

## C H A P. X V.

Of Gospel-Assurance; and whether Assurance of interest in Christ, in Grace and Glory, may be attained in this life.

I Shall now come to speak something about Gospel-assurance, or the assurance of Faith, whether the assurance of interest in Justification and Salvation may be attained in this life, on this side the possession of the purchased inheritance: and as for the assurance of Faith, we must consider it in two particulars.

1. Assurance of Faith in the truth of the Doctrine to be believed, and the truth and faithfulness of God therein, this being the Faith to which Justification is promised, (as hath been before proved) and in this, assurance of Faith is requisite unto Justification and life; for if we falter in the truth of the Doctrine, we must needs fail in the whole; by believing the truth of the Doctrine of God, we justify him, and set to our seal that God is true; and he will justify those who justify him: *if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, (to those who believe,) he will not, he cannot deny himself,* 2 Tim. 2. 13. this being the Faith of Justification and life, of this we ought to be fully assured,

of assurance of Faith.

Assurance of Faith in the Doctrine.

and infallibly, and undoubtedly satisfied of the truth of God in his Word, and of all things related therein, relating to Salvation by Jesus Christ Crucified, raised and ascended: *Joh. 6. 69. We believe, and are sure, that thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God, Chap. 8. 24. If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins; so that Assurance in this is positively necessary, i. e. the full assurance of Faith; this Peter Preached as necessary to Salvation, Act. 2. 36. therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ; 1 Thes. 1. 5. Our Gospel came not to you in word only, but also in Power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance, &c. to that end was those mighty gifts given to, and by the Apostles in the Primitive time, for confirmation of the truth of the Doctrine of the Gospel, Act. 5. 32. 1 Pet. 1. 2. which confirmation stands firm to us, and to all believers to the Worlds end; though, it's true, it is by the work of the same Spirit, in the same Doctrine that doth establish our hearts therein, 2 Cor. 4. 13.*

Yet in this it's possible for gracious souls sometimes to be under temptation, and to want that assurance of Faith as is requisite in so weighty a matter as this is; there is no temptation but a Christian may be assaulted with; consent is the dangerous sin, and in this matter, to depart from the Faith,



Faith, and to reject Christ crucified, and Salvation by him, is the unpardonable sin, Heb. 10. 26. 29. and 6. 4, 5, 6.

Many gracious souls trouble themselves about this sin, fearing themselves to be guilty thereof, through their ignorance of the sin what it is: all sin (it's true) is against the Holy Spirit, but the unpardonable sin, or sin unto death, consists especially in two things;

*The unpardonable sin in two things.*

1. A wilful departing from the Faith, and refusing and rejecting Salvation by Jesus Christ crucified, by persons after they have professed Faith in him, and obedience to him, according to those Scriptures before mentioned.

2. A wilful and malicious opposing of the Spirits workings, or any known truth of the Lord Jesus, after conviction, that it is the Holy Spirit, and the truth of the Lord Jesus; yet contrary to light and convictions of conscience, for base, by, and fleshly ends to oppose, contradict, and blaspheme, is the sin against the Holy Spirit; and this is it mentioned, Mat. 12. 31, 32. with v. 24. but for Christians to meet with doubtings about the matters of Faith, (though they ought to watch and war against it) they have no ground to draw sad conclusions against themselves, though it's cause of humiliation. For support in such cases, consider, 1. The Prophet, Psal. 89. 34, 35, 36, 37. the Lord having made great



and precious promises to *David*, and in him to *Christ*, on the new covenant account, in which was much of the Gospel Grace; yet immediately his Faith fails in the whole, as if God had made void his covenant, and broken all his promises in that matter, *ver.* 38. 45. which hath been fulfilled on the natural seed, and worldly Kingdom, to visible appearance: but as it related to *Jesus Christ*, it stands firm, and he is exalted upon the Throne, and the Promise is sure to all thee seed. 2. *John* the Baptist, who had many high confirmations from Heaven concerning the Lord *Jesus*, that he was the *Christ*; he saw the sign upon him, which God gave him, by which he should know him, *Joh. 1. 33.* insomuch that he could say, *ver. 34. 56. I saw, and bear record, that this is the Son of God; and behold the Lamb of God, &c.* and heard the voice from Heaven saying, *This is my beloved Son, &c.* yet after all these testimonies and assurances of his Faith in this matter, he being in Prison, comes to doubt whether he was the *Christ* or not, *Matt. 11. 3. Art thou him that should come, or do we look for another?* which discovers that there was in *John* a doubt whether he was the *Christ* or no: and this appeareth not only by the message or question, but if we consider, 2. the time when he sent, when he was in Prison; it was a Prison temptation: 2. By the answer of *Christ* to *John* to strengthen him under this temptation,



tation, *Go and shew John those things that you do hear and see, &c.* 2. By his answer to the multitude, *What went ye out to see, a reed shaken with the wind? &c.* which clearly imports, that *John* was shaken in his Faith; and yet for all that, he was *a Prophet, and more than a Prophet, v. 9.* Which clearly imports, that gracious souls may come under temptations and doubts in matters of Faith of highest concernment, and yet be gracious still: yea further, gracious persons may, through a sudden fit of fear, and surprisal by temptation, not only doubt in the main matters of Faith, but even deny the Faith they have been established in. The case of *Peter* is full in this matter, who denied and forswore his Lord: but the difference lieth here, the gracious person may fall by a sudden surprisal of sinful fear, and weep bitterly for it when it is done, and loves the Lord the more; but the other deliberately resolved, and wilfully departs from the Lord, and will no more of him, but with *the dog* returns to his vomit, and with *the sow that was washed, to her wallowing again in the mire*: yet it deeply concerns souls to be heedful of such temptations.

2. The second sort of Assurance, is the assurance of interest in the Doctrine believed; and in speaking to this, I shall shew, 1. That there is a Gospel Assurance of interest in Grace and Glory to be obtained in this World. 2. What this Assurance

2. Of Assurance of Interest.



rance is, and how, and how far it may be attained. 3. What it is that ordinarily hinders persons from obtaining thereof.

