

7  
The Life of Faith,  
AS IT IS  
The *Evidence of things unseen.*

---

A  
SERMON  
Preached (contractedly)  
before the KING at *White-*  
*Hall*, upon *July* the 22<sup>th</sup> 1660.

---

By *Richard Baxter*, one of his Ma-  
jesties Chaplains in Ordinary.

---

Published by his Majesties special Com-  
mand.

---

With enlargement, and relaxation of the  
stile for common use.

---

LONDON,  
Printed by R. W. and A. M. for *Francis Tjton* and *Jane*  
*Underhill*, and are to be sold at the three Daggers in  
*Fleet-street*, and at the Bible and Anchor in *Pauls*  
Church-Yard; and by *Nevil Simmons* at  
*Kedermister*, 1660. Aug: 10.



Readers,

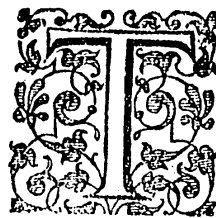
**T** Hough it was but the Sermon as Preached, that I was required to Print, yet for the more common use, I took the boldness to enlarge it, and relax the stile; but think it meet here to acquaint you with the alterations. From page 6. to page 47. it is that I have exercised this liberty; there being only the Heads (or most of them) delivered in speech, in a more contracted stile. But to page 6. and from page 46. to the end, it is Printed as it was delivered; saving the Addition of the second and third Considerations, page 55, 56. which time allowed me not to utter.



# The Life of Faith.

Heb. I I. I.

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



Though the wicked are distinguished into *Hypocrites* and *Unbelievers*, yet *Hypocrites* themselves are *Unbelievers* too. They have no faith which they can justify, by its prevailing efficacy and works : and therefore have no faith by which they can be justified. Because their discovery is needfull to their recovery, and all our salvation depends on the sincerity of our faith, I have  
 B chosen

chosen this Text, which is a Description of faith, that the opening of it may help us for the opening of our hearts, and resolving the great Question, on which our endless life depends.

To be a *Christian* and to be a *Believer* in Christ, are words in Scripture of the same signification. If you have not *faith*, you are not *Christians*. This faith hath various offices and objects. By it we are justified, sanctified and saved. We are justified, not by believing that we are justified, but by believing that we may be justified. Not by receiving justification immediately, but by receiving Christ for our justification: not by meer accepting the pardon in it self, but by first receiving him that procureth and bestoweth it, on his terms: Not by meer accepting health, but by receiving the Physician and his remedies, for health.

*Faith is the practicall Believing in God as promising, and Christ as procuring justification and salvation. Or, the practicall belief and acceptance of life, as procured by Christ, and promised by God in the Gospel.*

The everlasting fruition of God in Heaven, is the ultimate object. No man believeth in Christ as Christ, that believeth not in him for eternall life. As faith looks at Christ as the necessary meanes, and at the Divine benignity as the fountain, and at his Veracity as the foundation or formall object, and at the promise, as the true signification of his will; so doth it ultimately look at our salvation, (begun on earth, and perfected in Heaven) as the end, for which it looketh at all the rest.

No wonder therefore if the holy Ghost here speaking of the *Dignity* and *Power* of *faith*, do principally insist on that part of its Description, which is taken from this final object.

As Christ himself in his *Humiliation* was rejected by the *Gentiles*, and a *stumbling stone* to the *Jews*, despised and not esteemed, *Isai. 53. 2, 3. having made himself of no reputation, Phil. 2. 7.* So *faith* in Christ as incarnate and crucified, is despised and counted foolishnesse by the world. But as Christ in his *Glory*, and the *glory* of *believers*, shall force them to an awefull admiration; so *faith* it self as exercised on that *Glory*, is more glorious in the eyes of all. Believers are never so revered by the world, as when they converse in Heaven, and the *Spirit of Glory* resteth on them, *1 Pet. 4. 14.*

How faith by beholding this glorious end, doth move all the faculties of the soul, and subdue the inclinations and interests of the flesh, and make the greatest sufferings tollerable, is the work of the holy Ghost in this Chapter to demonstrate, which beginning with the Description, proceeds to the proof by a cloud of witnesses. There are two sorts of persons (and employments) in the world, for whom there are too contrary ends hereafter. One sort subject their Reason to their sensuality or carnall interest. The other subject their senses to their Reason, cleared, conducted and elevated by faith. Things present or possessed, are the riches of the sensuall; and the byas of their hearts and lives: Things absent but hoped for, are the riches of believers, which actuate their chief endeavours.

This is the sense of the Text which I have read to you; which setting *things hoped for*, in opposition to *things present*, and *things unseen*, to those that *sense* doth apprehend, assureth us that faith (which fixeth on the first) doth give to its object a *subsistence*, *presence*, and *evidence*, that is, it *seeth that which supplyeth the want of presence and visibility*. The *iniquis*, is that which *quoad effectum* is equal to a *present subsistence*. And the *veritas*, the *evidence* is somewhat which *quoad effectum* is equal to *visibility*. As if he had said, [*Though the glory promised to believers, and expected by them, be yet to come, and only hoped for, and be yet unseen and only believed, yet is the sound believer as truly affected with it, and acted by its attractive force, as if it were present and before his eyes*] as a man is by an inheritance, or estate in reversion, or out of sight, if well secured, and not only by that which is present to his view. The *Syriack Interpreter* instead of a *Translation*, gives us a true exposition of the words; *viz.* [*Faith is a certainty of those things that are in hope, as if they did already actually exist, and the revelation of those things that are not seen.*]

Or you may take the sense in this Proposition, which I am next to open further, and apply, *viz.* [*That the nature and use of faith is to be as it were instead of presence, possession and sight: or to make the things that will be, as if they were already in existence; and the things unseen which God revealeth, as if our bodily eyes beheld them.*]

1. Not that faith doth really change its object.

2. Nor

2. Nor doth it give the same *Degree* of *apprehensions* and *affections* as the *sight* of *present* things would do. But 1. Things Invisible are the Objects of our Faith.

2. And Faith is *effectual instead of sight* to all these uses: 1. The *apprehension* is as *Infallible*, because of the objective certainty, (though not so satisfactory to our imperfect souls,) as if the things themselves were *seen*. 2. The *will* is *determined* by it in its *necessary consent* and *choice*. 3. The *affections* are moved in the *necessary degree*. 4. It *ruleth* in our *lives*, and bringeth us through duty, and suffering, for the sake of the *Happiness* which we Believe.

3. This *Faith* is a grounded *wise* and *justifiable* act: an *infallible knowledge*; and often called so in Scripture, *Joh. 6. 69. 1 Cor. 15. 58. Rom. 8. 28, &c.* And the constitutive and efficient causes will justify the *Name*.

We know and are *infallibly sure*, of the truth of God which we believe: As it's said, *Joh. 6. 69. [We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.] 2 Cor. 5. 1. [We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.] Rom. 8. 28. We know that all things worke together for good to them that love God.] 1 Cor. 15. 58. You know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.] Joh. 9. 29. [We know God spake to Moses, &c.] 31. [We know God heareth not sinners.] Joh. 3. 2. We know thou art a Teacher come from God.] So 1 *Joh. 3. 5, 15. & 1 Pet.**

B 3.

3. 17.

3.17. and many other Scriptures tell you, that *Believing God*, is a certain *infallible* sort of *knowledge*.

I shall in justification of the work of Faith, acquaint you briefly with 1. That in the *Nature* of it: 2. And that in the *causing* of it, which advanceth it, to be an *infallible knowledge*.

1. The Believer *knows* (as sure as he knows there is a God) that God is *true*, and his Word is *true*, it being *impossible for God to lie*, Heb. 6.18. *God that cannot lie hath promised*, Tit. 1.2.

2. He *knowes* that the holy Scripture is the Word of God; by his Image which it beareth, and the many evidences of Divinity which it containeth, and the many Miracles (certainly proved) which Christ, and his Spirit in his Servants, wrought to confirm the truth. 3. And therefore he knoweth assuredly the conclusion, that all this Word of God is true.

And for the surer effecting of this Knowledge, God doth not only set before us the ascertaining Evidence of his own veracity, and the Scriptures Divinity; but moreover, 1. He *giveth us to believe*, Phil. 1.29. 2 Pet. 1.3. For it is *not of our selves, but is the gift of God*, Eph. 2.8. Faith is one of the fruits of the Spirit. Gal. 5.22. By the *drawing of the Father we come to the Son*. And he that hath knowledge given from Heaven, will certainly know: and he that hath Faith given him from Heaven, will certainly believe. The heavenly Light will dissipate our darknesse, and infallibly illuminate. Whilst God sets before us the Glasse of the Gospel in which the things *invisible* are revealed, and also gives us *eye-sight*

*eye-sight* to behold them, Believers must needs be a heavenly people, as walking in that Light which proceedeth from, and leadeth to the Celestial everlasting Light.

2. And that Faith may be so powerfull as to serve instead of *sight* and *presence*, *Believers have the Spirit of Christ within them*, to excite and actuate it, and help them against all temptations to unbelief, and to work in them all other graces that concur to promote the works of Faith; and to mortifie those sinnes that hinder our believing, and are contrary to a heavenly life: So that as the exercise of our sight, and tast, and hearing, and feeling, is caused by our natural life, so the exercise of Faith and Hope, and Love, upon things unseen, is caused by the holy Spirit, which is the principle of our new life. 1 Cor. 2.12. *We have received the Spirit, that we might know the things that are given us of God.*] This Spirit of God acquainteth us with God, with his veracity and his Word. Heb. 10.30. *We know him that hath said, I will never fail thee, nor forsake thee.*] This Spirit of Christ acquainteth us with Christ, and with his grace and will. 1 Cor. 2.10, 11, 12. This heavenly Spirit acquainteth us with Heaven, so that [We know that when Christ appeareth, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, 1 Joh. 3.2. And we know that he was manifested to take away sinne,] 1 Joh. 3.5. And will perfect his work, and present us spotlesse to his Father, Eph. 5.26, 27. This heavenly Spirit possesseth the Saints with such heavenly dispositions and desires, as much facilitate the work of Faith. It bringeth us to a *heaven-*

heavenly conversation; and maketh us live as fellow citizens of the Saints, and in the household of God, Psal. 3. 20. Eph. 2. 19. It is within us a Spirit of supplication, breathing heaven-ward, with sighs and groanes which cannot be expressed; and as God knoweth the meaning of the Spirit, so the Spirit knoweth the mind of God, Rom. 8. 37. 1 Cor. 2. 11.

3. And the work of Faith is much promoted by the spiritual experiences of Believers. When they find a considerable part of the holy Scripture verified on themselves, it much confirmeth their Faith as to the whole. They are really possessed of that heavenly disposition, called, *The Divine Nature*, and have felt the power of the Word upon their hearts, renewing them to the Image of God, mortifying their most dear and strong corruptions, shewing them a greater beauty and desirableness in the Objects of Faith, than is to be found in sensible things: They have found many of the Promises made good upon themselves, in the answers of prayers, and in great deliverances, which strongly perswadeth them to believe the rest that are yet to be accomplished. And experience is a very powerfull and satisfying way of conviction. He that seeth, as it were, the first fruits, the earnest, and the beginnings of Heaven already in his soul, will more easily and assuredly believe that there is a Heaven hereafter. [We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true; even in his Sonne Jesus Christ: This is the true God and eternal life,] 1 Joh. 5. 20. [He that believeth on the Sonne

*Sonne hath the witnesse in himself*, Ver. 10.] There is so great a likeness of the holy and heavenly nature in the Saints, to the heavenly life that God hath promised, that makes it the more easily believed.

