

the promise of eternal life? Death is your last enemy—can you triumph upon your sick-beds in these hopes, that these your enemies you shall see them no more for ever?

Thirdly, The next circumstance in the text is the ground of her faith—*Because she judged him faithful that had promised.* Hence observe:—

1. Wherever we put forth faith we must have a promise, otherwise it is but fancy, not faith. It is not a ground of expectation barely what God is able to do, but what God will do. As the two pillars of Solomon's house were called Jachin and Boaz, 1 Kings vii. 21, the one signifies 'Strength,' and the other, 'He will establish it.'

2. In closing with the promise, we should chiefly give God the honour of his faithfulness.

1. Because God valueth this most, he standeth much of his truth—'Heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or tittle of his word shall pass,' Mat. v. 18. The monuments of his power shall be defaced to make good his truth: Ps. cxxxviii. 2, 'Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.' All other attributes give way to this.

2. Because this giveth support and relief to the soul in waiting: Heb. x. 23, 'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised.' God hath promised no more than he is able to perform; his word never exceeded his power.

Use. Well then, meditate of this; silence discouragements when you have a clear promise. The course of nature saith, It cannot be; her own age saith, It cannot be; but still faith replies, God is faithful. In all your debates let this be the judgment and casting voice.

SERMON XLV.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.—HEB. xi. 13.

HAVING laid down the particular instances of the patriarchs, he speaketh of what they had in common, they went to the grave in hope, albeit the promises were not performed in their time.

Here you have the trial of their faith and the victory of their faith.

1. The trial of their faith—*They died, not having received the promises*; that is, they went to the grave ere the blessings God had promised were accomplished.

2. The victory of their faith, which is set forth—

[1.] By the several acts of the soul in and upon the promises, both elicit and imperate. There is an act of apprehension—*They saw them afar off*; an act of judgment or firm assent—*And were persuaded of them*; an act of affection—*ἀσπασάμενοι, And embraced them*—they hugged the promise; this will yield a Messiah.

[2.] By the effect and fruit of it in their lives and conversations—*And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth.*

Who are here spoken of? Some refer it to the numerous posterity of Abraham mentioned in the former verse, who did not till the time of Joshua enjoy the promised land of Canaan. But that cannot be, because many of these were buried in the wilderness, and died murmuring, and in the displeasure of God. Therefore it is meant chiefly of the patriarchs last recited—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah; and you may take in the faithful that came of their race—Joseph, and others that lived till the time of their going out of Egypt.

By promises are meant things promised. They must receive the promise, or else there were no room for faith. Some take *επαγγελίας* for the spiritual promises; these they saw but in figure, or afar off. Temporal promises they had of a numerous posterity, the calling of the gentiles; an heir, Christ; an inheritance, Canaan; but this would cross the apostle's scope. Understand it therefore of things promised. But what were the things promised which they received not? *Ans.* The possession of the land of Canaan, a kingdom, a city, a temple, which was made good to their posterity, the coming of the Messiah out of their loins; these 'they saw afar off,' that is, by the eye of faith; and were certainly 'persuaded' of the accomplishment of them, though not in their time, and therefore 'embraced them,' shouted for joy, as mariners when they see land at a distance. *Italiam læto socii clamore salutant;* 'professed themselves strangers and pilgrims,' *ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς* 'in the earth,' sojourners in the land, as expecting a greater happiness by the Messiah than they did yet enjoy. Yea, 'they died in faith'—*κατὰ πίστιν*—'according to faith,' for *ἐν πίστει*; as Rom. viii., *κατὰ σὰρκα* for *ἐν σὰρκι*. All these died by or according to faith. The meaning is, they remained stable and firm to the end of their lives in this assurance, notwithstanding the variety of conditions which they passed through.

From the first words, 'These all died in faith,' the points are two—

(1.) It is not enough that we must live by faith, but we must also die by faith. (2.) They that would die in faith must live in faith.

Doct. It is not enough that we must live by faith, but we must also die by faith. So it is said of these patriarchs, 'All these died in faith.' Faith is always of use on this side the grave; at death it doth us the last office. In the other world there is no need of it; when we come to enjoyment faith ceaseth.

The reasons of the doctrine are these—

1. Because faith is not sound unless we persevere therein to the end. The patriarchs had many afflictions, they were tossed up and down, yet they died in faith; that was their commendation: so unless we hold out to the end, all is lost. The Nazarite under the law, if he did defile himself before the days of his purification were accomplished, was to begin all anew again: Num. vi. 12, 'The days which were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.' So we lose what we have wrought, if we do not remain stable till we come to 'receive the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls,' 1 Peter i. 9; Ezek. xviii. 24, 'When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? All his righteousness

that he hath done shall not be remembered.' All that is past is nothing unless we persevere to the end. Faith is not for a fit, we must hold on in it: Heb. iii. 6, 'Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end;' so ver. 14. 'We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.' This was the commendation of these holy men, still their hearts were kept close to God, they died in faith: Prov. xvi. 31, 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.' A Mnason, an old disciple, is a great honour. As Jacob wrestled with the angel till daylight: Gen. xxxii. 26, 'And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh;' so we must constantly keep up the exercise of faith till the day break, and the shadows flee away. Elisha would not leave his master till he was taken from him into heaven; so faith will not leave us till we are taken to heaven. To be constant to the last is the crown and glory of faith; let the world know you have no cause to leave Christ. We read, Mat. xx., some were called into the vineyard sooner, some later; some were called early in the morning, some at the third, some at the sixth, some at the ninth, and some at the eleventh hour; but all tarried to the end of the day. So must we carry faith and religion with us to the grave; patient abiding is a sign of true faith. Many have outlived their religion and former profession.

2. Because the hour of death is a special season wherein faith cometh to be exercised, and the strength of it is tried. There is no notion doth so much express the nature of faith as this, the committing of the soul to God's keeping: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day;' and 1 Peter iv. 18, 'Commit the keeping of your souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator.' The great work of faith is to put the soul into safe hands; it is our jewel, and it should be in safe hands; it is sensible of danger, and it is never safe till it is put into the hands of God through Christ, and therefore we must commit it to him. Now this never comes so much to the trial as at the hour of death; then to trust God with our souls, upon a confidence that he will keep them for us, that we may enjoy them in another world, this is a sensible discovery of faith, as appears by Christ's surrender when he was to die: Luke xxiii. 46, 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit;' and Stephen: Acts vii. 59, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' While we live we must put the soul into God's care; it is fit our jewel, our darling, should be in safe hands. But can you trust God with your souls when you are ready to die? And then is the time to put the promises in suit, and to express our confidence in them: Ps. xvi. 9, 'Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope,' &c. The heart is filled with joy, and the tongue runneth over, when we can send our souls to God and our bodies to the grave in hope of a blessed resurrection. During life faith is most exercised in waiting for present supplies, but in death it is put to trial about future recompenses. While we have health and strength we do not mind the danger and hazard of the everlasting state; and that is the reason why we find it harder to trust God for present mercies, temporal supplies, strength

for duties and afflictions; but we are careless of things to come. But when we come to die faith is exercised about things to come; then it is put to the push to meet and grapple with the great and last enemy, death. Then we come to receive the great promise of our final estate; therefore to dismiss the body to the grave in hope, and recommend the soul to God, is a great trial of our faith.

3. There are great promises to be performed after our decease, and it is a great honour to God when we are ready to die, to go to the grave with assurance, and profess our confidence that God will make them good. There are two parts of this reason.

[1.] There are many promises to be accomplished when we are dead and gone, and they are either public or private.

