

charge given him, and he must give an account of it—'The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell (or the grave) delivered up the dead which were in them,' Rev. xx. 13. We should not be afraid to go down to the grave now we hear of such a glorious resurrection from it. This is the way for the body to go to heaven.

SERMON LVII.

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they not afraid of the king's commandment.—HEB. xi. 23.

THE apostle goeth on with the story of the church; and having done with the patriarchs, he goeth on to their posterity. Egypt had been kind to Israel, but now oppressed them, and the posture of things is changed. Pharaoh, a domineering commander that knew not Joseph, now bore sway, Exod. i. 8. He made a bloody law that the male children of the Hebrews should be destroyed, Exod. i. 10. Now the text showeth what Moses' parents did with respect to this bloody edict—'By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents,' &c.

The faith of Moses' parents is described—

1. By the action wherein it was shown—*Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents.*

2. The considerations on which it was done.

[1.] In the action there is—

(1.) The action itself—'He was hid.'

(2.) The duration—'Three months.'

[2.] In the considerations are two things; the one external, the other internal.

(1.) The occasion, or external impulsive cause—*Because they saw he was a proper child.*

(2.) The internal moving cause—*They not afraid of the king's commandment.*

But three things I shall consider in the words—(1.) What is commended; (2.) Who is commended; (3.) The commendation itself.

First, What is commended—'By faith,' What great matter of faith was here? Brute creatures are careful to preserve their young ones; their endeavour to save him might seem to be a work of natural affection, but the Holy Ghost ascribeth it to faith. Natural affections sanctified are subservient and useful to faith; grace doth not abolish nature, but perfect it. We are to obey God against our natural affection; as by faith Abraham offered his son Isaac; nature was against it. And we are to obey God with natural affection: by faith Moses

was hid of his parents; there nature was for it. Many times God's interests and ours are twisted together, and then nature is allowed to work, but grace must bear sway; sometimes they are severed, and then we must leave nature to keep company with God.

Use 1. It informeth us, that to strengthen faith we may and must take in the help of nature; it is God's allowance, that we may be carried out more cheerfully in the work of God: Philem. 16, 'Dear to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord.' When a dictate of grace and the inclination of nature concur, and nature and grace run in one channel, the stream is the more violent. This is seen in labouring for the conversion of a child, in seeking the life of a near relation, or in laying to heart their sufferings.

2. That their wickedness is very great that sin against nature. Some men will be held in with no restraints, neither with the bonds of nature nor grace, nor both together. The more unnatural a sin is, the more aggravated; yet it is usual that most sins have an inconvenience to nature annexed to them. Envy and anger troubleth our own flesh, and eats like a cannibal; lust sucketh the bones; love of pleasure, of corn, wine, and oil, wastes the purse. We have reasons in nature to be against carking, and many other sins.

3. In all these mixed actions look to your principles, what beareth sway and worketh most—faith or natural affection. God alloweth nature to work, and accepts it as a gracious action if faith beareth sway. There are many common actions which a man would do by nature, but then he doth them in another manner, as in and to the Lord, out of love to God, and fear of God, and respect of God's glory, and so the nature of the action is changed; as meek deportment in our relations is for our own quiet, but it is to be done in obedience to God, and out of the fear of God, and so second table duties are acts of faith, fear, and love to God.

Quest. But wherein lay the faith of this action?

Ans. Chiefly in overcoming fear, in trusting God's protection for the preservation of the child; and possibly there might be something of a public regard and consideration, in believing the future deliverance of the church and people of God out of Egypt. Josephus saith that it was revealed to Amram in a dream that he should have a son, who in time should free the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt; but that is uncertain. But this might be gathered out of that general promise: Gen. xv. 14, 'That nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterwards they shall come out with great substance.'

Here are three propositions—

[1.] Whether the tyrant would or no, God's people should be preserved.

[2.] Out of the male children a deliverer should arise.

[3.] In all probability this child might be he; by special instinct, seeing the beauty of the child, they might conceive hopes of him. Faith spieth light at a little hole. The patriarchs had dark presignifications of the Messiah, yet they saw his day: John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.' They regard the word; every dust of it is precious: Ps. xii. 6, 'The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth,

purified seven times.' Not a dust of them shall fall to the ground; they make much of what others pass over carelessly, they pry into it—'Of which salvation the prophets inquired and searched diligently,' 1 Peter i. 10. They have a deeper insight than others—'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him,' Ps. xxv. 14. None have such a quick, eagle eye, as they that have most communion with God, they pierce deeper into a promise than others do.