1. That it  
may be at-  
tained.

1. That a well grounded Gospel Assurance of Faith may be attained here in this life; it is that which many Saints have attained, and a possibility is stated for all to attain it. 1. That many have attained it, *Job*, though under afflictions, yet could say, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c. whom I shall see for my self, &c. Job. 19. 25. 27.* and the Prophet could say, after a cloud of darkness, and temptation, *Psal. 73. 24. 26. Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory; and Paul, Gal. 2. 20. I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me: and 2 Tit. 4. 7, 8. I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith, from henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me at that day, &c.*

But, 2. Lest it be objected by any, that these were extraordinary persons, and therefore may doubt whether it be attainable by believers as such; a possibility is stated for all to attain it: and this will appear in the promise; it's promised (not to Prophets, or Apostles, or Ministers as such) but to all Believers; *he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; and John 6. 40. and this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have*



have everlasting life, see *Act. 16. 31. Rom. 10. 9.* If God hath made the promise of life to believers as such, without distinction, he hath stated a possibility to believers to obtain a Gospel assurance of their Salvation.

2. It appears in that it was the Apostles work, (and should be the work and endeavour of every faithful Minister) to help Believers in this matter, that so they might attain a well grounded comfortable assurance of their interest in the grace of life; so *Paul, Rom. 3. 22. The righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Christ, unto all, and upon all that believe; and Chap. 8. 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit: 1 Joh. 5. 13. These things have I written to them that believe, &c. that ye may know that ye have eternal life, &c.* The Lord's design is not only to give his people eternal life, but he would have them to know it for their comfort; and for that end he hath stated clear grounds in his Word, by which they may come to know it, as I shall endeavour in the second place to shew what it is, and how it may be attained.

2. What this Assurance is, and how far it may be attained. 1. What it is, it is called in Scripture sometimes, the assurance of Faith, *Heb. 10. 22. Let us draw near in full assurance of Faith, Heb. 6. 11. The full assurance of hope, the full assurance of understanding;*



ing; Col. 2. 2. Confidence, boldness; Eph. 3. 12. Heb. 10. 35. The confidence of hope; Heb. 3. 6. *Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.* The assurance of Faith, Hope, Confidence, is sometimes higher, and sometimes lower; sometimes more, sometimes less, according to the souls exercise in the word of Life, and work of Faith, and the working of the Spirit in the word of Faith; for there is no such assurance to be attained here, as when we come to the possession of the Kingdom and Glory promised, when all occasion of doubting shall be done away: for the assurance here, is but the assurance of Faith, Hope, and Confidence, which affords Peace, Joy, and Consolation: the Scripture (and so must reason too) make a vast disproportion between the life of Faith, and the life of present and full Injoyment, 2 Cor. 5. 7. *We live by Faith, and not by sight*, that is, not by present injoyment; Heb. 10. 38. *Now the just shall live by Faith*, that is, now in this side the Glory promised, in which it may be supposed, is danger of drawing back: *If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

2. How it must be obtained.

2. How it must be obtained; the assurance of Faith and hope must be attained by a reflect act of the soul, or a resultancy, or conclusion from the condition, on which life is promised: to instance, Mat. 5. 3. &c. are many precious promises made to persons

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sons that are indowed with those Divine Virtues therein exprest, as, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, &c.* Who so finds those Virtues in him, may, and ought to claim his interest in the promises: so *Mat. 16. 16. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved*; that is, he that believeth, and obeyeth the Lord, (of which, Baptism is the first, and inga- geth to the whole duty of the Gospel) shall be saved; I do believe and obey the Gospel, therefore I shall be saved: so *1 Job. 5. 1. Whosoever doth believe that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God*; this Faith, if right, is accompanied with those other Virtues mentioned, as love to God, love to his people, obedience to his will, and his *Com- mandments are not grievous*, it getteth victory over the World, &c. as *ver. 2. By this we know we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his Commandments*; *ver. 3. For this is the love of God, that we keep his Com- mandments, and his Commandments are not grievous*: that is, they are not grievous to Believers; *ver. 4. Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World*; and this is the victory that overcometh the World, even your Faith. What the World is that Faith overcometh, the Apostle had before explained, *Chap. 2. 15, 16, 17.* Faith getteth the victory, by fixing the soul on better objects than the World is: *Heb. 5. 9. He is become the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him.* Now the resultancy from the whole is, I do believe that *Jesus*  
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is the Christ, and my Faith is accompanied with love to God above all, and do love his people for his sake; and do sincerely desire to know and do his will, and keep his Commandments; they are not grievous to me, but my failing therein, is my grief; and by this Faith I have overcome the World, and am dead to it; and it is my real desire and endeavour to abandon all things that are contrary to the will of the Lord, *to abhor that which is evil, and to cleave to that which is good*; therefore I am born of God, therefore I have an interest in the new covenant, this is the way appointed of God, in which they may make *their Calling and Election sure*, if they give diligence to it, 2 Pet. I. 10. and these are the things that John write in his Epistle to them that *did believe, that they might know that they had eternal life*, 1 John. 5. 13. and according to our abounding in those Divine Virtues, or not abounding, so will our assurance be, 2 Pet. I. 10, 11.

*Quest.* *Quest.* Is not Assurance the immediate gift of the Spirit? does not the Scripture speak of being sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, Eph. I. 13. 2 Cor. I 22?

*Answ.* I. It's without all question to me, that the ground of all sealings is from the Holy Spirit, and that he doth refresh the hearts of Believers, and seal up love to them in the waies of his own appointment; yet for persons to take that for a sealing evidence,

evidence, which relates neither to word, nor work of th<sup>e</sup> Spirit, but some apprehended over-powrings, or strong perswasions without all grounds, strong confidence and consolation, but knows not from whence it comes, can give no reason thereof, but supposeth that it must needs be from the Spirit: this may be a delusion of our own spirits, or the Devil, who can transform himself into an Angel of light, and I fear many souls have miscarried on this account.

2. The assurance and comfort of Saints must come in by believing, (if right, Rom. 15. 13. *The God of Hope fill you with joy and peace in believing*: as, 1 Pet. 1. 8. What ever comes in any other way, may prove a fancy, and Faith in this matter must have a relation to the word of Grace, or the work of the Spirit suitable to some word, or both, in which is found the sealings of the Spirit, it must be in and by the word and work. The Spirit was promised and given for a twofold Seal. 1. To seal the truth of the Doctrine, to be believed by its gifts and mighty works, in and by the Ministers thereof; and 2. To seal the truth of our Faith relative to interest in that Doctrine, and that is by the word and work of the same Spirit.