(1.) Concerning the church there are many promises which we see not performed in our lifetime. This was the case of these patriarchs, they had a promise of Canaan that was now possessed by giants, of a numerous offspring, of a city, of a temple wherein God would be present, all unaccomplished. In every age of the church there is something to be waited for; and there are many public promises not accomplished in our days, as the prosperity of the church, the calling of the Jews, the second coming of Christ, the confusion of antichrist. Though we go to the grave, and see not these things, yet we should not doubt of them, for God hath been faithful hitherto: Rev. xiv. 8, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen.' We should count it as done already, though we see it not performed in our days. God counts our purposes obedience; Abraham is said to offer Isaac because it was his vow and purpose to do it; and therefore we should count God's promises to be as good as performances. Go to the grave with this hope, we leave a God behind us, who is able to perform his promises whether we be or no. We hereby teach others to believe.

(2.) Concerning our families and relations that survive us, there are private promises. God cannot content himself with doing good to the person of a believer, but he hath promised also to do good to his posterity: 2 Sam. vii. 19, 'And this was yet a small matter in thy sight, O Lord God, for thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come.' God will act according to the highest laws of friendship; as David: 2 Sam. ix. 1, 'Is there any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake.' God hath not only spoken comfortably for our persons, but for our house, our families, our relations for a great while to come. Now when we can provide for them no longer, pray for them no longer, this is the last act that we can do, believe for them, go to the grave with confidence that God will be as good as his word, who hath promised to be a father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow. When you can leave them no inheritance, leave them a God in covenant, that is a good portion. God hath taken you off from being instrumental for their good, you can do no more for them; now believe that God will take the care upon himself: Gen. xvii. 7, 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.' Our trust is not so pure in life, whilst we have opportunity to act for them, as in death, when we can leave them in the hands of

God; and leave them the promises for their portion, though you can leave them nothing else.

[2.] This is an honour to God, to profess our confidence in him when we are going to the grave. All faith bringeth glory to God: John iii. 33, 'He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true;' but especially dying faith, because then we can do no more, and we leave all to the Lord, and because the speeches of dying men are wont to be observed as they are entering upon the confines of eternity, they are wiser and more serious than at other times, it is no time to dally or dissemble now, at the last gasp. Now speeches of living men are suspected of partiality to present interests, or are neglected as not having much weight in them: Gen. i. 16, 'Thy father did command before he died, saying, Thus shall you say unto Joseph,' &c.; Josh. xxiii. 14, 'Behold this day I am going the way of all the earth.' When men return, as one expresseth it, *ἐπὶ τὸ πρόγονον θεῖον* —to the divine original, they seem to be more possessed with the divine spirit than at other times; when they are dying, their speeches are more serious, grave, weighty, entertained with more consideration and readiness: therefore when we die, to profess our confidence in the faithfulness and truth of God, and go to the grave with this acknowledgment, this is a mighty honour to God.

4. There are most conflicts at death: sin is revived, and fears are revived. A man is never so serious as then; now we come to feel what we never felt before. Christ bids us come to him, as he did Peter on the waters, then if ever we have need of faith. And Satan is most busy now, as dying beasts bite shrewdly; Satan hath great wrath when he hath but a short time. This is the last enemy, and within a little time those Egyptians which ye shall now see, ye shall see them no more; therefore now is a time to exercise faith. Besides, all carnal pleasures are then at an end, and have spent their force. Whilst we have plentiful accommodations wherewith to entertain the flesh, a little faith serveth the turn; but death plucketh us from all these, and then we must bid good night to them, and unless we have other supports we are wholly shiftless and comfortless. Satan, that formerly tempted us, now troubleth us; and then we must immediately appear before God. Things near at hand do more affect us when we are entering upon the confines of eternity, and are to grapple with our last enemy. What shall we do? Now faith is of use. Graces that are not of use in another world discover their highest and most consummate act in this world.

Use 1. Let us provide for this hour, that we may die in faith. We know not how near we may be unto death, or whose turn may be next; there is a providence goeth along with sermons, it may be some of us have more need of this discourse than we are aware; however, it is good to hear for the time to come. You come to sermons not only to learn to live, but to learn to die. You are often taught how to live in faith; let me instruct you, and show you what it is to die in faith.

1. Profess your hearty and cheerful assent to the general articles of the christian faith, those articles which concern the end and the means. Those that concern the end, as the doctrines of the world to come, the immortality of the soul, and resurrection of the body, and life eternal. And those that concern the means, of making the promise sure on

God's part or our application. The means that concern the impetration, as the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. Christ's death is the ground of our triumph and victory: Heb. ii. 14, 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.' His resurrection is an act of conquest, he conquered death in its own territories. His ascension, he is gone to heaven to seize upon it in our name, from whence he sends his Spirit to fit us for it: Rom. v. 10, 'If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled shall we be saved by his life.' The means that concern application are his justifying, sanctifying, assisting us in all conditions, especially in sickness: Ps. xli. 3, 'Thou wilt strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.' You must assent to this, these are *ἐν πρώτοις*, the first truths of christianity, and the foundation of our comfort and hope. The general belief of these things giveth life to the applicative acts of faith. Christ trieth our assent: John xi. 26, 'Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me shall never die; believest thou this?' 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'

2. Reduce these to practice.

[1.] Make application of reconciliation with God, and pardon of sins by Christ. Christ's blood shed made the atonement, and by his blood sprinkled we receive the atonement: Rom. v. 11, 'And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.' This is fit for a dying man: 1 Cor. xv. 55-57, 'O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;' so the psalmist, Ps. xxxi. 5, 'Into thy hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.' Every one cannot thrust his soul upon Christ, but only those who are redeemed and reconciled by his blood. Redemption applied frees us from the power of the devil, and the tyranny of sin.

[2.] Resign up the soul to God with comfort; he calls for it, therefore resign it to him. The death of the godly is not a mere passion, but a lively and vehement action, by which they deliver up their souls to God; so Christ, Luke xxiii. 46, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit;' so Stephen, Acts vii. 59, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' It is not lawful for us to procure our own death, or out of an impatience of pain to hasten our end, nor cry out with Elijah in a pet: 1 Kings xix. 4, 'It is enough now, O Lord; take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers.' Yet on the other side we must not be merely passive, or die by force. Beasts when they die, are merely passive, and properly do suffer death. Wicked men struggle, and are loath to depart; their soul is not given up by them, but taken away from them: their death, though it be never so natural, yet it is a violent death; their souls are as it were snatched and torn away from them: Job xxvii. 9, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' Luke xii. 20, 'Thou

fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!’ They do not commend their souls into the hands of God, but God requireth it of them. A wicked man would fain hold out a little longer, but God will not suffer him; the Lord puts his bond in suit, he requireth their souls of them. The godly, though they cannot wholly lay aside their aversion from death, which is natural to every living thing, yet when they see the will of God, they hold out no longer, but overcome themselves and yield. Death is a sweet dismissal of their soul, and a resignation of it into the hands of God. Resign up then the soul unto God upon these terms, you are going to a father, you are sent for home, death is not penal, as it is to the wicked; to them it is the wages of sin, they are hailed before the judge, the body sent to the grave, and the soul to hell. There is a great deal of difference between death and death. Death hath many considerations; as Christ endured it, so it was a ransom; as wicked men suffer it, so it is wages; as godly men suffer it, so it is the gate of life, the messenger to bring them home to God,—the Lord will be no longer without your company, and therefore he sends for you. In what soft terms doth the scripture express the death of the saints; it is a dissolution, not a violent rending and tearing to pieces: Phil. i. 23, ‘Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ;’ it is a departure, a setting sail for another world; it is a sleep, the grave is a chamber and bed of rest: Isa. lvii. 2, ‘He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds;’ it is a hastening to the great assembly that is above. Such soft terms the scripture useth concerning the death of the saints; for death, though it is an enemy to nature, yet it is a friend to grace. And consider, you do not only give up your souls to God that gave them, but to Christ that redeemed them: Ps. xxxi. 5, ‘Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth;’ and you may be confident Christ will receive the soul which he hath purchased with his blood. Christ comes in a nearer way of enjoyment, that thou mayest receive the fruits of his own purchase. If thou belongest to God, thy heart was there long since, thou hast sent spies, thoughts and affections to take a view of that land, to see what it is, and they have brought a report of the goodness of the country in the promises, and now thou art going thither in person; therefore resign up thy soul to God, and say, I am going the way of all flesh, to yield up my soul to God, and death is ready to close mine eyes, Lord, I commit my soul to thee, I commend my spirit to thee; I have trusted in thee and I do trust in thee; thou hast made it, Christ redeemed it, and I hope the mark of thy Spirit will be found upon it. I do resign up my soul to thee.

[3.] Dismiss the body to the grave in hope of a joyful resurrection, sow it as good seed, that will spring up again. Say then, Go, flesh, rest in hope, take the covenant along with you to the grave: Ps. xvi. 9, 10, ‘My flesh also shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.’ Job could see life in death: Job xix. 25, 26, ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day on the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God.’ This body must be turned into dust, but this dust shall be

gathered together again ; this body must be eaten by worms, but the morsels of worms shall be parcels of the resurrection. Death is conquered by Christ ; it may kill, but it cannot hurt ; but the body shall be raised a glorious structure, conformed to Christ's glorious body. You are going to make experiment of that promise : John xi. 25, 26, 'He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.' Overlook all things that are between you and glory. It is a sweet close when the body and soul do part from one another in this manner ; when you can commend your spirits to God, and send the body to the grave to rest in hope ; when the body and soul are parting, that God and the soul may meet ; when conscience is a compurgator, and can say, I bear them witness that body and soul have spent their time together in the world well, in loving thee, and obeying thee. When body and soul thus take their leave one of another, it is a blessed parting ; as on the contrary it is a very sad parting, when conscience falleth a-raving, and the body and soul curse each other ; when the body complains of the soul as an ill guide, and the soul of the body as an unready instrument, and you curse the day of their first union. Oh, that I had been stifled in the womb, and never seen the light !

[4.] Meditate on the happiness into which you are entering. Stephen's eyes were opened—'And he looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God,' Acts vii. 55. Whether in vision, or by ecstasy and the elevation of faith, I dispute not ; I only urge it for this, it is a good meditation, when at the point of death to think of God, and of the glory of his presence, and of Jesus Christ in heaven at his right hand ready to receive you. Your thoughts should be now taken up about the glorious things of another world ; think no more of heaven as at a distance, but as one going to take possession of it ; the angels are ready to conduct you to Christ, and Christ to present you to God, as a proof of the virtue of his death : Jude 24, 'Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding great joy.' Death is ready to untie the soul from its chains, and to let it forth into liberty and glory ; look upon yourselves as ready to pass into the throng of spirits, to see Christ and all his blessed angels, and your everlasting companions. You are going to better company, to better employment, to a better place, where is your God, your head, the Lord Christ ready to receive you when you come thither. This is the time we longed for, looked for, prayed for ; now we are going to our preferment, and enter upon those glorious things that are represented to us in the gospel ; these things should take up your thoughts. It is not so with the wicked ; how horrid are the thoughts of death to him : he is going to suffer and feel that which he would never believe before ; death cometh to him as God's executioner, to rend the unwilling soul from the embraces of the body ; he sees an handwriting against him, great bills of uncanceled sins awakening and amazing the conscience, and breaking all his hope in pieces. How is the man perplexed ; what between the memory of past sins and the fear of future pains, the sense of an angry God and the presence of devils ready to carry him to accursed and damned spirits, and he has no comforter, no advocate to plead for him.

[5.] Commend your faith to others, this is to die in faith. This is the last time that you can do anything for God in the world, and therefore this you should do, commend the faithfulness and goodness of God, what a good master you have found him to be: John iii. 33; 'He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.' Swans, some say, sing before their death; so have God's servants commended their experiences of God's faithfulness to others; as Moses: Dent. xxxii. 4, 'He is a rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he;' so Joshua, chap. xxiii. 14, 'Behold this day 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.' He repeats it twice. The words of dying men are of most efficacy and authority, as being spoken out of all their former experience, and with most simplicity, and without self-seeking and sinister ends. Therefore speak a good word of God, let the world know what you have found God to be, I know him for a true God, he is not behind-hand in one word. So Jacob: Gen. xlviii. 15, 16, 'God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life-long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil.' Carnal men do not honour their principles; they cannot speak of the worth of the world, and of the things they have trusted to; they fail them when they stand in most need of them, and therefore they fall a-complaining of the world, how it hath abused and deceived them. But godly men can speak honourably of the God they have trusted. Stephen told them of his vision, though it increased their rage against him: Acts vii. 56, 'He said, Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.' He would honour God that owned him, though it made them fall upon him like madmen. Thus you see what the duty of christians is when they come to die, to die in faith and obedience, resigning their souls to God, dismissing their bodies to the grave in hope, meditating on the great things of eternity, honouring their principles, and speaking for God to others.

Use 2. Can you thus die in faith? It is another thing to do it in deed than what it is to do it in conceit. They that stand on the shore may easily speak to men in a storm, Sail thus and thus; but when the waves beat high, directions are not easily followed. Can you then die in faith? There is the great trial of faith. A christian doth not only make it his care to live in Christ, but to die in Christ: Rev. xiv. 13, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' It is a blessed thing 'to sleep in Jesus,' 1 Thes. iv. 14. How is it with you? are you provided for such an hour? There are two expressions I shall take notice of on this occasion; one is, 2 Cor. v. 3, 'If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked;' another is, 2 Peter iii. 14, 'Give diligence, that you may be found of him in peace.' O christians! it is a sad thing to be found naked; you can never die with comfort, and appear before God with confidence, if you are not clothed with Christ's righteousness. A wicked man hath no garment to cover him; but for the righteous God puts one grace upon another, upon the righteousness of Christ God puts on the sanctification of the Spirit, and upon the sancti-

fiction of the Spirit he puts on the robes of glory. And it is a sad thing to die and not to be at peace with God, when death surpriseth us with our weapons of defiance in our hands. When a town is taken by storm, if there be pity shown to children and aged persons, yet they die without mercy that are taken with weapons in their hands; so when death comes and surprises us in our rebellion and war against him, the end will be full of horror. The scripture speaks of the wicked man, Jer. xvii. 11, 'At his end he shall be a fool.' A wicked man was ever a fool, because he neglects the best things for vile and contemptible pleasures; but at his latter end he shall be a fool; viz., in the conviction of his own conscience. A wicked man never comes to himself till he comes to die, and then his own heart will call him fool. O fool that thou wast, to neglect thy salvation, and run after trifles of no use and profit.

Obj. 1. But you will say many carnal men die quietly.

Ans. So much the worse, some die of a lethargy, as well as of a burning fever; as they live in carnal confidence, so they may die in carnal confidence, and this is a sad judgment; when their hearts like Nabal's are like a stone, it is an argument of the greater hardness and sottishness, they have not that calm and quiet that ariseth from an interest in Christ.

