

And the saints are described to be those that 'love his appearing,' 2 Tim. iv. 8. If we have heard him, if we be christians indeed, if we loved him when we saw him not, and delighted in him, and tasted his grace in truth, and felt his power, we shall long to be near him, and see him, and converse with him intimately.

(3.) Taste. Communion begun maketh us long for communion perfected: Ps. lxxiii. 1, 2, 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.'

(4.) Their complete happiness dependeth upon it: 1 John iii. 2, 'We shall see him as he is, and be like him:' John xvii. 24, 'That they may be where I am, and behold my glory.' Christ cannot be fully seen on this side time.

Use 1. Is to condemn and disprove them from being true christians that cannot abide the presence of Christ. The Gadarenes desired him to depart out of their coasts, Mat. viii. Yet carnal men have such a spirit, Job xxii. 17, 'which say unto God, Depart from us;' cannot abide Christ in their neighbourhood, that he should come near their consciences.

Use 2. Is to press us to two things.

1. To prize the communion and fellowship of Christ for the present. It is constant and habitual; that 'he may dwell in your hearts by faith,' Eph. iii. 17. Where Christ taketh up his abode, there his Spirit is the fountain of life, Gal. ii. 20; our defence against temptations: 1 John iv. 4, 'Greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world;' 'The seed and hope of glory,' Col. i. 27. Solemn and actual in holy duties; there is heaven begun, there we 'behold his face in righteousness,' Ps. xvii. 15; 'And a day in his courts is better than a thousand elsewhere,' Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

2. Let us long to be with him, to get out of the pesthouse of the world, and the prison of corrupt nature. I allude to that, Gen. xxiv. 57, 58, 'And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said to her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.' Wilt thou go to Jesus? Lord, I will go with thee. Hindrances are these.

[1.] A surfeit on the sinful pleasures and contentments of this world. This weakens your desires, and taketh off the edge of your affections. Lot lingered when he was to go out of Sodom, Gen. xix. 16.

[2.] Do not darken your confidence by your sin and folly. Then you will as a malefactor fly from him as a judge, rather than rejoice to be with him as a saviour.

SERMON X.

For we walk by faith, and not by sight.—2 Cor. v. 7.

IN this verse a reason is given why we are said to be absent from the Lord while we are at home in the body; because all things are

transacted between him and us by faith, and not by sight or immediate vision—‘For we walk,’ &c.

These words do notably set forth to us both the nature of faith, and the condition of believers here in the world.

1. They set forth the nature of faith, which mainly goeth upon things unseen, or not obvious to present sense.

2. The condition of a believer in the world: he doth not now see God face to face; he hath only the promise of blessedness, not the enjoyment.

But that I may draw forth the full scope and sense of the words, I shall give you six observations or propositions.

1. That faith and sight are opposed and contra-distinguished the one from the other.

2. That faith is for earth, and sight is for heaven; the one is of use to us in this world, the other is reserved for the world to come.

3. That till we have sight it is some advantage that we have faith.

4. Those that have faith are not satisfied and contented till they have sight. For therefore the apostle groaneth and desireth.

5. That if we have faith, we may be sure that hereafter we shall have sight, or hereafter enjoy the beatifical vision.

6. That those that have faith must walk by it.

Doct. 1. That faith and sight are opposed and contra-distinguished the one from the other. Faith is a grace that is conversant about things unseen, or a dependence upon God for something that lieth out of sight. That this is the essential property and nature of faith appeareth by the definition of it, Heb. xi. 1, ‘It is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.’ The objects of faith are things invisible and future. The Lord is absent from us, who maketh the promise; and heaven, which is the great promise which he hath promised us, is yet to come. The nature of faith and hope is destroyed if the object be seen and present, or ready at hand to be enjoyed: Rom. viii. 24, ‘For hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he hope for it?’ Vision and possession exclude faith and hope; there is a constant opposition, you see, between faith and sight; so that we may know that we have faith, when we can believe those things which are promised, though we have little probability in sense or reason to expect them. And hereby we may know the measure as well as the nature of our faith, for the excellency and strength of it is in believing things upon God’s word, to which sense giveth little encouragement, as appeareth by those words of Christ to Thomas: John xx. 29, ‘Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed; but blessed are they that have not seen and yet believed.’ Thomas must have the object of faith under the view of his senses, which though it did not argue a nullity in his faith, yet a very great weakness and imbecility. Weak christians must be carried in arms, dandled upon knees, fed with sensible pledges and ocular demonstrations, or else they are ready to faint; but strong christians can believe above sense and against sense. As it is said of the father of the faithful that he believed in hope and against hope: Rom. iv. 18, 19, ‘And considered not his own body, being dead, being an hundred years old, nor the deadness of Sarah’s womb; he

