

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.

[3.] There God usually chooseth and bestoweth his special grace, though he be not absolutely tied. The grace of the covenant runneth most kindly in the channel of the covenant; these are the natural branches: Rom. xi. 24, 'How much more shall those that be the natural branches be grafted into their own olive-tree?' The apostle thence evinceth the Jews conversion.

And this was Joseph's case; when he was young in his tender years, he was seasoned with good education; and though he was sold into Egypt, and a long time lived among idolaters; yet the grace of God findeth him out, and followeth him, because of his father's covenant. He seemed to be cast off and lost, yet still God looketh on him as a branch of the covenant—'By faith Joseph, when he died,' &c.

Use 1. Well then, you see how hurtful the wickedness of those that have children is, they hurt not only their own souls, but as much as in them lieth they destroy their children too, and so are not only *patres*, but *peremptores*, as Bernard called them; they murder their own posterity.

Use 2. And hence is the wickedness aggravated of those that are born of godly parents, that were seasoned with good education, yet have broken out; none sin as they do, they sin against preventing grace, against privileges and warnings. If there be a hotter place in hell, they shall have it.

Use 3. It is some plea to say, I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid. God delighteth to be owned as our father's friend: Ps. cxvi. 15, 'O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid.' As David showed kindness to Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake, 2 Sam. ix. 11.

2. Let us look upon Joseph as a great courtier in Egypt, as a man that had run through various conditions, but was now well settled, counted a father in the country. But all that wealth, delight, and honour, which he enjoyed there, could not induce a forgetfulness or neglect of the promise, nor entice his heart to be set on Egypt; it was another country to Joseph. It was better with him there than at home, yet he telleth them of their departure; and to show his affection to the land of promise, he would not have a bone left there. Note, That honour and riches do not hurt faith in themselves, where there is a gracious heart to manage them. In themselves they are God's gifts, and must be improved to his glory.

[1.] I shall show that the rich are not excluded from the exercise of faith: Ps. xxii. 26, 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied;' and ver. 29, 'All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship.' The rich and the poor have the same ransom: 1 Tim. vi. 17, 'Charge them that are rich in the world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.' God will choose men of all conditions; not all poor, lest religion should be trodden underfoot; not all rich, lest it should seem to be supported by a secular arm, and lest there be a disparagement of the blessings of his providence. *Dantur bonis, ne putentur mala*, &c.—They are given to good men, lest they be thought not to be good

things, and to wicked men, lest they be esteemed to be the chiefest good.

[2.] There is as much faith seen, yea more, in moderating the affections in a full estate, as in depending upon God for supplies; to learn to abound is a hard lesson, to see the love of God in all, and to keep from settling here: Ps. lxii. 10, 'If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.' To be thankful and to be useful. The poor have not such temptations as the rich. Diseases that arise from plenty are most usual, though diseases that arise from want are most dangerous; so that a full estate hath most temptations. Joseph's brethren had their temptations, yet they had not such temptations as Joseph had. Men that have nothing are as it were driven to it, beaten to dependence upon God; but here there is more of choice, when they are full and well. If Joseph had liked the pomp of Egypt, he might have had enough there.

Use. Well then, it maketh for the comfort and caution of rich men.

1. For their comfort. There are some of your order, though not many: 1 Cor. i. 26, 'Not many mighty, not many noble, are called.' Joseph, a courtier in Egypt; and the eunuch in Acts viii. 27, was treasurer of queen Candace. Usually the poor receive the gospel, in the first times of the gospel especially, lest it should seem to be supported by human force and power, but not always. God hath taken in great ones, there is room for your faith.

2. For their caution. Be of Joseph's temper, let Egypt be nothing to Canaan. This is the true greatness of mind, in counting the highest things which you enjoy as nothing in comparison of heaven. There are none bound to look after better things so much as you; for you have tasted more of God's bounty, you have more occasion to make trial of the world's vanity and nothingness, you are in a condition wherein many miscarry; as in a dangerous way we are more careful of our steps. Say then, All this is nothing to heaven; let me go there where my home, my country, my estate, my treasure, my inheritance is.

