

SERMON LV.

By faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.—HEB. xi. 21.

WE are come to the third patriarch, which is Jacob; his faith is set forth—

1. By the time—*When he was a-dying.*

2. By the actions wherein his faith was exercised; they were two—*The blessing the sons of Joseph,* and—*The worshipping on the top of his staff;* for I look upon both these actions as distinct.

First, For the time—‘Jacob, when he was a-dying,’ in a weak body he shows a strong faith. He could hardly turn in his bed, yet in the failing of all his strength he discovereth his respect to God and his faith in the promises; he would be worshipping, and commending the promises and the covenant. We may learn hence—

Doct. That faith is a grace that stands us, and honoureth God both in life and death.

I have spoken of the exercise of faith at death in the 13th verse, and therefore shall but touch of it now.

1. Faith steadeth us at death. True grace doth best at last. Carnal wisdom doth best for a while; none seem to live such lives as carnal men for a while; but when death comes, there is the great trial—‘What hope hath the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God takes away his soul?’ Job xxvii. 8. Wicked men are forced to die, whether they will or no,—God takes away their souls. They would fain keep them. That is the meanest part of wisdom, to provide for our being in the world; but to die well, to go out of the world comfortably, that is true wisdom. Carnal wisdom will stead you well enough for the present life, though many times it is blasted and frustrated. Therefore Job speaks by way of supposition—‘Though he hath gained.’ Usually he doth well enough; but when God comes to take away his soul, we see a failure in all these things. Natural courage will bear us out in lesser brunts. Security and ignorance will help us to die sottishly; but to die comfortably, to die worshipping and glorifying God for the promises, that is the privilege and work of faith.

2. Faith honours God, not only in life, but in death; for it doth not only yield comfort to ourselves, but enables us to confirm others. A carnal man cannot speak well of the world when he comes to die; oh, he dares not commend his worldly life to others! But a godly man can speak well of God, and commend the covenant and promise to others: Gen. xlviii. 15, 16, ‘The God which fed me all my life long to this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.’ As if he had said, I have had much experience of the angel of the covenant, who hath been with me, and kept me in all my ways. I do not commend you to Pharaoh, nor desire him to be kind to you, nor advance you as he hath done your father; no, but the angel of the covenant bless you; no blessing like that.

Use 1. Well then, get such a faith as this is. Nothing will hold out in death but this. The world fails; riches have done their office,

and their work is at an end when death comes, for they are only supplies for the present life. And courage fails; for then we have not to do with men, but with God, and 'Can your heart endure or your hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with you?' Ezek. xxii. 14. Security fails: that is the devil's policy while we live, to keep us secure; but when we come to die, he hath another engine to destroy us, and that is despair. And presumption or false faith, that fails, for now men begin to be serious; as they come nearer to eternity, they grow wiser, and then a false faith will not serve the turn, that will not keep up that confidence it kept up before. Therefore nothing will stead you but true faith in such an hour. If christians did oftener think of death, they would not be contented with such a slight provision for eternity as they usually make. Oh! could I die comfortably, would I venture my eternal condition in this estate?

Use 2. Act faith after this manner when you come to die, that it may yield comfort to you and glory to God. Comfort to you: a christian is not to be passive in his death, to die as a beast. Think of the covenant which yieldeth comfort for soul, and for body, and for children. Jacob worshipped when Joseph had sworn to bury his bones in Canaan with his father, their society in the grave was a type of their communion in heaven; then he worshipped upon the top of his rod, I am going to God and Christ, to Abraham and Isaac, to dwell with them in the presence of God; this was his comfort. Get such a faith, I say, that you may have comfort for your bodies, and souls, and children; for here Jacob blesseth his children, and comforts himself that he should go to the state of the blessed; for that was figured in carrying the bones thither. So also such a faith will honour and glorify God. This is the last time you can do anything for God. Now it is a great honour to God when you can give him a good testimony as the fruit of all your experience, as Joshua doth: Joshua xxiii. 14, 'I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.' So Jacob here commends the God of the covenant, the angel of the covenant, and the blessings of the covenant, and gives it out as the result of all his experiences.

Secondly, Let us come to the actions about which his faith was conversant it is said—

First, 'He blessed both the sons of Joseph.' In the original it is *ἐκαστον τῶν υἱῶν*, every one of the sons of Joseph, though we read but of two, therefore it is well translated, 'both.' Here I shall show (1.) The reasons of the blessing; (2.) The manner; (3.) How it was done by faith.