staggered not at the promise of God, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.' The more faith can live upon the word of God, the better, though the things believed be neither felt nor seen; and the less of sensible demonstration we require, the stronger the faith ever. This is true in all the objects that faith is conversant about; I shall instance in some. The person of Christ. Many believed on him though they had never seen him in the flesh, and therefore their faith is commended: 1 Peter i. 8, 'Whom having not seen ye love, and in whom ye believe, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' It was an advantage certainly to converse with Christ personally here upon earth, but faith can embrace him in the word though it never saw him in the flesh. So for the threatenings, when we can tremble at the word; as Josiah did when he heard the curses of the law, though there were no dangers nigh; we do not read of any actual disturbance and trouble at that time in the nation. So many times when an age is very corrupt, and things are ripe for judgment, and God giveth warning, alas! few take it or lay it to heart; they are not affected with things till they feel them. Few can see a storm when the clouds are a-gathering, they securely build upon their present ease and peace, though God be angry. But in the eye of faith a sinful estate is always dangerous, and they humble themselves while the judgment is but in its causes; as it is said, Heb. xi. 7, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became the heir of righteousness which is by faith.' Mark, things not seen are still matter of faith; he saw them in the warning of God, though he could not any way else see a flood a-coming. So for God's aid and succour in a time of danger: Heb. xi. 27, 'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.' To appearance he was like to be swallowed up, being pursued by a wrathful and puissant king; but the terrors of sense may be easily vanquished by those invisible succours which faith relieth upon. So in all matters of practical experience. In prosperity we have but too much confidence; but when we are lessened in the world, and cut short, we are full of diffidence and distrustful fears: Ps. xxx. 6, 'In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.' Even a child of God, when he gets a carnal pillow to rest upon, lieth down and sleepeth securely, and dreameth many a pleasant dream, and is full of confidence; but when God taketh away his pillow from under his head, then he is as diffident as formerly confident. God is the same, his promises the same, his covenant the same, the mediator the same; but we are much changed, because we look to things seen, and live upon things seen. In danger how are we troubled about protection, in deep poverty about provisions and maintenance! If sick and nigh unto death, how little do the promises of pardon and eternal life prevail! In perplexed affairs how little can we unravel ourselves, and refer the issue to God! Faith is staggered because we cannot believe in hope against hope. We must have something in view and sight; faith yieldeth no relief to us. Let me instance in a case of spiritual sense in troubles of conscience, when God's law speaketh him an enemy, and conscience feeleth him

an enemy. How long is it ere we can bring men to any kind of hope by Christ, notwithstanding the rich and free offers of his grace, or engage them, when the curse of the law cleaveth to their consciences, to take God's way for cure and remedy? because they prefer sense before faith, and the feeling of God's law that cleaveth to them maketh them exclude all hope by the gospel: Isa. l. 10, 'Who is there among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.' The recumbency of such a soul is a notable act of faith, loving God as a friend, trusting him as an enemy. So in outward trials and difficulties, to wait for so much as God hath promised. Many trust God no further than they can see him, or have probability to expect his help, which is a limiting the holy one of Israel, Ps. lxxviii. 41, confining him to a circle of their own making. If sense be against the promise, the promise doth them no good. Now to comfort ourselves in God when all faileth: Hab. iii. 18, 'Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation;' and Ps. xxiii. 4, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear none evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff doth comfort me.' To make the promise yield us that which the creature cannot, health, strength, life, peace, house and home, and maintenance for ourselves and children. When we die, and have little or nothing to leave them, and all means of subsistence are cut off and blasted, then to live, yea to grow rich by faith, as 'having nothing, yet possessing all things,' 2 Cor. vi. 10. It is enough that God carrieth the purse for us. Many talk of living by faith, but it is when they have something in the world to live upon; as those, Isa. iv. 1, 'Only let us be called by thy name.' So in other cases, why do the vain delights, and dignities, and honours of the world so prevail with men, that all the promises of the gospel cannot reclaim them? yea, sell their birthright for one morsel of meat? Heb. xii. 16. The life of sense is lifted up above that of faith. The soul dwelleth in flesh, looketh out by the senses, and knoweth what is comfortable to sense, that God is unseen, our great hopes are to come, and the flesh is importunate to be pleased: 2 Peter i. 9, 'They that want these things (that is, faith and other graces) are blind, and cannot see afar off.'