Secondly, The time when his faith was exercised—*When he died,* τελευτῶν, at his ending; it alludeth to his speech: Gen. i. 24, 'I die; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land.' He saw that death was at hand, and he meeteth it with a confident spirit. It is one of the blessings which God bestoweth upon his children, that when they are about to go out of the world he begetteth a knowledge of it, or maketh it sensible to them that their end draweth nigh, that they may dispose of their affairs, and compose their spirits for their dissolution. 'When he was dying;' all of them are said before to die in faith, and therefore is this circumstance so often repeated. Observe how willing the children of God were to renew their own faith, and to encourage, and strengthen others a little before their death. We brought you the examples of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and here is Joseph's instance, he comforts himself and his brethren with the memorial of the promise. I showed you their grounds, because this was the last act of love, and then their words were received with most reverence. Now I shall only press you that you may go and do likewise, to be providing for such a time. All our lifetime we should be

preparing for our dying speech and valediction, that we may not go out in a snuff, but may take our leave from the world with honour to God and comfort to ourselves. Christians, is your dying speech ready? Consider, there is no dissembling then, you must be able to speak it in truth of heart, and it had need be pressing, and serious, and stirring, for you shall never speak for God more in the world. I say, Is it ready? Can you call to mind promises? Can you yield up your souls to God? Are you furnished with experiences to confirm others? A christian is not to die like a beast, to be only passive, merely to yield to the necessity of nature, and there is an end. It is a harder matter to die well than you are aware. Can you take your soul in your hand, and yield it up to God in a confidence of the promises? Oh! let us all provide, we are all hastening this way; some of you are young, and you hold life but by an uncertain tenure. When swine come into a garden, they crop off the buds as well as the grown flowers; death maketh no distinction. Some of you are old, you are as good as dead already; Heb. xi. 12, 'Therefore sprang there of one, and him as good as dead,' &c. A little provision will not serve the turn; many of God's eminent servants have been even foiled in this last combat; you had need gather up many experiences, you had need be acquainted with the promises, that you may have them ready. In the text it is said, 'He made mention,' or remembered, *ἐμνημόνευσε*; if we would make use of the promises in a dying time, we should keep them in sight and mind that they may be ever ready. It is the last enemy you are to grapple with, you had need of armour of proof. It is an enemy that will come well provided with weapons ready drawn, and if we are not wholly armed, we shall go by the worst; nay, we shall put weapons into the enemy's hand by our sins and fears. If you have not the breast-plate of faith and the helmet of salvation, what will you do? Alas! you never met with such an enemy in your lives as this last enemy; you have lived forty or fifty years, and have rubbed out well enough, but this is another manner of enemy.

Thirdly, The effects of this faith, or if you will, the effect, and the sign, and visible symbol of it.

First, The first effect of his faith is—*He made mention of the departure of the children of Israel*: Gen. i. 24, 'I die, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land into the land which he sware to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' 'In visiting he will visit you.' Now this he mentioneth, not only to testify his own faith and hope, but also to confirm his brethren that they might hope well though he should die; and to draw them out of Egypt as much as he could. Now the strength of his faith was shown in this, that this deliverance and departure out of Egypt was a great while yet to come, to come to pass a great many years afterwards; and in the meantime they were to be after his death under a hard and cruel oppression in Egypt; for in all this he alludeth to the promise: Gen. xv. 13, 14, 'Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterwards shall they come out with great substance.' There is a great deal of faith

shown in the public deliverance of God's people. Here I shall show—

1. Why faith is to be herein exercised.

[1.] So far as a christian is interested to act and look after blessings, so far is he bound to believe. Now a christian is not only to seek his own things, but the common welfare of the saints: Phil. ii. 21, 'All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ.' If men do so, though, it is against humanity, for man is ζῶον πολίτικον, a sociable creature. The heathens were sensible of a duty they owed to their country; yet if men do so, let not christians. It is a self-excommunication to be selfish and senseless, to have such narrow lines of communication as our own private sphere, and the interests and concerns of our own families; you cast yourselves out of the body. It is not enough to look to your own estate, to your own souls; but that it is also well with the body, and to help on the common good; and therefore he is bound so far to believe. For all action is supported by faith; men would soon stick else in duties of public relation which mostly expose to danger and hazard.

