

*Use 2.* It condemns the backwardness of God's children, that they do no more talk of their hopes, and the glory of their kingdom, and of the world to come, that they may go hand in hand, and comfort and quicken one another in God's ways.

## SERMON XLIX.

*For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.— And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.—HEB. xi. 14–16.*

IN these verses the apostle proves that the patriarchs had an eye to heaven, from their constant profession; wherever they came, they were telling the world that they were strangers and pilgrims. He frames his argument thus: those that are strangers and pilgrims seek another country. This was not the country whence they came, for they might have returned thither when they would, but they look for another country, that is, an heavenly.

I shall go over these verses with brief hints.

*First,* From their language he concludes the disposition of their hearts. From whence we may observe this—

*Doct.* That a man should speak nothing, but what he really thinks.

A lie is naught everywhere, but especially in matters of religion; and therefore I shall show—(1.) How naught it is in any case; (2.) How exceeding naught it is to act a false profession of mortification and strictness in the ways of God when there is no such matter; for that is the case in hand.

1. A lie is naught everywhere.

[1.] It is the right of our neighbour that we should speak the truth to him; for speech is a kind of traffic and commerce, a commodity by which men trade one with another, and therefore in justice the commodity should be right. When you defraud your neighbour of his right, you are guilty of theft, as it is theft to give him counterfeit gold and silver for true gold and silver; and so if you give him false words for true, you rob him of his right. As men, we are bound to speak the truth every one to his neighbour: Eph. iv. 25, 'Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are a members one of another.' When you speak that which is false, it is a violation of commerce; for where there is no truth there is no trust, and where there is no trust there is no commerce, truth being the bond and foundation of human society.

[2.] A lie is the perversion of the order of nature. It is the office of the tongue to be the interpreter of the mind; now if the interpreter of another man should take upon him to speak contrary to what he commands, this were a manifest wrong and disorder. So when the

tongue speaks otherwise than the mind thinks, it is a great disturbance and deordination.

[3.] We resemble the devil in nothing so much as in falsehood and lies : John viii. 44, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do ; he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own ; for he is a liar, and the father of it.' And on the contrary, truth is no small part of the image of God ; for he is called the God of truth, as Satan is the father of lies ; and truth is made to be one special effect of regeneration : Eph. iv. 24, 25, 'That you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every one truth with his neighbour.' The main thing that is wrought in regeneration is to make the heart perfect, upright ; and true regeneration doth not introduce a total perfection into the soul, but it introduces uprightness ; he that is born again is not without sin, but he is without guile : Col. iii. 9. 'Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.' The old man is nothing but a bundle of deceits and crookedness ; the new man consists in truth and uprightness.

[4.] This is of consideration also, that God never dispensed with this precept. He hath upon special occasions dispensed with other commandments, and made a particular exception from a general law, but he never dispensed with the ninth commandment. God dispensed with the eighth commandment in the theft of the Israelites when they borrowed the jewels of the Egyptians ; he dispensed with the seventh commandment in the polygamy of the patriarchs ; he dispensed with the sixth commandment in the case of Abraham, when he bid him to offer Isaac ; he dispensed with the second commandment in Hezekiah's passover ; when they were not purified according to the preparation of the sanctuary, yet God allowed them to eat the passover : 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 'For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves ; yet did they eat the passover, otherwise than it was written ;' but God never dispensed with the ninth commandment upon any pretence whatsoever ; a man must not lie for God : Job xiii. 7. 'Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him ?' Because this commandment hath more in it of the justice and truth and immutable perfection of God than others.

[5.] By the light of nature, nothing is more odious than a lie. We love a just and true man, that is without guile, we acknowledge it a moral perfection ; but a lie among men is accounted the greatest disgrace. And nothing stirs up revenge and wrath more than the imputation and charge of a lie ; because it comes from slavish fear, and tendeth to deceit, both which argue baseness of spirit, and are contrary to the gallantry of a man, and to that moral equity which nature discovereth. Therefore nature disproves and taxeth it as an odious crime.

2. Especially a lie is odious in matters of religion, to pretend that we are not ; as to profess ourselves strangers and pilgrims when it is no such matter, this is very bad. Because it is in a weighty matter ; and the more weighty the matter is in which we lie and speak falsely,

the more heinous the lie ; for in a more weighty matter God is more appealed to, he is more challenged as a witness, and especially in the profession of religion, more than he is in acts of commerce between man and man. Religion should check and restrain a lie, and therefore when religion itself is made a lie, it is a great evil. It is an interpretative blasphemy : Rev. ii. 9, 'I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.' To profess that we are the people of God when we are not is blasphemy. Why? because it is an implicit denial of God's omniscieny, as if he could not see, and did not regard us ; for you do in effect say, If we can but carry it fair before men, we need care for no more ; there is no God to see us.