1. For the reasons; why were Joseph's children blessed rather than others? Why doth the apostle only mention them?

[1.] Because they were born in Egypt, in a foreign land, out of Jacob's family, and now they were to be incorporated and taken into the body of the holy seed, the people of God. For mark, when Jacob blesseth them, what doth he say? Gen. xlviii. 16, 'Let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.' He doth

not say, The Lord make you great in Egypt; the Lord preserve you in your honour and happiness, for they had powerful alliance and great respect in the country. No, but the name of Abraham and Isaac be on them; that is, be you reckoned among the people of God. As for those other nations that were not taken into the church, the name of Abraham was not named among them; the name of the patriarchs was quickly extinguished in Ishmael's and Esau's family. But let the name of Abraham and Isaac be upon them; that is, keep there, join yourselves there. He seeks by this blessing to withdraw them from Egypt, and from their kindred there, that they might have a name among the rest of the tribes, and remain annexed to the church, and take the common share and lot with the people of God.

[2.] Because of Jacob's special affection to Joseph, and God's special providence in and about Joseph. He makes Joseph's two sons to be two distinct tribes; as he did not the sons of his other children, but they were called after the name of their father, the children of Reuben, and the children of Simeon, no notice of their sons, but Manasseh and Ephraim are made distinct tribes. Now the reason of this is, Joseph had the privilege of the first-born, and the first-born was to have a double portion. Now that Joseph might have a double portion, Ephraim and Manasseh had both a share in the land of Canaan. That it was the right of the first-born to have a double portion appeareth by Deut. xxi. 17, 'He shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the first-born by giving him a double portion of all that he hath, for he is the beginning of his strength, the right of the first-born is his.' Reuben was the first-born, but he forfeited his right, and then it was vested in Joseph: 1 Chron. v. 1, 2, 'Reuben was the first-born, but forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birth-right. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the first ruler, but the birth-right was Joseph's.' And indeed of right it belonged to him, if Laban had not deceived Jacob by substituting Leah in Rachel's place, and Joseph was her first-born, and now by the providence of God the primogeniture is restored to him. Indeed when Israel was branched into twelve tribes, the right of the first-born was thus divided; the priesthood, that was one right of primogeniture, was bestowed upon Levi; the sovereignty, another right of primogeniture, was bestowed upon Judah; there was David's throne, from whom the Messiah came; and then the third right was the double portion; that is clearly settled upon Joseph; therefore his two sons are made two distinct tribes.

2. In what manner was this blessing bestowed? Here again the younger, by the special providence of God, was preferred before the elder: Gen. xlviii. 14, 'And Israel stretched forth his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head.' Jacob, though blind, guided his hands wittingly it was not a thing of chance, but there was much of the providence of God. In the Hebrew it is, He made his hand understand, God was with him, to take this son and leave that; to settle the supremacy upon Ephraim, and the children that sprang out of him; for in the light of prophecy he foresaw the kingdom should be in the race of

Ephraim, Num. i. 32; compared with ver. 34; there it is said, first, 'The children of Joseph, to wit, by Ephraim were forty thousand and five hundred;' afterwards, 'The children of Manasseh were thirty and two thousand and two hundred.' So when the tribes were sealed, Rev. vii. the tribe of Manasseh is mentioned, ver. 6, and the tribe of Ephraim is called the tribe of Joseph, ver. 8. Ephraim had the pre-eminence, and had Joseph's right devolved upon him.

3. Wherein lay the faith; for it is said, 'By faith he blessed the two sons of Joseph.' Partly, in embracing the revelation that was made to him by God in prophecy. Partly, in pronouncing the blessing according to the tenor of that revelation; for as the cordial assent is an act of faith, so confession with the mouth is a fruit of faith. Partly, in looking through the present difficulties to things to come. Isaac blesseth in Gerar, Joseph in Egypt, where he died an exile, yet he beholdeth things to come, as if present. Partly, in a contempt of the world, in minding them of Canaan, and of the covenant, when they had great honours, renown, and power in Egypt. Joseph was governor in Egypt, yet he comes to settle such a blessing as notwithstanding which they should be exiled and banished, and oppressed with the rest of their brethren, that he might withdraw them from the honours of Egypt. The great end of the blessing was to keep themselves joined to the body of the church whatever befell them.

Obs. 1. It is no small privilege to be taken into visible covenant with God, or to be joined with the body of the church.