[2.] So far as God hath promised, so far we are bound to believe. Now God hath made promises, not only to our persons, but to the church in general; to particular persons, and to Sion: not only for our preservation, but for the preservation of the church as a church, to believers considered in a collective body, that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,' Mat. xvi. 18.

2. How we must believe promises.

[1.] That they will be accomplished, though long delayed. Faith looketh over that length of time that is between the promise and the accomplishment. For a long time they were to lie under Egyptian thralldom, yet surely God will visit you: Hab. ii. 3, 'For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.' It is the weariness of the flesh that thinketh that God tarrieth—'He is a present help in trouble,' Ps. xlvi. 1. And if it were seasonable, you should have it next hour, if there were not more of the beauty of providence to be seen, and more profit to redound to the church—'He that believeth shall not make haste,' Isa. xxviii. 16. Hold out then, God's delays are not to deny our prayers and frustrate our hopes, but to quicken us to call upon him, and to fit us for the mercy we look for.

[2.] Though the case of the children of God be very afflicted, yet faith is to wait. In Egypt they were in sore bondage. Faith is to out-work all difficulties—'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,' Job xiii. 15; and Ps. xxiii. 4, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, and thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' When we are ploughed enough, then God will cut their cords asunder; he may suffer the ploughers to make long furrows, yet Christ will have his crop. *Quando duplicantur lateres, tum venit Mose*—When the tale of bricks was doubled, then Moses came and delivered them.

3. Propositions to help us.

[1.] It is not for the profit of the church always to enjoy serenity. As to the fruitfulness of the earth and the health of men, it is not pro-

fitable that the face of heaven should always be serene and glittering ; we have need of rains, and winds, and tempests, and foul weather as well as fair. The welfare of the church needs to be interrupted sometimes. If the church and the members of it were merely spirit, without any flesh and corruption, they might enjoy a continual peace ; but we need troubles and persecutions to keep us in order, lest the worse part prevail : Isa. liv. 11, ' O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted ! ' Where we would have no chaff, we use much fanning.

[2.] The church may be much afflicted, but in the issue the church shall have the best ; it shall not be utterly destroyed. Christ cannot be a king without subjects : Mat. xvi. 18, ' The gates of hell shall not prevail against it ; ' and Ps. cxxix. 1, 2, ' Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say ; many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me. ' Ever since there was a church, there was a delivering God ; the whole history of the bible is a tragi-comedy. Hence Mordecai's confidence : Esther iv. 14, ' For if thou altogether holdest thy peace, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place. ' The Jews were then the only visible people of God, and Esther the only visible deliverer ; but if she held her peace, yet deliverance would come. *Premi potest veritas, non opprimi*—Truth may be pressed, but it shall not be oppressed. Now what God ever hath been, he is still the same, the same God is above still. We have as good promises as they. The Jews watched Christ's sepulchre, yet Christ rose again. The enemy hath designed in all ages to destroy the people of God, but God hath defeated their designs and rendered their opposition ineffectual.

[3.] God many times deferreth help to the last : Acts xii. 6-8, Peter was the next day to be executed, and the night before God brought him out ; till the very last point of time did the Lord defer help. This is the Lord's fashion : Gen. xxii. 14, ' In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. ' Isaac was just ready to be offered up ; and then the Lord called to Abraham out of heaven, and staid his hand. When the Israelites were shut up, Exod. xiv. 13, ' Moses said to the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day, for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. ' 2 Kings vi. 25, in the siege of Samaria there was a great famine, that ' an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver. ' And the wicked king said, ver. 33, ' This evil is from the Lord ; why should I wait any longer ? ' Yet God of a sudden gave an incredible plenty to them, chap. vii. So Ps. lxix. 1-3, ' Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing ; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried, mine eyes fail, while I wait for my God. ' David was nigh to perishing, like a drowning man, but he cried unto God ' in an acceptable time, ' vers. 13-15, and God delivered him, and kept his head above the waters, that he was not drowned. As the disciples

in the storm were in great danger: Mat. viii. 24, 'Behold there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves.' And the disciples came to Christ, ver. 25, 'Lord, save us, we perish!' And then 'he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm,' ver. 26. The devil thought he had gotten a great advantage there; the apostles were to preach the gospel, and Christ and his apostles were all embarked in one bottom. So it was with Peter: Mat. xiv. 30, 'When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me!' He began to sink, his faith would hold out no longer, and the sea would bear him no longer. And so also God loveth to delude the expectations of his enemies, when they come to the top of their desires they miss their aim: Isa. xxix. 7, 8, 'And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her munition, and all that distress her, shall be as a dream of the night vision. It shall be as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite; so shall all the multitude of the nations be that fight against Mount Sion.' Sennacherib feedeth himself with the surprisal of Jerusalem, Isa. xxxvi. Now God suffers this that grace may have the fuller exercise, and that his glory may be the more seen. Help is not denied though it be delayed. Therefore wait for the salvation of God.