*Use 1.* Let us beware of all lying, especially of dissimulation of respect to God or men. Let our words consent with our mind, and our mind with the thing itself. To move you hereto, consider, a lie is most odious to God, it is reckoned among the things that are an abomination to him : Prov. vi. 16, 17, 'These six things doth the Lord hate, yea, seven are an abomination to him, a proud look, a lying tongue,' &c. A christian that loves God dares not yield to that which God so expressly hates ; he doth, as it were, hear God speak in his ears, Jer. xlv. 4, 'Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate !' And then it is a sin that shall not escape unpunished : Prov. xix. 5, 'A false witness shall not be unpunished ; and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.' God that is the judge of truth, that is appealed to as the great witness of all that is done in the world, he will reveal it to your shame. Nay, God expects it from all you that fear his name ; he reckoneth upon it that you should be far from this evil : Isa. lxiii. 8, 'For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie.' Disappointment is the worst vexation. When the Lord standeth upon his honour in your carriage, Well, I can trust them, they are a people that will not lie ; if you disappoint him, you do, as much as in you lies, make God a liar.<sup>1</sup>

*Obj.* But you will say, What needs all this? Speak to children to warn them of lying, or to heathens or profane persons that make no conscience of the truth.

*Ans.* Lying is a more general and common sin than we imagine, it is natural to us : Ps. lviii. 3, 'The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.' We suck in the deceitful old man with our milk ; nay, we brought him into the world with us. There was a lie in our hearts long before there was a lie in our mouths. And consider how little nature is subdued even in the best ; David prays, Ps. cxix. 29, 'Remove from me the way of lying, and grant me thy law graciously.' You shall find him tripping herein in his dissembling before Achish and the like. Is there not a lying to God in public and private worship? In public worship, it was the complaint God took up against his people, Hosea xi. 12, 'Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit.' How often do we show love with our mouths, when our hearts are at a distance from God ; as it was said of the Israelites, their hearts were in Egypt, when their bodies were in the wilderness : Acts vii. 39, 'In their hearts they turned back again into Egypt ;' so here, we prattle

<sup>1</sup> See this subject handled at large, Ps. cxix. 29.

words without sense and spiritual affection; and what is this but to compass God with lies, when the heart is gone after and taken up with vanity? And then in private worship; how often in confession of sins do we lie to God! not that we can speak worse of ourselves than we do deserve, but we do not believe that is true which we confess; for if we did but confess half so much to a man who is but our fellow-creature, and hath but a drop of indignation against sin, how should we be ashamed! Thus we often compass God with lies in confession. And then in prayer we pray, but as if we would not be heard. Conscience enlightened tells us what we should pray for, but the carnal heart retracts our prayers; as Austin, when he prayed against his lusts, Lord, give me strength against my carnal affections, *sed noli modo*, do not yet, Lord; he was loth to have his requests granted. We pray out of course, and that is but a lie. As children shoot away their arrows, and never look after them; so we throw away our prayers, and never mind what comes of them. If a man make a supplication to the king, he would be hearkening what answer the king gave; so if we prayed in earnest, we would be looking after our prayers. And then we give thanks without meltings of heart. Custom and natural light tells us something must be done in this kind, but how hard a matter is it to draw nigh to God with a true heart! Heb. x. 22. Though we cannot draw nigh to God with a sinless heart, yet we should with a sincere heart, and come without guile into his presence. Lies in worship are worst of all; a lie in commerce between man and man is bad; a lie about worship, to pretend what we are not, is worse; but a lie in worship, this is to dare and mock God to his face, and God will not be mocked. Again, would we not be accounted better than we are? Where is the man that would be thought as ill as he hath cause to think of himself? We storm if others should but speak half so much of us as we speak of ourselves to God. Again, doth not rash suspicion make us speak worse of others than they deserve? Do not we take up reports of others without search, and out of envy blaze them abroad? In much talk do not unworthy expressions drop from us that cannot be justified? Are there not many rash promises that we make to God which it may be may suit with present sense, but all things are not considered: Ps. lxxxviii. 36, 37, 'Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.' All these things show that we had need to pray with David, Ps cxix. 29, 'Remove from me the way of lying.' Surely, though you should set aside gross lying in a way of testimony, and with an intent to deceive, yet you see there are many ways wherein we may be guilty of lying; indeed seldom are our speeches the image of our minds, and so we are guilty of this sin which is so odious to God, so contrary to the new nature, and such a blemish to the profession that we have taken upon ourselves.