1. By the word, *Job. 16. 13, 14.* Where the manner of the Spirits work is discovered; that is, *he shall guide you into truth, he shall*  
*The Spirit seals by the Word.*  
 not.



not speak of himself, he shall shew you things to come, he shall glorifie me, he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you; so that the way of the Spirits working and leading into truth is, in opening the Word, and shewing the goodness of the Word, the Doctrine of the Gospel which leads us to Christ; for he shall glorifie him, and take of his, and shew it to the soul; and there is nothing of Christ to be shewed to us, more than is revealed in, and by the Word: so that the Spirits sealing is in, and through the Word; and this Believers have experience of, more or less, (of the Spirits sealing through the Word, read, heard, and applyed) to their joy and comfort; for the Spirit comforts, by opening Christ, and the blessed truths of the Gospel relating to him, by his Word, and his Ordinances appointed for that end.

*Quest.*

*Quest.* In what manner doth the Spirit work by the Word, in sealing up assurance to the souls; is it by an immediate bringing in of Scripture over-powringly unthought on, or unexpected?

*Answ.*

*Answ.* Sometimes the Spirit of Christ may so work, and I question not but that in some cases, and at sometimes he hath so wrought, though it's not so usual, nor alwaies may it prove so safe to be depended on; for when we respect more the manner of its being brought in, than the matter; and

and the ~~new~~ <sup>assurance</sup> of the sealing testimony (as apprehended) lieth rather in the manner than the matter; *Sathan* may transform himself therein, and deceive the soul: I have known some looking so much after the manner of receiving evidence in this way, as that they thought scarcely any Scripture ~~the~~ or worth a looking into, unless brought in in this way, which is a great and dangerous temptation. But if at any time the Spirit of the Lord, do in distress supply the soul in this way, it may be known;

1. When the Scripture is suitably applied to the souls condition; 2. When the fruit thereof is thankfulness to God, humility, and an humble walk with God, and with his people: for delusions in this case are accompanied with bad effects, as pride, self-exalting, neglect of duty to the Lord, and slighting the Word, (unless it be in this manner of revelation, as it's called;) but to the Believer, every word of the Lord is pure and precious, and the Spirit meets with sealing evidences sometimes in one word, and sometimes in another, from the openings of the Grace and Glory of the new covenant; with the applications thereof; so that the soul can say on good ground, this is my promise (where-ever it finds it) my Grace, my Glory, and the Lord is my Portion, my God in whom I trust.

2. The Spirit seals Assurance, by his <sup>2. By his</sup> work in the <sup>work in the</sup> hearts of Believers; as by his <sup>soul,</sup> Word,



Word, he leaves such an impression upon the soul, of his own likeness, by which the whole man is in a measure formed into the Image and likeness of Christ, that, upon examination, the Believer finds the Spirit of Christ is there; he finds Faith, and Love, and Humility, and Meekness, and Obedience, and Joy in the Lord; from whence the Believer clearly concludes, that the Spirit of the Lord is there: it is the Spirit of Adoption, that enables those, in whom it is, to cry *Abba Father*; that is, it discovers the Adoption and Sonship to the soul; and this doth not import (alwaies) an undoubted assurance, yet the soul can cry it out, cry *Abba Father*; so it is, in both Scripture that speaks of this truth, *Rom. 8. 15. Gal. 4. 6.* It's a Metaphor taken from children, who, when their Father frowns, or hides his face, yet they lose not their relation, though they cry, yet their cry is *Father, Father*; so gracious souls that have the Spirit of Adoption, though but low in their apprehensions, yet they cry it out, *Father, Father*; and claim their interest and relation still.

*Quest.* *Obj.* In the same Scripture it's said, *for ye have not received the Spirit of bondage to fear, again, but the Spirit of Adoption, &c?* Which seems to import, that where the Spirit of Adoption is, all doubting and fears is done away: and *John* saith, *1 Job. 4. 18. That perfect love casteth out fear.*

*Answe.*



*Ans.* 1. We are to understand, that the Apostle in this place is distinguishing between the two ministrations, *i. e.* between the old and new Covenants, and the differing spirit that each tended to; the first, with all its sacrifices, *which could not make the comers thereunto perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, Heb. 9. 9. and 10. 1.* had a natural tendency to leave them under bondage and fear, *there being a remembrance of sin every year, when the sacrifice was over, they must necessarily be under fear till another sacrifice.*

But the Gospel ministration is a ministration of Liberty, Life, and Peace, by that one Sacrifice once offered for all, that there is no cause of fear for need of another Sacrifice; so that the spirit of the Gospel in the ministration thereof, hath its natural tendency to take away legal fear out of the hearts of Believers, *where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, that is, from the spirit of bondage: it doth not import that the Saints are freed from the filial fear of God, nor from fear of sinning against him, nor from having an holy fear of themselves, lest they come short, Heb. 4. 1.*

And it's true, *perfect love casteth out fear; that is, that fear which hath torment, the legal fear; and it's true likewise, that if we did or could live up in the perfect apprehension of the love of God in Christ to us, (which would perfect our love to him) we could*



could not fear the legal fear, you cannot fear, that one whom you believe do intirely love you, will do you hurt; so live in this love of God, and you cannot fear this fear, that is, you cannot fear that he will damn you, and destroy you after all the Gospel-grace and manifestations of his love.

But yet for all this, you may fear, and you'll have need (sometimes) to fear your own naughty hearts, and sinful nature; and to take heed of an evil heart of unbelief, to depart from this Living and Loving God.

So that the sum of all is this, that Believers under the Gospel are freed from the old covenant spirit of bondage, and under that notion cannot fear again, because they are by one Sacrifice for ever perfected; they need not another to take away their sins, if they live up much in the love of God, they cannot fear that God will hurt them, but do them good.

But when their fear works so high as to disclaim their relation, that is besides the Spirit of the Gospel, unless it be as a punishment of some former or present sin, thereby to work the soul to a more watchful frame, how it walks for time to come.