Jacob doth not desire the continuance of their present greatness in Egypt, but puts them in mind of the covenant and of the name of Abraham. Joseph would have left to his children nobility of blood, a rich patrimony in Egypt, but he brings them to his father Jacob to receive his blessing. And what is that? An infeoffment into the visible privileges of the covenant. The blessings of Egypt are nothing in comparison to the blessings of Zion. Now it is no small privilege to be joined to the body of the church, because there we may have communion with God, and with the people of God. There we know God most, and there we enjoy God most. There we know God most, Ps. xxvii. 4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord,' &c. Mark, in the house of the Lord, that is, in the church; for the temple was a figure of the spiritual church, there we behold the beauty of the Lord. By the light of nature we may know God; but it is by track or footprint, or some obscure shadow; but in his house we see his glory, his wisdom, his grace, his beauty. The great end why we are brought to heaven is to behold the beauty of the Lord, to see him face to face. Now this is begun in the church, we come more immediately to look upon his wisdom, glory, and goodness in Christ, and the riches of the covenant of grace. And there we have most enjoyment of God. There are common blessings God gives to the world, but then there are blessings come out of Zion, therefore it is said: Ps. cxxviii. 5, 'The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion;' and Ps. cxxxiv. 3, 'The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion;' Ps. cxxxiii. 3, 'There,—that is, out of Zion,—the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for

evermore.' To have a blessing merely from a creator, as he is the maker of heaven and earth, that is no such enjoyment of God; but in Sion there he will communicate himself to his people; there is the light of his countenance, pardon of sin, sanctification of common mercies, and the graces of his Spirit. Ever since the creation there are some places where God will be enjoyed. The angels had a proper place to enjoy God in heaven; therefore the apostle takes notice that they 'kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation,' Jude 6. Mark, it is *ἰδίων οἰκητήριον*, their proper place, where they were to enjoy God; therefore they lost their original state of happiness and glory, because they left their own habitation. Paradise was the place Adam was to enjoy God in; when he was driven out of his place, then he loses his communion with God. We enjoy God in the church, there he will be found of us; therefore it is good to keep our place; God will communicate himself to his people there. There also we have communion with the saints and children of God, and are helps one to another, and that is a great happiness. Our communion with the saints is a privilege, as well as our communion with God. The fire is kept in when the coals lie together; so the converse of the people of God together keeps in the fire of religion. Wine is best preserved in the hogshead. Our fellow-members are appointed to be means of our mutual edification and spiritual supply: Eph. iv. 16, 'By that which every joint supplieth.'

Use. This showeth what we should chiefly respect and seek, both for ourselves and for our children. For ourselves, that we may have a nail in the holy place, an interest in the church, that the blessings of Abraham may come upon us. You should esteem more of God's covenant, and of being members of the church, than of all the honours of the world besides. So for our posterity, parents should not strive so much to make their children great as good; to see them joined to the body of Christ's church, that is the best blessing you can leave them. It is not your work merely to prefer them to such an office or such an estate, to make them free of such a city or corporation, but to look that these spiritual privileges may be continued in those that come from your loins. For a man truly spiritual will desire spiritual privileges, not only for himself, but for others, that there they may be where God is enjoyed; that they may edify one another in love and faith, and forward one another in spiritual worship.

Obs. 2. In conferring this blessing there is a difference here again; Ephraim, the younger, is preferred before Manasseh, the elder, the regality is entailed upon him. Learn thence, there is a difference not only between the blessings of the wicked and the godly, but between the blessings of the godly and the godly. In the former verse you have Jacob and Esau represented with their different blessings; Esau hath his common portion, and Jacob his covenant blessing; there is a godly and a wicked man. But here Ephraim and Manasseh, two branches of the covenant, and they have different blessings; Ephraim is preferred, that he might have the pre-eminence, and that Joseph's portion may be entailed upon him. And still God keeps the same course, the Lord doth not deal alike with his children, neither in temporals nor spirituals. There is *ἐκλεκτων ἐκλεκτότεροι*, the elect of the elect,