Doct. 2. That faith is for earth, and sight is for heaven.

So the apostle sorteth these two. Here we believe in God, and there we see him as he is. As soon as we are reconciled to him, God will not admit us into his immediate presence; as Absalom, when he had leave to return, yet he could not see the king's face, 2 Sam. xiv. 24. So God causeth us to stay a while in the world ere we come before him in his heavenly temple.

1. Because now we are in our minority, and all things are by degrees carried on towards their state of perfection; as an infant doth not presently commence into the stature of a man. In the course of nature there is an orderly progress from an imperfect state to a perfect. The dispensations of God to the church, Gal. iv. And the apostle compareth our estate in glory and our estate by grace to childhood and manly age, 1 Cor. xiii. 11, 12. Our words, inclinations, affections, are quite

changed in the compass of a few years, so as we neither say, nor desire, nor understand anything as some years before we did. So it is with this and the next life: now our vision is very dark and imperfect, looking upon things when they are showed us as through a glass, on purpose to give us a glimpse of them; but when we come to heaven, we shall see perfectly, as we see a person or thing that is before our eyes.

2. We are now upon our trial, but then we are *in termino*, in our final state; now we are in our way, but then we are in our country. Therefore now we walk by faith, but then by sight; God would not give us our reward here. A trial cannot be made in a state of sense, but in a state of faith: we are justified by faith; we live by faith; we walk by faith. This state of faith requireth that the manner of that dispensation by which God governeth the world should neither be too sensible and clear, nor too obscure and dark, but a middle thing, as the daybreak or twilight is between the light of the day and the darkness of the night; that as the world is a middle place between heaven and hell, so it should have somewhat of either. If all things were too clear and liable to sense, we should not need faith; if too obscure, we should wholly lose faith; therefore it is neither night nor day, but towards the evening. If the godly should be presently admitted to their happiness, and have all things according to heart's desire, it would make religion too sensible a thing, not fit for that kind of government which God will now exercise in the world: Heb. vi. 12, 'But followers of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises;' and James i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.' Every man must be tried, and approved faithful upon trial, and then God will admit him into his presence.

3. There is no congruity between our present state and the beatifical vision; the place is not fit, nor the persons.

[1.] The place is not fit, because it is full of changes. Here time and chance happeneth to all, and there is a continual succession of night and day, calm and tempest, winter and summer. There is neither all evil nor only evil, not all good nor all blessing, but a mixture of either. The world to come is either all evil or all good. This is a fit place for our exercise, but not for our enjoyments. Here is the patience of the saints, but there is the reward of the saints. It is a fit place to get an interest in, but not a possession. It is God's foot-stool, but not his throne, Isa. lxvi. 1. Now he will not immediately show himself to us till we come before the throne of his glory. He manifesteth himself to the blessed spirits as a king sitting in his royal robes upon his throne, but the church is but his foot-stool; as he filleth the upper part of the world with his glorious presence, so the lower part with his powerful presence. This is a place wherein God will show his bounty to all his creatures, a common inn and receptacle for sons and bastards, a place given to the children of men, but the heaven of heavens he hath reserved for himself and his people, Ps. cxv. 16.

[2.] The persons are not fit. Our souls are not yet enough purified

to see God, Mat. v. 8; 1 John iii. 3. Till sin be done away, which will not be till death, we are unmeet for his presence. When Christ will present us to God, he will present us faultless before the presence of his glory, Jude 28. Our bodies also are not fit till we have passed the gulf of death. We are not able to bear eternal happiness. Old bottles will not hold the new wine of glory; a mortal creature is not capable of the glorious presence of God, and cannot endure the splendour of it: Mat. xii. 6, 'They fell on their faces, and were sore afraid.' Upon any manifestation of God the saints hide themselves: Elijah wrapt his face in a mantle; Moses himself, when God gave the law, trembled exceedingly.