[4.] God is punctual at his time, neither sooner nor later; he will come to make good his truth: Exod. xii. 40, 41, 'Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.' Mark the words—'Even the self-same day it came to pass;' God will keep exact touch; God brought them out of Egypt, but he deferred it till the last day; his bond was almost forfeited, yet he paid it before sunset. God is most exact in performing his promises; though they are very ancient, he keepeth touch even to a day. So Ezek. xxiv. 2, 'Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day, the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem, the same day.' So there is a time for the calling of the Jews, the fall of antichrist, and other promises that are to be fulfilled and when. So of Joseph it is said, 'Until the time that the word came, the word of the Lord tried him,' Ps. cv. 19. It may be the troubles of the church do not end when we would wish, but they have a set time determined and appointed by God, and then there shall be an end of them; there is a secret word of his decree which will in time be manifested; as when we are sufficiently humbled, then it is fit that means should work for our deliverance. God deferreth till the last hour be running: Job vii. 1, 'Is there not an appointed time for man upon earth? are not his days as the days of an hireling?' Doth not a hireling keep exact reckoning? Will he serve beyond his time? If he covenanted for three years, will he serve four? Mercy is not always ready at our call; God hath his own seasons for afflicting, trying, and delivering his people: Hab. ii. 3, 'The vision is for an appointed

time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.' The vision is silent for a while; there is delay, there is misery and oppression, and so it seemeth to lie; ay, but it doth but seem to tarry.

[5.] The church in the latter times hath an advantage of the former, as their hopes draw nearer. Their troubles, though they did rebound to the good of the church in the end, yet they made way for the revelation of antichrist, 2 Thes. ii. 9, the inundations of these barbarous nations, the Goths, and Vandals, and Lombards, to weaken the Roman empire. But now, though we cannot be confident at particular occurrences, yet one or other tend to the destruction of antichrist. God taketh his aim afar off. The providences of latter times are like great eclipses, which have not their operations presently, yet it is good to observe their general aim and tendencies.

[6.] God many times worketh contrary to outward likelihoods. When the bricks were doubled, who would look for deliverance? As the Hebrew tongue must be read backward, or as the sun going back ten degrees in Ahaz, dial was a sign of Hezekiah's recovery; so is providence to be read backward. Joseph was made a slave that he might be made a favourite; who would have thought that the dungeon had been the way to the court? that error is a means to clear truth? and bondage maketh way for liberty? Persecution and oppression are like an iron in the fire, which, heated too hot, burneth their fingers that hold it. Christ loveth to befool his enemies in the height of their wisdom: Exod. i. 10, 'Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass that when there falleth out any war, they join also with our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of our land.' When the project is laid finely, the wise are taken in their own craftiness. All looketh towards ruin and destruction, but nothing is out of order to providence; the wise God can make use of the most cross accidents, he is never out of his way. Nothing is out of order to faith and providence.

All afflictions continued upon the people of God work for the glory of God and their good.

(1.) For the glory of God; that is dear to his children. The malice and wickedness of the enemies is compared to ploughing: Ps. cxxix. 3, 'The ploughers have ploughed upon my back, they made long their furrows.' We have fallow ground that must be broken and ploughed up; and when they have ploughed enough, he cuts their cords asunder. It is for our benefit and God's glory; they plough, but the harvest is Christ's, the crop belongeth to the owner of the field. We must distinguish between God's aims and the enemy's aims. The water keepeth its course, but the wise husbandman maketh it drive the mill: Isa. x. 7, 'Howbeit he meaneth it not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few;' and Ps. lxxvi. 10, 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.' God will restrain wrath when the work is done; when the mill hath nothing to grind, we shut the sluices, but that which breaketh out turneth to God's praise.

