any thing for God. And did our faith make such glorious things as these reall and substantial to us? how substantial would our duties and services be. Why is it then that our duties have so much vanity in them, are so empty, having nothing but circumstance in them; certainly (brethren) if our faith gives a subsistence to such blessed & glorious things of eternal life, it will likewise give a subsistence to all our duties and services, that we shall not tender to God empty and dead services. Consider, this you, who though you dare not omit duties, yet what empty duties doe you tender to God; your works should be the works of faith, and faith should give them a subsistence, as well as it gives your hopes; therefore satisfie not your selves with that faith that will not give a subsistence to your duties; and doe not think it will give a subsistence to such glorious things we speak of. Thus much of the first particular, *Faith is the substance of things hoped for.* I would faine speak a little of the second, *It is the evidence of things not seen.*

There are two things here.

First, that the things of grace, spiritual and heavenly things, are things not seen.

And secondly, that faith gives an evidence to those things.

First, that grace, spirituall and heavenly things, are things not seen.

The Apostle says *Gal. 5.19.22.* the works of the flesh are manifest; but when he comes to the workes of the spirit, he says the workes of the spirit are *these*: he doth not say, they are manifest; for indeed they are things that are not seen: though tis true, the operations of them appear, yet there is no externall work of grace, but an hypocrite may doe it: therefore the workes of the spirit cannot be said to be seen either by the eye, of sense or reason. And then for the things of heaven, says the Apostle, *2 Cor. 2.18.* *While we look not at the things which*

which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporall, but the things which are not seen are eternall. I might here discover to you how it comes to passe, that spirituall and heavenly things are not seen unto sense and reason. Many arguments I thought to have given to discover this: I must but cull out two or three particulars. The riches of a Christian in spirituall and heavenly things are like the riches of the Sea; it may be outwardly you see nothing but hideous waves, and a great deal of filth, I but the riches are at the bottome, and the riches of the earth are within, and hidden, they doe not appear: so the riches and treasures of a Christian are things not seen, they are things that are in the very bosome of God, in the very heart of God. Now as no man knowes the things of a man, but the spirit of man; so no man knowes the things of God, but the spirit of God, and him to whom God doth reveal them.

And then they are things that are beyond the principles of reason, they are too high. and so too glorious for such a faculty as reason is: if an object be too glorious for sense, it destroys the sense: so these objects are too high for reason, and therefore cannot be seen by reason.

And the blindness of man naturally is such that he cannot see these things. And chiefly God so orders things in his providence, that he goeth a quite contrary way (as to sense and reason) to that which he hath promised. I say it is the way of God to hide his glorious excellencies by seeming to goe in the wayes of his providence directly crosse to what he hath promised; we might shew how God hath hid from sense and reason his mercy to his own people: that of *Abraham* is considerable; there were two promises God made to *Abraham*, the one of going out of his own country, and carrying him to a land flowing with milk and honey; the other, that he would make his seed as the stars of heaven for multitude, and that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Mark now, if *Abraham* had not had something to evidence that which was not seen, he could never have seen the faithfulness of God in these promises: for when he was gone out of his own country, he comes to *Canaan* (the country promised)

but as soon as he was there, he was ready to starve, and was faine to flye to *Egypt*: and if he had not had faith he would have fallen off, and have been ready to turne back againe. And then for the second promise, *That in his seed all the Nations of the earth should be blessed*: *Abraham* goeth on seaventy yeares, and his wife had no childe; and it ceased to be with her after the manner of women; she was old, and *Abrahams* body dead: and after he had a child, he must kill him, and being saved, *Isaac* must be forty yeares before he is married; and when he is married, he must have no childe in twenty yeares: and in the first hundred and fifty yeares after the promise, there was but seaventy of all his seed: yet this was the promise, that in his seed all the Nations of the earth should be blessed: thus God seemes to goe crosse to what he promised. We might instance also in *Jacob*; God commande *Jacob* to returne from *Laban*: and after that, mark how God followes him. First, his uncle *Laban* followes him with thoughts to slay him. Secondly, In his Journey his wives nurse dyeth. Thirdly, his wife dyes. Fourthly, *Dinay* is ravished. Fifthly, his two Sons, *Simeon* and *Levy* commit that villany, that makes him stink in the nostrils of the people of the land. Sixtly, *Esau* comes to destroy him; and all this in that journey that God commanded *Jacob* to take. Now if *Jacob* had not had faith to look through these to the things that might encourage him in his way to things not seen, it had been impossible he should have gone on. So when God brings *Israel* to *Canaan*, you know what a way they goe about through the wildernesse: when they were come to *Canaan*, a land flowing with milk and hony, God brought them to the worst part of it: for the south part was the hottest, and dryest, and barrenest part of the country: thus God seemes to goe on in crosse wayes, and this hides the excellency of the things of God: and hence it comes to passe they are not seen. If it be so, then that the things of God are not seen to a carnall eye, and require more then reason to apprehend them:

First, it should make us cease wondering, that men of excellent parts and reason, doe not see the things of God, but slight them: he that offendeth in this, they are things not seen: if it



a great deceit in many, who think that because such and such men have larger abilities of reason then others to understand naturall things; that therefore it must needs follow, they have deeper apprehensions of spiritual things: and yet men reason thus, what you poor simple men and women understand these things, when there are great Schollars and learned men, that see them not: this argues a carnal heart; as if the strength of reason could make men apprehend more then faith can doe. You know what Christ sayes, *Father I thank thee, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes*, *Matth. 13. 35.* Notwithstanding such expressions of Christ, yet we see the temper of the men of the world: alas, they look upon religion as a most foolish and ridiculous thing; and so for strictnesse in the wayes of religion: when a man shall see another very earnest about a thing that he thinkes is of no consequence at all, he cannot but impute folly to him: so, when the men of the world see the people of God fervent, and zealous about those things that they can see no excellency in; and see them willing to venture and suffer for them; they count this folly and madnesse: when Christ (being in danger of his life, *John 18. 37, 38.*) tells *Pilate* that he came into the world to bear witnesse unto the truth, sayes *Pilate*, *what is truth?* speaking in a slighting way, as if he had said, you come here to answer for your life, and you had need look to that; and what doe you talk of truth now your life is in question. So carnall men, when they see others venture their estates, and lives, for poor inconsiderable things, as they esteeme them, they count this folly: and why doe they doe so? because the things of God are not seen. Therefore in spirituall and heavenly things we must alwayes endeavour to beat down reason, and to advance faith: sayes *Luther*, *In the things of God we must not continually be asking the reason, for they are the things that are not seen.* Nay (sayes he) *faith kills the beast reason, in spiritual things.* Though it is true, being kept under faith there is good use of it, yet it is as a beast to be flaine, that so we may see the more of spirituall things. I meet with a story in a book of a company of Bishops that were gathered together, and there was a Philosopher with them, who

disputed against the Christian faith; and he argued so subtilly that he non-plust the Bishops. Now there was a godly man, a poor weak man there, and he desired he might have liberty, to dispute, for that they were so non-plust in: and though at first they were afraid he would spoyle the cause through his weaknesse, yet at length they gave him leave to speak; and he propounds certaine principles of religion to the Philosopher, and said to him, doe you believe these things? and said no more, but doe you believe these things? and upon this the Philosopher yeilds: I have heard (sayes he) nothing all this while but words; but now I finde a divine vertue come into me, that I can no longer resist the Christian faith, and this meerly upon the propounding of the objects of faith, with urging upon him, Doe you believe? certainly in the things of faith we must believe before we can understand them fully: our faith must sometimes help us to conceive, and not alwayes our conceiving help to us to believe, we finde this in *Peter, John 6.69. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ the Son of the living God:* mark, *we believe and are sure:* He doth not say, we are sure, and believe: but first believe, and then are sure; by believing we come to be sure. There are many they would faine be sure that Christ died for them, that their sins are pardoned, and that they are the children of God; and they endeavour to make this out by arguments, from the effects, and would try themselves by such and such notes: but we should rather, and in the first place goe the way the Apostle doth here, we believe and are sure: we should cast our souls upon the truth of the word, and by believing come to be sure.

So much for the First, the things of God are things not seen.

But now faith, that doth evidence and make them cleare, *We know in whom we have believed, 2.Tim.1.12.* and the mercies of God in Christ are called *The sure mercies of David, Ais 13.34.* Faith is not a meer notion, imagination, or conceit, but tis that which makes all sure and certaine to the soul. I should have answered a case here, whether or no there may not be faith without assurance, that is without assurance of a mans own salvation by Christ.

o Certainly it must needs be a great mistake to put that upon the being of faith, which is the riches of faith; for so the Scripture calls assurance: a man may be able to carry on his Trade, though he be not rich; and a man may be a believer, though he be not rich in assurance: now assurance is the creame of faith, the riches of faith. I should have shewn also how farre faith can be an evidence, where there is doubting. Onely thus: the assurance we have by faith building upon the word, and drawing conclusions from divine principles, (for that I should have spoken of, how faith draws things up to an evidence, by divine and spirituall principles; and what these principles are: but we cannot stand to open this: but) it is so farre an evidence, that the soul can venture upon it, as I told you before; faith is a foundation that the soule dare venture upon: as that Martyr said, though I cannot dispute for the truth, yet I can dye for the truth. Where faith comes with a convincing light, though there may be doubts and fears, and temptations; yet it can trust; and depend; and the soul resolves if I perish, I will perish here: let all the world say what they will, I finde this is the way, and whatever comes of it I will not goe back: and by this meanes over-powers the soul, and carries it through opposition; and so faith is an evidence.