Now this new Covenant assurance, as it admits of degrees, so in the highest degree it admits of imperfection, and reacheth not so far as sight and injoyment; so that in the same souls may be high confidence and

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and comfort at one time, and flagings and fears at another; not fears of Gods love and faithfulness, nor the all-sufficiency of that one Sacrifice, but fear of our own deceitful hearts, and naughty natures; and the reason is, because (as I said before) our assurance depends not only on the truth and faithfulness of God in his Word, but likewise on the truth of the work of Grace in us, and that work being imperfect as in us, our assurance must needs be something like unto it; *but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is imperfect shall be done away*; then no more sin nor sorrow, no more fear of coming thort of that rest.

*Quest.* If our assurance must come in *Quest.* from the Divine works, and workings of the Spirit through the Word in the way by you prescribed, is it not the way to keep souls under doubtings still? when those Divine Virtues are low, and hardly discernable by reason of corruption, it must needs minister occasion of doubting?

*Ans.* 1. This is the most certain and infallible way of discerning our interest, and in this the Devil cannot delude, or deceive souls, when our assurance comes in from Scripture grounds; but the other is uncertain, souls may be deceived, and the most certain and sure, must needs be best, and most satisfactory to the sincere Christian.

2. Those high (supposed) assurances, without relation to the Word or work of

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the Spirit, (if true) may fail as much, and more than the other, unless souls will live for ever under one single sealing evidence, (as I fear too many do so neglect the daily exercise of Faith,) or expect daily renewed sealings, which I suppose are not ordinary in this way; whereas those Divine Virtues of the Spirit to which the promise is made shall never totally fail, in truly gracious souls; though through the prevalency of corruption they may be clouded, yet the soul may through all the clouds of darkness, see something of the Divine stamp left and remaining on the heart: if sometimes (to apprehension) there should appear nothing but a sense of sin, and bitter weeping for it, with a heart longing after Christ, as was sometimes the case of Peter, yet this is something, yea very much of the Divine impression, and so it appears to be the sure way for solid peace, and salvation in the end.

2. The hindrances of Assurance.

3. What it is that ordinarily hinders Christians from obtaining this assurance; though first I fear that many Christians content themselves with an ungrounded assurance, and such need to be startled out of their groundless security: and, 2. Others scarce trouble themselves about the matter, but content themselves in the form of the Gospel, leaving the matter of assurance of interest to those that will trouble themselves about it: but it's that which does

does concern every true Christian (both for his own comfort, and the comfort or conviction of others) to be able to give a reason of his hope, a grounded and comfortable assurance of interest in Christ and Grace being of that worth; for a comfortable walking with God here, (though not the essence of Christianity) I shall endeavour to state some of the lets and hindrances, that Christians may escape them, and obtain the mercy.

The first let or hindrance I shall mention, ariseth from the confused notions about the way of obtaining thereof, which have occasioned many miscarriages; some to conclude that they have it, when it's to be feared they do mistake, and if so, they deceive themselves, and others, serious seeking souls, sent with sorrow to their graves, for want of right direction from the Word of Life in this matter.

1. It hath been by many supposed, that the Faith of assurance of interest, hath been the Faith of Justification; and hence persons falling short in this, conclude that they have no Faith at all, but that they are in a state of unbelief: I have known some to lie in sorrow, complaining they had no Faith, and so under fears of perishing, because they could not believe their own interest, being unskilled in the right way of making it up to their comfort; I have asked them, do you believe in truth that

*Lets and hindrances of obtaining Assurance.*

*1. Supposing the Faith of interest to be the Faith of Justification.*



Jesus is the Christ? they answer, yea, then you are *born of God*, *Job. 5. 1.* Do you believe the truth of the Doctrine of the Gospel concerning the life and salvation held forth therein by Jesus Christ crucified; (yea) then you have that Faith to which Salvation is promised: *Mar. 16. 15, 16.* *1 Job. 5. 10, 11, 13.* Do you believe *with your heart that God hath raised Christ from the dead?* if you do, you cannot but believe that he died for our sins, according to the Scripture, (yea) then you shall be saved, *Rom. 10. 9.* Are you in good earnest, willing to be saved by Christ, and to be ruled by him as your Lord, and to serve him in all things? *Ans<sup>r</sup>.* yea, with my whole soul, if I may be accepted; then you have the Spirit of Christ, *1 Cor. 12. 3.* Do you love God and Christ above all, and his people for his sake? yea, I love God and Christ (I hope) above all, and desire to love them more, and his people, because they are his, and his image is stamp'd upon them, then you are born of God, *1 Job. 3. 14, 19,* and *4. 7, 12.* And do you see your self vile, are you poor in your own eyes, and do you see and believe, that if ever you be saved, it must be by the free Grace and Mercy of God in Jesus Christ? Yea, I do find it so to be with me, then yours is the Kingdom of Heaven; *Mat. 5. 3.* *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* And what Faith is it that you would have? will the Faith of *Abraham*

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Abraham the Father of us all do it? He believed God, and it was accounted to him for Righteousness, Rom. 4. 3. Will the Faith to which Justification and Life is promised do it? why that you have, and yet conclude that you have no Faith: thus many poor souls lie groveling on the ground, supposing they have no Faith, when in truth they are rich in Faith, and heirs of that Kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him, Jam. 2. 10. and from such a self-examination may doubting souls come to see that they indeed have Faith, even the Faith of Gods Eleſt, and be able to give a reason of their Hope both to themselves and others.

But for persons to suppose, that the Faith of interest is the first and only Faith of Justification and Life, is according to the Proverb, to set the Cart before the Horse, which must needs go heavily, and bring disconsolation and confusion to the soul.

2. Others talk at such a rate about the attaining of Assurance, as if it must drop down from Heaven into the heart in some wonderful, unknown way, immediately from the Spirit, with such over-powrings of consolation, as if they were in Heaven already, such as scarcely any serious Christians have experienced; which have amazed serious souls out of their hope and confidence, having no experience of such a thing; and

*2. Supposing it to come in some unknown way & manner.*



others it may be cheated with something like this, with a foolish confidence of assurance of Heaven, ordinarily attended with Pride and Self-conceit, and neglect of an humble walk with God, which is the way for Christians to walk into Glory; whereas solid and sound assurance must come by believing, and the Spirits sealing is in that way, and the highest attainment of Joy and Peace is by believing; what comes in any other way, comes we know not whence, and may lead us we know not whether.