(2.) For our good temporal, spiritual, and eternal.¹

¹ Vide the Life of Faith as to afflictions.

[7.] If we should miscarry in this work, God cannot want instruments. If we should miscarry sinfully by negligence and silence: Esther iv. 14, 'If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place.' Her petitioning was the only likely way of preserving the people of God. Or if we miscarry by death; if Moses die, there will be a Joshua. God knoweth how to help when we are at an utter loss: Micah v. 7, 'And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.' The herbs of the garden have a visible means of supply by the water-pot, which dependeth upon man's providence and industry; but dews and showers do not fall at the pleasure of man, and the grass in the wilderness groweth by the mere providence of God.

[8.] They that act for the church shall be no losers; their endeavours shall not be lost, however they speed in the world: Isa. xlix. 4, 'Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work is with my God.' God doth not take notice of success, but affection: 2 Chron. vi. 8, 'Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build a house for my name, thou didst well that it was in thy heart.' Actions intended for God's glory, if they fail of their aim, they shall not fail of their reward; as fountains run, though none drink of them.

Use is to reprove us,

1. That we dono more regard the public welfare of God's people. A man is known by his affection to Sion; dying Joseph comforts himself, not only with his own happiness, but the happiness of God's people after his death. Every true member of the church hath life in Christ, and this life giveth feeling, and that feeling stirreth up the affections of joy or sorrow. It is a part of our care that it may be well, not only with our souls, but with the church: Ps. cxxxvii. 6, 'If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.' They could as well forget themselves as forget Sion, here was their chief happiness. Their own private calamities have not been so grievous as the public; it was ill with every member when in Babylon, but it was ill with Sion as well as ill with them, and the church sorrow is the chiefest. As Phinehas's wife complained: 1 Sam. iv. 22, 'The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken.' It is not, My father is dead, my husband is dead; but the ark of God is taken, the glory is departed from Israel. When it is well with them and ill with the church, they cannot but mourn, as Daniel and Nehemiah, and those in Ps. cxxxvii. 6. Possibly their own private condition may be tolerable. When it is well with the church, though ill with them, it is a comfort, their private griefs are swallowed up in the public joy. Paul in prison rejoiceth in the progress of the gospel, though with his particular loss, Phil. i. 15-18. But when it is well with them and the church too, it doubleth their contentment: Ps. cxxviii. 5, 6, 'The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion, and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all thy days; yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.' To have public and private mercies together is very sweet, that we have

no occasion to be out of tune, but can join in comfort with the people of God. Yea, when they are entering upon their great happiness, church promises are a comfort, as well as private particular promises. Jesus Christ thought of his in the world when he was going to his Father: John, xiii. 1, 'When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of the world unto his Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.' He was landing at the haven, but he had left friends at sea, conflicting with winds and waves.

2. It reproveth us that we do no more put forth faith upon these occasions. We are not only to pray down, but believe down troubles and oppositions: Heb. xi. 34, 'By faith they turned to flight the armies of the aliens.' You will think that this is easy, a little confidence will serve the turn; so it is to those that do not mind the affairs of Sion; but to them that long, pray, and wait, that prefer the affairs of the church above their chief joy, it is a hard thing. It is hard to settle the heart upon the promises for church deliverances, else what mean so many fears and despondencies which God's people complain of? Men are not deeply enough engaged in the church's quarrel, and therefore do not mind the church's deliverance. However these bewray that they cannot believe, by their murmurings when God's interest and theirs is not combined, and by their apostasy: it is 'an evil heart of unbelief that maketh them depart from God,' Heb. iii. 12.

Secondly, Another effect of faith we have in the next clause of the text—*And gave commandment concerning his bones.* This is a circumstance often taken notice of in scripture: Gen. l. 25, 'And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence;' so Exod. xiii. 19, 'And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him;' after a hundred and fifty years they did it: and Joshua xxiv. 32, 'And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, they buried in Shechem.' The same desire Jacob made before he died: Gen. xlvii. 30, 'I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place.' This request was not out of superstition, or with respect to any contentment or pleasure which departed saints take in the disposal of their bodies, nor as if there were a more easy resurrection in that soil rather than another, it is all one in Egypt or in Canaan; nor as if they hoped to be some of those that should rise out of their graves at the resurrection of Christ, Mat. xxvii. 52, 53; nor that they might be partakers of the prayers and sacrifices there offered, as Bellarmine thinks, besides the impiousness of the conceit that prayers can avail the dead, and that to the blessings obtained by prayer local nearness is necessary,—at this time there were none, nor two hundred years afterwards. No, there were special reasons for this desire.