Obj. 2. Many good men may die with great conflicts, and to beholders have little expression of comfort and feeling of God's love.

Ans. God's children may have their conflicts, they may fear death, they are not as stones, their strength is not as brass, nor their sinews iron. Grace itself as well as nature requireth that we should be sensible of God's hand. Nature recoileth at what is destructive. Adam in innocency would have been affected if his body had been wronged; nay, and bodies of the best temper and complexion are most sensible, because they enjoy life at a higher and more valuable rate than others do. This is better than to die stupid; Christ himself had his agonies. Nay, many times corruption may interpose, and the best men, because of the remainders of sin in them, may have their agonies. God will show himself a free Spirit, not to come in at our hours; God will crown some in the very field and middle of the combat. But there is a great deal of difference between these conflicts that are in the godly and the horrors of the wicked: there is a mixture of faith pleading and disputing for God, and these conflicts arise, not out of a legal fear only, but from the height of hatred and displeasure against sin. Faith is usually discovered in the most glorious way at the last; if it be not glorified in triumphing, it is glorified in dependence, and casting ourselves upon the grace and mercy of God in Christ, notwithstanding all arguments to the contrary. Therefore how do matters stand between God and you? Are you thus fit to die in faith, to resign up your souls to God, and to glorify him in believing?

Use 3. To press you to get and keep faith to the end.

1. Get faith, it is an excellent grace, that standeth by us when all things else leave us. At death all comforts vanish; your wealth that you have gained will stand you in no stead: Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' When you look on your bodies, all is wasting: Ps.

lxxiii. 26, 'My heart and my flesh faileth;' this face, these arms, as Oblevian said, must now be meat for worms; when you look on your houses and habitations, these dwellings will know me no more; when you look on your children and friends mourning by you, you shall see them no more; but then faith will stand us in stead, it makes us to live with comfort, and to die with comfort. Faith is an excellent grace, that excelleth reason as much as reason excels sense; and what a difference is there between a toad and a man!

2. Keep faith to the end: Heb. iv. 1, 'Let us fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.' We have more cause to persevere than they, we have clearer promises, a clearer sight of heaven, a clearer knowledge of Christ, greater advantages of grace than ever they had; and if they died in faith, and held out to the end, what a shame is it if we should give over!

Doct. 2. They that would die in faith must live in faith; as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and such as confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Men would die well, however they live. Balaam wished, Num. xxiii. 10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' There is a natural desire of happiness; men would die the death of the righteous though they are loth to live the life of the righteous. The snake, that was full of windings and circlings while it lived, yet when struck with a dagger it stretched itself out right. *At oportet sic vixisse.* It is not enough when you come to die to say, Oh that I were in such a man's case! We must live in faith if we would die in faith.

Reasons—

1. We had need make trial of that faith we must die by. *In bello non licet bis peccare.* Have you tried your faith? A man had need have experiences of the strength of his faith, and of the truth of God's word, that the word of the Lord is a tried word. Hath it been thy practice to make trial of promises all the days of thy life, that you may be able to say, I have had experience of God, and he hath never failed me? We try how to swim in shallow brooks before we venture to swim in the deep waters; so before we trust Christ with our eternal state we must try how we can trust him with temporals. There are daily cases wherein we make proof and trial of God: Ps. xxxvii. 5, 'Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.' See how it succeedeth with you in present things, what establishment of heart you find by trusting in God during life: Prov. xvi. 3, 'Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.' We seek worldly things in good earnest, therefore we are troubled about them, and find it a great difficulty to rest on God for present supplies. There is some general inclination after happiness, but that is soon satisfied. How can you trust him with your souls, and with your everlasting concerns, if you cannot trust him for daily bread, and in present dangers? 1 Peter iv. 19, 'Commit the keeping of your souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator.' It will be hard work when you are put to it unless you are acquainted with God beforehand.

2. Then is a time to use faith, not to get it. It is no time to buy weapons when the battle is begun. The foolish virgins had their oil

to buy when the bridegroom was come, Mat. xxv. 10. We must lay up comforts against the hour of death; that is the great day of expense, wherein a man is to throw his last for everlasting life. Therefore did God give us so long a life to prepare for this hour. Now we are to make use of the articles of faith; not to learn to believe them, but to turn all into practice.

3. We need the strongest faith to grapple with our greatest and last enemy. Now faith is a grace that is wrought by degrees to strength and perfection: 1 Thes. iii. 10, 'That I may perfect that which is lacking in your faith:' Luke xvii. 5, 'Lord, increase our faith.' Now it is hard to encounter with the worst and last enemy at first. We had need to get promises ready, evidences ready, and experiences ready. Promises ready, upon which we dare venture our souls. Evidences ready: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world;' 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but also unto all them that love his appearing;' Isa. xxxviii. 3, 'Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.' Experience is ready, that all along you have found him a good God: Ps. xviii. 30, 'As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.' You have found him good to you in pardoning your sins on a penitent confession: 1 John i. 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' In enabling you to duties of holiness: 1 Thes. v. 23, 24, 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God, your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.' In bearing you through all your sufferings: 2 Thes. iii. 3, 'And the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.' You have found him a good God in all your cares, troubles, and sorrows; and will he fail you at last? There is nothing more easy than a slight inconsiderate trust; but you must make a business of believing; it is not a slight 'God have mercy upon us' that will serve the turn. Do you think to please the flesh, and hunt after the world as long as you can, and that Christ will take care of your souls? Do you think it is sufficient to say over a few devout words at last, as if you could do the work of an age in a breath?

Use 1. Reproof.

1. It reproves those that live as if they should never die, and then they die as if they should never live: they fill up the measure of their sins, and so do but provide matter for despair, and horror, and agonies on their deathbeds; for at their latter end they shall taste the fruit of their own doings. There is not such a quick passage as the world imagines—a *cæno ad cælum*, from Delilah's lap to Abraham's bosom; there must be a sitting and preparing time to get up the heart to heaven.

2. It reproves such as please themselves with the hopes of a death-bed repentance. It is very hazardous whether we shall then have grace to repent; for it is just with God—*ut qui vivens oblitus est Dei, moriens obliviscatur*, he that hath forgotten God all his life, that he should not be remembered by God when he comes to die. It is very unseasonable, for then we need cordials, not work. Is it a time to have our oil to buy when we should use it? And it is suspicious. The scripture containeth an history of near about four thousand years, and there is but one instance of it—viz., of the good thief upon the cross, and there are special reasons for that. It was the first-fruits of Christ's merits, when the great oblation was actually made; the taste and handsel of his drawing power, John xii. 22; as princes will do extraordinary acts of grace on the day of their coronation. Never was such a season: Christ was now actually redeeming the world by his death, and he owneth Christ in the day of his highest abasement, when all others scorned him.

Use 2. Exhortation; it presseth us to live by faith. If you would have faith ready to die by, you must have faith ready to live by; otherwise, you will be either as a stone, or under horror, or at least in the dark—doubtful and anxious, and will not know what will become of you.

1. Disarm death beforehand by plucking out its sting, seeking reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ. The great business you have to do upon earth is to make and keep peace with God. Seek reconciliation with God through the merits of Jesus Christ, and keep up your friendship with him by following the guidance of the Spirit, and then you will pluck out the sting of death; otherwise sin will stare you in the face, and then death will be terrible.