the flower of God's people, that have more choice privileges than others. In the little body of Christ's own disciples there were some were treated more familiarly than others. Peter, James, and John, were taken to see the transfiguration of Christ, Mat. xvii. 1, and afterward to see the passion of Christ, Mat. xxvi. 37. There are some to whom God will manifest himself more familiarly, give them larger supplies of comfort, and a more plentiful allowance in the course of his providence. As in the sphere of reprobation there is a great deal of difference between God's dispensations—all are not passed by alike, some have more means, better tempers, advantages of education, though the Lord hath not given them special grace; so also in the sphere of election there is a great deal of difference—some have more advantages to glorify God than others, more comfortable and sweeter incomes of the Spirit of God, higher opportunities of service, greater supplies of grace, more abilities of parts, and the like. There is a difference in grace, all have not a like measure, there are stars of the first magnitude; the same fountain filleth several cisterns, but all have not a like measure. There is a difference in comfort,—some are kept mournful, and others walk more comfortably; some travel the upper, and some the lower way to heaven. There is a difference in gifts: 1 Cor. xii. 8, 'To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit,' &c. There is a difference in estate and outward supply; levelling is not God's way, 'The poor you have always with you,' Mat. xxvi. 11. God will be glorified in every relation,—by some as servants, by others as masters of families, for in all things God will be free, and we must submit. The talents were not equally distributed,—one had five, another three, another one. Therefore let us not murmur, we have all more than we can well improve. If these things happened according to chance or to man's designation, we might murmur; but there is a wise providence in it. God is the disposer of honours, and dignities, and estates: 1 Sam. ii. 7, 'The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich; he bringeth low and lifteth up.' And so he disposeth of comforts; we must tarry till the master of the feast bids us sit higher. Do not limit him, and begrudge the Lord the freedom of his counsels. Thou art there where God hath set thee, and if thou canst not improve this relation to the glory of God, thou wilt never improve an higher. The tree that cannot thrive in the valleys, will never thrive on the bleak mountains and tops of barren hills. We are not to choose what part we will act in the world; God is the great master of the scenes. Say then, I have that which the Lord sees fit for me; this should be the temper of a christian, to say, I have a covenant portion, though I do not come up to the height of what others enjoy. God will never maintain all his servants at the same rate, but some shall have more, some less, according to his own wise distribution.

Obs. 3. The prophetic blessing is again ascribed to faith.

The light of faith and the light of prophecy differ in some things, yet they agree in many. They differ in the extraordinariness of the revelation: the light of prophecy depends upon an extraordinary revelation, but faith hath the ordinary word of God. Peculiar instinct and vision makes way for the light of prophecy, but we have the com-

mon ground of the word of God. They had oracles, we 'a sure word of prophecy,' 2 Peter i. 19. In prophecy there is an immediate illumination; there is not discourse and argument so much as there is in faith. In prophecy the particular event is more expressly foretold, the Lord binds his hands as it were by prophecy; but we must refer ourselves to the general tenor of the covenant, that 'all things shall work together for good,' Rom. viii. 28. And they agree in this in having the same general ground, divine revelation; we have the word of God to show, as well as they; and as to the particular event, an actual trust is not disappointed, and sometimes in those that enjoy communion with God there may be particular instincts for special mercies. Thus much for the first action, wherein he showed the strength of his faith in the weakness of his body—'Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph.'

Secondly, For the other action—'He worshipped leaning upon the top of his staff.' Here you have (1.) The action—'He worshipped;' (2.) The gesture 'Leaning upon the top of his staff.'

1. The action—'He worshipped.' This worship was not a civil worship performed to Joseph, but religious worship to the Lord. The indefinite expression shows that it must be taken in a more noble sense; that is, he worshipped God. Now what kind of worship was this? He was about to resign his soul, and therefore there is thanksgiving contained in it for mercies already received, and prayer for mercies to come.

[1.] There is thanksgiving in it. So the Targum, *Laudes Dei cecinit super spondam suam*. Joseph had sworn and promised to bury him in the land of Canaan, to lay him with his fathers; the society of the grave was a pledge of the communion of saints in heaven, then he sings the praises of God upon his bed's head, and glorifies God in the midst of his weak estate. I find the like passage concerning David when he heard the shouting and the acclamations of the people when the kingdom was settled upon Solomon, it is said, 1 Kings i. 47, 'The king bowed himself upon the bed.' So Jacob, having obtained his desires, and passed through the pikes, and all the dangers of the present life, falls a-praising and glorifying of God. As men are, so are their thoughts and carriage at death: Jacob is worshipping, blessing, and praising God for past experiences, for present assurance, and for future hopes; so we should go out of the world praising and glorifying God both for what is past, and present, and to come, that we shall have a society with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for ever.