*Secondly*, The next thing we learn hence is the use of consequences. That doctrine, that is not expressed in plain words of scripture, yet is deduced thence by just consequences, is a scripture doctrine. Our Lord proves the resurrection by a consequence: Mat. xxii. 31, 32, 'But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of

Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.'

*Use 1.* We learn that in all controversies and the decision of cases genuine deductions are not an obscure proof. The apostle saith of these patriarchs, they 'declare plainly that they seek a country.' The Arians reject the consubstantiality of Christ and the trinity because they are not scripture words. The Donatists called Augustine not the christian, but dialecticum, the logician, because he argued from consequences in disputing with them. And so nowadays in the controversy about infant baptism, they require plain scripture for it; we prove it by consequence, that they are in covenant, and therefore they have a right to the seal of the covenant; they are disciples, members of the church, and therefore have a right to the privileges of the church. And so for the sabbath; we must not instruct God how to set down his mind. The Jews say, If Christ had been the true Messiah, he would have come in such a way as all his own countrymen might have known him; so will men say, Had this been the mind of God, it would have been more plainly and expressly revealed in scripture; thus will foolish men give laws to God. If a doctrine can be deduced from scripture, it is as much as if it were in express words of scripture.

*Use 2.* We learn hence that in reading of the scriptures we are to mark not only what is spoken, but what may be thence inferred. It is notable that Jesus Christ taxeth the Sadducees as ignorant of the scriptures, because they were ignorant of the consequences of scripture: Mat. xxii. 29, 'Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God.' Though they knew the letter of the scripture, yet they did not know the consequence and import of it. A christian is bound, and must aim at it more and more, to know all the doctrines revealed in the scripture, and all the consequences of them. You have reason given you to meditate, to argue and debate matters, otherwise how can we resolve cases and try spirits? 1 John iv 1, 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God.' We are to draw inferences of faith and practice from what we read in the scriptures, by comparing scriptures with scriptures.

*Thirdly,* Let us come to the apostle's argument, 'they seek a country;' it must be that whence they came, or else an heavenly country. But it was not the country from whence they came, therefore it must be an heavenly country. Mark, the apostle knew but two places of residence for the saints in the old testament, either in this life on earth, or in the life to come in heaven. From this distribution, it must be in earth or heaven. Learn this point—

*Doct.* That there are but two places of residence for the saints, either the place of exercise, that is here upon earth, or the place of their reward or recompense, and that is in heaven.

From the beginning of the world to this day so it has been, there is no third place. The papists, besides heaven, hell, and purgatory, have two vaults; they have their *limbus patrum*, some obscure cabins for the faithful that died before Christ came in the flesh, where they are kept as in a dark prison, out of heaven, yet without torments, as they are without blessedness: and they have their *limbus infantum* for those that died without baptism. Others imagine there are *beatæ sedes*, et

*secreta animarum receptacula*, blessed seats, and secret receptacles and places for souls, besides the heaven of heavens, where the just remain till the day of judgment. But all this is without scripture. Here the patriarchs expected an heavenly country; that their souls should immediately go to God, and their bodies should be raised in due time. But let us come to the proof and making out of this argument; he proves the first, that Mesopotamia, or Ur of the Chaldees, the place from whence they came, was not their country, 'for, saith he, verse 15, 'Truly if they had been mindful of that country whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.' From whence we may observe two things—

*Doct.* 1. That God's children do not contemn the world out of necessity, but out of choice.