2. Get your title to eternal life evidenced by holiness. Your right and title to eternal life is founded on the merits of Christ, who paid a price, and therefore heaven is called 'the purchased possession,' Eph. i. 14; but your evidence that you have to show for your interest in it is holiness—that is the first-fruits; and when we come to die, we come to have our fill. God qualifies all those whom he appoints to happiness, and prepares them for it; no unclean thing shall enter into heaven; swine, that wallow in the puddle and mire of the world, who would have profit and pleasure rather than grace, are not fit for this happiness. Your end should be to be safe in another world, to enjoy everlasting communion with God; and therefore the evidence of this is the weaning of your heart from the world, and getting it up to heaven, and making holiness the great business of your lives. This is your evidence, though the title comes by Christ.

SERMON XLVI.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.—HEB. xi. 13.

THE next thing I shall observe in the text is the nature of faith, how it works in and upon the promises. Here are several properties of it : it eyes blessings promised, is firmly persuaded of them, and embraceth and huggeth them ; and all this was observable in these patriarchs, though they went to the grave without any experience of the fulfilling of them. Here I shall observe something from the general view of the text, and then from the several actings of faith.

First, From the whole, observe this doctrine—

Doct. Faith is contented with the promise, though it cannot have actual possession. It is enough to faith to see things at a distance, as these patriarchs did : it constantly adhereth to God, though it findeth not what it believeth ; yea, though it see no probability and reason for it. For this also was the case of these patriarchs. Canaan was promised to them, which was now possessed by the Canaanites ; and God hath told them of the calamity that should befall their posterity in Egypt, and yet that they should be a glorious nation, and have a temple and a city. These were very unlikely things, yet they went to the grave, and saw these blessings afar off, and embraced them. Usually God exerciseth his people in this kind ; so it was in the first believer—the Lord had made a promise of a blessed seed to Adam. Now for a great while there was no likelihood of the accomplishment of it—Abel was slain, Cain was a wicked man, and Adam was an hundred and thirty years old before Seth was born, Gen. v. 3, who was appointed instead of Abel, in whom God would continue the blessed line and race. And so it has been all along, there has been a time between the promise and the accomplishment ; therefore the apostle saith, Heb. vi. 12, ‘Be ye followers of them, who though faith and patience inherit the promises.’ Never any came to possess the things promised, but there was something to exercise their faith and patience ; there was some distance of time for the exercise of their faith, and the inconveniences of the present life to exercise their patience. But yet faith constantly adheres to God, notwithstanding all this. Now faith worketh thus partly because of the advantages it hath in the promises, and partly because of the work it putteth forth upon the heart of a believer.

1 Because of the advantage it hath in the promises ; for consider what the promises are in three things.

[1.] They are the eruption and overflowings of God’s love. God’s heart is so big with love to his people, that it cannot stay till the accomplishment of things ; but his love breaks out and overflows in the promise before the mercy be brought about : Isa. xlii. 9, ‘Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare ; before they spring forth I tell you of them.’ God’s purposes are a sealed fountain ; his promises are a fountain broken open. As when a river swells

so high that the channel will not contain it, it breaks out and overflows; so the love of God is so great that the purposes of God, and the fountain of eternal grace towards a believer, swell and break out into actual promises, that we may know what he hath provided for us before they be accomplished. God might have done us good, and given us no promise of it; but love concealed would not be so much for our comfort. Now faith that hath such a testimony of God's love counts itself bound to be contented; for as God counts our purposes to be obedience, so should we count God's promises to be performance. When there is a purpose in the heart to do anything for God, God counts it as actually done. Abraham purposed to sacrifice his son, and it is said, Abraham offered Isaac, Heb. xi. 17. And God takes notice of David's purpose: 1 Kings viii. 18, 'And the Lord said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.' Now as our purposes are the first issues of our love to God, so God's promises are the first issues of his love to us.

[2.] They are the rule and warrant of faith. The promises show how far God is to be trusted, because they show how far he is engaged. So far as the Lord hath promised, so far he hath made himself a debtor, and so hath given the creature a holdfast upon him, something for faith to lay hold upon. God's purposes are unchangeable, therefore the apostle speaks of the 'immutability of his counsel,' Heb. vi. 17; and his promises are his purposes declared, therefore here faith hath something to work upon, it can boldly challenge God upon his word. The word that is gone out of his mouth he will make good, as he hath said: Ps. lxxxix. 34, 'My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.' The promises are a means whereby God tries our faith. God will try of what credit he is with men, whether we will depend upon his word or no, and besides they are a security put into our hands. We have now something to urge to God, and may challenge him by his promise: Ps. cxix. 49, 'Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.' They are as so many bonds wherein God is bound to us, and God loves to have his bonds put in suit. A usurer thinks himself rich, though it may be he hath little money in the house, because he hath bonds and good security; he that hath a thousand pounds in bonds and good security is in better case than he that hath only a hundred pounds in ready money. A christian though he hath little in his purse, yet he hath much in bonds; he is rich in promises, by which he hath a holdfast upon God, and therefore he is contented to wait.

[3.] They are a pawn of the thing promised, and must be held till performance come. God's truth and holiness lie at stake, and the Lord will set them free and recover his pawn again. God, when he leaves his promise in his people's hands, he leaves his glory, his truth, his holiness, and his justice there, and they are to remain as pledges with the creature till God sets them free again by performing his promise. This is the meaning of that solemn expression so often used—'As I live, saith the Lord.' He plights his essence; count me not a living God if I do not fulfil my word. So the saints plead with God, that he would free his attributes left in pawn by fulfilling his promises: Ps. cxv. 1. 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory,

for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.' As if they should say, Lord, we do not plead for ourselves, for our own profit, but for thy attributes; for thy mercy and truth. When mercies come according to the promise, God doth not only deliver us, but he delivereth his mercy and truth from calumny and reproach. Now upon all these advantages faith is as good as fruition; it is the 'substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen,' Heb. xi. 1; it maketh absent things present; it sets up a stage in the heart, and sees God acting over his counsels, and looks upon things to come as already accomplished or now a-doing. It doth not require the existence and presence of the thing we believe, but only the promise of it. Thus the patriarchs had Christ, and saw Christ, and embraced Christ—viz., in the figure and in the promise; therefore it is said, Heb. xiii. 8, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' As our faith looketh backward, so did their faith look forward; and they are said to eat and to drink Christ: 1 Cor. x. 3, 4, 'And they did all eat the same spiritual meat: and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.' They had the promise, and so a believer hath heaven in the promise: John viii. 36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;' Titus iii. 5, 'According to his mercy, he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.' As soon as we are regenerated we are saved. They have the love of God in the promise, they have an holdfast upon God by his promise, and they have the promise as a pawn till the performance, and they keep it by them; and this is as good as fruition to a believing soul.

2. Because of the work of faith upon the heart of a believer. There is not only a work of faith upon the promise, but a work of faith upon the heart of a believer.

[1.] It calms the affections and deadeneth the heart to present enjoyments. Carnal affections must have things present and pleasing to sense—'Demas hath forsaken us, having loved the present world,' 2 Tim. iv. 10; but faith causeth the soul to look within the veil, and acquaints us with better things than are to be seen in the world; and so the affections are altered: 2 Cor. iv. 18, 'While we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.' Faith carries the soul into heaven, above the clouds and mists that are here below, and causeth it to see the glory of the world to come; and when it looks to things not seen, things that lie within the veil and curtain of heaven, the soul is weaned from such things as are pleasing to sense. As a man that hath been looking on the sun, his eyes are so dazzled with the lustre of it, that he cannot for a while see anything else. Faith is ever accompanied with weanedness from the world, or else it could never do its office; it gets the heart up to heaven, and then all things are easy. Worldly cares and worldly fears arise from the affection of carnal sense, that is all for the present; but faith looketh to things that are to come, and so purifieth the heart from worldly affections; it acquainteth us with better things in Christ, and so spoileth the taste of other things.