Doct. 3. That till we have sight, it is some advantage that we have faith. There is no other way to live spiritually and in holy peace, joy, and the love of God, but by sight or faith, either by enjoyment or expectation. Therefore, sight being reserved for the other world, if we would live holily and comfortably, we must walk by faith; for our life is not maintained so much by the things which we enjoy, as the things we look for from God. If a christian had no more to look for from God than he enjoyeth here, he were of all men most miserable—not only equal, but more miserable. God's children have fewer comforts, more afflictions, and their affections to heavenly things are stronger than others. Therefore that which we look for must be our solace.

What relief will faith yield us?

1. Faith hath its sights, though not full and ravishing, as those which presence and immediate vision will yield to us. By the light of faith we see the good things which God hath promised and provided for us. We see them in the promise, though not in the performance; there is a spiritual sight which faith seeth by: John vi. 40, 'He that seeth the Son, and believeth on him.' Faith is a sight of Christ, such a sight as affecteth and engageth the heart, such a sight as maketh us to count all things but dung and dross. Thus 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and saw it, and was glad.' The Lord suspended the exhibition of Christ in the flesh till long after Abraham; but he got that which was far better than a bodily sight, he got a spiritual sight of him by faith. Faith hath an eagle's eye, and can see a very far off, and can draw comfort not only from what is visible for the present, but yet to come for a long time. Through all that distance of time could Abraham see Christ's day. This will in part satisfy us: Eph. i. 18, 'That the eyes of your mind being enlightened, ye may know what is the hope of his calling.' The eye of the soul or the mind is faith, without which we are blind, and cannot see afar off, 2 Peter i. 9. It seeth things past, present, and to come. Past: Gal. iii. 1, 'Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you.' Christ was not crucified in Galatia, but in Jerusalem. It is not meant of a picture and crucifix, for in those early days they did not paint what they worshipped, but set forth to their faith. So plain and powerful is the apprehension of faith, as if he had acted his bloody passion before them, as if they had seen Christ crucified. So not only for present things, but in the other world. God: Heb. xi. 27, 'As seeing him that is invisible;' Christ at the right hand of God. Stephen saw it in vision and ecstasy, Acts

vii. 51. But every believer seeth it by faith. Things to come, as the day of judgment: Rev. xx. 12, 'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.' A believer is certainly persuaded and suitably affected; so Abraham saw Christ's day.

2. Faith goeth not upon fallible, but certain and sure grounds. Enjoyment is more comfortable, but faith is sure; sight is better than faith, yet faith is our present strength, comfort, and support. It is our unhappiness that we walk not by sight, but it is some piece of happiness that we walk by faith; so that a believer is comforted, but not satisfied. His faith is satisfied, though his love and desire be not. For faith goeth upon good security, the security of God's promise, who cannot lie; nay, we have not only promises, but pledges which faith worketh. It is of faith, that it may be sure to all the seed. But the world thinketh nothing sure that is invisible. To carnal men, what they see not is as nothing; that the promises are but like a night-dream of mountains of gold, that all the comforts thence deduced are but fanatical illusions. Nothing so ridiculous in the world's eye as trust and dependence upon unseen comforts: Ps. xxii. 7, 8, 'All they that see me laugh me to scorn, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him.' Ungodly wits make the life of faith a sport, and a matter of laughter. They are all for the present world; present delights and present temptations have the greatest influence upon them. One little thing in hand is more than the greatest promise of better things to come: 2 Tim. iv. 10, 'Demas hath forsaken us, and embraced the present world.'

But are all things future and invisible to be questioned? Surely we do not deal equally with God and man. Country people will obey a king whom they never saw. If a man promise, they reckon much of that; they can tarry upon man's security, but count God's nothing worth. They can trade with a factor beyond seas, and trust all their estate in a man's hands whom they have never seen. And yet the word of the infallible God is of little regard and respect with them, even then when he is willing to give earnest.

3. Faith hath some enjoyment. All is not kept for the world to come. We are 'partakers of Christ,' Heb. iii. 14; partakers of the benefit, 1 Tim. vi. 2, that is, of salvation by Christ. A christian hath here by faith whatever he shall have hereafter by sight or full enjoyment. They believe it now, they receive it then; they have the beginnings now, the consummation then.

