

Faith of God's Children

The children of God live by faith. Thus they began and thus they are to end. "We walk by faith, not by sight." Their whole life is a life of faith. Their daily actions are all of faith. This forms one of the main elements of their character. It marks them out as a peculiar people. None live as they do. Their faith is to them "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

It is a sort of Substitute for sight and possession. It so brings them into contact with the unseen world that they feel as if they were already conversant with, and living among, the things unseen. It makes the future, the distant, the (untouchable), appear as the present, the near, the real.

Such is the power of faith. It throws back into the far distance the things of earth, the things that men call near and real; and it brings forward into vital contact with the soul the things which men call invisible and distant. It discloses to us the heavenly mansions, their passing splendor, their glorious purity, their blessed peace. It shows us the happy courts, the harmonious company, the adoring multitudes. It opens our ears also, so that when beholding these great sights we seem to hear the heavenly melody and to catch the very words of the new song they sing, "Thou art worthy . . . for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10).

(Faith), moreover, points our eye forward to what is yet to come: the coming of the Lord, the judgment of the great day, the restitution of all things, the kingdom that cannot be moved, the city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is GOD. While thus it gives to things invisible a body and a form which before they possessed not in our eyes, on the other hand, it divests things visible of that semblance of excellence and reality with which they were formerly clothed. It strips the world of its false but bewildering glow, and enables us to penetrate the thin disguise that hides its poverty and meanness.

It not only sweeps away the cloud which hung above us, obstructing our view

of heavenly excellence, but it places that cloud beneath us to counteract the (false) brightness and unreal beauty which the world has thrown over itself to mask its inward deformity. Thus it is that faith enables us to realize our true position of pilgrims and strangers upon earth, looking for the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD.

- Horatius Bonar