They might have returned if they had a mind; they were not necessitated to stay here, but it was their wise choice to follow and obey God. Many do despise riches and greatness in the world because they cannot attain to it; as the fox in the fable did the grapes that he could not reach, or as ignorant persons despise learning, because they cannot attain to it. Some may speak contemptibly of these things out of envy. Many do not affect great things because they do not lie within their grasp and reach; it is not every man that can rationally aspire to be a ruler. So many think they could prefer a naked Christ before all the world, because they have not an offer and a temptation; therefore the trial of your hearts is when the temptation cometh: Ps. lxii. 10, 'If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.' Can you then contemn them, and think meanly of them? Are they as low and base things in your esteem as when you were in your deep poverty? How are you to the temptations that are incident to your rank and station? Every one is apt to seek great things for himself as far as his grasp reacheth. A thousand pounds to some kind of persons may not be so great a matter as an hundred pounds to others. Men think that because they do not aim at such vast and great worldly profits as others have, therefore they are not worldly; but the reason is because these great things are not within their grasp and reach. The devil doth not come to all, as he did to Christ, to offer him all the kingdoms of the earth; some will accept of less with thanks. The devil suiteth his temptations to men's conditions, and the opportunities that are put into their hands, and all the trial is, how you behave yourselves as to these temptations that you meet withal. In all this I do not deny, but that outward providence is an help, and there is much of the care of God seen in removing the temptation, as well as in abating the affection; as Paul took notice of God's providence: Gal. vi. 14, 'The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' He observed not only the deadness of his own heart to the world, but the world's frowning upon him, and its uselessness to him. We are to take notice of the love of providence, as well as of the power of grace. It is a mercy to be acknowledged that we have not the temptations or the opportunities to depart from God that others have. But then the people of God are apt to reflect upon their own carnal disposition, and to say, Surely I have a heart as bad as others, and should have been as bad as others; if God did not shut me up, and keep me low, my heart would be high, carnal and proud as well as others. To apply this—

*Use 1.* Do not reckon the absence of a temptation to be grace. Grace is seen in the conflict, when you have an opportunity to start from him, and yet your hearts keep close to God; the opportunity is present, but grace forbids. Joseph had not only a temptation, but an opportunity, but grace resisted it: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' These patriarchs might have had an opportunity to return; nothing kept them back, but the command of God. *Esse bonum facile est, ubi quod vetat esse, remotum est*—It is easy to be good when we cannot be otherwise, or when all temptations to the contrary are out of the way. All the seeming good that is in many, they owe it to the want of a temptation, and to the want of an opportunity of doing otherwise. Some have not the wit to be heretics, nor an estate to be luxurious, or the like.

*Use 2.* It showeth us the evil of those that can break through the restraints of providence; when their way is hedged up with thorns, yet they will find a path. As the Lord complains, Isa. xxvi. 10, 'In the land of uprightness they will deal unjustly;' they will stumble when stumbling-blocks are removed out of the way; they be proud in deep poverty, wicked in godly families, sin, when the awe of parents should restrain them. They have not an opportunity and an occasion to sin, but they make one, and draw iniquity with cart-ropes. Where the channel is cut, the water followeth easily; so where there is an opportunity the heart runs out to sin; this is sinful; but when men overthrow the banks and cut down the dam, that corrupt nature might find an issue or course, it is exceeding sinful.

*Use 3.* It presseth us to a voluntary mortification, in the fulness of all things to be strangers and pilgrims; not upon necessity, but upon reasons of conscience, as it was with these here in the text. David professeth himself to be a stranger and a pilgrim, not only when he was hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, but when he was in his palace, and in his best estate. We are not to renounce our comforts, and throw away God's blessings; but we are to renounce our carnal affections. We cannot get out of the world when we please, but we must get the world out of us. It is a great trial of grace to refuse the opportunity; it is the most difficult lesson to learn how to abound, more difficult than to learn how to want, and to be abused; to have comforts, and yet to have the heart weaned from comforts; not to be necessarily mortified, but to be voluntarily mortified and by choice. We use to say, Such an one would do well to be a lord or a lady, when we see him proud, and masterful, and dainty in fare and apparel. Oh it is a harder matter than we are aware of, when we have an opportunity to be evil, worldly and carnal, not to be evil, worldly and carnal, but in the fulness of all things to be as if we had nothing; to possess all things as if we possessed not, as the apostle speaks and directs, 1 Cor. vii. 30, 31, 'That they that rejoice be as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use the world as not abusing it.'

Again, I observe the constancy of these patriarchs; they kept constant to their purpose, and were unmindful of their country from whence they came. They were hated, maligned by the inhabitants of the land, burdened by the envy of the natives; they could not dig a well, but they were fain to strive for it; but though they had these hard con-

ditions, yet they were not mindful of that country from whence they came, because God had called them out of it. This affords a second doctrine.

*Doct.* 2. When we have renounced the world and sin, we must take heed of an hankering mind after these things again.