[2.] It may imply his prayer to God likewise, that those blessings might be accomplished.

2. The gesture—'Leaning on the top of his staff.' It is said, Gen. xlvii. 31, 'Israel bowed himself upon the bed's-head.' Some reconcile these places thus; that to give the greater honour to God, he rose out of his bed, and sat upon his bed, leaning upon his staff; for it is said, after these blessings were finished, he gathered up his feet into the bed and died. The most genuine reconciling of the place is this, to acknowledge a condescension of the Holy Ghost, in making use of a corrupt translation that was then in use. The Septuagint, they read as the apostle doth

here, προσκύνησεν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ, 'That he worshipped upon the top of his staff.' When the Hebrew bible was without prickles or vowels, there might be a mistake of the word *הַטָּבַח*, *lectus*, a bed, for *הַטָּבַח*, *baculus*, a staff or rod. But possibly it might be both, he might lean upon his bed, and upon the top of his staff at the same time. And the apostle would not contend in a thing indifferent, nor bring any other exposition than what was now in their hands, for he writes to the Hebrews; and the Jews living among the Grecians had accustomed themselves to the Septuagint. The apostles were not so scrupulous but that they did accommodate themselves to the weak in things not weighty, to show what condescension we should use in like cases to the infirmities of others. But what is the meaning of this posture and gesture? Many fond superstitions are drawn from hence, as all matters of external gesture and ceremony are apt to be abused; superstition presently gets in, and improves them to vile uses. Some plead from hence for bowing to the east, and bowing to the cross, which they suppose figured in Jacob's hands laid cross upon Joseph's sons; others to some supposed image upon the top of his staff. But this gesture was used, partly, to show his reverence and humility in the worship of God. Though he was now grown weak and impotent with age and sickness, and could hardly get out of his bed, yet he was loth to use an irreverent gesture. Having special business with God, he raiseth up himself leaning upon his bed, and praises the Lord; he doth, as well as he can, put himself into the posture of such as worshipped with a bended knee, an expression of reverence and humility. And partly, this gesture was a public profession of his dependence and reliance upon God's promises. I find there are two interpretations made of this gesture. Some (as Grotius and others) make it to be an emblem of faith, as trust is often compared to leaning. Trust in the creatures is compared to leaning upon a reed or staff in 2 Kings xviii. 21, 'Behold thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it shall go into his hand.' So they make it to be an emblem or public profession of his faith, and that, I think, it is in general. Another more suitably and more probably conceives Jacob's leaning upon his staff was, not only to sustain his feeble body, but that he might use this gesture as a profession of his pilgrimage—and faith in the heavenly country. The patriarchs were wont upon all occasions to declare they were pilgrims; now a staff was an emblem of their pilgrimage: Gen. xxxii. 10, 'With my staff I passed over this Jordan;' Exod. xii. 11, they were to eat the passover 'with their staff in their hands;' and Mark vi. 8, the disciples were commanded 'to take nothing for their journey but a staff,' &c. So Jacob, to declare his hopes were in another and a better country, that here he was but a sojourner and pilgrim, he leaned on his staff. But I will rather content myself with the general observation, that it is the gesture by which he did publicly express and declare his humility and thankfulness to God for the great mercies bestowed on him, and his faith in God.

Obs. 1. That our addresses to God must be reverent, both as to the frame of the soul and as to the gesture of the body.