[2.] It worketh patience and waiting the Lord's leisure. That is

another effect upon the heart of a believer. Faith and patience are inseparable, and therefore they are often coupled together: Heb. vi. 12, 'Be followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises,' so Heb. x. 35, 36, 'Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.' Faith always worketh waiting, and quiet submission, balancing our sufferings with our hopes. It tarrieth the Lord's leisure; the promise is sure, therefore faith is satisfied with the promise, and quietly hopeth for the performance of it; and the promise is good, and will make amends for all; and therefore faith is contented to wait, notwithstanding present inconveniences. There is longing and looking, yet tarrying and waiting; the mercy is in sure hands, and when it comes it will make amends for all your waiting; and if the blessing be deferred, there will be more glory to God and comfort to us when it cometh. It is but fit we should tarry the Lord's leisure. They are wicked heirs that desire the inheritance before it falleth, and wish the death of their parents; and so they are carnal that must have all things for the present and cannot wait, that would have blessings before they are ready for them. God is not slack, but we are hasty, and therefore the work of faith is to calm the affections and to subdue us to a quiet waiting upon the Lord, till he accomplish all his pleasure. As Naomi said to Ruth: Ruth iii. 18, 'Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall; for the man will not be at rest until he have finished the thing this day.' So faith says to a believing soul, Be still; he that hath begun will not rest till he hath brought this matter to pass.

Use 1. It presseth us to such a faith as will be contented, though it do not come to enjoyment—such a faith as can see that made up in the promise that is wanting in sense and actual feeling. In outward wants get such a faith; it was the apostle's riddle: 2 Cor. vi. 10, 'As having nothing, and yet possessing all things;' all things are in the promise, though nothing in actual possession. Now can you live upon a promise, and fetch life and encouragement and protection and maintenance from thence? Ps. xc. 1, 'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.' When was this said? When they were wandering in the wilderness without house or home; for it was a prayer of Moses, the man of God: they found a habitation in God, when they had none in the wilderness. If we want house, food, raiment, faith can see all this in the promise. The life of faith cometh nearest to the life of heaven. In heaven, God is all in all without the intervention of means; when we can see all in the promise, it is some kind of anticipation of the life of heaven, because the promise shows us what we shall find in God. Can you fetch thence house, food, raiment, life, deliverance, a legacy and blessing for your children, when you die, and are in deep poverty?

Again, in spiritual distresses, though you feel no comfort and quickening, yet you have his word. Men cast anchor in the dark, and a child takes his father by the hand in the dark; can you stick to God in the dark? Though you see nothing, yet can you cleave close to him, and wait and stay upon his name? In the absence of the blessing there is room for faith; can you take your father by the hand when

you cannot see him? And when there is nothing appears to sense, can you stay upon the name of God? Christ may be out of sight, and yet you may not be out of mind. Sense makes lies of God: Ps. xxxi. 22, 'I said in my heart I am cut off from before thine eyes; nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplication when I cried unto thee.' When to sense and feeling all is gone, God may be very nigh, if we had but an eye of faith to see him. In the midst of the miseries of the present world canst thou comfort thyself with thy right in the promises of the world to come? Though thou hast not possession, thou hast the grant, and the deed is sealed; a man may buy lands that he never saw, if he be well informed about them. Thus heaven and earth differ; heaven is all performance, and here is very little performance; here we have the first-fruits and the earnest, enough to bind the bargain; thou hast the conveyances to show, and it is not *nudum pactum*, a naked bargain, there is earnest given in lieu of a greater sum; now can you wait?

Use 2 It informs us how much the happiness of a believer excels that of a worldling. A worldling hath much in hand, but he hath nothing in hope; he hath fair revenues and ample possessions, but he hath no promises; here they have their portion: Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes;' and when they come to die, there is an end of all; Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember, that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' But now look upon a believer: Ps. cxix. 111, 'Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever.' His portion lies in God's promises, and God's promises concern the present life, as well as that which is to come: 1 Tim. iv. 8, 'Godliness is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' For the present life all that he has comes with a blessing out of the womb of the promise, and as a fruit of the covenant; and a share he shall have as long as the Lord will use them and employ them; he will give them maintenance and protection as long as he expects service from them: and in the life to come he enters upon his heritage. Oh, it is a sad thing to have our portion here, and to look for no more; to have all in hand and nothing in hope. A christian is not to be valued by his enjoyments, but by his hopes. Do not look upon the children of God as miserable, because they do not shine in outward pomp and splendour, for they have meat and drink which the world knows not of—estate, lands and honours which lie in another world. It is better to be trained up in a way of faith, than to have our whole portion here. A worldly man hath his present payment, that is all he cares for; but a christian hath an ample portion—all the testimonies of God, and all his promises concerning this life and a better. And therefore he is a rich man, though stripped of all; his estate lieth in a country where there is no plundering, no sequestration, no alienation of inheritances. So that if he be stripped of all that the world can take hold of, he is a happier man than the greatest monarch of the world, that hath nothing but present things; because he is rich in bills and bonds, such as lie out of the reach of the world. Turn him where you will, yet still he is happy; turn

him into prison, the promises bear him company, and revive and cheer him there; turn him into the grave, still God goes along with him, and will revive and raise him up again; his riches stand him instead at death; then is the time to put his bonds in suit. When God comes to demand his soul, he gives it up cheerfully; for then he comes to enjoyment, and to possess that which he expected; the best is behind. So much for the general view of the text.

Secondly, More particularly, I shall speak to the several acts of faith, and they are three—

1. Apprehension—*They saw them afar off.*
2. Firm assent—*They were persuaded of them.*
3. Affection—*They embraced them.*

First, The first act of faith is apprehension of the blessings—‘They saw them afar off.’ Hence I observe—

Doct. It is the property of faith to eye the blessings promised at a distance.

So Abraham: John viii. 56, ‘Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.’ Faith hath an eagle eye; it is the perspective of the soul, by which it can see things at a distance. There were many ages between Abraham and Christ, and yet he saw Christ’s day. So Moses, Heb. xi. 26, ‘He had respect,’ *ἐπίβλεπε* he had an eye to the recompense of the reward.’ As the devil showed Christ the glory of the present world in a map or representation; so doth faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, represent to the soul the glory of the world to come; there is a view of heaven and happiness. Let me show you what there is in this view of faith.

1. It apprehends the blessing as a real thing, which without faith we can never do. The promises are but as a golden dream to a carnal man; they hear of these things as if they were in a dream, and do not look upon them as real objects: 2 Peter i. 9, ‘He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off’—*τυφλός καὶ μυωπάζων*,—the word signifies short-sighted. Fancy and reason cannot out-look time, and see beyond death; men have a guess and general traditional knowledge; but there is no serious apprehension of the reality of these great blessings; heaven doth not come in view to them, as it doth to a believer. Carnal men may have a dream of such things as Elysian fields, and happy mansions in another world, but they have not an eye open to see God and Christ at his right hand; as Stephen’s eyes were opened: Acts vii. 55, ‘He being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.’ There might be something of special dispensation there, but it is temperately done by faith. The sight of faith differeth from that of fancy and reason, as the sight of the eye doth from report. A man that hath seen a foreign country is more affected at the mention of it than he that knows it only by a map, or by the report of others. Carnal men’s hearts are only possessed with an empty notion of heaven; but they do not see it as a real thing, worthy of their choice and pursuit.