4. And it exceedingly helpeth our Belief of the life that's yet unseen, to find that Nature affordeth us undeniable Arguments to prove a future Happiness and Misery, Reward and Punishment, in the generall; yea and in special, that the Love and Fruition of God is this Reward; and that the effects of his displeasure are this Punishment: Nothing more clear and certain then that *there is a God*, (He must be a fool indeed that dare deny it, Psal. 14. 1.) as also that this God is the Creatour of the rationall nature, and hath the absolute right of Sovereigne Government: and therefore that the rationall Creature oweth him the most full and absolute obedience, and deserveth punishment if he disobey. And its most clear that infinite goodnesse should be loved above all finite imperfect created good: And its clear that the rationall nature is so formed, that without the hopes and fears of another life, the world neither is, nor ever was, nor (by ordinary visible meanes) can be well governed; (supposing God to work on man according to his nature.) And it is most certain that it consisteth not with infinite wisdom, power and goodnesse, to be put to rule the world in all ages, by fraud and falsehood. And it is certain that Heathens do for the most part through the world, by the light of nature acknowledge a life of joy, or misery to come: And the most hardened Atheists or Infidels

C

must

must confesse, that [*for ought they know there may be such a life:*] it being impossible they should know or prove the contrary. And it is most certain that the *meer probability or possibility* of a Heaven and Hell, (being matters of such unspeakable concernment) should in reason command our utmost diligence to the hazard or loss of the transitory vanities below : and consequently that a holy diligent preparation for another life is *naturally the duty* of the reasonable creature. And its as sure that God hath not made our nature in vain; nor set us on a life of vain employments nor made it our businesse in the world to seek after that which can never be attained.

These things and much more do shew that nature affordeth us so full a testimony of the life to come that's yet invisible, that it exceedingly helpeth us in believing the supernatural revelation of it, which is more full.

5. And though we have not *seen* the objects of our faith, yet those that have given us their infallible testimony by infallible means, have *seen* what they testified. Though [*no man hath seen God at any time, yet the only begotten Sonne which is in the bosome of the Father hath declared him,* Joh. 1. 18. [*Verily, verily, (saith our Lord) we speak that we know, and testifie that we have seen*] Joh. 3. 11. Vers. 31, 32. [*He that cometh from Heaven is above all, and what he hath seen and heard that he testifieth.*] Christ that hath told us saw the things that we have not seen : and you will believe honest men that speak to you of what they were eye-witnesses of. And the Disciples *saw* the person, the transfiguration,

on,

on, and the miracles of Christ. Inasmuch that John thus beginneth his Epistle, 1 Joh. 1. 1, 2, 3. [*That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life, (for the life was manifested and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew it to you, that eternall life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us :) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.*] So Paul, 1 Cor. 9. 1. *Am I not an Apostle? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord,* 1 Cor. 15. 5, 6, 7. [*He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve : after that he was seen of above 500 brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present*] Heb. 2. 3, 4. *This [great salvation at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles and gifts of the holy Ghost, according to his own will.]* 2 Pet. 1. 16, 17. [*For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his Majesty : For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him, from the excellent glory; This is my beloved Sonne in whom I am well pleased : And this voice which came from Heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy Mount.*] And therefore when the Apostles were commanded by their persecutors, not to speak at all, or teach in the name of Jesus, they answered, [*We cannot*

C 2

but



*but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*] Act. 4. 18, 20. so that much of the objects of our faith to us invisible, have yet bin seen by those that have instrumentally revealed them; and the glory of Heaven it self is seen by many millions of souls, that are now possessing it. And the tradition of the Testimony of the Apostles unto us, is more full and satisfactory, then the tradition of any Laws of the Land, or History of the most unquestionable affairs that have been done among the people of the earth: (as I have manifested elsewhere) So that faith hath the infallible Testimony of God, and of them that have seen, and therefore is to us instead of sight.

6. Lastly, Even the enemy of faith himself doth against his will confirme our faith by the violence and rage of malice, that he fireth up in the ungodly against the life of faith and holinesse; and by the importunity of his oppositions and temptations, discovering that it is not for nothing that he is so maliciously solicitous, industrious, and violent.

And thus you see how much faith hath, that should fully satisfie a *rationall man*, instead of presence, possession and sight.

If any shall here say, [*But why would not God let us have a sight of Heaven or Hell, when he could not but know that it would more generally and certainly have prevailed for the conversion and salvation of the world: Doth he envy us the most effectual meanes.*]

I answer, 1. Who art thou ô man that disputest against God? shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Must God

God come down to the barre of man, to render an account of the reason of his works? Why do ye not also ask him a reason of the nature, situation, magnitude, order, influences, &c. of all the Starres, and Superiour Orbes, and call him to an account for *all* his works? when yet there are so many things in your our own bodies, of which you little understand the reason. Is it not intollerable impudency, for such wormes as we, so low, so dark, to question the eternall God, concerning the reason of his Laws and dispensations? Do we not shamefully forget our *ignorance* and our distance?

2. But if you must have a Reason, let this suffice you: It is fit that the Government of God be suited to the *nature* of the *reasonable* subject. And *Reason* is made to apprehend more then we *see*, and by reaching beyond *sense*, to carry us to seek things higher and better then *sense* can reach. If you would have a *man* understand no more then he *sees*, you would almost equalize a *wise* man and a *foole*, and make a *man* too like a *beast*. Even in worldly matters, you will venture upon the greatest cost and paines for the things that you *see not*, nor ever *saw*. He that hath a journey to go to a place that he *never saw*, will not think that a sufficient reason to stay at home. The Merchant will saile a thousand miles to a Land, and for a Commodity, that he *never saw*. Must the Husbandman *see* the *Harvest* before he plow his Land and sow his Seed? Must the sick man *feele*, that he hath health before he use the *meanes* to get it? Must the Souldier *see* that he hath the victory before he fight? You would take *such conceits* in worldly mat-

ters to be the symptomes of distraction : And will you cherish them where they are most pernicious ? Hath God made man for *any end*, or for *none* ? If *none*, he is made in vain : If for *any*, no reason can expect that he should see his *end*, before he use the *meanes*, and see his *home* before he begin to travaile towards it. When Children first go to Schoole, they do not see or enjoy the learning and wisdom which by time and labour they must attain. You will provide for the Children which you are like to have before you see them. To look that *fight* which is our *fruition it self*, should go before a holy life, is to expect the *end* before we will use the *necessary meanes*. You see here in the government of the world, that it is *things unseen* that are the instruments of rule, and motives of obedience. Shall no man be restrained from felony or murders, but he that seeth the Affizes or the Gallows ? It is enough that he *foreseeth* them, as being made known by the Lawes.

It would be no *discrimination* of the *good* and *bad*, the *wise* and *foolish*, if the reward and punishment must be *seen* ? what thief so mad as to steal at the Gallows, or before the Judge ? The basest habits would be restrained from acting, if the reward and punishment were in sight. The most beastly drunkard would not be drunk ; the filthy fornicator would forbear his lust ; the malicious enemy of godlinesse would forbear their calumnies and persecutions, if Heaven and Hell were open to their sight. No man will play the adulterer in the face of the Assembly : The chaste and unchaste seem there alike : And so they would

would do if they saw the face of the most dreadful God. No thanks to any of you all to be *godly* if Heaven were to be presently seen : or to *forbear your sinne* ; if you saw Hell fire, God will have a meeter way of tryal : You shall *believe* his *promises*, if ever you will have the *benefit*, and *believe* his *threatnings*, if ever you will *escape the threatened evil*.

Use 1. This being the Nature and Use of Faith, to apprehend things *absent* as if they were *present*, and things *unseen* as if they were *visible* before our eyes ; you may hence understand the *nature of Christianity*, and what it is to be a true Believer. Verily, it is another matter than the dreaming, self-deceiving world imagineth. Hypocrites think that they are Christians indeed, because they have entertained a superficiall *opinion*, that there is a Christ, an immortality of souls, a Resurrection, a Heaven and a Hell ; though their Lives bear witness, that this is not a *living*, and *effectuall* faith ; but it is their *sensitive faculties* and *interest* that are *predominant*, and are the *byas* of their hearts. Alas a little observation may tell them, that notwithstanding their most confident pretensions to Christianity, they are utterly unacquainted with the Christian life. Would they *live* as they do, in worldly cares, and pampering of the flesh, and neglect of God and the life to come, if they saw the things which they say they do *believe* ? Could they be sensuall, ungodly and secure, if they had a faith that *serv'd instead of sights* ?

Would you know who it is that is the Christian indeed ? 1. He is one that *liveth* (in some measure) as if he saw the Lord ? Believing in that God that *dwelleth*

*dwelleth in the inaccessible light*, that cannot be seen by mortall eyes, he liveth as before his face. He speaks, he prays, he thinks, he deals with men, as if he saw the Lord stand by. No wonder therefore if he do it with *reverence* and *holy fear*. No wonder if he make lighter of the smiles or frowns of mortall man, than others do that see none higher; and if he observe not the lustre of worldly dignity, or fleshly beauty, wisdom or vainglory, before the transcendent incomprehensible light, to which the Sun itself is darkness. When *he awaketh he is still with God*, Psal. 134. 8. *He sets the Lord alwaies before him, because he is at his right hand, he is not moved*, Psal. 16. 8. And therefore the life of believers is oft called, a *walking with God*, and a *walking before God*, as Gen. 5. 22, 24. & 6. 9. & 17. 1. in the case of *Enoch*, *Noah*, and *Abraham*. *All the day doth he wait on God*, Psal. 25. 5. Imagin your selves what manner of person he must be that *sees the Lord*; and conclude that such (in his measure) is the true believer. For by *faith he seeth him that is invisible* (to the eye of sense) and therefore can forsake the glory and pleasures of the world, and feareth not the wrath of Princes, as its said of *Moses*, Heb. 11. 27.

2. The Believer is one *that liveth on a Christ whom he never saw*, and *trusteth in him*, *adhereth to him*, *acknowledgeth his benefits*, *loveth him* and *rejoyceth in him*, as if he had *seen him with his eyes*. This is the faith which *Peter* calls *more precious than perishing gold*; that maketh us *love him whom we have not seen*, and in whom though now we see him not, yet believing we *rejoyce, with unspeakable and glorious joy*,

1 Pet.

1 Pet. 1. 8. *Christ dwelleth in his heart by faith*; not only by his *Spirit*; but *objectively*; as our dearest absent friend, doth dwell in our estimation and affection, Ephes. 3. 17 O that the miserable Infidels of the world, had the *eyes*, the *hearts*, the *experiences* of the true believer! Then they that with *Thomas* tell those those that have seen him, [*Except I may see and feel, I will not beleieve*,] will be forced to cry out, [*My Lord and my God*,] Joh. 20. 25, &c.