3. Others  
some immediate application of  
some Scripture.

3. Others will have no Faith of assurance, unless it be from some Scripture immediately and powerfully brought to them by the Spirit to the satisfying of their souls, and silencing all doubts in the matter, and this they account the sealing of the Spirit. To this I say, 1. That it is mercy when the Lord does bring Scripture to remembrance, to his people, suitable to their conditions, for their comfort and instruction; I doubt not but that God doth instruct, support and comfort his people in this way: yet, 2. This is not the Scripture way in which souls may undoubtedly read their interest: it's true, it's matter of meditation and consolation to gracious souls, to have the Word brought into their remembrance, but not the way prescribed by which they may undoubtedly conclude their interest.

2. The

2. The Scripture saith, that we should be able and ready to give a reason of our hope; now this is no sufficient reason, according to the Scripture, either to satisfy our selves or others, that I had such a Scripture brought home to me at such a time, in which the assurance of my interest in Grace and Life was sealed: this singly of it self may be true or false, if there be not the rational Scripture ground, that is, the true work of Grace; it's a hundred to one but it's false and delusive, therefore, at a distance from the work of the Spirit, it's no sureground; for Satan can make use of Scripture to deceive souls. So that I say, that evidence that may admit of doubt, and if the party receiving it, be void of those evidences I have minded, then it's undoubtedly false, and therefore not overconfidently to be built upon.

But in the other way, of concluding our interest from the work of the Spirit in us, suitable to the Word without us, when there is an answerableness in this matter, it's surely of God, and in this the Devil will not, cannot deceive you; it works you more to love, and be like the Lord: but the other, if not right, it serves rather to harden, and to cure miscarriages ever after. Well, saith such a soul, I had such a word brought in at such a time, in such a manner, in which I was sealed: I will never let go that, it was of God, I fear neither



Devil nor men, &c. Though the right use of former experiences is precious, yet I fear this hath proved to the damage of many souls.

And on the other hand, gracious and tender souls that hath the root of the matter in them, understanding that this is the supposed way to get assurance; and having no experience thereof in themselves, put their souls upon the rack of doubts and fears without cause, fearing they have no Faith, being afraid to draw conclusions from right Gospel grounds: O, faith the soul, I never had experience of such a sealing evidence, therefore I fear all is naught.

4. Some talk of assurance at such a rate, not only as if it must come in some strange immediate way from the Spirit, but likewise it must come to whom, and when he pleaseth, and that it's retained from some for ever; that is, in this World, and as if it were reserved to sometimes, and for some persons, &c. And this puts tender and serious souls to a doubt in the matter, where ever they may meet with any comfortable assurance of the love of God to their souls, &c.

To this I say, it's true it is the gift of God, but no other than the Spirit and Faith is, and if *any one hath not the Spirit of God, and Faith, he is none of his*; and whoever can assure himself that he hath the Spirit

of

of Christ, is sure of all; for God no more with-holds assurance from any of his, than he does his Spirit, and the virtues thereof; but it is as common for all Saints as believing, though all Saints are not so commonly instructed herein: God is no respecter of persons, he would have all his little ones to have the consolations of the Gospel: it is true, there are causes why God may hide his face from his people in this matter, but that relates to themselves as the cause, which is the second hindrance of assurance.

2. Sin proves a great hindrance to the comfortable assurance of the Saints; and that, 1. Sometimes through mistake; and, 2. Sometimes justly. 1. Sometimes through mistake; for indeed sin, if seen and repented of, cannot justly hinder assurance, for to such souls there is the promise of mercy, they are under the promise of the pardoning Grace of the Gospel, 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. The remembrance of old sins, or new sins, if repented of, should not hinder, 1 *Joh.* 2. 1, 2.

2. Sin sometimes justly hinders assurance, when it is regarded in the heart, and unrepented of; it stares in the conscience, and fills the soul with fear; and no wonder, if sin be harboured secretly in the soul, whether it be pride, covetousness, oppression, disobedience, neglect of duty, loss of first love, &c. one of these two things must

2. Sin  
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must necessarily follow; either, 1. a dull insensible, hardened frame, without all fear or doubts: or, 2. Clouds and darkness, doubts and fears do arise about interest, and that justly too, till the soul do repent, forsake, and turn to the Lord; *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear my Prayer*; there is the same reason as well as rule, for a Believer to repent of sin, before he can have true Peace, as for a sinner in the first work of Conversion; for sin is the same still where-ever it is; and on this account it is, that God doth hide himself from his people, and leave them under affliction and sorrow, *Deut. 32. 20.* And on this account it is, that persons may have a comfortable assurance, and lose the sense thereof again, by renewed acts of sin, without repentance.

3. Is misunderstanding the Spirits working.

3. Hindrance is, mistakes in the manner and method of the Spirits working, and so of witnessing in some cases, proves a great hindrance to Christians in their assurance; by reason of which, gracious souls take up that against themselves, as an hindrance, which is one of the most assured grounds of the truth of Grace, and of the Spirits working; to instance, *Job 16. 8, 9, 11.* The Spirits work is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; now when the Spirit in the Word effects this work in the hearts of sinners, when they see themselves to be sinners, and miserable  
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in themselves, and that they are unrighteous, and that their own righteousness is nothing worth, and that there is righteousness in Christ for sinners, *because he is gone to the Father to make good his suffering on that account, and of the certainty of Judgment, because the Prince of this World is judged*; this work being effected in them, they sink in their spirits, and think they are undone, that there is no hope of mercy, when they are in the highway of mercy and the Spirits working in order to their eternal safety. Hard it is to suffer the loss of all things, not only their sins, but their own righteousness, and to submit themselves to the righteousness of Christ, *Phil. 3. 7, 8, 9.* and this not only in the first work of Conversion, but after some progress in Christianity; many gracious persons are exceeding liable to this mistake: O, saith the gracious soul, (that lives most in self-examination, and so in the knowledg of himself, and the badness of his own nature) I find such a deadness in my nature, such an indisposedness to that which is good, &c. that I fear all is naught, and that it is not for such a one as I to think that I have any thing of good in me. This, I know, is the case and complaint of many gracious souls, whereas this is one of the most undoubted evidences of being possess'd with the Spirit of Christ,