Poor impotent Jacob desires to put himself into the posture of supplicants. As to the frame of the soul, our addresses to God must be reverent. Reverence is a special qualification in worship. A child of God cannot be always affectionate, for affection depends much upon the vigorous motion of bodily spirits and other accidental causes, therefore a child of God cannot always pray with like affection; but a child of God should be always reverent and serious. Without this it is no worship; we forget with whom we have to do. To come otherwise is a lessening of the greatness and majesty of God. As those which offered a corrupt thing, the Lord confutes them with this: Mal. i. 13, 'I am a great king, saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.' They that come in a carnal, formal manner to the Lord, they do not consider they have to do with a great king, and with the God of all the world, Superficial dealing in God's service argues we have mean thoughts of God, and are enemies to his greatness: we go about to persuade the world that God is not so great and terrible. The first reason, 'I am a great king,' implies it is a lessening of his majesty; and the second reason, 'My name is dreadful among the heathen,' implies that familiarity and acquaintance should not lessen and weaken our dread of God. The very heathens have an awe of divine powers; those that pray now and then upon some eminent judgment of God or affrightment of conscience, are full of dread. But though we should be familiar with God, we should not forget that his name is dreadful; it is custom and formal worship, unless those that pray constantly are possessed with an awe of God. Heathens that have but a little light to see into the nature of God, yet they see enough to fear that which they suppose to be God. Therefore christians that know more of God, should come with a dread of his presence, and with a heart awed with a sense of God's glory. Our familiarity and constant converse should abate nothing of our godly fear and reverence, for they that know the least of God know enough to reverence him, though not to put confidence in him: 'My name is known among the heathen.' And as there should be reverence in the frame of the soul, so also in the gestures of the body: for God that made both body and soul, will be served by both; and Christ that redeemed both, will be served by both — 'Glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirits, which are God's,' 1 Cor. vi. 20. Not that I would here stand upon gestures, you are not bound absolutely to this or that; and the examples of saints recorded in scripture are various and different, whether standing, kneeling, or falling upon the face, to show that in such things christians are left to their own liberty; but at least we may collect this much in the general that there is a necessity laid upon us that the gesture should be reverent and serious, and when we are not hindered by any just cause, we must choose such gestures, as do most of all savour of humility and reverence in worship of the great God, and such as doth argue that we are not backward. Sitting, and lying along at prayer, does not savour so much of reverence, humility and zeal as we should show. As to the particular gesture God would give no law, for according to the affection of the heart, such will be the motion and posture of the body; and the received custom of the nation doth most show what is decent;

and the use and practice of the church is to be regarded, that we may give the least offence; that unless we are hindered by invincible impotency and weakness of body, we should be careful of our very gestures.

Obs. 2. That where faith gives a willing mind, bodily infirmities shall be no let and hindrance from duty.

Faith makes us to do our best, to do all that we can to glorify God; and then duty is most acceptable where most self-denial is shown; when we recover it out of the hands of a temptation, from our lazy, self-loving heart, duty is sweet then. Timothy was a weak man, he had his infirmities, 1 Tim. v. 23; yet he did not cease from his work in the gospel, or neglect his charge. Now I shall show how faith works upon such an occasion: faith looks backward, forward, round about us, and every way it engageth and encourageth the soul against bodily distempers, to be doing something that may bring glory to God, and may conduce to the worship of his majesty. Faith looks backward: and thus faith represents Jesus Christ as dying upon the cross, what pains Christ endured in his own body,—his face spit upon, his hands and feet nailed to the cross, his head crowned with thorns, and shall we stand upon the body? Christ exposed his body to the utmost suffering; pain was poured in upon him by the conduit of every sense; and if Christ stood not upon his body, but neglected his refreshment to do good to souls, shall we stand upon our bodies? Thus faith looks backward upon the love of Christ, and urgeth the soul to do what we are able, notwithstanding bodily infirmities; as old Jacob raised up himself in his bed when he was hardly able to move, leaning upon his staff, worshipping of God. Then faith looks round about us, and shows how far lust prevaileth with men; and shall not the love of God prevail with us? Carnal men in pursuance of their fleshly lusts can weary and waste the body; and shall we stand upon every lesser excuse? Shall others beat their brains, tire and waste their spirits, go to bed late, rise early, and all to accomplish their worldly projects, and to satisfy their vile lusts and will; and will you not do something for God, and deny your ease and pleasure for God? We are willing to put ourselves on self-denial for everything but for God's sake. Sin is a tyrant, it wastes and weakens men; yet still it hath obedience paid to it. Men make their bodies drudges to their lusts and vile affections; and in all sports and pleasures what pains will men take! Pain seems to be the very sauce of pleasure; and shall we begrudge a little pains taken in prayer, a little struggling and wrestling with God in private and secret prayer? So faith looks forward to things to come when this earthly tabernacle shall be dissolved, 2 Cor. v. 1; and the body crumbled to dust and ashes. It is better to be worn out with labour than eaten out with rust and consumed with idleness. Faith looks upward, and there beholds the blessed recompenses for the body; the great things God hath provided not only for your souls (that is indeed the heaven of heaven, and the chiefest part of our happiness), but for your bodies. The body that hath a share in labours shall have also a share in the happiness: Phil. iii. 21, 'Who shall change our vile bodies,' &c. Though you waste and spend your bodies in the service