Drawing back is very hateful to God: Heb. x. 38, 'If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.' This is a dog's nature, to lick up his vomit; it is a swine's trick, to return to wallowing in the mire: 2 Peter ii. 22, 'It is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.' Christ tells us, Luke ix. 62, 'No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' We shall never be fit for Christ, or any good and excellent use, unless we be unmindful of what we have left for Christ, and hold on our course. The crab that goes backward, was an unclean creature under the law.

*Use.* This note is useful in public reformations and private conversation.

1. In public reformations. Israel was ready to return to Egypt when they were sensible of the difficulties and inconveniences of the wilderness. So because reformation is clogged with many inconveniences, sottish people wish for their old times of mass and matins, and hanker after the flesh-pots of Egypt. But these patriarchs were of another temper, they were unmindful to return, though they had inconveniences where they were, and an opportunity to go back. So those carnal Jews: Jer. xlv. 17, 18, 'We will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.' Times of reformation are usually thus encumbered. Oh! but let us not return thither from whence we came.

2. In private conversation; when we renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, we should not retract our vows. One said, he would launch out no farther into the deeps of religion than he might get to shore again. Oh, take heed of such a spirit! when you are embarked with Christ, take heed of looking back; forget your father's house, and the flesh-pots of Egypt. To this end count the charges when you give up your names to Christ. When a man is to build, he makes a good allowance; and as long as he keeps within his allowance, he never grudges it; but when that is exceeded, it grieves him to disburse more. Oh, make the Lord a good allowance, that you may not go back, but follow him fully! This is the first part of the apostle's argument, the negative part of it, 'They were unmindful of that country from whence they came, though they had opportunity to return.'

But now as to the positive part of the proof—'But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly.'

*Doct.* It is not enough to despise this world, but we must have our hearts carried forth after better things; we must believe and desire a better country.



Many out of a slight temper may renounce the world, their corruptions do not lie that way, they have not a genius fit for scraping and heaping up wealth. Others are of a prodigal humour, and may abhor baseness and forbid sparing, but they are not heavenly; they despise but a piece of the world, not the whole world; they are taken with worldly pleasures, though they regard not worldly profits; their hearts are not carried forth to better things.

You may clearly discern whether the temper of your hearts be right with God by these two marks—Do you renounce the world? and do you look after better things?

1. Do you renounce the world for God's sake? But you will say, Do you persuade us to voluntary poverty? possibly some may be full of fears and doubts concerning their estate, because they prosper in the world, when they consider the condition of the patriarchs who left all at the call of God. How are we therefore to renounce the world? I answer, We must not renounce the good things of this life but upon God's call, for otherwise we should cast away the blessings of the covenant. Temporal blessings are adopted and taken into the covenant as well as spiritual mercies: 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' To run into voluntary poverty were to despise God's bounty. But what then is that renouncing of the world that is required of every christian? It lies in four things.

[1.] We must be contented with that portion of worldly things which comes to us in a fair way of providence, without carking, and caring, and turmoiling ourselves about the things of the present life; we must be satisfied with our Father's allowance and blessing: Heb. xiii. 5, 'Be content with such things as you have.' But when men are greedy after worldly things, this is to seek the world. Whatever comes to us in a way of obedience and dependence upon God, we must be contented with as our portion.

[2.] We must avoid the corruption that is in the world. Take heed you be not corrupted by the world; use it as if you used it not; let not your hearts be entangled with the world: 1 Cor. vii. 31, 'And they that use the world as not abusing it.' Though you must not throw away God's common blessings out of your houses, yet let them not engross the heart. If we do not get out of the world, we must get the world out of us, that it may not encroach upon God's rights: Ps. lxxii. 10, 'If riches increase, set not your heart on them.'

[3.] We must get a sanctified use of the things of the world. Then we have such a sanctified use of them, when they make us love God more, and not less. That which comes from love causeth love; when the blessings of this world are given us from God in love to us, they work up the heart to love God again, and then have we a sanctified use of them.

[4.] We must be willing to quit them upon God's call, or upon the just reasons of religion. This is to renounce the world as these patriarchs did. But when doth God call us? Partly, when otherwise we cannot keep a good conscience; when we cannot hold the world, and maintain the conscience of our duty to God; as Joseph left his coat to keep a good conscience, Gen. xxxix. 15. Partly, when God offers

us occasions of charity : 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, ' Charge them that are rich in this world, . . . that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate,' that is, to those that are in need, when God offers us opportunity.