Christ, and so in a state of Grace, *Rom. 8. 9, 10.* The Apostle having asserted this truth, *That if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;* but how shall I know that I have the Spirit of Christ? The Apostle answers this question; *If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness;* that is, if the Spirit of Christ be in you, it hath discovered your own death to you; you see that there is nothing but death in your own nature, because of sin, *but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness;* that is, if the Spirit of Christ be in you, it hath discovered your own death to you; you see there is nothing but death in your bodies by reason of sin, but the righteousness of Christ, the Grace, the Mercy, the pardon of sin for the sake of Christ, is the life of your Spirits; this is a certain evidence of the Spirits work, when it causeth souls to be sensible of their own death, and the life that is in Christ Jesus, and that not only in their first conversion and turning to the Lord; but it keeps up, and carrieth on that work in the hearts of Believers all the daies they live in this world, *Col. 3. 3.* *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God:* not only dead to sin, but you do, or should know, that there is nothing but death in your nature, as of your selves, and your life is in Christ hid there; so that sometimes Christians themselves that are interested

interested in it can scarce see it, or believe it, altogether hid from wicked men; they are strangers to it, and as for the glory thereof, hid from all Saints, till Christ who is our life do appear, then shall they appear with him in Glory, v. 4. that this is so sure a character of the Spirits working, doth further appear, Rom. 7. 18. *I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.* O, but when Christians are taught this lesson, they think they are undone, and so indeed they are in themselves, but it's an high discovery of the Spirits working; the flesh never did, never will discover its own badness; but the flesh will be alwaies priding it self, and puffing it self up, though altogether without cause; but, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven,* Matt. 5. 3. That is, those who are sensible of their own poverty, and want of all good in themselves, that what of virtue is in them, is of the Lord, and from him, and that their righteousness and life is of free Grace in our Lord Jesus Christ; so that this (it's evident) hath been a needless hindrance in the way of the Christians comfort, and is rather a strong ground to confirm them in the truth of their partaking of Gospel Grace.

4. Hindrance is, that mistaken notion amongst many Christians, that is, that we must seek God and his Glory only in all our seekings, services and sufferings, and not

4. Hindrance is, mistake about the end of seeking.



not any thing for our selves; O, saith the gracious soul, I cannot, I dare not lie, I find that I cannot but have respect to my self, and mine own salvation; if that were left out, I should sink and fail in the work, and that makes me fear that it is not right, what-ever I do.

Doubtless this is a mistaken notion, and contrary to the very drift and scope of the Gospel; for the great design of God in the work of Redemption, next his own Glory, was the salvation of poor sinners; and to suppose that God would have his people to leave out their own good and salvation in the Gospel work, which he himself hath so much designed in the whole work of Gospel Redemption, is contrary to all (both divine and humane) reason.

1. The encouragement to believing, obeying, and suffering is this, Justification, *Act. 13. 39.* Salvation, *Mar. 16. 16. Act 16. 31. Rom. 2. 10.* Augmentation of Glory, *2 Cor. 4. 17, 18.* And certainly God would never have stated these as encouragements, if he would not have his people to have respect thereto.

2. This is that which hath been the encouragement of the Saints throughout all generations, and that which they had in their eyes, to which they had respect, and which they sought after, *Matt. 19. 27.* Peter's question, with Christ's gracious answer, *We have left all, and followed thee; and*

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what shall we have? Heb. 11. 13, 14, 15, 16. describes the Patriarks to be seeking a Countrey, and so to have respect to the recompence of reward, and God's owning them therein; wherefore (even for seeking an heavenly Countrey according to the will of God) he was not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a City, ver. 24, 25, 26. Moses left Egypt, and Pharaoh's house, and refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of reward, 1 Cor. 9. 24. to 27. Rom. 2. 7. Heb. 10. 34. 36. Rev. 22. 14. with multitudes of like Scriptures that might be mentioned in this matter. In all which it appears, that it is the will of God, and hath been the design of the Saints in all ages, to be seeking after their own spiritual and eternal welfare: and indeed it's one of the first exhortations of Christ to his, *First seek the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Righteousness thereof, &c.* and the reward is that which all true Believers must and do believe, Heb. 11. 6.

To clear this matter further, I shall mind <sup>4 Things to</sup> four things, 1. That we are to seek God <sup>clear this</sup> and his Glory first and chiefly, because he <sup>matter.</sup> is the chiefest good; and in seeking him, and finding him, we find all; yet not to leave



leave out our selves, and our own good in seeking him, it is for his worth that we seek him, that we may be able in truth to say as the Prophet, *Lam. 3. 24. The Lord is my Portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him*; for when once the soul hath an interest in Christ, and in God, he hath an interest in all, *1 Job 5. 12. He that hath the Son, hath life, 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.*

2. He that truly seeketh the honour of God and Christ, seeketh his own honour in the right way; he that taketh care of the honour of God and Christ in the right way, (that is, in believing, loving, and obeying the truth,) God will take care for his honour, *1 Sam. 2. 30. the Lord saith, He that honoureth me, I will honour.*

3. If we seek our selves in the way that God hath appointed, we cannot miscarry, that is, in the lose of our selves, and cleaving to the Lord alone, expecting all from Grace, in the way of Faith and Obedience, not for any meritorious good that is in us; that when we have done all we can, see and say, that we are unprofitable Servants, and cry Grace, Grace, to the whole work, both for us, and in us, then we rightly seek God and Glory.

4. It's true in one sense, that we may not seek our selves by any means, that is, our own esteem and glory here among men, or to be lifted up in our own minds, that is, fleshly, and of the first man, that must be  
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fortified, as a dangerous and soul-ruining, and God-dishonouring evil, that Christians are too much by nature inclined to, through the remainders of the old corrupt nature; and must be watched and warded against; self-wisdom, self-will, self-esteem, self-boasting, and self-glorying, is to be abandoned; but in seeking after and obeying of God and Christ, *To seek glory, honour, and eternal life*, is so consistent with the truth of the Gospel, that it's impossible to sever them, whatever souls foolishly and vainly imagine to the contrary; *What God hath joyned together, let no man put asunder.*

5. Hindrance of souls assurance is, when they trouble themselves about the Decrees and Counsel of God, whether Elected, or not Elected; if they are not Elected, then it's in vain for them to believe, &c. *Hindrance, when souls trouble themselves about Gods Decrees.*

This is not a work for Christians to trouble their minds about, neither are they like to have the assurance of Gospel consolation, while they make this their first work: I shall for help in this matter, prescribe these seven things.