Doct. 4. Those that have faith are not satisfied and contented till they have sight. For therefore the apostle groaneth after and desireth a better estate. The reasons of this:—

1. The excellency of that better estate which is to come. It is expressed in the text by sight. Now what sight shall we have? The sight of God and Christ. Of God: 1 Cor. xiii. 12, 'We shall see him face to face, and we shall know as we are known.' And for Christ: 1 John iii. 2, 'We shall see him as he is;' and John xvii. 20: 'That they may be where I am, and behold my glory.' What is this glory? The excellency of his person, the union of the two natures in the person of Christ: John xiv. 20, 'At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.' The clarity of his human nature.

They shall see the Lamb's face, and be eye-witnesses of the honour which the Father puts upon him as mediator. In what manner shall we behold it? It is either ocular or mental. (1.) Ocular. Our senses have their happiness as well as our souls; there is a glorified eye as well as a glorified mind—'With these eyes shall I behold him,' Job xix. 26. We shall see that person that redeemed us, that nature wherein he suffered so much for us. God intendeth good to the body, and hath intrusted it with the soul, and that soul with so much grace, that he will not lose the outward cask and vessel. (2.) There is a mental vision or contemplation. The angels that are not bodily are said to 'behold the face of our heavenly Father,' Mat. xviii. 10. And when we are said to see God, it is not meant of the bodily eye; a spirit cannot be seen with bodily eyes; so he is invisible, Col. i. 15. And seeing face to face is opposed to knowing in part. The mind is the noblest faculty, and therefore must have its satisfaction. Well then, this is our happiness, to see God and Christ with eye and mind; ocular vision maketh way for mental, mental for fruition, and fruition for love and joy, and that accompanied with all manner of felicity. Alas! now we have dull and low conceptions of God, are little transformed by them, or weaned from fleshly and worldly lusts; could we see God in all his glory, nothing would be dreadful, nothing would be snarlingly or enticingly amiable to us any more: 1 John ii. 6, 'Whosoever sinneth hath not seen God, nor known him.' We can hardly get such a sight of God now as to prevent heinous and wilful sins, but then shall see him, and grow more holy and God-like.

2. The taste which we have by faith draweth on the soul to look and long for a full enjoyment. They are sweet and ravishing as apprehended by faith, but what will they be when enjoyed by sight? Moses' first request was, Tell me thy name; afterwards, Show me thy glory; now we scarce know his name, but then we shall see his glory. A little Christ hath told us, who hath seen God, and is with God, and is God himself, Mat. xi. 27. This little doth not satisfy, but enkindle our thirst to know more, especially if this knowledge be joined with experience, 1 Peter ii. 3. 'If we have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' This sets the soul a-longing for a fuller draught, and we still follow on to know more of God, Hos. vi. 3.

Doct. 5. If we have faith, we may be sure that hereafter we shall have sight. For God will not disappoint the soul that looketh and longeth for what he hath promised; and not only looketh and longeth, but laboureth, and suffereth all manner of inconveniency, and is willing to do anything and be anything that it may enjoy these blessed hopes. Would God court the creature into a vain hope, to his great loss and detriment? More distinctly—

1. It is faith that maketh us mind sight, or regard the things of another world. When they were persuaded of things afar off, they embraced them. There is a twofold life commonly spoken of in scripture as being in man: the animal life and the spiritual life. The animal life is the life of the soul void of grace, accommodating itself to the interests of the body:—Jude 19, 'Sensual, having not the Spirit,'—as to the power and pomp of the world, height of rank and place, riches, pleasures, honours, or such things as are grateful to sense.

Our spiritual life is a principle that enableth us to live unto God, to act towards him, to make his glory our chief scope, his favour as our felicity and happiness. These two lives are governed by sense and faith—the animal by sense, the spiritual by faith; so that reason is either debased by sense, or sublimated and raised by faith. Sense carrieth and inclineth the soul to the pleasures, honours, profits of the present world, faith directeth it to the concernments of the world to come; hereunto all cometh, the distinction of the outward man and inward man. The animal life is cherished by the comforts of this life, the other by the life to come; see 1 Cor. ii. 14; ‘But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;’ so 2 Cor. iv. 16, ‘For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.’ Well then, it is faith that breedeth a heavenly spirit; so that a man is made heavenly in his walkings, heavenly in his thoughts, heavenly in his supports, heavenly in his discourse, heavenly in his expectations. Faith doth not a little tincture a man, but he is deeply drenched by it, and baptized into a heavenly spirit.