3. A Believer is one that *judgeth of the man by his invisible inside*, and not by outward appearances with a fleshly worldly judgment. He *seeth* by faith a greater ugliness in sin, than in any the most deformed monster. When the unbeliever saith, what harm is it to please my *flesh*, in ease, or pride, or meat and drink, or lustfull wantonness? the believer takes it as the question of a fool, that should ask [what harm is it to take a dram of Mercury or Arsenick?] He *seeth the vicious evill*, and foreseeth the consequent *penal evill*, by the eye of faith. And therefore it is that he pittiyeth the ungodly, when they pittiy not themselves, and speaks to them oft with a tender heart in compassion of their misery, and perhaps weeps over them (as *Paul*, Phil. 3. 18, 19.) when he cannot prevail; when they weep not for themselves, but hate his love, and scorn his pittiy, and bid him keep his lamentations for himself; because they see not what he sees.

He seeth also the inward beauty of the Saints (as it shineth forth in the holiness of their lives) and through all their sordid *poverty* and contempt, beholdeth the image of *God* upon them. For he judg-

D

eth

erh not of *sin* or *holiness* as they now appear to the distracted world; but as they will be judged of at the day which he foreseeth; when *sin* will be the *shame*, and *holiness* the honoured and desired state.

He can see Christ in his poor despised members, and Love God in those that are made as the scorn and offscouring of all things, by the malignant unbelieving world. He admireth the excellency and happiness of those, that are made the laughing stock of the ungodly: and accounteth the Saints the *most excellent on earth*, Psal. 16. 2. and had rather be one of their communion in rags, than sit with Princes that are naked within, and void of the true and durable glory. He judgeth of men as he perceiveth them to have more or less of Christ. The worth of a man is not obvious to the sense. You see his *stature*, *complexion* and his *clothes*; but as you see not his *Learning* or *skill* in any *Art* whatsoever, so you see not his *grace* and heavenly mind. As the *soul* it self, so the *sinfull deformity*, and the *holy beauty* of it, are to us invisible, and perceived only by their fruits, and by the eye of faith, which seeth things as God reveals them. And therefore in the eyes of a true believer, *a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth those that fear the Lord*, Psal. 15. 4.

4. A true Believer doth seek a Happiness which he never saw, and that with greater estimation and resolution, than he seeks the most excellent things that he hath seen. In all his prayers, his labours and his sufferings, it is an *unseen Glory* that he seeks: He seeth not the Glory of God, nor the Glorified Redeemer, nor the world of Angels, and perfected spirits of the just: but

but he *knoweth* by faith, that such a God, such a Glory, such a world as this *there is*, as certain as if his eyes had seen it. And therefore he provides, he lives, he hopes, he waites, for this *unseen* state of spirituall blis, contemning all the wealth and glory, that sight can reach in comparison thereof. He believeth what he *shall see*; and therefore strives that he *may see* it. Its something above the Sun, and all that mortall eyes can see, which is the *end*, the *hope*, the *portion* of a believer, without which all is nothing to him; and for which he trades and travels here, as worldlings do for worldly things, *Matth. 6. 20, 21. Col. 3. 1. Phil. 3. 20.*

5. A true Believer doth all his life prepare for a day that is yet to come, and for an account of all the passages of his life, though he hath nothing but the word of God, to assure him of it. And therefore he lives, as one that is hasting to the presence of his Judge; and he contriveth his affairs, and disposeth of his worldly riches, as one that looks to hear of it again, and as one that remembreth the *Judge is at the doore*, *James 5. 9.* He rather asketh, [what life, what words, what actions, what way of using my Estate and interest, will be sweetest to me in the review, and will be best at last when I must accordingly receive my doome?] than [what is most pleasant to my flesh? and what will ingratiate me most with men? and what will accommodate me best at present? and set me highest in the world?] And therefore it is, that he pittieeth the ungodly even in the height of their prosperity; and is so earnest (though it offend them) to procure their recovery, as know-

ing that how secure soever they are now, they *must give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead*, 1 Pet. 4. 5. and that then the case will be altered with the presumptuous world.

6. Lastly, A true believer is *carefull to prevent a threatned misery which he never felt*; and is awakened by holy fear to *flye from the wrath to come*, and is industrious to escape that *place of torment* which he never saw, as if he had seen it with his eyes. When he heareth but the *sound of the trumpet*, he takes *warning that he may save his soul*, Ezek. 33. 4. The evils that are *here felt and seen* are not so dreadful to him, as those that he *never saw or felt*. He is not so carefull and resolute, to avoid the ruine of his Estate or name, or to avoid the plague, or sword or famine, or the scorching flames, or death, or torments, as he is to avoid the endless torments, which are threatned by the righteous God. It is a greater misery in his esteem, to be *really undone for ever*, then *seemingly only for a time*, and to be cast off by God, then by all the world; and to *lie in Hell*, then to suffer any temporall calamity. And therefore he fears it more, and doth more to avoid it; and is more cast down by the feares of Gods displeasure, then by the feelings of these present sufferings. As *Noah* did for his preservation from the threatned deluge, so doth the true Believer for his preservation from everlasting wrath, Heb. 11. 7. [*By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Arke, to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world,* and

*and became heire of the righteousness, which is by faith.*] God first giveth warning of the flood: *Noah* believeth it: not with a *lifelesse*, but a *working faith*: that first moved in him a *self-preserving fear*: This fear moveth *Noah* to obey the Lord in the use of means, and to prepare the Ark; and all this was, to save himself and his house from a flood, that was as yet unseen, and of which in nature there was no appearance. Thus doth God warne the sinfull world, of the day of judgment, and the fire that is unquenchable; and *true believers* take his warning; and *believing* that which they *cannot see*, by *fear* they are *moved* to flye to Christ, and use his meanes to escape the threatned calamity. By this they become the *heirs of that Righteousnesse which is by faith*, and *condemne* the unbelieving careles world, that take not the warning, and use not the remedy.

By this time you may see that the Life of Faith is quite another thing, than the *lifelesse opinion* of multitudes that call themselves *believers*. To say [*I believe there is a God, a Christ, a Heaven, a Hell,*] is as easie as it is common. But the *faith* of the ungodly is but an *uneffectuall dreame*. To dreame that you are fighting, wins no victories: To dreame that you are eating, gets no strength. To dreame that you are runing, rids no ground: To dreame that you are plowing, or sowing, or reaping, procureth but a fruitles harvest. And to dreame that you are Princes, may consist with beggery. If you do any more than *dreame* of *Heaven* and *Hell*, how is it that you stirre not, and make it not appeare by the diligence of your lives, and the fervour of your duties,

and the seriousness of your endeavours, that such wonderfull unexpressible overpowering things, are indeed the matters of your belief? As you love your souls take heed lest you take an *image of faith* to be the thing it self. *Faith* sets on work the powers of the soul, for the obtaining of that joy and the escaping of that misery which you believe. But the *image* of faith in self-deceivers, neither *warms* nor *works*: it conquereth no difficulties; it stirs not up to faithful duty. It's *blind*, and therefore *seeth* not God; and how then should he be fear'd and lov'd? It *seeth* not Hell, and therefore the senseless soul goes on as fearlessly and merrily to the unquenchable fire, as if he were in the safest way. This Image of faith, annihilateth the most potent objects, as to any due impression on the soul. God is as no God, and Heaven as no Heaven, to these *Imaginary Christians*. If a Prince be in the roome, an Image reverenceth him not: If musick and feasting be there, an Image finds no pleasure in them. If fire and sword be there, an Image fears them not. You may perceive by the senselesse neglectfull carriage of ungodly men, that they *see* not by faith the God that they should love and fear; the Heaven that they should seek and wait for; or the Hell that they should with all possible care avoid. He is indeed the true Believer that (allowing the difference of degrees) doth pray as if he saw the Lord; and speak and live as alwaies in his presence; and redeem his time as if he were to dye to morrow, or as one that *seeth* death approach, and ready to lay hands upon him; that begs and cries to God in prayer, as one that *foreseeth* the day of judgement; and the

the endless joy or misery that followeth: that bestirreth him for everlasting life, as one that *seeth* Heaven and Hell, by the eye of faith. Faith is a serious apprehension, and causeth a serious conversation: for it is instead of *sight* and *presence*.

From all this you may easily and certainly inferre,  
1. That *true faith* is a Jewel, rare and precious: and not so common as nominall careless Christians think. What say they, *Are we not all believers? will you make Infidels of all that are not Saints? are none Christians, but those that live so strictly?* Answer, I know they are not *Infidels by profession*: but what they are indeed, and what God will take them for, you may soon perceive, by comparing the description of faith, with the inscription legible on their *lives*. It's common to say, *I do believe*: but is it common to find men, *pray* and *live*, as those that do believe indeed? It is both in works of *charity*, and of *piety*, that a *living faith* will shew it self. I will not therefore contend about the name: If you are *ungodly, unjust, or uncharitable*, and yet will call your selves *Believers*, you may keep the *name*, and see whether it will save you. Have you forgotten how this case is determined by the holy Ghost himself, *James 2. 14, &c.* What doth it profit my Brethren, if a man say, he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him? Faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone. Thou believest that there is one God: thou dost well: the Devils also believe and tremble. If such a belief be it, that thou gloriest in, its not denied thee! But wilt thou know, oh vain man, that faith without works is dead? &c. Is there life where

where there is no *motion*? Had you that *Faith* that is instead of *sight*, it would make you more *solicitous* for the *things unseen*, then you are for the *visible trifles* of this world.

2. And hence you may observe, that *most true Believers are weak in Faith*. Alas how farre do we all fall short of the love, and zeal, and care, and diligence, which we should have if we had but *once beheld* the things which we do *believe*? Alas how dead are our affections, how flat are our duties? How cold, and how slow are our endeavours? How unprofitable are our lives, in comparison of what *one hours sight of Heaven and Hell* would make them be? O what a comfortable converse would it be, if I might but joyn in Prayer, Praise, and holy conference one day or hour, with a Person that had *seen the Lord*, and *been in Heaven*, and born a part in the Angelical Praises! Were our Congregations composed of such persons, what manner of worship would they perform to God? How unlike would their heavenly ravishing expressions be to these our sleepy heartlesse duties? Were Heaven open to the view of all this Congregation while I am speaking to you, or when we are speaking in prayer and praise to God, imagine your selves what a change it would make upon the best of us in our services! What apprehensions, what affections, what resolutions it would raise! and what a posture it would cast us all into! And do we not all professe to *believe* these things, as revealed from Heaven by the infallible God? Do we not say, that such a Divine Revelation is as sure as if the thing,

things were in themselves laid open to our sight? Why then are we no more affected with them? Why are we no more transported by them? Why do they no more command our souls, and stirre up our faculties to the most vigorous and lively exercise? and call them off from things that are not to us considerable, nor fit to have one glance of the eye of our observation, nor a regardfull thought, nor the least affection, unlesse as they subserve these greater things? When you observe how much, in your selves and others, the frame of your souls in holy duty, and the tenour of your lives towards God and man, do differ from what they would be, if you had *seen* the things that you believe, let it mind you of the great imperfection of Faith, and humble us all in the sense of our imbecillity. For though I know that the most *perfect Faith*, is not *apt* to raise such *high affections in degree*, as shall be raised by the *beatifical vision* in the glorified, and as *present intuition now* would raise, if we could attain it; yet seeing Faith hath as *sure* an Object and Revelation as sight it self, though the *manner* of apprehension be *lesse affecting*, it should do much more with us than it doth, and bring us nearer to *such affections and resolutions, as sight would cause*.