Many things should have been spoken by way of application.

As First, If faith be an evidence to other things, and makes, them seen, then it is an evidence to it self. I meane thus: It is therefore possible for a soul to know its own good condition and its interest in Christ, meerly by the very work of faith it self; though for the present it be not able to argue, *aposteriori*, from the effects of faith, yet it may argue *apriori*; faith may evidence it self. Many Christians goe on in a doubting way, meerly because they think they must have evidences of their faith, by some effects that follow their faith; and till then they can have no comfort; tis true, where true faith is, there will be fruits and effects of it: but certainly if you could learne this mystery of the Gospel, to finde an evidence in faith it self, you would sooner come to comfort; And it is a safer way a great deal: as thus, if you have doubts about your conditi-

have no interest in Christ, the way to be freed from these doubts and feares; is by renewing the act of faith it self, by presenting to your souls the riches of the grace of God in the Lord Jesus; and by viewing the glory of that, see if it will not draw out your souls to believe. And if upon this your hearts stirre not for the present, set these things before your souls againe, and turne not from renewing the acts of faith, to pore upon your corruptions, and then say, you can see no interest that you have in Christ: but look upward againe and againe, and by the very viewing of them, a vertue will come in, to draw the heart to believe. As by presenting the law, there is an efficacy to terrise and afright: so by presenting the glorious things of the Gospel, there is an efficacy to draw out faith: And then you are to renew the very primitive work of faith; that is to close with Christ, and to cast your selves upon the freeness of the grace of God in Christ; and though you finde in your hearts such and such corruptions, and are ready to say, shall such a one as I am, so polluted and defiled, cast my self upon the grace of God in Christ? yet lay hold upon Christ, and you have as much reason to doe it from thence, as from any thing; and therefore this must be thy course to renew this primitive act of thy faith again and again. I but yet my doubts and feares remaine: but if thou wouldest have an evidence, to it againe & again a thousand times over, and at last there will be an evidence of the act of faith it self. But you will say, this may be presumption to cast ones self upon the free grace of God in Christ. I answer, this is no presumption, because the very act it self gives thee a right to all that is in God and Christ. Now presumption is when a man takes that which he hath no right to: and if a man doe that to which he hath no right before, yet if that he doth give him a right, it is no presumption. But you will say, this is a licentious way, & gives liberty. O do not wrong faith, when thou (though thou canst see no reason for it), in the want of sight and sense canst venture thy self upon the riches of the grace of God in Christ, it is the most glorious work that thou canst possibly doe in this world: shouldst thou be able to live to overcome all thy corruptions, and to doe the greatest service imaginable, it could

could not be so glorious a work as this. And it is the most difficult thing in the world; and therefore no doctrine of liberty; that soul that can goe through all the difficulties of faith, that can overcome its infinite guilt, and the terrours of the law, and notwithstanding all that comes between God and it, can venture upon the free grace of God in Christ, may overcome all the difficulties in the world. Many other things might have been in urging of this, as now, though we are in the dark, and fight and sense, and all is gone; yet exercise faith, and if thou wouldst study to magnifie God as a Christian, this is the onely way. There is a notable instance of credit that *Alexander* gave to his Physician, and the example of the trust he put in him did mightily honour him before all his Nobles: *Alexander* being sick, one sends to him and adviseth him to take heed of *Philip* his Physician, for that one had feed him to poyson him; his Physician brings him the potion, and *Alexander* gives him the letter, and drinks the potion presently, intimating that he would not believe what was reported of him: and this was a mighty honour done to his Physician, and so when thou hast no evidence in thy selfe, yea when thou hast many temptations that speak ill of the free grace of God in Christ, and that tell thee Christ hath left thee and forsaken thee; and that it would never be thus and thus with thee if Christ intended any good to thee; and when temptations are in their greatest heat, and speak the worst of Christ; Now to venture thy soul upon Christ, Christ will take it as the greatest honour thou art capable of doing to him: and it is the readiest way to advance the riches of his grace and mercy. And be afraid of unbelieve, as well as of presumption; be afraid least thou shouldst not magnifie the riches of the grace of God in Christ, which is his great desire amongst the children of men. I thought to have laid downe something to shew what encouragement we have to believe in case of want of evidence, when we are in the dark, and can see no light; and to have given rules to help our faith:

But I will conclude with this one use.