2. It is faith that prepareth us for sight; for it is a kind of anticipation of blessedness, or fore-enjoyment of our everlasting estate. Therefore called, Heb. xi. 1, ‘The substance of things hoped for.’ God by faith traineth us up for sight; first we live by faith, and then by sight. Faith now serveth instead of vision, and hope of fruition; it maketh our happiness in a manner present; though it doth not affect us in the same degree that the life of glory or vision will do, yet somewhat answerable it worketh. The life of glory is inconsistent with any misery: but the life of faith enableth us to rest quietly upon God and his gracious promises as if there were no misery. Where it hath any efficacy and vigour, no allurements and terror can turn us aside, but we follow the Lord in all conditions with delight and cheerfulness. The expectation cannot affect us as the enjoyment doth, but in some measure it doth: Rom. v. 3, ‘We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.’ The beatifical vision transformeth us: 1 John iii. 2, ‘We shall see him as he is, and be like him.’ So doth the sight of faith: 2 Cor. iii. 18, ‘Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into his image and likeness.’ The one nullifieth sin, the other mortifieth sin.

3. It is faith giveth a right and title to the things expressed by sight; there is a charter, or certain grant of eternal life, written with Christ’s blood, sealed by the Spirit, offered by God, accepted by faith. Sealing, offered and accepted, standeth valid and ratified. The heirs of promise are described to be those who run for refuge to take hold of the hope that is before them, Heb. vi. 18, all that take sanctuary at his grace, and are resolved to pursue it in God’s way; that is, to continue patiently in well-doing, Rom. ii. 7. Faith giveth the first consent, which is after verified by a constant and unwearied pursuit after this happiness. Those who entertain a king make reckoning of his train. The winning of the field is ascribed to the general under whose conduct the battle was fought; so the promises run upon faith, which beginneth and governeth the whole business. Well then, many catch at it by a fond presumption, but have no title till faith,

and that faith no cold speculation and dead opinion about heaven, but a lively, working faith. Certainly we do but talk of eternal life, we do not believe it, if our most industrious care, and serious thoughts, and constant and active endeavours be not turned into this channel, or if we do not believe it so as to prize it, and prize it so as to seek after it, and seek after it in the first place, Mat. vi. 33. This must be our great scope—do all things to eternal ends: 2 Cor. iv. 18, ‘While we look not to the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.’

Doct. 6. Those who have faith must walk by it; for faith is here considered as working and putting forth itself. We walk, that is, we live, for in the dialect of the Hebrews this life is a walk; *vitam nostram componimus*, we must govern and direct our lives by the power and influence of faith. It is not enough to have faith, but we must walk by it; our whole conversation is carried on and influenced by faith, and by the Spirit of God on Christ’s part: Gal. ii. 20, ‘I live by the faith of the Son of God;’ a lively faith. There living by faith is spoken of as it respecteth the principle of the spiritual life; here walking by faith as the scope and end of it: there, as we derive virtue from Christ; here, as we press on to heaven, in the practice of holiness. In short, walking noteth a progress, and passing on from one place to another, through a straight and beaten way which lieth between both. So we pass on from the earthly state to the heavenly by the power and influence of our way; our way is through all conditions we are appointed unto, and through all duties required of us.

1. Through all conditions. By honour and dishonour, evil report and good report, afflictions, prosperities, 2 Cor. vi. 4–8. Whether despised or countenanced, still minding our great journey to heaven. Faith is necessary for all, that the evil be not a discouragement, nor the good a snare. Evil: Rom. viii. 18, ‘For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.’ Good: 2 Tim. iv. 10, ‘For Demas hath forsaken us, and loved the present world.’

2. All duties required of us. That we still keep a good conscience towards God and towards man, Acts xxiv. 15, 16, in this faith and hope.

Reasons—

1. Walking by faith maketh a man sincere, because he expecteth his reward from God only, though no man observe him, no man commend him: Mat. vi. 6, ‘Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.’ Yea, though all men hate him and condemn him: Mat. v. 11, 12, ‘Blessed are you when men shall revile and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my name’s sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.’ Now this is true sincerity, when we make God alone our paymaster, and count his rewards enough to repair our losses and repay our cost.

2. It maketh a man vigorous and lively. When we consider at the end of our work there is a life of endless joys to be possessed in heaven with God, that we shall never repent of the labour and pain

that we have taken in the spiritual life: 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord;' Phil. iii. 14, 'I press towards the mark, because of the high prize of the calling of God in Jesus Christ.' The thoughts of the prize and worth of the reward do add spirits to the runner.