1. That Christ died for all, and that the love of God in the Gospel is truly propounded to all, and that all are brought under it, either in a way of life or death; life, if they repent, believe, and obey it; death, if they reject it, *7 Things considered in this matter.* *1 Tit. 2. 6. Heb. 2. 9. 1 Joh. 4. 14. Joh. 3. 16, 17. Mar. 16. 15, 16.*

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2. That



2. That all are invited, and required to believe and obey the Gospel, with gracious promises of acceptance, by him that is truth it self, and *cannot lie*, nor will he deceive those that come to him, *Isa. 55. 7. Matt. 11. 28. Acts 17. 30. 1 Tit. 2. 4.*

3. There is the same reason for all to halt, and doubt in this matter, as for any one; and yet we find not any one mentioned in the Scripture, among the many thousands of Believers. that made a doubt on this ground, no, not of the worst of sinners: those that had a hand in the Crucifying of Christ, *Acts 2. 23. 36, 37, 41.* They gladly received the word of Salvation, not questioning the matter of Election, but glad, with the good news of Salvation, on the terms propounded; with many like instances of Gentiles as well as Jews, *Acts 13. 48.* And the Apostles did not propound Election as any hindrance to the Faith of any, but assures them, (where-ever they came) that on the terms of the Gospel they should be saved; *Acts 16. 31. Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.*

4. Nor did the Apostles mention Election to Believers after conversion, with any design to stumble them in the matter of Faith relating to their own interest, but that they might the more admire Grace, and live to the God of Grace, that they might not sacrifice to their own net, nor take

take the Glory of the work of God wrought in them, and for them, to themselves, but that they might give the glory of all to him, and live to him in the enjoyment thereof, *Rom. 11. 6, 33. Eph. 1. 3 4.*

5. Nor hath God done any act (contrary to the free tenders and invitations of the Gospel) that may tend to discourage, or hinder any from believing and obeying the Gospel, that they may be saved; God's Electing some, that he might not lose his design wholly in the restauration work, is no bar to hinder any, because he affords means and helps to all; so that men shall one day acknowledge, that God is righteous, and their damnation is of themselves, and of their own choice; *I would, but ye would not*; see *Prov. 1. 20.* to the end.

6. Take heed of entertaining such thoughts about the Decrees of God, (which are secret and hidden) as are inconsistent with the Doctrine of the Gospel, his revealed will; for all notions about the Decrees, really inconsistent with the Doctrine of Grace, and promise of life on the terms of the Gospel, are dishonourable to God, and dangerous to your souls; therefore look you to the revealed will, believe and obey that, and you are safe.

7. You are to know, that the way by which you shall know your Election, is by believing and obeying the truth; and sure enough it is, that if you continue in a state



of unbelief and disobedience to the Gospel, you are not Elected; For he that believeth and obeyeth, it is, that shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.

O therefore be wise, and stumble not where God hath laid no stumbling stone, but fall in with the truth, believe and obey the Gospel, and you shall be saved; you are under all the precious promises of life, which are all yea and amen (certain and sure) in Christ Jesus, who is become the Author of Eternal Salvation to all those that obey him, Heb. 5. 19.

6. Hindrance is, the loss of Hope.

The sixth and last hindrance I shall mention, is, the cancelling, and striking out of hope out of the Believers Book, or turning it into another thing than it is, making new covenant hope to be nothing else but the expectation of the soul, expecting and looking for that which Faith believes; whereas hope and expectation are two distinct Virtues; expectation is the daughter both of Faith and hope; Faith believes the truth, hope puts in for an interest, then comes expectation of the full enjoyment thereof.

This of Hope, is a step for the soul to stand upon, till it attain assurance; but when this is taken away, and the soul supposeth there is no degree short of assurance, and finding that something difficult, especially to step into it at one step, lieth groveling on the ground without hope; but

but this we are to know, that Hope is a blessed Gospel virtue, when rightly grounded; and that Christians may, and should exercise it in this very case; step up into Hope first, and there stand and wait till assurance come, that will come in by degrees, in the souls constancy in the Faith and sincere walk with God, improving Divine Grace received, and acquaintance with the right way of attaining of assurance: it's true, that Hope as well as Faith admits of degrees; sometimes there is the *full assurance of Hope*, which is the next step to the full assurance of Faith; we are *saved by Hope* as well as by Faith, *Rom. 8. 24.* And *Hope is the anchor of the soul, to hold us firm and stedfast to the Lord, Heb. 6. 19.* Therefore *be sober, and hope to the end, and cast not away your confidence*: if you never get above a well grounded hope of an interest in Grace and Glory, you are safe. See the precious promises made to this Grace, or rather to the persons in whom it is, *Pf. 31. 24, & 33. 18, 19, & 147. 11.*

*Quest.* How may I know that my Hope *Quest.* is right, and not the common ungrounded Hope of the World and Hypocrites?

*Ans.* 1. When it is rightly grounded, *Ans.* not meerly fancy and imagination, taken up either from a common notion of Christianity and hear-say of Heaven and Happiness, conclude an interest, and pretend an



hope to be saved without any work of Grace at all in the heart, and thus deceive themselves with a vain hope, can give no reason thereof, but God is merciful, and Christ died for sinners, and they be Christians, and hope to be saved, although altogether strangers (if not enemies) to the work of Grace.

Others hope ariseth from a meer rational conversion from some external acts of sin, to some external duties, and so (it may be) to another, though not a new life, altogether without a new heart, and thence hope to be saved.

Now the well grounded hope of the Gospel, must be on the same that Faith of interest is, on the same grounds must souls get first into hope, that is, the word and promises of the New Covenant, and the work effected in the heart; where there is an harmony in word and work, there is a stable ground for hope; as there is no stable ground for hope from the Word without the work, so is there no ground for hope from the work without the Word; but when the soul can say, I have believed, repented, and obeyed the Gospel, and it is its desire and endeavour to persevere therein to the end, there is a Gospel ground for hope of an interest in the precious promises of the Gospel.