Use 2. If Faith be given us to make things to come as if they were at hand, and things *unseen* as if we *saw them*, you may see from hence, 1. *The reason of that holy seriousness of Believers*, which the *ungodly want*. 2. *And the reason why the ungodly want it*. 3. *And why they wonder at, and distaste*

and deride this serious diligence of the Saints.

1. Would you make it any matter of wonder, for men to be more carefull of their souls, more fervent in their requests to God, more fearfull of offending him, and more laborious in all holy preparation for eternal life, than the holiest and precisest person that you know in all the world, if so be that *Heaven and Hell were seen* to them? Would you not rather wonder at the *dullnesse* and *coldnesse*, and *negligence* of the *best*, and that they are not farre more holy and diligent than they are, if you and they did *see these things*? Why then do you not cease your *wondering* at their *diligence*? Do you not know that they are men, that *have seen the Lord*, whom they daily serve? and *seen the glory* which they daily seek? and *seen the place of torments* which they fly from? By *Faith* in the *Glaspe* of Divine Revelations they have *seen* them.

2. And the reason why the *carelesse world* are not as diligent, and holy as *Believers*, is because they have not this eye of Faith, and never saw those powerfull objects, that *Believers* see. Had you *their eyes*, you would have their *hearts* and *lives*. O that the Lord would but illuminate you, and give you such a *sight* of the things *unseen*, as every true *Believer* hath! What a happy change would it make upon you? Then instead of your deriding or opposing it, we should have your company in the holy path: You would then be such your selves, as you now deride. If you *saw* what they *see*, you would *do* as they *do*. When the heavenly

heavenly light had appeared unto *Saul*, he ceaseth persecuting, and enquires what Christ would have him to do, that he might be such a one as he had persecuted: And when the scales fell from his eyes, he falls to Prayer, and gets among the *Believers* whom he had persecuted, and laboureth and suffereth more than they.

3. But till this light appear to your darkned souls, you cannot see the Reasons of a holy heavenly life: and therefore you will think it hypocrisie, or pride, or fancy, and imagination, or the foolishnesse of crackt-brain'd self conceited men. If you see a man do reverence to a Prince, and the Prince himself were invisible to you, would you not take him for a mad man; and say that he cringed to the stools or chaires, or bowed to a post, or complemented with his shadow? If you saw a mans action in eating and dinking, and see not the meat and drink it self, would you not think him mad? If you heard men laugh, and hear not so much as the voice of him that gives the jeast, would you not imagine them to be brainick? If you see men dance, and hear not the musick, if you see a Labourer threshing, or reaping, or mowing, and see no corn or grasse before him; if you see a Souldier fighting for his life, and see no enemy that he spends his stroakes upon, will you not take all these for men distracted? Why this is the case between you and the true *Believers*. You see them reverently worship God, but you see not the Majesty which they worship, as they do: You see them as busie for the saving of their souls,



as if an hundred lives lay on it, but you see not the Hell from which they fly, nor the Heaven they seek: and therefore you marvell why they make so much ado, about the matters of their salvation; and why they cannot do as others, and make as light of Christ and Heaven, as they that desire to be excused, and think they have more needfull things to mind. But did you *see* with the eyes of a true Believer, and were the amazing things that God hath revealed to us, but open to your *sight*, how quickly would you be satisfied, and sooner mock at the diligence of a drowning man, that is striving for his life, or at the labour of the City, when they are busily quenching the flames in their Habitations, than mock at them that are striving for the everlasting life, and praying and labouring against the ever-burning flames?

How soon would you turn your admiration, against the stupidity of the carelesse world, and wonder more that ever men that hear the Scriptures, and see with their eyes the works of God, can make so light of matters of such unspeakable eternal consequence? Did you but *see Heaven and Hell*, it would amaze you to think that ever *many*, yea *so many*, and so *seeming wise*, should wilfully run into everlasting fire, and sell their souls at so low a rate, as if it were as easie to be in Hell as in an Ale-house, and Heaven were no better than a beastly lust? O then with what astonishment would you think! [Is this the fire that sinners do so little fear? Is this the Glory that is so neglected?] You would then see that the *madnesse* of the *ungodly* is the wonder.

*Use. 3.*

*Use 3.* By this time I should think that some of your own Consciences have prevented me, in the *Use of Examination*, which I am next to call you to. I hope while I have been holding you the Glasse, you have not turn'd away your faces, nor shut your eyes: But that you have been *judging your selves* by the light which hath been set up before you. Have not some of your consciences said by this time, [If this be the nature and use of Faith, to make things unseen, as if we saw them, what a desolate case then is my soul in? how void of *Faith*? how full of *Infidelity*? how far from the *truth* and *power of Christianity*? How dangerously have I long deceived my self in calling my self a true Christian, and pretending to be a true Believer? When I never knew the *life of Faith*, but took a dead opinion, bred only by Education, and the custom of the Countrey instead of it; little did I think that I had been an Infidel at the heart, while I so confidently laid claim to the Name of a Believer! Alas how farre have I been from living, as one that *seeth* the things that he *professeth to Believe*?] If some of your consciences be not thus convinced, and perceive not yet your want of Faith, I fear it is because they are *fear'd*, or *asleep*.

But if *yet conscience* have not begun to plead this cause against you, let *me begin* to plead it with your *consciences*: Are you *Believers*? Do you *live the life of Faith*, or not? Do you *live upon things that are unseen*, or upon the present visible baits of sensuality? That you may not turn away your ears, or hear me with a sluggish senselesse mind, let me tell you first,

E 3

how

how nearly it concerneth you; to get this Question soundly answered; and then, that you may not be deceived; let me help you toward the true resolution.

1. And for the first, You may perceive by what is said, that saving Faith is not so common, as those that know not the nature of it, do imagine. [ *All men have not faith,* ] 2 Thes. 3. 2. O what abundance do deceive themselves with *Names*, and *shews*, and a *dead Opinion*, and *customary Religion*, and take these for the *life of faith*!

2. Till you have this *faith*, you have *no special interest in Christ*. It is only *Believers* that are *united to him*, and are his living *Members*: and it is by *faith* that *he dwelleth in our hearts*; and that we live in him, Eph. 3. 17. Gal. 2. 20. In vain do you boast of Christ, if you are not true *Believers*. You have no part or portion in him: None of his special Benefits are yours, till you have this living working Faith.

3. You are still in the state of *enmity* to God, and *unreconciled* to him, while you are *unbelievers*. For you can have *no peace with God*, nor *accesse unto his favour*, but by Christ, Rom. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. Eph. 2. 14, 15, 17. And therefore you must *come by faith to Christ*, before you can *come by Christ unto the Father*, as those that have a special Interest in his love.

4. Till you have this Faith, you are *under the guilt and load of all your sinnes*, and under the curse and condemnation of the Law; For there is no *Justification* or *forgiveness*, but by *Faith*, Act. 26. 18. Rom. 4, & 5, &c.

5. Till

5. Till you have this *sound Belief of things unseen*, you will be *carnal minded*, and have a *carnal end* to all your actions, which will make those to be *evil*, that *materially* are *good*, and those to be *fleshly* that *materially* are *holy*; *without Faith it is impossible to please God*, Rom. 8. 5, 8, 9. Prov. 28. 9. Heb. 11. 6.

6. Lastly, Till you have this *living Faith*, you have *no right to Heaven*, nor *could be saved* if you die this hour. [ *Whoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life: He that believeth on him, is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already: He that believeth on the Sonne, hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Sonne, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him,* Joh. 3. 16, 18, 36. ]

You see, if you love your selves, it concerneth you, to try whether you are true *Believers*: Unless you take it for an *indifferent thing*, whether you live for ever in *Heaven* or *Hell*; it's best for you to put the question close to your consciences betimes. Have you that Faith that serves instead of sight? Do you carry *within you the evidence of things unseen*, and the *substance of the things* which you say you *hope for*? Did you know in what manner this question must be put and determined at judgment, and how all your comfort will then depend upon the answer, and how near that day is, when you must all be sentenced to *Heaven* or *Hell*, as you are found to be *Believers* or *unbelievers*, it would make you hearken to my counsel, and presently try whether you have a *saving Faith*.

2. Buc

2. But lest you be deceived in your trial, and lest you mistake me as if I tried the weak by the measure of the strong, and laid all your comfort upon such *strong affections*, and *high degrees*, as *fight* it self would work within you, I shall briefly tell you, how you may know whether you have *any faith* that's *true and saving*, though in the *least degree*. Though *none of us* are affected to that *height* as we should be, if we had the sight of all that we do believe, yet all that have *any saving belief* of *invisible things*, will have these four signs of faith within them.

1. *A sound belief of things unseen, will cause a practickall estimation of them, and that above all earthly things.* A glimpse of the heavenly glory as in a glass, will cause the soul deliberately to say, [This is the chief desirable felicity; this is the Crown, the pearl, the treasure; nothing but this can serve my turn. It will debase the greatest pleasures, or riches or honours of the world in your esteem. How contemptible will they seem, while you see God stand by, and Heaven as it were set open to your view; you'll see there's little cause to envy the prosperous servants of the world; you will pity them, as miserable in their mirth, and bound in the fetters of their folly and concupiscence; and as strangers to all solid joy and honour. You will be moved with some compassion to them in their misery, when they are braving it among men, and domineering for a little while, and you will think, alas poor man! Is this all thy glory! Hast thou no better wealth, no higher honour, no sweeter pleasures than these husks? With such a *practickall judgement* as you value gold  
above

above *dirt*, and *jewels* [above *common stones*; you will value *heaven* above all the *riches and pleasures* of this world, if you have indeed a living saving faith, *Phil. 3. 7, 8, 9.*

2. *A sound belief of the things unseen will habitually incline your wills to embrace them, with consent, and complacence, and resolution, above and against those worldly things, that would be set above them, and prefer'd before them.* If you are true believers, you have *made your choice*, you have *fixt your hopes*, you have *taken up your resolutions*; that God must be your *portion*, or you can have none that's worth the *having*: that *Christ* must be your *Saviour*, or you cannot be saved: and therefore you are at a point with all things else: they may be your *Helps*, but not your *Happiness*: you are resolved on what *Rock* to *build*, and where to cast anchor; and at what port and prize your life shall *aim*. You are *resolved* what to *seek*, and *trust* to *God or none*: *Heaven or nothing*: *Christ or none*; is the voice of your rooted, stable resolutions. Though you are full of fears sometimes whether you shall be accepted, and have a part in Christ, or no: and whether ever you shall attain the Glory which you aim at; yet you are off all other hopes; having seen an end of all *perfections*, and read *vanity* and *vexation* written upon all creatures, even on the most flattering state on earth, and are unchangeably resolved not to change your *master*, and your *hopes*, and your *holy course*, for any other *life* or *hopes*. What ever come of it you are resolved that here you will venture all: Knowing that you have no other game to play, at  
F which

which you are not sure to lose, and that you can lay out your love, and care, and labour on nothing else that will answer your expectations; nor make any other bargain whatsoever, but what you are sure to be utterly undone by, *Psal. 73. 25. & 4. 6, 7. Mat. 6. 20, 21. & 13. 45, 46. Luk. 18. 33.*

3. A sound belief of things invisible, *will be so farre an effectual spring of a holy life*, as that you will [*seek first the Kingdom of God, and its Righteousness,*] *Mat. 6. 33.* and not in your *Resolutions* only, but in your *Practises*, the bent of your lives will be for God, and your invisible felicity. It is not possible that you should see by faith, the wonders of the world to come, and yet preferre this world before it. A *dead, opinionative belief*, may stand with a *worldly fleshly life*; but a *working faith* will make you stirre, and make the things of God your *business*: and the labour and industry of your lives will shew, whether you soundly believe the things unseen.