1. To show their belief in the promise; though they could not go thither in person, they would have their bones carried thither to take possession, which was a visible symbol or public testimony of their faith that they doubted not of the promised possession.

2. It was an excitement to posterity not to settle their minds in

Egypt, lest being overcome by the wealth and pleasures of the country, they should forget the land of promise. It was as a trumpet to awaken them.

3. It was a public memorial, by which upon all occasions they might call to mind the truth of the promise when it came to pass. We see now, it is true, what Joseph spake concerning his bones; as they called to mind that parabolical speech of Christ's destroying the temple and building it in three days: John ii. 22, 'When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them, and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had said.' They now believed that he spake of the temple of his body.

4. It was a pledge of their communion with the saints; living and dying they would have no communion with idolaters, they would not lie in the same grave with them.

5. Canaan was a symbol of their eternal inheritance; so to show their heavenliness, they desired to be in Canaan, living and dead, that is, in the land of promise, where Christ conversed, lived, died, rose again. That they did not merely look upon the temporal enjoyment of Canaan is clear, for Joseph was better in Egypt; but they looked upon heaven, and the great promises and blessings of the covenant figured thereby, they looked for the translation of their souls to heaven, and a future resurrection of all the blessed hereafter. In short, Joseph would have all know that he did not die an Egyptian, but in expectation of the enjoyment of a heavenly life with all the patriarchs, of which this country was a figure. Hence the phrase is often used of 'being gathered to their fathers,' which did not only imply their lying in one common sepulchre, but their going to them in heaven, the true Canaan, and place of rest and establishment.

What shall we learn hence?

[1.] Papists would gather the veneration of relics from the translation of Joseph's bones, but fondly, for this was a thing which the Israelites would never have done if not bound thereunto by oath. These bones were carried into the land of promise to be kept, not for show and worship, but for burial.

[2.] Superstitious persons would gather hence a necessity of burying in holy or consecrated places, but fondly, for there were special reasons why these holy men desired to be buried in Canaan. Now there is no promise made to one place rather than another, it maketh nothing *ad animæ levamentum*, to the good of souls.

And the custom of burying in places of worship, as it is very unhealthy and unseemly, so it is very modern. The Jews buried without the city, and Abraham in the cave beside Mamre. Deborah was buried under an oak, Gen. xxxv. 8; Rachel, in the way, ver. 19; and Joseph, in the field of Shechem, Joshua xxiv. 32.

But what is to be learned hence?

(1.) Joseph maketh mention, not only of a departure out of Egypt, but of an introduction into Canaan. The blessings of the covenant are privative and positive; we are not only delivered from hell, but we have an entrance and admission into heaven: John iii. 16, 'That who-

soever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' If we had only been delivered from the power of darkness, it is more than we could expect, as the prodigal son said, 'Make me as one of thy hired servants,' Luke xv. 19. But to be preferred to the privileges of the gospel, that is higher, and more glorious. Well then, let your obedience be privative and positive; do not only depart from evil, but abound in the work of the Lord. Many are not vicious, but they do not look after communion with God.

(2.) Joseph was a great man in Egypt, yet his heart was elsewhere, he had no mind to the country where he was so well at ease. So though we live in Egypt, let our hearts be in Canaan; if we cannot get out of the world, let us get the world out of us: John xvii. 16, 'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.' There was their abode, but their hearts were not there. Oh, it is an excellent frame of spirit when we can enjoy much in the world, as Joseph lived in great dignity; and yet not be of a worldly spirit, and in the fulness of all worldly things to mind better things.