By what hath been delivered you may all see what an excellent and admirable grace faith is, and of what use it is. O

brethren, in these times wherein there is such feare, trouble and distraction; now to have faith to give a subsistence to all, the things that God hath spoken of; a subsistence to all the glorious promises that God hath made to his people: what a wonderfull blessing is this! now exercise faith, and by faith give a subsistence to all these promises; make them a foundation to rest upon; be willing to venture all you have, your Estates, names, liberties, lives, for the furthering and fulfilling the glorious promises which God hath made unto his Church: and if you have faith, that gives foundations to those promises, you will doe so. And though we see nothing but darkness, and misery upon the world, yet let us exercise faith; if the hour of temptation be yet to come, as who knowes, then we shall have need of faith; and faith onely, in such darkness can helpe us to light. And for preparation for such times, labour to strengthen faith, and by what you have heard, you may see what stead faith will stand you in, in any danger. It is a great comfort to a Christian that though he be in the dark in many things (as there are many truths now disputed about Churches, and the like) yet to know he hath that in him that will make the things of eternall life evident to him: It is a wonderful blessing of God to have a principle that gives subsistence and evidence to such things as these are. How exceedingly would many poor souls rejoyce, if they might have an evidence but of some one truth of religion; as the truth of a deity, which reason gives light in; they are so pestred with Atheisme, that they would give a thousand worlds to be rid of it. Now if this be so great a mercy, to have that which doth evidence onely one principle of religion; what a glorious mercy then is it, to have faith to evidence all the glorious things of God; and to make them cleare and plaine to you! you can remember there was a time when you thought them fancies and conceits, but now you see them as cleare as the light of the Sun., and you would not now for a thousand worlds but you saw them as you doe. Hereafter (brethren) when we shall see them not by faith, but by sense, O how shall we blesse God then, that we had before an evidence of these things made to our souls. What would have become of us if

we had not had an evidence to cleare those things to us that lead to this glory, to evidence the righteousness of God in Christ for eternal life. I saw these things subsisting and evident before, and now God reveals them fully to me; whereas on the other side, those that want a principle of faith to make them substantiall and evident to them, when they shall come to be substantiall and evident to their sense, O what a horrid terrour will it be unto them: then you will say, O Lord, that I had seen these things before, my heart then would never have been taken so with the things of the world: I ran madly upon the vanities of the world, to get riches, and honours; and I thought I was the onely happy man, and that those things were the onely substantial and reall things, and those things that I heard the Preacher speak of, I thought them to be but notions and conceits: but now I see they are reall and substantiall. O miserable man that now I am!

O the work of faith that can make those that are of weak parts, to see the great things of God, *James 2.5. Hearken my brethren (sayes the Apostle) God hath chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith.* To understand the great things of faith; that poor men should understand the great, the deep, the glorious things of God, that were hid from the foundations of the world, it is a wonderful work; therefore when *John* sent to Christ, to know if he were the *Messias*, Christ gives this as one argument, *The poor receive the Gospel, Matthew 11. 5.* Why, was that an argument that Christ was the *Messias*, was it not rather an argument against him? that the poor did it: if the great ones had done it, it had been an argument. No, *The poor receive the Gospel.* And that those that are poor and weak in other things, should have this mighty work wrought in their souls, to be able to receive Christ and the Gospel: this is an argument of the mighty power of God. Brethren, to have the use of the eye of the body by which we can see the great works of God, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and can take notice of the glory of God in these, this is a great blessing: what man would be willing to loose the sight of his eyes, to gain a world? because it discovers so much of the glory of God. Now if the eye that receives onely these naturall things, be

so preecious O then what is it to have a principle within us, an eye of faith clearly to evidence the great things and glorious counsels of God unto us? if a christall that can receive colours into it from without, be precious; O what is the christall of faith? it may well be called precious faith, for it receives into the soul the glory of God, and the excellencies of Christ, and the great things of eternall life. And these are brought into the soul by faith, in the reallity and power of them to raise the heart, and to fill it with all joy and peace in believing, and to carry the soul through all the troubles of this world. O the eye of faith is a precious eye! the eye of sense is precious, because we can see visible objects by that; but the eye of reason is more precious, because that can make things seen which are not seen by the eye of sense; reason can discourse up to God himself: and it is the wonderfull excellency of a reasonable creature that God hath given him that ability, that he can discourse so from the effect to the cause, and from one cause to another, till at last he gets up to God, the first being of all. This is an admirable indowment we should blesse God for: but now, if the use of reason have such an excellency in it; because by that we have an evidence of reasonable things to us, then still goe higher and labour to have a right esteem of this precious faith, that gives unto us such evidence of the glorious things of God, even that faith that God puts into our hearts on purpose that by it we might be able to receive into our souls those glorious and hidden mysteries of godlynesse that doe infinitely concerne our eternall peace.

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