Use. It reproveth us that are so slow of heart to believe what is more clear and open. We must have line upon line; such is our dullness in believing and apprehending spiritual things. The disciples at first understood not Christ's sayings till they received the Spirit. Let us make much use of the word, and wait for more of the Spirit. A dull servant must be told his work over and over again.

Secondly, Who are commended—*ὑπὸ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ*, 'By his parents.' Moses ascribeth it to his mother: Exod. ii. 2, 'And when she saw that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months;' Stephen, to his father, 'He was nourished up in his father's house three months,' Acts vii. 20. The apostle here ascribeth it to both. So the Septuagint—*ἐσκέπασεν αὐτὸν μήνας τρεῖς*; but Moses ascribeth it to his mother, either because she was the author of this counsel, or took the care of managing the business upon herself. I would observe here the concurrence that should be between husband and wife in promoting that which is good: the father did it, the mother did it, both joined together. When there is strife, it is like the jostling of two persons in a boat, which may overset it. Husband and wife should go hand in hand to the throne of grace, and join together in every good thing; they should agree together in the worship of God, and promoting the good of their children. When the will of the wife and the will of the husband fall in, like the tenon and the mortise, the building goes on; but when one draws one way, and another the other way, like untamed heifers in the yoke, all cometh to ruin. The prophet observes with what a ready diligence idolatry is promoted in a family when all set their hands to it: Jer. vii. 18, 'The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven.' They all hang in a string.

Thirdly, The commendation itself; and there we have the action, and the considerations on which it was done.

1. The action, where—

[1.] The time—'When he was born.'

[2.] The action itself—'He was hid.'

[3.] The duration—'Three months.'

[1.] The time—'Moses, when he was born;' that is, as soon as he was born, for then he was in danger. So Rev. xii. 4, 'The dragon stood before the woman that was ready to be delivered, for to devour the child as soon as it was born.' The early buds are soon nipt. Jesus Christ was sought to be destroyed by Herod as soon as he was born. So it hath been with all the people of God: Ps. cxxix. 1, 'Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say.' Satan is a murderer from the beginning; and it is no wonder, for in destroying of Abel he thought to have cut off all the church at once. It is no wonder to see Satan so busy; as soon as a man beginneth to look

towards God, some frown him out, some flatter him out of his religion : Heb. x. 32, 'After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.' At first conversion they meet with scoffs, frowns, and mocks, because they are called to give a proof of their faith and love to Christ. But rather observe here the wisdom and power of God in preserving his church, which Satan seeketh to crush in the egg. I do the rather note it because this was Pharaoh's design at this time, but God's counsel standeth : he made Egypt and Pharaoh's court nourish their own destroyer. Herod kills all the children at Bethlehem, and some say, to make sure work, his own also. Thus can God outwork the counsels of men, and overshoot the devil in his own bow.

[2.] The action itself was hid. Though faith overcome fear, yet we may use lawful means to overcome the danger ; she hid the child. They do ill that needlessly thrust themselves upon danger : unless we are especially called to bear witness, wary carriage is required. God counts it faith : faith is far from compliance or obeying carnal commands, yet it is cautious and wary. Moses was called to kill the Egyptian, yet he looketh about to see if anybody saw him. Faith doth not tempt God ; though it rests upon his providence, yet it useth means. Christ, though he certainly knew his Father's will to save him, yet he withdrew himself from the enraged multitude, Mark xii. 15.

Use 1. Learn hence, that it is no want of faith to avoid danger by lawful means.

2. It is no neglect of trust to use means where we are sure of the event : Acts xxvii. 31, 'Except these abide in the ship you cannot be saved.' Christ never supplied himself by a miracle where ordinary means might be had.

[3.] The duration—'Three months.'

(1) They hid him three months, and no longer. But why so ? Either because, as some think, at every three months' end they made a stricter search ; or possibly some neighbouring Egyptian had spied out the matter ; or the cries of the child being stronger every day might bewray them. But now their weakness beginneth.