of the Lord, yet they will be repaired again. Oh, how glorious was Christ's body! It may be discerned in part in his transfiguration, there were such beamings forth of light from the body of Christ that the disciples could not bear it. Such kind of bodies for clarity, brightness, and strength shall the saints have; this massy clog of flesh and blood which is such a hindrance to us, it shall then be made like to Christ's glorious body. There will be nothing lost by Christ; he that could heal Malchus's ear, can restore what is lost, wasted, spent and worn out in constant duty. He will make up all again. Then *faith* looks downward; there are hell's torments which are provided, not only for the soul, but for the body. Then *faith* judgeth, it is better to take pains than to endure pains; it is better to be bound with cords of duty than with chains of darkness; these pains are nothing to what the wicked shall endure in hell. Though I do not believe there is corporal fire in hell, yet clearly there are pains that shall immediately be inflicted upon the body; not only pains in the body resulting from the sympathy it hath with the soul, but upon the body itself: Mat. x. 28, 'Fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.' And there is a place of torment, but what it is we cannot tell. Now *faith* represents this, the terrors that are to come, and shall we stand for a little pains for God.

Use. It shames us for our laziness and love of ease. Love of ease and pleasure is the bane of christianity; away with those nice christians that are so sparing and tender of their bodies! Oh, let not the body betray the soul! If you would gratify one part above another gratify the soul, for that is the better part; and in gratifying the soul, you gratify the body in the issue. If out of love to duty you should neglect the body a little, the body will lose nothing by it at last. Christians, whenever ease and laziness creep upon you, remember it is good to interest the body in some self-denial, that it may the better look for its share. Jacob was willing to rouse up himself, to put himself into a posture of suppliant, to give a good example to his children. Consider, duty is never sweeter than when there is some difficulty, and when it is recovered out of the hands of indisposition. Shall we serve God with that which cost us nothing? Though it put us to pain, and be some intrenchment to our ease, it will be sweeter at length. Contempt of ease and pleasure is the greatest pleasure in the end. That is worth nothing that cost nothing, and excuses are a sign of an unwilling heart. Where the spirit is willing, though the flesh is weak, a christian will be doing what he can, he will not sit out. And consider, the body is Christ's as well as the soul: 1 Cor. vi. 20, 'Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your bodies and with your spirits, which are God's.' When duty proves grievous and burdensome, consider, your bodies are not your own, they are bought by Christ, and let it not be grievous and burdensome to you to give Christ his own. He expects the body should be put to some pains. To conclude, when we are lazy, and ease is apt to creep upon us, then set *faith* a-work, looking backward, forward, upward, downward. Let it argue and plead for God from what is past, and what is to come. Let *faith* be expecting, waiting, looking up, there will a time come when the body

will not be a clog, but will be a spiritual body, that is, more fit for spiritual employments and spiritual enjoyments, that it shall never be weary of. There is no weariness in heaven, both soul and body shall ever remain fresh, to rejoice in and praise the Lord; there is no indisposition, no weakness there. Then let it argue, If God hath provided such things for us, what! shall I be backward? And if it be difficult, here is an occasion to show my love.

SERMON LVI.

By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones.—
HEB. xi. 22.

HERE we have (1.) The person; (2.) The times; (3.) The effects of his faith.

First. The person mentioned for his faith—*Joseph.*

1. Let us consider him as Jacob's son, for still the line of believers is continued. The three former are called heirs of the same promise. Now the next in rank is Joseph, who was eminent for faith; the rest had their privileges, but the scripture taketh notice of this most notably. It is an advantage to be born of godly parents; Timothy is said to be 'the son of a Jewess woman that believed,' Acts xvi. 1. Though the piety of the parents doth not hinder but that children are born in sin, and so are under the curse; yet they have a treble benefit.

[1.] The children of such, without any scruple, are to be accounted children of the covenant, and belonging to the church, till they do actually declare the contrary: Rom. xi. 16, 'For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.' They are a covenant stock; the apostle useth two comparisons, of the first-fruits, and of the root: 1 Cor. vii. 14, 'Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.'

[2.] That in their infancy they are seasoned with good education, and the sprouts of sin are cut off betimes, before they come to be hardened and strengthened by custom. Though education cannot kill sin, yet it hindereth the growth of sin; the vessel is seasoned betimes. Letters graven in the bark of a tree grow with a tree; a little scratch will come to be a deep dent or gap; this is hindered. And this is to be supposed of all godly parents: Gen. xviii. 19, 'I know Abraham that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.' You hinder the impressions of sin at least, if God's blessing give not more.