4. If you savingly believe the invisible things, you will purchase them at any rate, and hold them faster than your worldly accommodations; and will suffer the losse of all things visible, rather than you will cast away your hopes of the glory which you never saw. A humane faith and bare opinion, will not hold fast when trial comes. For such men take Heaven but for a reserve, because they must leave earth against their wils, and are loath to go to hell: but they are resolved to hold the world as long as they can, because their faith apprehendeth no such satisfying certainty of the things unseen, as will encourage

rage them to let go all that they see, and have in *sensible possession*. But the *weakest faith* that's true and saving, doth *habitually dispose* the soul, to let go all the hopes and happiness of this world, when they are inconsistent with our spiritual hopes and happiness, *Luk. 14. 33.*

And now I have gone before you with the light, and shewed you what a Believer is, will you presently consider how farre your hearts and lives agree to this description? To know [*Whether you live by faith or not*] is consequentially to know, *Whether God or the world be your portion and felicity*; and so whether you are the heirs of Heaven or Hell. And is not this a Question that you are most neerly concerned in? O therefore for your souls sakes, and as ever you love your everlasting peace, *Examine your selves, whether you are in the faith or not? Know you not that Christ is in you (by faith) except you be reprobates? 2 Cor. 13. 5.* will you hearken now as long to your consciences, as you have done to me? As you have heard me telling you, *What is the nature of a living, saving faith*; will you hearken to your consciences, while they impartially tell you, *Whether you have this life of faith, or not? It may be known if you are willing, and diligent, and impartial*: If you search on purpose as men that would know whether they are alive or dead, and whether they shall live or die for ever: and not as men that would be flattered and deceived, and are resolved to think well of their state, be it true or false.

Let conscience tell you: What eyes do you see by, for the conduct of the chief imploiment of your lives?

lives? Is it by the eye of sense, or faith? I take it for granted that it's by the eye of Reason. But is it by Reason corrupted and byassed by sense, or is it by Reason elevated by faith? What Countrey is it that your hearts converse in? Is it in Heaven or Earth? What company is it that you solace your selves with? Is it with Angels and Saints? Do you walk with them in the Spirit, and joyn your eccho's to their triumphant praises, and say Amen, when by faith you hear them ascribing honour, and praise, and glory to the ancient of dayes, the Omnipotent Jehovah, that is, and that was, and is to come? Do you fetch your Foyes from Heaven or Earth? from things unseen or seen? things future or present? things hoped for, or things possessed? What Garden yeeldeth you your sweetest flowers? Whence is the food, that your hopes and comforts live upon? Whence are the spirits and cordials that revive you, when a frowning world doth cast you into a fainting fit, or swoon? Where is it that you repose your souls for Rest, when sinne or sufferings have made you weary? Deal truly, Is it in Heaven or Earth? Which world doe you take for your pilgrimage, and which for your home? I do not ask you, where you are, but where you dwell: not where are your persons, but where are your hearts? In a word, Are you in good earnest, when you say, you believe a Heaven and Hell? And do you think, and speak, and pray, and live, as those that do indeed believe it? Do you spend your time, and choose your condition of life, and dispose of your affairs, and answer temptations to worldly things, as those that are serious in their belife? Speak out,

out; do you live the life of faith upon things unseen? or the life of sense on things that you behold? Deale truly, for your endlesse joy or sorrow doth much depend on it. The life of faith is the certain passage to the life of glory? The fleshy life on things here seen, is the certain way to endlesse misery. If you live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye by the spirit, do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live, Rom. 8. 13. Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap everlasting life, Gal. 6. 7, 8. If you would know where you must live for ever, know how, and for what, and upon what it is, that you live here.

Use 4. Having enquired whether you are Believers, I am next to ask you, what you will be for the time to come? will you live upon things seen or unseen? While you arrogate the name and honour of being Christians, will you bethink you what Christianity is? and will you be indeed what you say you are, and would be thought to be? Oh that you would give credit to the Word of God: that the God of Heaven might be but heartily believed by you! And that you would but take his Word to be as sure as sense? and what he hath told you is or will be, to be as certain as if you saw it with your eyes? Oh what manner of persons would you then be? how carefully and fruitfully would you speak and live? How impossible were it then that you should be carelesse and prophane? And here that I may by seriousness bring you to be

F 3      serious

*serious* in so *serious* a businesse, I shall first put a few *suppositions* to you, about the *invisible objects* of *faith*, and then I shall put some *applicatory Questions* to you, concerning your own *resolutions* and *practice* thereupon.

1. Suppose you saw the Lord in glory continually before you; When you are hearing, praying, talking jesting, eating, drinking, and when you are tempted to any wilfull sinne: Suppose you saw the Lord stand over you, as verily as you see a man! (As you might do if your eyes could see him: for it's most certain that he is still present with you) suppose you saw but such a glympse of his back parts as *Moses* did! *Exod.* 34. when God put him into a cleft of the Rock and covered him while he passed by. (*Chap.* 33. 23.) when the face of *Moses* shined with the sight, that he was faine to vaile it from the people, *Exod.* 34. 33, 34, 35. Or if you had seen but what the Prophet saw, *Isa.* 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. when he beheld the Lord upon a throne, high and lifted up, &c. and heard the Seraphim cry, Holy; Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. When he said, *Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips! for mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of Hosts.* Or if you had seen but what *Job* saw, *Job* 42. 5, 6. when he said [I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhorre my self and repent in dust and ashes.] What course would you take, what manner of persons would you be after such a sight as this? If you had

had seen but *Christ* appearing in his glory, as the Disciples on the holy Mount, *Matth.* 17. or as *Paul* saw him at his conversion, when he was smitten to the earth, *Acts* 9. or as *John* saw him, *Revel.* 1. 13. where he saith [He was clothed with a Garment down to the foot, and girt with a golden girdle; his head and his hairs were white like woole or Snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters; and he had in his right hand seven starres, and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword, and his countenance was as the Sun shineth in his strength: and when I saw him; I fell at his feet as dead; and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of Hell and death] What do you think you should be and do, if you had seen but such a sight as this? Would you be godly or ungodly after it? As sure as you live, and see one another, God alwayes seeth you: He seeth your secret filthinesse, and deceit, and malice, which you think is hid: he seeth you in the dark: the locking of your doores, the drawing of your curtains: the setting of the Sun, or the putting out of the candle, doth hide nothing from him that is Omniscient. *Psal.* 94. 8, 9. [Understand oh ye brutish among the people! and ye fooles when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not heare: he that formed the eye, shall he not see:] The lust and filthinesse, and covetousnesse, and envy, and vanity of your ve-

ry *thoughts* are as open to his view as the Sunne at noone. And therefore you may well suppose him *presens* that cannot be *absent*; and you may suppose you saw him that still seeth you, and whom you must see. Oh what a change, a *glimpse* of the *glory* of his *Majesty*, would make in this Assembly! Oh what amazements, what passionate workings of soul would it excite! Were it but an *Angel* that did thus appeare to you, what manner of hearers would you be? How serious? how affectionate? how sensible? And yet are you *Believers*, and have *none* of this? when faith makes unseen things to be as seen? If thou have *faith* indeed, thou seest him that is invisible: thou speakest to him: thou hearest him in his Word: thou seest him in his Works: thou walkest with him: he is the life of thy comforts, thy converse and thy life.

2. Suppose you had *seen the matters revealed in the Gospel to your faith, as to what is past and done already?* If you had seen the deluge and the *Ark*, and preservation of one righteous family: the burning of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* with fire from Heaven; and the saving of *Lot* whose *righteous soul was grieved* at their sinnes, and hunted after as a prey to their ungodly rage, because he would have hindred them from transgressing? Suppose you had *seen* the opening of the Red Sea, the passage of the *Israelites*, the drowning of *Pharaoh* and his *Egyptians*; the *Manna* and the *Quailes* that fell from Heaven, the flaming Mount, with the terrible Thunder, when God delivered the Law to *Moses*! What manner of people would you have been? What lives would you have

have led, after such fights, as all or any one of these? Suppose you had *seen* Christ in his state of Incarnation, in his examples of lowliness, meekness, contempt of all the glory and vanities of this world, and had heard him speak his heavenly Doctrine with power and authority, as never man spake. Suppose you had seen him heal the blind, the lame, the sick, and raise the dead; and seen him after all this made the scorn of sinners, buffeted, spit upon, when they had crowned him with thorns, and arrayed him gorgeously in scorn; and then nailed between malefactours on a Cross, and pierced, and die a shameful death, and this for such as you and I. Suppose you had seen the Sun darkned without any Eclipse; the Vail of the Temple rent; the earth tremble; the Angels terrifying the Keepers, and Christ rise again! Suppose you had been among the Disciples when he appeared in the midst of them, and with *Thomas*, had put your fingers into his wounded side: and had seen him walking on the waters, and at last seen him ascending up to heaven. Suppose you had seen when the Holy-Ghost came down on the Disciples in the similitude of cloven tongues, and had heard them speak in the various languages of the Nations, and seen the variety of Miracles, by which they convinced the unbelieving world: What persons would you have been? What lives would you have led, if you had been eye-witnesses of all these things? And do you not profess to Believe all this? and that these things are as certain truths, as if you had seen them? Why then doth not your Belief affect you, or command you

G more?

more ? Why doth it not do what fight would do, in some good measure, if it were but a lively saving faith indeed, that serveth instead of sense ? Yea I must tell you, Faith must do more with you, in *this case*, then the *fight* of Christ *alone* could do, or the *fight* of his *Miracles* did on most. For many that saw him, and saw his works, and heard his word, yet perished in their unbelief.