Observe, that God takes notice of their faith as long as it lasted.

It was an act of weakness at three months' end to expose the child ; yet God winketh at that ; and it is said, By faith he is hidden. As often you have it in this chapter, the faith, and not the failings of good people are recorded,—'By faith Isaac blessed Jacob,' &c. ; 'By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that believed not ;' her faith is mentioned, but not her lie.

Use. It should encourage us to serve God, who will graciously accept of what is good in us, and pardon our failings. Man overlooks all the good ; if there be any evil in an action, we are sure to look upon that. As flies pitch upon the sore place, or as a kite flies to the carrion, passing by the pleasant gardens, so men pitch upon the worst. But it is otherwise with the Lord ; he taketh notice of what is good and sincere. This should not encourage us in our failings but in our duties.

(2.) When the three months were ended, they made careful provision for him. You have the story in Exod. ii. If he had been kept at

home, they saw a certain danger; there was some weakness not to trust God. But she doth not drown him in the river, but maketh an ark of bulrushes, well prepared, and set his sister to watch him; and it is likely she chose the place where Thermutis, the king's daughter, was wont to resort. Faith may trip, but it doth not fail totally. It trippeth sometimes; as Abraham dwelt in Haran for a while; and Peter cometh to Christ upon the waters, but there he is ready to sink, Mat. xiv. 30; Moses smote the rock twice. The Israelites ever and anon were returning to Egypt. Lot said, 'I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil take me, and I die,' Gen. xix. 19. A sincere faith may tire a little, and grow weary; but up it gets again, it doth not wholly fail. Such kind of infirmities are consistent with faith, where there is not a total disobedience.

2. I come now to the considerations upon which it was done.

[1.] The external impulsive cause—'Because they saw he was a proper child,' *ἄστειλον*, comely, and fair, Acts vii. 20. At what time Moses was born he was exceeding fair—*ἄστειλος θεῷ*, fair to God; as to all things that did excel in their kind they were wont to add the name of God to them, as the Hill of God, for an exceeding high hill.

But what reason was this? Moses' beauty, take it in a vulgar consideration, did more stir up *στοργήν*, natural affection; but here in a special sense they saw something divine in him to stir up their faith. Beauty is not always a sure sign of excellency—*fronti nulla fides*, there is no trust to the brow; but they saw special lineaments of majesty, and of a heroical disposition in his countenance, which, being accompanied with some secret instinct, moved them to think that God had designed him to some eminent work, probably to the deliverance of his people. Otherwise, beauty is not always a sign of excellency: 1 Sam. xvi. 7, 'Look not upon his countenance, nor the height of his stature, because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.'

Use 1. God hath means to preserve his children in danger when he hath use for them. Moses' extraordinary beauty did excite and move the natural love of his parents, and gain the heart of Thermutis. Some of God's servants have been preserved for their eminent wit and parts; others for their skill in rare artifices, when their fellows have been slain round about them, Dan. ii. 24. I observe this to show you the wisdom of providence, and how this is one means of his children's preservation.

2. Where God will make special use of instruments, he giveth them answerable endowments, both of body and mind. Moses, in his very childhood, had a majesty and invincible grace in his countenance. There are some upon whom God hath set a mark for special work and service; this is a kind of presage what he will do with them in time to come. This hint is of use to parents, to observe their children's disposition; and where there are special endowments, to dispose of them to public work. Much of the duty of parents is seen in providing meet callings for their children, that the man may suit the calling, and the calling the man. Otherwise mischief ariseth; many public gifts are smothered, and lie hid in a private employment; or else mis-

chief ariseth by invasion of callings, and there is never any quietness while that lasteth ; as when elements are out of their place, or a member of the body is out of joint ; it is as if a man should go about to walk on his hands, or write with his foot. This must be done with much seeking of God, observing their dispositions, and inclinations, and natural gifts ; and if it were made a matter of public care, so much the better. Nazianzen, in his epistles, showeth that this was the practice of the Athenian magistrates, to make public trial of the ingenuity and disposition of children. For want of this there hath been much obtruding of unworthy men into public ministries and offices, dull men, who have been more fit for the plough ; and others have been hindered by poverty and want of supply who gave great hopes of eminency in better employments than they were set to.