2. It pondereth the worth of the blessings. Faith is a considerate act, it takes a view of heaven; as Abraham was to travel through the land of promise, and take a view of it, and Moses from Mount Pisgah

was to take a view of the land of Canaan. As the prophets of old not only believed that Christ was to come in the flesh, but they diligently inquired into the salvation that was to come: 1 Peter i. 11, 'Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; so doth faith employ the thoughts, and sends them out as spies into the other world to bring tidings of the state of the other country. Faith languisheth for want of meditation; for the promises are the food of faith, and meditation is, as it were, the chewing and the digesting of our food. View them then often, let us be creating images and suppositions of our future happiness. If a poor man were adopted into the succession of a crown, he would be pleasing himself with the thoughts of it: so should we mind and ponder on the things that are above, thinking beforehand what a welcome there will be between us and Christ, when the angels shall bring us to Christ; and in what a manner we shall be brought by Christ, and presented to the Father, as the fruits of his purchase; what a pleasure it will be to see their fellow-saints with crowns of righteousness upon their heads. Faith is a steady view.

3. There is actual expectation. Faith, having a promise, looketh out after the blessing. This the scripture expresseth by ἀποκαραδοκία, a lifting up the head; as a man looks after the messenger he hath sent about some business, to see if he be coming back again. Rom. viii. 19, Ἀποκαραδοκία τῆς κτίσεως, &c., 'The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. So David. Ps v. 3, 'In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee and will look up,' that is, to see if I can spy the blessing coming. Faith not only looks up in prayer, but it looks out to see if anything be coming from God in a way of answer; as Elijah when he had prayed earnestly for rain, sent his servant to look towards the sea, whether the rain was a-coming: Hab. ii. 1, 'I will stand upon my watch, and set me on the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me.' He was resolved to wait for an answer of grace, withdrawing the mind from things visible, and elevating it to God, and looking above the mists and darkness of inferior accidents. So faith, as from a watch-tower, looks and sees if it can spy the mercy afar off: 2 Peter iii. 12, 'Looking for and hastening to the coming of the day of God' Faith, or meditation on the certainty of the promise (for that is faith), doth thus erect the soul, and sets it in a posture of expectation, to behold if there be any tokens of God's coming, if they can hear the soundings of his feet, any approach of the mercy they look for. As a man that hath bills or bonds due at such a day, waits for the time when they will come due; so is faith watching when the time will expire, that he may come to the fruition of that he looks for. So much for the first act of faith, apprehension.

Secondly. The second act of faith in and upon the promises in firm assent, πεισθέντες,—'They were persuaded of them.' From hence I observe—

Doct. Faith is persuaded of the certainty of the blessings which it beholdeth in the promises.

That there is a firmness of assent and persuasion in faith, these

scriptures evidence: Phil. i. 6, 'Being confident,' or firmly persuaded, 'of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ;' so Rom. viii. 38, *πέπεισμαι*, 'I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creatures, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;' 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.' Faith is not a moral conjecture, but a certain persuasion: and yet there may be many doubtings: Mat. xiv. 31, 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?' which is an argument of the weakness, not of the nullity, of faith; but, however, doubts do not get the victory; but of this hereafter.

Now this persuasion of the certainty of the blessing promised stands upon two feet, God's truth in keeping promises, and his power to bring them to pass.

1. On God's truth. God is very tender of the honour of his truth: Ps. cxxxviii. 2, 'Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.' When we have the word of a man of credit we rest satisfied. Now we have not only God's word, but his bond. The great work of faith is to rest upon the promise. God would cease to be God if he were not a true God, and the chiefest honour that we can give him is to rest upon his faith: Heb. xi. 11, 'She judged him faithful who had promised.' Faith is a sealing to God's truth: John iii. 33, 'He that believeth his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true;' whereas unbelief giveth God the lie, which is the worst reproach among men; 1 John v. 10, 'He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.' Now God's truth should be the more credited,—

[1.] Because when we trust God upon his word, God is doubly engaged; for there are not only promises made to invite faith, that we may trust in him, but promises made to faith, because we trust in him: Isa. xxvi. 3, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.' God counts himself bound in honour to fulfil that which we are firmly persuaded of, upon the ground of his word. God will not disappoint a trusting soul. When the soul dares upon the warrant of God's word to stay and rest upon him, God counts himself bound to satisfy such a soul. An ingenuous man would not disappoint one that reposes his trust in him; much less will God, who is a God of faithfulness.

[2.] Because of the form of God's engaging his truth to us. It is not only in the form of a promise, which is *nudum pactum*, a naked bargain; but in the form of a covenant, which is the most solemn way of transaction and engagement between man and man; nay, and this covenant is ratified by an oath, which is the highest assurance among men: Heb. vi. 16, 'An oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.' Barbarous nations have been always very tender of an oath; take away the obligation of an oath, and you destroy all commerce among men. Herod made conscience of his oath when he promised half the kingdom, Mat. xiv. 9. Now the Lord interposeth an oath,

and in every oath there is not only an invocation of God as a witness, but an implicit imprecation: God is called upon as a judge and avenger in case of falsehood. So in God's oath, he lays all his glory at stake, as in that oath,—‘As I live, saith the Lord;’ count me not a living God if this be not accomplished for you. So that not only is the word of God gone out of his mouth, but it is put into the form of a covenant, and that covenant is confirmed by the solemnity of an oath.

[3.] Because this covenant is ratified by the blood of Christ: 2 Cor. i. 20, ‘All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us.’ This gives us the more satisfaction, because the blood of Christ satisfies God's justice. All God's promises come from his mercy. Now that God's mercy might have a freer course, God represents himself as satisfied with the blood of Christ, which was a price to purchase our blessings. The covenant of grace is founded upon the covenant of redemption, which was made between God and Christ; so that God is not only engaged to us, but engaged to Christ; so some expound that text, Titus i. 2, ‘In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began;’ and 2 Tim. i. 9, ‘According to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.’ It is clear that there was a covenant made between God and Christ: Isa. liii. 10, ‘When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall seek his seed; he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands.’

[4.] Because of the many experiences of his faithfulness, the saints have been witnesses of God's fidelity: Ps. xviii. 30, ‘The word of the Lord is tried.’ Never any had to do with God, but they have been witnesses of his truth. There is more than letters and syllables in the promises; there is comfort, support, life and peace in them: it had been cast in the fire, and come out again. His promises are tried promises; believers have not only been tried with troubles and dark afflictions, but the promises have been put to trial, and all the saints may come in as witnesses of God's faithfulness: Ps. xxii. 4, 5, ‘Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them, they cried unto thee and were delivered; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.’ Praymark, how it is repeated,—‘They trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them,’ they were willing to make trial of God; they trusted, and trusted, and trusted, and still they kept up their trusting, notwithstanding they were exercised with troubles. When the first trust was ready to be broken off they continued the act of their trust, and waited upon God, and he did deliver them. All that have made trial of God will come in for witnesses. Did God disappoint Abraham, or David, or any of the patriarchs? and God is where he was. Hitherto in the story of our own lives we may come in as witnesses for God against our own unbelief, and may plead our own experience, that not one word hath failed of all that he hath promised. Now no wonder if faith that is thus founded on God's truth and faithfulness grows up to firm persuasion.