2. Do you look after better things? But how shall we discover that? Observe here, by what words these patriarchs' respect to their heavenly country is described: they looked for a country, they desired a country, they sought a country, and they declared plainly that they sought a country. Now all these things do discover a heavenly mind and heart.

[1.] They look for a country; so verse 10, it is said of Abraham, ' He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' It noteth an actual expectation of blessedness to come, such as stirreth up serious and frequent thoughts of it; not a glance only, such as is forced upon us, or cometh into the mind by chance, but a constant serious expectation, an entertaining of the soul with the thoughts of a blessedness to come. If you look for a city as they did, you will be entertaining and solacing your souls with the hopes of it.

[2.] They desire a country; they are groaning and longing, Oh, when shall it once be that I shall come to my country? here I am but a stranger, wandering up and down, when shall I come home to my father's house, to my elder brother, to the rest of the family, and to my heavenly inheritance? When the children of Israel had tasted of the grapes of Canaan, how did they long for the soil where they grew! a man cannot have the first-fruits of the Spirit, but he will be waiting and groaning for the adoption: Rom. viii. 23, ' We ourselves, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' A man that hath had a taste of heaven in the joys of the Spirit, his heart is always groaning, Oh, when shall I come to the full of my inheritance? they are always waiting for the happy time when their inheritance shall fall into their hands.

[3.] They seek a country: Heb. xiii. 14, ' We have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.' It implies that it must be our great aim, and that the business of our lives must be to get to heaven, to be at home at our Father's house, to be there where God and Christ are. It must be the great aim and scope of our lives, next to the glory of God, and the great work and business of our lives. Provision and supports for the present life are but our by-work; but to be fitting and preparing ourselves to get home, this is the great business and employment of a christian in this life. More particularly, our great work is to be getting dispositions for heaven and evidences for heaven. To be getting dispositions for heaven, to be meet to live above: Col. i. 12, ' Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' Before God calls us hence, and translates us to heaven, he first makes us meet for it. As Esther, when she was chosen to be bride to Ahasuerus, she was to accomplish the months of her purification, to purify herself with odours and sweet oils, Esther ii. 12. So the time of our lives is as the months of our purification, and our great business is to get a fit frame of heart, to live above among the glorified spirits. As Christ's business in

heaven is to prepare heaven for us, so our business on earth is to prepare and fit ourselves for heaven, to be providing and trimming our lamps against the bridegroom comes. So, to get evidences for heaven as well as dispositions—to get it certified and ratified to our souls every day more and more, this is a christian's employment—'To be laying up a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold of eternal life,' 1 Tim. vi. 18; to get his evidences more cleared up every day, that we may take hold of eternal life, that is, that we may seize upon it as a man doth upon his own right and portion.

[4.] They declare plainly that they seek a country. There was not only a verbal, but a real confession; for by dwelling in tents they did more openly acknowledge their desires of another country. They did not go up and down, and tell men that they were strangers and pilgrims; but by dwelling in these poor movable habitations, when the Canaanites dwelt in cities, and built houses, hereby they declared to all that lived about them, that they looked for another country. So, christians, your business is to declare plainly that your journey lies towards heaven; you should discover your hopes more in your lives than you do, by walking suitably and answerably thereunto, and as those that are not ashamed of their country, that so you may draw in others to be companions with you in your journey to heaven. When all your cares, griefs, desires and endeavours are for civil and carnal things, you declare plainly that you savour of the world; but when the heart is taken up with better things, and the face of your conversation lies another way, then you declare plainly your journey is for heaven. And this is it which is meant everywhere by walking worthy of God and worthy of our vocation, that is, answerably and suitably to, and becoming your great hopes, and that kingdom and glory to which God hath called you. A christian should not live unsuitably to his hopes, but should discover them in his life, that all that see him may know that his heart and his hopes are above, and that God hath called him to his kingdom and glory: 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'That you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.' This will discover whether you have a heavenly mind, yea or no.

## SERMON L.

*Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city.—HEB. xi. 16.*

WHAT is the meaning of this—'God is not ashamed to be called their God?' This shame might be supposed to arise from the unworthiness of these patriarchs, or from the slenderness of their reward.

1. From the contemptibleness and unworthiness of these patriarchs; and so the sense would be that God is not ashamed to abase himself to, put honour upon his servants that honour him. Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob were persons of contemptible appearance, a few poor wan-