3. That beauty is a gift of God, but not to be rested in, nor to be abused to feed pride. It is a gift of God ; we might have been deformed by nature, and the crookedness of the soul have been stamped upon the body. It is a good portion which a body brings to a virtuous soul ; beauty is a beam of the majesty of God, it hath a natural magic in it. Absalom gained much by his beauty. There is the greatest cognation and sympathy between the soul and the body. As some forerunning beams foretell day, so beauty is a good presage, but it is not to be rested in. Beauty was a mark of special service in Moses, but not in Elijah. Sometimes the stuff doth not answer the show. It is often joined with folly and filthiness, and other vices. Paul was a little old man. In itself it is one of God's lower blessings, but it is but skin-deep : Prov. xxxi. 30, 'Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain.' It is soon withered with sickness and old age. Well then, let them that excel in gifts of the body look to excel also in gifts of the mind, and then it is a mark of honour ; if you abuse it, you lay your crowns in the dust.

[2.] The internal moving cause—'And they not afraid of the king's commandment,' that bloody law of destroying their children,—*τὸ διάταγμα τοῦ βασιλέως*, the constitution of the king.

Here are three points—

(1.) Princes must not be obeyed in things contrary to the word of God. Here was *διάταγμα*, a commandment of the king, and yet it was disobeyed. We have both doctrine and example for it. Doctrine : Eph. vi. 1, 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord.' We must not obey magistrates simply and absolutely ; that is proper to God, whose will cannot be controlled. Therefore if their edicts be against the law of God, they bind not, for then they would be honoured above God. And examples : Acts iv. 19, 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye ;' he leaveth it with them ; and Acts v. 29, 'Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.' When they forbid what God hath commanded, or command what God hath forbidden, it is a part of religious manners to break with the magistrate rather than God : so Dan. iii. 16-18, 'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said unto the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter ; our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver

us out of thine hands, O king; but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' For, (1.) The magistrate hath not his power from himself, 'he is the minister of God for good,' Rom. xiii. 4. Now the power of the minister or servant is not of force against the master, when he either forbiddeth what God hath commanded, or commandeth what God hath forbidden. (2.) He is under authority. As the centurion that came to Christ said, I am a man of authority, and have others subject to me, Mat. viii. 9; so there is a higher than the highest, whose will alone must be observed.

Use. It informeth us that it is no excuse though magistrates enjoin or connive at things evil. In human laws the husband shall not answer for the wife, nor the children for the parents; and therefore in all these cases say as Christ said to his earthly parents, Luke ii. 49, 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' It is no stubbornness, but a well-tempered zeal. You are wont to produce your commission, but that will not bear you out before God.

(2.) The commands of kings and princes have been a usual trial of God's children, as Nebuchadnezzar's command was to fall down and worship the golden image. Magistrates have not always been the best friends to Christ. God loves to put his people upon such trials. They that are not faithful to their God will never be faithful to their princes. But it is usual with men to make bold with God to please men. This is very natural to us, to hearken to men rather than God, and either out of fear or favour of men to do things unlawful. It is worse to do it out of favour of men than out of fear; for the temptation of favour is not so great, nor the danger of not obeying so imminent. What is done out of fear is done with reluctance: a compliance for the favour of men discovers more of the consent of our wills, and willingness is a great aggravation of sin: Hos. v. 11, 'Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he walked willingly after the commandment.' That is a most heinous sin when men consent of their own inclination, or the simple command of men, without any terrors, doth draw them to be at the beck of carnal potentates, and they are carried hither and thither at the pleasure of them that have power over them.

Use. This should draw us off from men. To this end consider—

1st, We are bound to God more than to men. We have protection from men under God; but we have life, and being, and breath, and all things from God. Men can only protect us at God's pleasure. How soon is a prince pulled out of his throne! Or if they could protect against men, yet not against God. There is no wall to be made against heaven; all is open above. Therefore if protection draweth allegiance, I owe most to him from whom I have most protection. The greatest potentate is but an instrument of providence, and therefore my greatest obligation is to the Lord.