(3.) There is a communion between the saints departed in the Lord. Bury me with my fathers, saith Jacob; and Joseph lying in the same grave is a pledge of their communion in heaven. They are called, 'a family,' Eph. iii. 15; and a society or company—'The spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 23. There is a double evil of death, it separates the body and the soul, and it separateth from our relations, fathers and children, and friends one from another. Now there is comfort against both; the soul is separated from the body and joined to the Lord, loosed from hence, that we may be with Christ. And then as to company, we go to better company in heaven, we go to those that long for us, and look for us every day, to 'the spirits of just men made perfect.' Let us delight in the communion of saints for the present, that when we change our place, yet we may not change our company, unless it be for the better; that we may be with our fathers. Wicked men are tormented in their society.

(4.) Living and dying we should make profession of our faith. Joseph, when he died, would be known to be an Israelite, and not an Egyptian.

(5.) We may gather hence that it is fit the saints, where it may be had, should have decent burial. It is made a work, not only of honesty, but piety: Acts viii. 2, 'Devout men carried Stephen to his burial;' so 2 Sam. ii. 5, 6, 'Blessed be ye of the Lord, who have showed this kindness unto your lord, even to Saul, and have buried him. And now the Lord show kindness unto you.' And it is mentioned as great impiety in the enemies: Ps. lxxix. 2, 3, 'The dead bodies of thy servants they have given to be meat for the fowls of heaven, the flesh of the saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem, and there was none to bury them.' And it is a curse: Ps. lxxiii. 10, 'They shall fall by the sword, they shall be a portion for foxes.' So that it is agreeable to the word of God that there should be such burials.

1st. It is agreeable to the sentence pronounced against sinners: Gen. iii. 19, 'Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return.' We bury the

dead to show that we are not forgetful what we were by nature ; it is a confession of the curse due to sin.

2dly, It is agreeable to our hope of the resurrection. We do not cast away their bones and remains, but lay them up ; not as we do the carcasses of beasts, but as we sow wheat in the ground, that it may rise again with increase. They do but ‘rest in their beds,’ Isa. lvii. 2. They are but *κοιμητήρια*, sleeping-places.

3dly, It is agreeable to the honour God hath put upon the bodies of his saints. They are parts of Christ’s purchase, 1 Cor. vi. 20. And Christ hath a charge to lose nothing, John vi. 39, ‘But to raise them up at the last day.’ And they are temples of the Holy Ghost, dedicated to him in covenant, and members of Christ.

4thly, It is agreeable to the love we bear to them. Joseph of Arimathea showed his love to Christ in burying him ; and the men of Jabesh Gilead showed their love to Saul. It is the last office we can do them, to lay them up safe.

5thly, Well then, funerals are lawful, if lawfully used. Not superstitiously by confining God to places, or as if it did good to patter words over the dead, or to bury in consecrated places—‘the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.’ God knoweth where to fetch our substance again, wherever our remains are cast. Not pompously, this is to sin after death, to continue the monuments of our pride when we can sin no longer. Not in a dead carnal manner ; too often it falleth out that the dead bury their dead, the dead in heart bury the dead in body. There are funeral and grave thoughts. It is a monument of the fruit of sin ; the full power of it remaineth over the wicked, and the grave to them is a prison. We should have humbling thoughts, that dust we are, and to dust we shall return ; and we should have believing thoughts, we have our friends in the grave ; but God doth not leave them, he taketh care of the bones of the saints. The grave is now opened with difficulty, but afterwards with ease, and all that are in it shall come forth. The dust of bodies is now mingled together, but God will soon sever them, and give to every man his own body. And we should have mortifying thoughts, we are all hastening this way ; as a candle, as soon as it is lighted, decreaseth. Our bodies will soon be loathsome carcasses. They that are dear before, within a little while will become loathsome and intolerable : Gen. xxiii. 4, ‘Give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.’ Their best friends would fain be rid of them. How soon is the glory of flesh stained, and turned into a stink and rottenness !

6thly, There is faith shown in disposing of our bones. So did Joseph, so should we look upon the grave as sanctified by Christ ; the waters of baptism he sanctified in his own person. And so for the grave, Christ hath been there ; to him it was not a prison, but a bed : Isa. liii. 9, ‘He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.’ Now the jaws of it are broken, that you cannot be holden of it. These bones shall be clothed with skin and flesh. Christ is the guardian of the grave : John vi. 39, ‘Of all that he hath given me I shall lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day.’ He hath a

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