2. From the effects of this hope, to increase and strengthen it, when the soul is

Sincerely

sincerely prosecuting the design of Holiness, and desireth, and endeavoureth to be more like Christ daily, and less like the World, it's an undoubted discovery that the hope is right; 1 Job. 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as he is pure.* And a wonderful discovery, I fear, it is of the vanity of the hopes of multitudes of professors, that think themselves gotten above the World, whose great design is to be like the World; great and rich, like the World; proud and vain in their fashions, like the World; dead and lifeless to the power of Religion, like the World: but where is the man, where is the woman to be found, who designs conformity to Jesus Christ, and mourns in the sense of non-conformity that yet remains, and rejoyceth that a time will come, that the *vile body shall be changed, and fashioned like unto his glorious body? He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as he is pure.*

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CHAP.



## C H A P. XVI.

*A further Discovery of the New Covenant,  
and Life of Faith.*

**O**F this much hath been spoken in what hath been before minded; yet I shall speak a little more distinctly to it in this place.

*1. of the  
Gospel, or  
New Cove-  
nant.*

1. The Gospel, or New Covenant, are terms equivalent, and intends one and the same thing in substance; the New Covenant is so called, because it is the Covenant of the renewed Estate, of the new Life, and deliverance out of that estate of sin and death into which we fell by the first transgression; this Covenant relating to new men and women in Christ Jesus, and the new World, the whole new estate propounded and promised therein, made, 1. In and with Christ Jesus the head of this new and glorious design of God, in the renovation and restauration work: and, 2. In him, with all the members of his body, the Church, *Tit. 1. 2. Tit. 1. 9.* On whom this design of God shall undoubtedly be accomplished, it being the glorious and undoubted end and issue of the great undertaking of Christ our Lord in his suffering  
for

for sinners, *Joh. 6. 38, 39. Eph. 5. 25, 26, 27.* Called a Covenant of Grace, because the regeneration and restauration work in all the parts thereof, is the effect of the free Grace of God in Christ Jesus, and a Covenant (or promise) of Life, because it is a deliverance from death, into a state of Life, never to die again: it's called the Gospel, which signifieth glad, or good tidings, *Luke 2. 10. Rom. 10. 15.* It imports all the good promised in the New Covenant, of Pardon, Peace, Life, of Justification, Sanctification and Glory, with the way by which it is effected, that is, by Jesus Christ crucified, raised and ascended in the performance of his Mediatory Office, *1 Cor. 15. 1, 3, 4.* It intends the glad tidings of remission of sins by Jesus Christ, and of Salvation; *Luke 24. 47. with Mark 16. 15.* It being one and the same commission, it promiseteth remission of sins, and Salvation, on its own terms, *i. e.* on Faith, Repentance and new Obedience; it promiseteth acceptation in service, and gives rules relating thereunto, unto which all New Covenant spirited people ought to take heed, *Acts 3. 22, 23.* It promiseteth assistance in service, *Isa. 26. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 5. Phil. 2. 13. Eph. 1. 6.* With eternal Life and Glory in the World to come, and preservation thereunto, in the way of Faith Holiness, and sincere Obedience unto the end, *1 Pet. 1. 5. Heb. 5. 9.* This is the New Cove-



Covenant, the Gospel, the glad tidings of Gods free Grace and good will to men, accompanied with the discovery of the dreadful state of all that do not believe and obey this Gospel.

There is Pardon and Peace, Grace and Life, a Kingdom and Glory, and that Eternal, given by covenant and promise to all that in truth believe and obey the Gospel, *Heb. 5. 9, & 9. 5.* Contained in that, *Gen. 12. 3.* *In the shall all thee Families of the Earth be blessed*; which includes all the blessings of the New Covenant, relating to Grace and Glory: but of this I have written distinctly, and of the Mediatory Office of Christ, in this New Covenant, in a Book entituled, *The Discourse of true Gospel Blessedness, or, The distinction of the two Covenants, Old and New*; to which I refer the Reader that desireth to see further in this matter.

2. Of the  
Life of  
Faith.

And, 2. As for the Life of Faith in this Gospel, or New Covenant, and the truth of God therein; what the Faith of the Gospel is, to which the promise is made, hath been before shewed: but the Scripture speaks of living by Faith, *Heb. 10. 38.* *Now the just shall live by Faith*; *2 Cor. 5. 7.* *We live by Faith, and not by sight*; that is in this side the glory promised, we live by Faith, and not by present possession and enjoyment; only the Spirit and Faith we have, as the *Earnest and Evidence of the Inheritance,*  
and

and purchased Possession, 2 Cor. 1. 22. Hebr. 11. 1.

Now this Life of Faith imports three *The life of Faith in three things* things; 1. A constant abiding in the Faith and profession of the Gospel unto the end, Heb. 3. 12. & 10. 23, 38, 39. 2. A constant exercise of Faith in the truth and faithfulness of God in all the good discoveries and promises of the Gospel, 1 Thes. 5. 24. Faithful is he that hath called you, who will do it. Heb. 10. 23. Let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering, for faithful is he that hath promised. Faith rightly exercised on the faithfulness and all-sufficiency of God, will fill the soul with Joy and Peace, Rom. 15. 13. To believe not only the truth of the mercy promised, but the faithfulness of God therein, and his all-sufficiency in the performance thereof: this was it supported Abraham in his life of Faith, Rom. 4. 31. He did not only believe the faithfulness of God, but being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

3. When the soul thus abides in the Faith, and thus exerciseth Faith on the good promises of the Gospel, as that it is strengthened, comforted, nursed up, and nourished thereby unto life eternal: when the soul is kept alive to God thereby in the greatest temptations and difficulties this World affords, this is to live by Faith, to live by believing the truth of the good Word



Word of God to live by believing the truth of his precepts in the Gospel, so as to obey him therein, the truth of all his great and precious promises of life, so as to be comforted therein, *Matt. 17. 5. Rom. 15. 13.* O that Christians would study more this life of Faith, the want of which, is the cause they go on so heavily in the waies of the Gospel, and meet with so many obstructions and hindrances therein; whereas, if the life of Faith were kept up more in the true nature thereof, how might Christians make Christ's commands *their songs*, and sufferings for him their joy, *in the house of their pilgrimage*: but for want of this it is, that his service is too often a burden, and sufferings for his sake too much feared; whereas the Lord would have his people to serve him with delight, and to suffer for him with joy, *Pf. 100. Luke 6. 22, 23. Acts 5. 41.* Which is possible to be performed in this life of Faith, and no otherwise, *Mark 9. 23. 1 Pet. 1. 8.*

CHAP.