3. Suppose you saw the *Everlasting Glory* which Christ hath purchased and prepared for his Saints : That you had been once with *Paul rapt up into the third heavens*, and seen the things that are *unutterable* : Would you not after that have rather *lived* like *Paul*, and undergone his sufferings and contempt, then to have lived like the brain-sick brutish world ? If you had seen what *Stephen* saw before his death, *Act. 7. 55, 56. the Glory of God, and Christ standing at his right hand* ; If you had seen the thousands and millions of holy Glorious spirits, that are continually attending the Majesty of the Lord ; If you had seen the glorified spirits of the just, that were once in flesh, despised by the blind ungodly world, while they waited on God in faith, and holiness, and hope, for that blessed crown which now they wear : If you had felt one moment of their joyes ; If you had seen them shine as the Sun in glory, and made like unto the Angels of God ; If you had heard them sing the song of the Lamb, and the joyful Hallelujah's, and praise to their eternal King : What would you be, and what would you resolve on after such a sight as this ? If the rich man *Luke 16.* had seen *Lazarus* in *Abrahams* bosom in

in the midst of his bravery, and honour, and feasting, and other sensual delights, as afterwards he saw it when he was tormented in the flames of hell, do you think such a *sight* would not have *cooled* his *mirth and jollity*, and helpt him to understand the *nature and value* of his earthly felicity, and have proved a more effectual argument then a despised Preachers words ? at least to have brought him to a freer exercise of his Reason, in a sober consideration of his state and wayes ? Had you *seen* one hour what *Abraham, David, Paul*, and all the Saints now see, while sin and flesh doth keep us here in the dark, what work do you think your selves it would make upon your hearts and lives ?

4. Suppose you saw the face of Death, and that you were now lying under the power of some mortal sickness, Physicians having forsaken you, and said, There is no hope : Your friends weeping over you, and preparing your winding-sheet and coffin, digging your graves, and casting up the skulls, and bones, and earth, that must again be cast in to be your covering and company : Suppose you saw a Messenger from God to tell you that you must *die to morrow*, or heard but what one of your predecessors heard, *Luke 12. 20. Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee : then whose shall these things be that thou hast provided ?* ] How would such a Message work with you ? Would it leave you as you are ? If you heard a voice from God this night in your chamber in the dark, telling you, that *This is the last night that you shall live on earth, and before to morrow your souls must be in another world, and come before*



before the dreadful God : What would be the effect of such a Message ? And do you not *verily Believe* that all this will very shortly be ? Nay do you not *know* without *Believing*, that you must *die*, and leave your worldly Glory ? and that all your pleasures and contents on earth, will be as if they had never been, (and much worse) ! O wonderful ! that a change so sure, so great, so near, should no more affect you, and no more be fore-thought on, and no more prepared for ! and that you be not awakened by so full and certain a fore-knowledge, to be in good sadness for eternal life, as you seem to be when death is at hand !

5. Suppose you saw the great and dreadful day of Judgement, as it is described by Christ himself in *Matth. 25*. [*When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy Angels with him, and shall sit upon his glorious throne, and all Nations shall be gathered before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, and shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left*] *v. 31, 32, 33.* and shall sentence the righteous to eternal life, and the rest into everlasting punishment. If you did now behold the glory and terrour of that great appearance, how the Saints will be magnified, and rejoyce, and be justified against all the accusations of Satan, and calumnies of wicked men; and how the ungodly then would fain deny the words and deeds that now they glory in; and what horror and confusion will then overwhelm those wretched souls, that now out-face the Messengers of the Lord ? Had you seen them *trembling* before

before the Lord, that now are *braving* it out in the pride and arrogance of their hearts : Had you heard how then they will change their tune, and wish they had never known their sins : and wish they had lived in greater holiness than those whom they derided for it : What would you *say*, and *do*, and *be* after such an amazing fight as this ? Would you sport it out in sin as you have done ? Would you take no better care for your salvation ? If you had seen those sayings of the Holy-Ghost fulfilled, *Jud. 14. 15. 2 Thes. 1. 7, 8, 9.* [*When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*] What mind do you think you should be of ? What course would you take, if you had but seen this dreadful day ? Could you go on to think, and speak, and live as sensually, stupidly and negligently as now you do ? *2 Pet. 3. 10, 11, 12.* [*The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up* : Is it possible soundly to believe such a day, so sure, so near, and no more regard it; nor make ready for it, then the careless and ungodly do ?

6. Suppose at that day you had heard the Devil accusing you of all the sins that you have committed; and set them out in the most odious aggravations, and call for justice against you to your Judge : If

you heard him pleading all those sins against you that now he daily tempts you to commit, and now maketh you believe are harmless, or small inconsiderable things : If you heard him saying, At such a time this sinner refused grace, neglected Christ, despised heaven, and preferred earth : at such a time he derided godliness, and made a mock of the holy Word and Counsels of the Lord : at such a time he prophaned the name of God. he covered his neighbours wealth ; he cherished thoughts of envy or of lust ; he was drunk, or gluttonous, or committed fornication, and he was never thorowly converted by renewing grace, and therefore he is an heir of hell, and belongs to me : I ruled him, and I must have him.] What would you think of a life of sin, if once you had heard such accusations as these ? How would you deal by the next temptation, if you had heard what use the tempter will hereafter make of all your sins ?

7. What if you had *seen the damned in their misery*, and *heard* them cry out of the folly of their impenitent careless lives ; and wishing as *Dives*, Luk. 16. that their friends on earth might have *one sent from the dead, to warn them that they come not to that place of torment* (I speak to men that say they are believers) what would you do upon such a *sight* ? If you had *heard* them there torment themselves in the remembrance of the time they lost, the mercy they neglected, the grace resisted, and wish it were all to do again, and that they might once more be tried with another life. If you saw how the world is altered with those, that once were as proud and confident

confident as others, what do you think such a sight would do with you ? And why then doth the *believing* of it do no more, when the thing is certain ?

8. Once more ; suppose that in your *temptations* you *saw the tempter appearing* to you, and *pleading* with you as he doth by his inward suggestions, or by the mouths of his instruments. If you saw him and heard him hissing you on to sin, perswading you to gluttony, drunkenness, or uncleanness ? If the Devil appeared to you, and led you to the place of lust, and offered you the harlot, or the cup of excess, and urged you to swear, or curse, or rail, or scorn at a holy life ; would not the sight of the angler mar his game, and cool your courage, and spoil your sport, and turn your stomachs ? would you be drunk, or filthy, if you saw him stand by you ? Think on it the next time you are tempted. Stout men have been apaled by such a sight. And do you not *Believe* that its *he indeed* that tempteth you ? As sure as if your eyes beheld him, its he that prompteth men to jeer at godliness ; and puts your wanton ribbald speeches, and oaths, and curses into your mouths : *He* is the Tutor of the enemies of grace, that teacheth them *doctè delirare, ingeniose insanire*, ingeniously to quarrel with the way of life, and learnedly to confute the arguments that would have saved them ; and subtilly to dispute themselves out of the hands of mercy, and gallantly to scorn to stoop to Christ, till there be no remedy ; and with plausible eloquence to commend the plague and sickness of their souls ; and irrefragably maintain

maintain it, that the way to hell will lead to heaven; and to *justify* the *sins* that will *condemn* them; and honourably and triumphantly to overcome their friends, and to serve the Devil in mood and figure; and valiantly to cast themselves into hell, in despite of all the laws and reproofs of God or man that would have hindered them. It being most certain that this is the Devils work, and you durst not do it if he moved you to it with open face, how dare you do it when *faith would assure you, that it is* as verily *he*, as if you saw him?

More distinctly, answer these following Questions, upon the foregoing suppositions.

*Quest. 1.* If you saw but what you say you do believe, would you not be convinced that the most pleasant gainful sin, is worse then madness? and would you not spit at the very name of it, and openly cry out of your open folly, and beg for prayers, and love reprovers, and resolve to turn without delay?

*Quest. 2.* What would you think of the most serious holy life, if you had seen the things that you say you do believe? would you ever again reproach it as preciseness? or count it more ado then needs? and think your time were better spent in playing then in praying, in drinking, and sports, and filthy lusts, then in the holy services of the Lord? would you think then that one day in heaven, were too much for the work for which you live; and that an hour on this holy day were enough to be spent in instructing you for eternity? Or would you not believe that he is the blessed man, whose delight is in the Law of God, and meditateth in it day and night? Could you

you plead for sensuality or ungodly negligence, or open your mouths against the most serious holiness of life, if heaven and hell stood open to your view?

*Quest. 3.* If you saw but what you say you do believe, would you ever again be offended with the Ministers of Christ, for the plainest reproofs, and closest exhortations, and strictest precepts and discipline, that now are disrelished so much? Or rather would you not desire them to help you presently to try your states, and to search you to the quick, and to be more solicitous to save you then to please you? The patient that will take no bitter medicine in time, when he sees he must die would then take any thing. When you see the things that now you hear of, then you would do any thing: O then might you have these daies again, Sermons would not be too plain or long: In season and out of season would then be allowed of. Then you would understand what moved Ministers to be so importunate with you for conversion; and whether trifling or serious preaching was the best.

*Quest. 4.* Had you seen the things that you say you do believe, what effect would Sermons have upon you, after such a sight as this? O what a change it would make upon our preaching, and your hearing, if we saw the things that we speak and hear of? How fervently should we importune you in the name of Christ? How attentively would you hear, and carefully consider and obey? we should then have no such sleepy preaching and hearing, as now we have. Could I but shew to all this Congregation, while I am preaching, the invisible world of which we

H

preach,

preach, and did you hear with heaven and hell in your eye-sight, how confident should I be (though not of the saving change of all) that I should this hour teach you to plead for sin, and against a holy life no more? and send you home another people then you came hither. I durst then ask the worst that heareth me, [Dare you now be drunk, or gluttonous, or worldly? dare you be voluptuous, proud, or fornicators any more? Dare you go home, and make a jest at piety, and neglect your souls as you have done?] And why then should not the *believed* truth prevail, if indeed you *did believe it*, when the thing is as *sure*, as if you *saw it*?

*Quest. 5.* If you had *seen* what you say you do *believe*, would you *hunt as eagerly for wealth, or honour*, and regard the thoughts or words of men, as you did before? Though its only the *Believer* that truly honoreth his Rulers, (for none else honour them for God, but use them for themselves); yet wonder not if he fear not much the face of man, and be no admirer of worldly greatness, when he *seeth* what they *will be*, as well as what they *are*. Would not usurpers have been less feared, if all could have *foreseen* their fall? Even common *reason* can *foresee*, that shortly you will all be dust: Methinks I *foresee* your ghastly paleness, your loathsome blackness, and your habitation in the dark: And who can much envy, or desire the advancements that have such an end? One sight of God would *blast all the glory* of the world, thats now the bait for mans perdition.

*Quest. 6.* Would *temptations be as powerful*, as  
now

now they are, if you did but *see* the things you *bear* of? Could all the beauty or pleasures in the world, entice you to filthiness or sensuality, if you saw God over you, and judgement before you, and saw what damned souls now suffer, and what believers now enjoy? Could you be perswaded by *any* company or recreation, to waste your precious time in vain, with such things in your eye? I am confident you would abhor the motion; and entertain temptations to the most honoured, gainful, pleasant sin, as now you would do a motion to cut your own throats, or leap into a coal-pit, or thrust your head into a burning-oven. Why then doth not *faith* thus shame *temptations*, if indeed you do believe these things? Will you say, [*It is your weakness, you cannot choose*] or that [*it is your nature to be lustful, revengeful, sensual, and you cannot overcome it.*] But if you had a *sight of heaven and hell*, you could then resist: you *cannot* now, because you *will not*: But did you *see* that which would make you *willing*, your *power* would appear. The sight of a Judge or gallows can restrain men: The sight of a person whom you reverence can restrain the exercise of your disgraceful sins; much more would the sight of *heaven and hell*. If you were but *dying*, you would shake the head at him that would then tempt you to the committing of your former sins. And is not a lively *foreseeing faith* as effectual?