2dly, None can reward our obedience as God can—'Will the son of Jesse give you fields and vineyards?' 1 Sam. xxii. 7. Have they such life and glory to bestow as God hath? They have power to take off a civil forfeiture, but they cannot continue life for a moment; much less can they give eternal life and glory. Herod promised to the half of

his kingdom to his minion. They can give you offices and places of power and trust, but they cannot give you a crown that shall never fade. As stage-players can set up a king for an hour, the world is but a play of a little longer continuance; and at last, as chessmen are all thrown into the bag together, so in the grave there is no distinction; skulls wear no wreaths and marks of honour. They cannot give a glorious body, or a better soul. But there is full contentment to be had in God, who hath other manner of rewards than men can bestow.

3dly, None can punish our disobedience so as God can: Mat. x. 28, 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.' Man's power reacheth only to the body; they may burn, and rack, and torture the body, but the soul lieth out of their power. If God now lay his finger on the conscience, all the engines of torture in the world cannot beget such a terror as there is in a wounded conscience. And what, then, will it be hereafter, when God sets himself a-work to torment you; when omnipotency falleth upon a worm; when God sets the body on the soul, and the soul on the body, and makes the body to accuse the soul as an evil instrument, and the soul the body as an evil guide, how dreadful is this punishment!

4thly, We live longer with God than we do with men; therefore if a man would study to please, he should rather please God than men. God is eternal, man is but mortal: Isa. li. 12, 'Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die?' &c.; Isa. ii. 22, 'Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?' 1 Kings i. 21, 'When my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, I and my son Solomon shall be accounted offenders;' Ps. cxlvi. 4, 'His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.' A man may outlive his friends and outlive his happiness. Nay, we ourselves must perish; and when we come to die, then we shall say, Oh! if I had been as careful to please God as to please my prince, it would have been better with me than now it is. But when men are dead and gone, God liveth for ever.

5thly, God can make others our friends: Prov. xvi. 7, 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.' Zealous resistance sooner gaineth friends than carnal compliance. Who would offend a king to please one of his slaves? The respects of others are in God's hands, and he can give us favour in the eyes of others, as the captive children found favour in the eyes of the king of Babylon. If God be our friend, we need not fear; we do not fear the sword if we do not fear him that weareth it. Man is frail, and can do nothing without God; he is the creator and sovereign cause of all things.

6thly, They that please men shall have enough of it: Hos. v. 12, 'Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment.' They were as willing to obey as he to command, and therefore they shall have yoke upon yoke. When we study to please men they often prove sad scourges to us.

(3.) In such cases carnal fear doth betray us, and faith carries us through: Isa. viii. 12, 13, 'Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom the people shall say, A confederacy, neither fear ye their fear,

nor be afraid ; sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.' Faith vanquisheth carnal fear, as it setteth the fear of God a-work. The Egyptian midwives' saving the children is made to be an act of the fear of God : Exod. i. 17. 'But the Egyptian midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men-children alive.' Faith represents a higher king and greater terrors ; it sets authority against authority, law against law, terror against terror. It fetcheth in invisible supplies : Heb. xi. 27, 'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king ; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.'

Use. When you are apt to miscarry by carnal fear, set faith a-work. When tyrants set forth unjust edicts, when you fear the loss of parents' favour for God's sake, let faith represent to you the favour of God, and the wrath of God. What is the favour of men to the favour of God ? and the wrath of potentates to the wrath of God ?

SERMON LVIII.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.—HEB. xi. 24.

IN this chapter you have a short chronicle of the worthies of God ; and in this constellation Moses shines forth as a star of the first magnitude. The apostle had spoken first of that faith by which he was saved by his parents ; and now he comes to speak of that faith by which he saved himself ; and here is one instance of it—'By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.' He is commended here for his principle and his carriage.

1. For his principle—*By faith.*

2. For his carriage—*When he was come to years, &c.*

His carriage is set forth.

[1.] By the season—*When he was come to years.*

[2.] By the act of self-denial—*He refused to be called.*

[3.] By the greatness of the temptation—*The son of Pharaoh's daughter.*

I shall give you—

(1.) The explication of the words.

(2.) The vindication of the act.

(3.) The commendation of it.

1. For the explication of the words.

[1.] His principle—'By faith.' His faith was fixed ; partly upon the eternal recompenses : he had never left the delights of the court, if he had not looked for greater blessings. And partly upon the particular promises made to God's people, for he believed that the seed of Abraham should be blessed ; though now they were very miserable and oppressed with hard servitude and bondage, yet he knew the promises of God to Abraham, and this faith urged him hereunto.