3. It maketh a man watchful, that he be not corrupted with the delights of sense, which are apt to call back our thoughts, to interrupt our affections, to divert us from our work, and quench our zeal. Now one that walks by faith can compare his eternal happiness with these transitory pleasures which will soon have an end, and everlastingly forsake those miserable souls who were deluded by them. As Moses: Heb. xi. 24, 25, 'By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.'

4. Walking by faith will make a man self-denying; for, having heaven in his eye, he knoweth that he cannot be a loser by God: Mark x. 21, 'Forsake all that thou hast, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven;' so vers. 29, 30, 'Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, but he shall receive an hundred-fold.'

5. Walking by faith maketh a man comfortable and confident; a believer is encouraged in all his duty, emboldened in his conflicts, comforted in all his sufferings. The quieting or emboldening the soul is the great work of faith, or trust in God's fidelity. A promise to him is more than all the visible things on earth, or sensible objects in the world; it can do more with him to make him forsake all earthly pleasures, possessions, and hopes: Ps. lvi. 4, 'In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me;' so Paul: Acts xx. 24, 'But none of those things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so I may fulfil my course with joy. Save the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me'—did wait for him everywhere. I make no reckoning of these things. It maketh us constant. Have ye fixed upon these hopes with so great deliberation, and will you draw back, and slack in the prosecution of them? Have you gone so far in the way to heaven, and do you begin to look behind you, as if you were about to change your mind, Heb. x. 39. The apostle saith, Phil. iii. 13, 'I forget the things which are behind, reaching forth unto the things which are before.' The world and the flesh are things behind us; we turned our backs upon them when we first looked after heavenly things. Heaven and remaining duties are the things before us; if we lose our crown, we lose ourselves for ever.

Use, Is to show the advantage the people of God have above the carnal and unregenerate. The people of God walk by faith, against the present want of sight. How do the world walk? Not by faith, they have it not; nor by the sight of heaven, for they are not there, and so continuing never shall be there. So they have neither faith nor sight; what do they live by, then? They live by sense and by fancy:

by sense as to the present world; and they live by fancy and vain conceit as to the world to come. Live in their sins and vain pleasures, and yet hope to be saved. Here they walk by sight, but not such a sight as the apostle meaneth; they must have something in the view of sense—lands, honours, pleasures; and when these are out of sight, they are in darkness, and have nothing to live upon. But now a christian is never at a loss, let his condition be what it will. Suppose God should bring him so low and bare that he hath no estate to live on, no house to dwell in, yet he hath an inheritance in the promises: Ps. cxix. 111, 'Thy testimonies I have taken for an heritage for ever;' and 'God is his habitation,' Ps. xc. 1. A full heap in his own keeping is not such a supply to him as God's all-sufficiency, Gen. xvii. 1. That is his storehouse. But his great happiness is in the other world; there is all his hope and his desire, and he looketh upon other promises only in order to that.

SERMON XI.

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.—2 COR. v. 8.

IN this verse the apostle repeateth what he had said verse 6, with some amplification. Here take notice of two things—

1. His confidence of sight, or of a blessed condition to come—*θαρόομεν, We are confident, I say.*

2. His preference or esteem of sight, or of that blessed condition before the present estate—*εὐδοκούμεν μᾶλλον, And willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.* Where two things—

[1.] What he was willing to quit—'the body.' We are willing (*ἐκδημηῆσαι*) to travel out of the body.

[2.] What he did choose and prefer—*ἐνδημηῆσαι*, to be at home with the Lord, to dwell in the same house with the Lord Christ; this he preferred before remaining in the body.

Let us a little explain these circumstances.

First, His confidence of sight to be had at length. 'We are confident, I say.' There is a twofold confidence—(1.) The confidence of faith; (2.) The confidence of assurance, or of our own interest. Both are of regard here. (1.) Faith in part produceth this willingness to go out of the body, and enjoy the heavenly life, and comfortably to leave the time and means thereof to God. Faith, where it is in any vigour, begets in those that live by it a holy boldness, whereby we dare undertake anything for God, not fearing the power and greatness of any creature; no, not death itself. (2.) assurance of our own interest doth much more heighten this confidence and holy boldness when we know assuredly that our end shall be glorious, and that when we depart out of the body, we shall be present with the Lord. The hope of our salvation is not uncertain.