*Quest. 7.* Had you *seen* what you say you do *believe*, you would not so much *sick at sufferings*; nor make so great a *matter* of it, to be reproached, slandered, imprisoned, or condemned by man, when

God and your salvation command your patience. A sight of hell would make you think it worse than madness, to run thither to scape *the wrath of man*, or any sufferings on earth, *Rom. 8. 18.*

*Quest. 8.* And O how such a sight would advance the Redeemer, and his Grace, and Promises, and Word, and Ordinances, in your esteem! It would quicken your desires, and make you fly to Christ for life, as a drowning man to that which may support him. How sweetly then would you *relish the name*, the Word, the waies of Christ, which now seem dry and common things!

*Quest. 9.* Could you *live as merrily*, and *sleep as quietly* in a negligent uncertainty of your salvation, if you had *seen* these things, as now you do? Could you live at hearts ease, while you know not where you shall be to morrow, or must live for ever? Oh no: Were *heaven and hell* but *seen* before you, your *Consciences* would be more busie in putting such questions [ *Am I regenerate, sanctified, reconciled, justified, or not?* ] Then any *the most zealous Minister* is now.

*Quest. 10.* I will put to you but one Question more. If we *saw God*, and *heaven*, and *hell* before us, do you think it would not *effectually reconcile* our differences, and heal our unbrotherly exasperations and divisions? would it not *hold the hands* that itch to be using violence, against those that are not in all things of their minds! what abundance of vain controversies would it reconcile! As the coming in of the Master doth part the fray among the School-boys; so the sight of God, would frighten us from contentions,

contentions, or uncharitable violence. This would teach us how to preach and pray better than a storm at sea can do; which yet doth it better than some in prosperity will learn: Did we *see* what we *preach of*, it would drive us out of our man-pleasing, self-seeking, sleepy strain, as *the cudgel* drives the beggar from his canting, and the breaking loose of the *Beast* did teach the affected cripple to find his legs, and *cut* away his crutches. I would desire no better outward help to end our controversies about indifferent modes of worship, then a sight of the things of which we speak: This would excite such a serious frame of soul, as would not suffer Religion to evaporate into formality, nor dwindle into affectation, complement and ceremony: nor should we dare to bear our fellow servants, and thrust them out of the vineyard, and say you shall not *preach*, or *pray*, or *live*, but upon these or those unnecessary terms: But the sense of our own frailty, and fear of a severe disquisition of our failings, would make us compassionate to others, and content that *necessaries* be the *matter of our unity*, *unnecessaries* of our *liberty*, and *both of charity*.

If *sight* in all these ten particulars would do so much, should not *faith* do much, if you verily believe the things you *see* not?

Alas, corrupted reason is asleep, (with men that seem wise in other things) till it be awakt by *faith* or *sight*. And sleeping reason is as unserviceable as folly. It doth no work: it avoids no danger. A Doctor thats asleep, can defend the truth no better than a waking child. But reason will be reason, and con-  
science

science will be conscience, when the dust is blown out of mens eyes, and sight and feeling have awakened, and so recovered their understandings; or Faith more seasonably and happily awaked them.

AND O that now we might all consent to addict our selves to the *Life of Faith* : and  
 1<sup>o</sup> That we live not too much on visibles.  
 2<sup>o</sup> That we live on the things invisible.

1. One would think that worldliness is a disease that carryeth with it a cure for it self; and that the rational nature should be loth to *Love at so dear a rate*, and to labour for so poor a recompence. It is pitty that *Gehezi's* leprosie, and *Fudas's* death, should no more prevent a succession of *Gehezi's* and *Fudas's* in all generations. Our Lord went before us most eminently in a *contempt of earth* : His *Kingdom was not of this world*. No men are more unlike him then the worldlings. I know necessity is the pretence : But it is the dropsie of Covetousness that causeth the thirst which they call *Necessity* : And therefore the cure is *non addere opibus, sed imminuere cupiditatem* : The disease must not be fed but healed. *Satis est divitiarum non amplius velle*. It hath lately been a controversie, Whether this be not the golden age ? that it is *atas ferrea* we have felt; our demonstrations are undenyable: that it is *atas aurata*, we have sufficient proof : and while gold is the god that rules the most, we will not deny it to be *atas aurea*, in the Poets sense.

*Aurea nunc vere sunt secula : plurimus auro  
 Vanit honos : auro conciliatur amor.*

This prevalency of things seen, against things unseen, is the *Idolatry* of the world; the *subversion* of nature; the *perversion* of our faculties and actions; making the soul a drudge to flesh, and God to be used as a servant to the world. It destroyeth *Piety*, *Justice* and *Charity* : It turneth *F I S* by *perversion* into *V I S*; or by *reversion* into *S U I*. No wonder then if it be the ruine of societies, when

*Gens sine justitiâ, sine remige navis in undâ.*

It can possess even *Demosthenes* with a *Squinancy*, if there be but an *Harpalus* to bring him the infection. It can make a Judicature to be as *Plutarch* called that of *Rome*, [ ἀποὶ τὴν χώραν ] *implorum regionem* ; contrary to *Cicero's* description of *Sulpitius*, who was [ *magis justitie quam juris consultus, & ad facilitatem aequitatemque omnia contulit, nec maluit litium actiones constituere, quam controversias tollere.* ] In a word, if you live by *sense* and not by *Faith*, on things present, and not on things unseen, you go backward; you stand on your heads, and turn your heels against heaven; you cause the *beast* to ride the *man*; and by turning all things upside down, will turn your selves into confusion.

2. Consider that it is the *unseen things* that are only *Great* and *Necessary*, that are worthy of a man, and answer the excellency of our nature, and the ends

ends of our lives and all our mercies. All other things are inconsiderable toys, except as they are dignified by their relation to these. Whether a man step into eternity from a Palace or a prison, a Lordship or a *Lazarus* state, is little to be regarded. All men in the world, whose designs and business take up with any thing short of Heaven, are in the main of *one condition*, and are but in several *degrees* and *forms* in the School of folly. If the intendment of your lives fall short of God, it matters not much what it is you seek, as to any great difference. If *lesser children* play for *pins*, and bigger boyes for *points* and *pence*, and *aged children* for lands and money, for titles of honour, and command; What difference is there between these, in point of wisdom and felicity? but that the little ones have more *innocent* delights, and at a cheaper rate, than the aged have, without the vexatious cares and dangers that attend more grave and serious dotage. As *Holiness to the Lord* is written upon all that is faithfully referred to his *Will* and *Glory*; so *Vanity* and *Sin*, is written upon all that is but made *provision for the flesh*, and hath no higher end than *Self*. To go to Hell with *greater stir*, and *attendance*, and *repute*, with greater pomp and pleasure than the poor, is a poor consolation, a pitiful felicity!

3. *Faith* is the *wisdom* of the *soul*: and *unbelief* and *sensuality* are its *blindness*, *folly* and *brutishness*. How *short* is the *Knowledge* of the wisest unbelievers? They know not much of what is past; (and less they would know, if *Historians* were not of more credit with them, than the *Word of God*.)

But

But alas, how little do they know of what is to come? sense tells them *where* they *are*, and what they are *now doing*: but it tells them not where they shall be to-morrow. But *Faith* can tell a true Believer, What will be when this world is ended, and where he shall live to all eternity, and what he shall be *doing*, what thoughts he shall be *thinking*, what affections shall be the temper and employment of his soul: what he shall *see*, and *feel*, and *enjoy*; and with what company he shall converse for ever. If the pretenders to *Astrological* prediction, could but foretell the changes of mens lives, and the time and manner of their deaths, what resort would be to them? and how *wise* would they be esteemed? But what is all this to the infallible predictions of the All-knowing God, that hath given us a prospect into another world, and shewed us what will be for ever, more certainly than you know what a day may bring forth.

So necessary is *fore-knowledge* in the common affairs of men; that without it the actions of the world would be but mad tumultuary confusion: What would you think of that mans understanding, or how would you value the employments of his life, that lookt no further in all his actions, than the present hour, and saw no more than the things in hand? What would you call him that so spends the day, as one that knoweth not there will be any night: and so past the night, as one that looked not for day? That knew not in the Spring there would be an Harvest, or in Summer, that there would be any Winter: or in Youth, that there would be

I

Age

Age or Death ? The silly brutes that have no fore-knowledge, are furnished with an instinct that supplyeth the want of it, and also have the help of mans fore-knowledge, or else their kind would be soon extinct. The Bees labour in Summer, as if they foresaw the Winters need. And can that man be wise, that *foreseeth* not his everlasting state ? Indeed he that knoweth not what is to come, hath no true knowledge of what is present : For the worth and use of present things, is only in their respect to things eternal : And there is no *means*, where there is no End. What *wisdom* then remains in Unbelievers, when all their *lives* are mis-employed, because they know not the *End* of life ? and when all their actions are utterly debased, by the baseness of those brutish ends, to which they serve and are referred. Nothing is truly wise or honourable, that is done for small and worthless things. To draw a curious picture of a shadow, or elegantly write the history of a dream, may be an ingenuous kind of foolery ; but the *End* will not allow it the name of *Wisdom* : And such are all the actions of the world ( though called Heroick, Valiant and Honourable ) that aim at transitory trifles, & tend not to the everlasting *End*. A bird can neatly build her nest, but is not therefore counted *Wise*. How contrary is the judgement of the world to Christs : When the same description that he giveth of a *fool*, is it that worldlings give of a wise and happy man, Luke 12. 20, 21. [ *One that layeth up riches for himself, and is not rich towards God.* ] Will you persuade us that the man is *Wise*, that can climb a little higher than his

his neighbours, that he may have the greater fall : That is attended in his way to Hell with greater pomp and state than others ? That can sin more Syllogistically and Rhetorically than the vulgar, and more prudently and gravely run into damnation ; and can learnedly defend his madness, and prove that he is safe at the brink of Hell ? Would you persuade us that he is *Wise*, that contradicts the God and Rule of Wisdom, and that parts with Heaven for a few merry hours, and hath not wit to save his soul ? When they see the *end*, and are arrived at eternity, let them boast of their Wisdom, as they find cause : We will take them then for more competent Judges. Let the Eternal God be the portion of my soul ; let Heaven be my inheritance and hope ; let Christ be my Head, and the promise my security, let *Faith* be my *Wisdom*, and Love be my very Heart and will, and patient persevering Obedience be my life ; and then I can spare the *wisdom of the world*, because I can spare the trifles that it seeks, and all that they are like to get by it.

What abundance of complaints and calamity would *foresight* prevent ? Had the events of this one year been ( conditionally ) *foreseen*, the actions of thousands would have been otherwise ordered, and much sin and shame have been prevented. What a change would it make on the *judgements* of the world ? how many words would be otherwise spoken ? and how many deeds would be otherwise done ? and how many hours would be otherwise spent, if the change that will be made by Judgement



and Execution, were well foreseen? And *why is it not foreseen*, when it is *fore-shewn*? When the omniscient God, that will certainly perform his Word, hath so plainly revealed it, and so frequently and loudly warns you of it? Is he *wise*, that after all these warnings will lie down in everlasting wo, and say, [ *I little thought of such a day: I did not believe I should ever have seen so great a change?* ]

Would the servants of Christ be used as they are, if the malicious world foresaw the day, when *Christ shall come with ten thousands of his Saints, to execute Judgement on all that are ungodly*? Jud. 14, 15. When he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that do believe; 2 Thes. 1. 10. When the Saints shall judge the world, 1 Cor. 6. 2, 3. and when the ungodly seeing them on Christs right hand, must hear their sentence on this account [ *Verily I say unto you, in as much as you did it (or, did it not) to one of the least of these (my Brethren) you did it unto me.* ] Matth. 25. Yet a few dayes, and all this will be done before your eyes: but the unbelieving world will not foresee it.

Would malignant Cain have slain his brother, if he had foreseen the punishment, which he calleth afterward intollerable, Gen. 4. 13. Would the world have despised the preaching of Noah; if they had believed the deluge? Would Sodom have been Sodom, if they had foreseen that an Hell from Heaven would have consumed them? Would Achan have meddled with his prey, if he had foreseen the stones that were his Executioners and his Tomb? Would Gehazi have obeyed his covetous desire, if he had fore-

foreseen the leprosie? Or Judas have betrayed Christ, if he had foreseen the hanging himself in his despair? It is *foreseeing Faith* that saves those that are saved; and *blind unbelief* that causeth mens perdition.

Yea present things as well as future, are unknown to foolish Unbelievers. Do they know who seeth them in their sin? and what many thousands are suffering for the like, while they see no danger? Whatever their tongues say, the hearts and lives of souls deny that there is a God that seeth them, and will be their Judge, Psalm 14. 1. You see then that you must live by Faith, or perish by Folly.

4. Consider that things *visible* are so *transitory*, and of so *short continuance*, that they do but deserve the name of *things*; being *nothings*, and *less then nothing*, and *lighter then vanity it self*, compared to the necessary eternal Being, whose name is *I AM*. There is but a few dayes difference between a Prince and no Prince; a Lord and no Lord; a man and no man; a world and no world. And if *this be all*, let the *time that is past* inform you how *small* a difference this is. Rational foresight may teach a Xerxes to weep over his numerous Army, as knowing how soon they were all to be dead men. Can you forget that Death is ready to undress you? and tell you, that your sport and mirth is done? and that now you have had all that the world can do, for those that serve it, and take it for their part? How quickly can a fever, or the choice of an hundred Messengers of death, bereave you of all that earth afforded you, and turn your sweetest pleasures into

gall, and turn a Lord into a lump of clay? It is but as a wink, an inch of time, till you must quit the stage; and speak, and breath, and see the face of man no more. If you *foresee* this, O live as men that do foresee it. I never heard of any that *stole his winding-sheet*, or *sought for a Coffin*, or *went to Law for his grave*. And if you did but see (as wise men should) how *near* your *Honours*, and *Wealth*, and *Pleasures* do stand unto *Eternity*, as well as your *Winding sheets*, your *Coffins*, and your *Graves*, you would then value, and desire, and seek them regularly and moderately, as you do these. O what a fading flower is your strength? How soon will all your gallantry shrink into the shell? *Si vestra sunt tollite ea vobiscum. Bern.* But yet this is not the great part of the change. The *terminum ad quem* doth make it greater: It is great, for persons of renown and honour, to change their Palaces for graves, and turn to noysom rottenness and dirt: and their Power and Command into silent impotency, unable to rebuke the poorest worm, that sawcily feedeth on their hearts or faces. But if you are *Believers* you can look further, and foresee much more. The largest and most capacious heart alive, is unable fully to conceive, what a change the stroke of death will make.

For the *Holy soul*, so suddenly to pass from prayer to *Angelical praise*, from sorrow unto boundless joys: from the *slanders*, and *contempt*, and *violence* of men, to the *bosom of eternal Love*; from the clamours of a tumultuous world, to the universal harmony and perfect uninterrupted Love and Peace; O what a blessed

blested change is this: which *Believing now*, we shall *shortly feel*.

For an *unholy unrenewed soul*, that yesterday was drowned in flesh, and laught at threatenings, and scorned reproofs, to be suddenly snatcht into another world; and see the *Heaven* that he hath lost, and feel the *Hell* which he would not *Believe*, to fall into that gulf of *bottomless eternity*, and at once to find, that *Joy* and *Hope* are both departed; that *horror* and *grief* must be his company, and *Desperation* hath lockt up the door: O what an amazing change is this! If you think me troublesome for mentioning such ungratefull things, what a trouble will it be to *feel* them? May it teach you to prevent that great trouble, you may well bear this. Find but a medicine against Death, or any security for your continuance here, or any *prevention* of the *Change*, and *I have done*. But that which unavoidably *must* be *seen* should be *foreseen*.

But the *unseen world* is not thus *mutable*, *Eternal life* is begun in the *Believer*. The Church is built on *Christ the Rock*: and the *gates of hell* shall not prevail against it. Fix here, and you shall never be removed.

4. Hence followeth another difference: The *mutable creature* doth impart a *disgraceful mutability* to the soul that chooseth it. It disappointeth and deceiveth; And therefore the ungodly are of one mind to day, and another to morrow! In health they are all for *pleasure*, and *commodity*, and *honour*: and at death they cry out on it as *deceitfull Vanity*; In *Health* they cannot abide this *strictness*, this *meditating*

ditating, and seeking, and preparing for the life to come; But at death or judgement, they will all be of another mind! Then O that they had been so wise as to know their time: and O that they had lived as holily as the best! They are now the bold opposers and reproachers of an holy life: But then they would be glad it had been their own: They would eat their words, and will be down in the mouth, and stand to never a word they say, when *sight*, and *sense*, and *Judgement* shall convince them.

But the *things unchangeable* do fix the soul. Piety is no matter for Repentance. Doth the Believer speak against sin and sinners: and for an holy, sober, righteous life? He will do so to the last: Death and Judgement shall not change his mind in this, but much confirm it. And therefore he perseveres through sufferings, to Death. *Rom. 8. 35, 36, 37.* [For this cause we faint not: but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day: For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory: While we look not at the things that 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, *2 Cor. 4. 16, 17.*

6. Lastly, let this move you to live by a *foreseeing Faith*, that it is of necessity to your salvation. *Believing Heaven*, must prepare you for it, before you can enjoy it. *Believing Hell*, is necessary to prevent it. *Mar. 16. 16. Joh. 3. 18, 36.* [The just shall live by Faith, but if any man draw back (or, be lifted up) the Lord will have no pleasure in him. *Heb. 10. 38.*

Hab.

*Hab. 2. 4.* Take heed that there be not in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God. *Heb. 3. 12.* And be not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. *Heb. 10. 39.* It is God that saith [They shall all be damned that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.] *2 Thes. 2. 10, 11, 12.*

May I now in the conclusion more particularly exhort you, 1. That you will *live upon things foreseen.* 2. That you will *promote this life of faith in others*, according to your several capacities.

Princes and Nobles live not alwayes: You are not the Rulers of the *unmoveable Kingdom*; but of a boat that is in an hasty stream, or a ship under sail, that will speed both Pilot and Passengers to the shore. *Dixi, estis Dii: at mortemini ut homines.* It was not the least or worst of Kings, that said [I am a stranger upon earth] *Psalms 119. 19. Vermis sum, non homo: I am a worm, and no man, Psalm 22. 6.* You are the greater worms, and we the little ones: but we must all say with *Joh. 17. 13, 14.* [The grave is our house, and we must make our beds in darkness: Corruption is our Father, and the worm our mother and our sister.] The inexorable Leveller is ready at your backs, to convince you by unresistible argument, that *dust you are, and to dust you shall return.* *Heaven* should be as desirable, and *Hell* as terrible to you as to others. No man will fear you after death: much less will Christ be afraid to judge you. *Luc. 19. 27.* As the Kingdoms and glory of the world were contemn-

K

ed

ed by him in the hour of his temptation ; so are they *inconsiderable* to procure his *approbation*. Trust not therefore to *uncertain* riches. Value them but as they will prove at last. As you stand on *higher ground* than others, it is meet that you should *see further*. The greater are your advantages, the wiser and better you should be : and therefore should better perceive the *difference* between things *temporal* and *eternal*. It is alwayes dark where these glow-worms shine, and a rotten post doth seem a fire.

Your *difficulties* also should excite you ; You must go as *through a needles eye* to heaven. To live as in *heaven*, in a crowd of business, and stream of temptations, from the confluence of all worldly things, is so hard, that *few* such come to heaven. Withdraw your selves therefore to the frequent serious forethoughts of eternity, and live by faith.

Had time allowed it, I should have come down to some particular instances : As, 1. Let the *things unseen* be still at hand, to answer *every temptation*, and shame and repell each motion to sin.

2. Let them be still at hand, to *quicken us to duty*, when backwardness and coldness doth surprize us. What, shall we do any thing coldly for eternity ?

3. Let it resolve you what *company to delight in*, and what society to be of ; even those with whom you must *dwell for ever* : What *side* soever is uppermost on earth, you may *foresee* which *side* shall reign for ever.

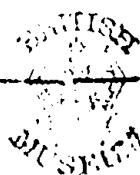
4. Let the *things* invisible be your *daily solace*, and the *satisfaction* of your souls. Are you *slandered* by men ?

men ? Faith tells you, it is enough that Christ will *justify* you. O happy day, when he will *bring forth our righteousness as the light*, and set all *strait*, which all the false histories, or slanderous tongues or pens in all the world made *crooked*. Are you *frowned on* or *contemned* by men ? Is it not enough that you shall *everlastingly be honoured by the Lord* ? Are you *wronged, oppressed*, or *trodden on* by pride or malice ? Is not *Heaven* enough to make you *reparation* ? and *eternity long enough* for your joyes ? O pray for your malicious enemies, lest they suffer more then you can wish them.

2. Lastly, I should have become on the behalf of Christ, a petitioner to you for protection and encouragement to the heirs of the invisible world : For them that *preach* and them that *live this life of faith*: not for the honours and riches of the world ; but for *leave and countenance* to work in the Vineyard, and peaceably travel through the world as strangers, and live in the *Communion of Saints*, as they believe. But though it be for the beloved of the Lord, the apple of his eye, the people that are sure to prevail and reign with Christ for ever ; whose prayers can do more for the greatest Princes, then you can do for them ; whose joy is hastened by that which is intended for their sorrow, I shall now lay by any further suit on their behalf.

But for your selves, O use your *seeing* and *foreseeing* faculties : Be often looking through the prospective of the promise : and live not by sense on present things ; but live as if you saw the Glorious things which you say you do believe. That when worldly

worldly titles are insignificant words, and fleshly pleasures have an end, and Faith and Holiness will be the marks of honour; and *unbelief* and *ungodliness* the badges of perpetual shame, and when you must give account of your Stewardship, and shall be no longer Stewards, you may then be brought by *Faith* unto *Fruition*, and see with Joy the Glorious things that you now believe. Write upon your Palaces and goods, that sentence, 2 Pet. 3. 11. *Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God!*



*FINIS.*