2. The other foot that faith stands upon is God's power: 2 Tim. i. 12, ‘I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.’ This is the ground of our dependence on God, the Lord is able to make good his word to the full: so Rom. iv. 21, ‘Being fully persuaded that

what he had promised he was able also to perform ;' his sufficiency to make good his word was the ground of his faith. God hath made known his will in his promise ; now all the doubt is about his power, and indeed unbelief stumbles there. How can this be ? is the language of unbelief. But faith is persuaded of the absolute power of God, that God that made heaven and earth out of nothing can accomplish what he hath promised. And therefore it is notable, when the apostle in this chapter would lay down the strength of faith, first he begins with the creation : ver. 3, 'By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.' This one article of faith helps us to believe all the rest, for if we believe the creation, then we may easily believe that he is able to accomplish all we trust in him for.

Thirdly, The third act of faith in and upon the promises is *ἀσπασόμενοι*, 'They embraced them,' or saluted them, and hugged them,—Oh, these are dear precious promises ! This will yield Canaan, this will yield a Messiah, this heaven ; as a man maketh much of bills, and bonds, and conveyances, and keeps them charily. Now in this act of faith I shall observe several things :—

1. I observe that faith is an act of the will, as well as of the understanding. There is in faith adherence as well as assent, and embracing as well as persuasion. Faith looketh upon the promises not only as true, but as good ; they are 'yea and amen,' 2 Cor. i. 20. They are 'great and precious promises,' 2 Peter i. 4. Faith in scripture is not only expressed by sight but taste. The promises are as food to the renewed soul, and faith is a spiritual taste ; it is a feeding upon the promises with delight. The trial of the soul is by affection ; they that are all notion, and have no affection have no faith. Certainly if you did believe the promises that are so good, and so true, you would be more affected with them, you would entertain the promises with respect and delight, though you do not receive present satisfaction ; for where faith is, there is love and delight in the things believed. We think we are persuaded, but where is our love and comfort ? for this necessarily follows, they saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.

2. I observe the order and method here laid down by the Holy Ghost, for these things follow one another in a very natural order, sight makes way for persuasion, and persuasion for delight. Sailors at sea, when they see land afar off, shout and make towards it with joy ; so when the soul sees that blessing at a distance, it stirs up actual rejoicing in God, because of his word. There would be no embracing if there were no sight ; the eye affecteth the heart, and according to the strength of conviction and persuasion, so is the strength of affection to the blessings promised. Therefore if you would have more lively affections to the promises, you must oftener think of them and be more firmly persuaded of them. Think of them oftener, the oftener the soul is in heaven the more joy, a man cannot take comfort in that whereupon he doth not often meditate. The mind must engage the heart, and serious thoughts must make way for these embracings. God's method is first to enter upon our judgments and consideration, and then to ravish the heart, the great things of the covenant do enter upon the mind, and then they affect and ravish the heart. And be more firmly persuaded of the promises ; if men were persuaded of them, they would

not be so coldly affected as they are. We that are so dead-hearted to heavenly things, surely we do not judge them real. It may be we do not actually call them in question, but we have not a firm persuasion of the truth of them; if we had, we would more 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' Rom. v. 2. For we should find the scripture always maketh delight a fruit of faith: 1 Peter i. 8, 'In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' Rejoicing is wrought in us by believing, and being persuaded of the reality, and worth of things that are come. So Rom. xv. 13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.' This is the natural order: faith is wrought in the soul, then these affections, and embracings, and rejoicings in God are stirred up.

3. The affection that is exercised in this embracing is joy. There are other affections, I know, that are exercised, as hope and love, but chiefly our joy, as appears by that parallel place, John viii. 56, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.' John Baptist did not only leap in the womb, because of Christ's day, when it was ready at hand, but Abraham, that lived at so great a distance. Joy is the affection proper to enjoyment, but faith behaveth itself as if it were already come to possession. This joy ariseth from the certainty of the promise, and the excellency of it, and our interest in it; they rejoice because such great and precious promises are made over to them in Christ, being assured they shall be made good to them in due time: so did the patriarchs, and so doth every believer.

4. This joy is manifested two ways, partly by the lively act of it in meditation, partly by the solid effects of it in our conversation.

[1.] By the lively act of it in meditation, it doth our hearts good to think of it. Thus they hugged the promises, O sweet promises! A man cannot think of a little pelf, or any petty interest in the world without comfort, when he knows he has a right to do it; and can a man think of the promises, and not be affected with them? Carnal men may think and think again, they have no spiritual appetite, and therefore they feel no savour, their joy is intercepted and prepossessed with vanity and carnal delights, and therefore the promises to them are as a dry chip, or withered flowers. Swine do not value pearls; but now to believers their hearts leap within them to think of the promises, and what God hath provided for them in Christ: Luke vi. 23, 'Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold your reward is great in heaven.' Whatever our condition be in the world, this maketh us full of comfort; there is an actual rejoicing, a hugging our happiness, as if we were in the midst of the glory of the world to come. A carnal man feelth contentment, sudden rapt motions of joy every time he doth actually think of his bags, riches, and honours; and shall not a christian find contentment, when he thinks of the heavenly glory? What? an heir of God, and co-heir with Christ, and be no more affected? 1 Sam. xviii. 23, 'Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law?' We should 'rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' Rom. v. 2. In meditation faith and hope is acted.

[2.] By the solid effects of it in our conversation. It is not a joy for a pang or fit, the practical joy is the best sign. The solid effects of it are these, cheerfulness in duties, comfort and support in afflictions, and weanedness from worldly pleasures.

(1.) **Cheerfulness in duties.** When we go cheerfully about our work, because we have heaven in our eye, it is a sign we have embraced the blessings made known to us in the promises: 1 Cor. xv. 58, 'Be ye stedfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' It will quicken us to obedience. A christian is persuaded that whatever he does will turn to a good account, and therefore he cheerfully holds on his course in holiness. You know a horse goes cheerfully, when he goes homeward; so a christian that is hastening to God, and every day draws nearer his home, goes cheerfully on in his work. So far as you are backward in God's work, so far is your delight in the promises weakened. Therefore a christian is cheerful, and holdeth on his journey to heaven with delight, because he looketh upon grace as a bud of glory, and upon duty as the way to heaven.

(2.) **Comfort and support in afflictions.** There is not only an extramission of acts of faith, but an intromission of comfort and strength to support the heart. As the heart acteth towards the promise, so doth the promise work upon the heart. David professeth his experience in this kind, Ps. cxix. 50, 'This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.' True faith draweth life, comfort and quickening out of the word of promise; so ver. 81, 'My soul fainteth for thy salvation, but I hope in thy word.' Faith looking to the word gathereth strength and hope. This is no disparagement to the Spirit of God, for faith is the instrument, the word the means, and the Spirit the author of all this grace which we receive. This is God's established order, the Spirit by the word, through our faith conveyeth strength and support to us. God doth not cast in comfort and quickening into the soul whilst we are idle; it is by his grace, but upon the acting of our faith: Ps. cxix. 92, 'Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine afflictions.' The worth of the word and the excellency of faith would not have been known unless God had cast into afflictions; then is the time to make trial of the virtue of the word, the excellency of faith, and the comforts of another world.

(3.) This joy is manifested by a weanedness from worldly pleasures. There cannot be such an affection of worldly greatness, because by embracing the promises the affections are diverted and prepossessed. The affections are the most active faculties of the soul, and they cannot remain idle; as water in the pipe must needs run, so must our affections have some vent and oblectation. Now when the promises have taken up our delight, when we have chosen them for our heritage, then the relish of other things is marred and spoiled: Ps. cxix. 3, 'Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart.' Our choice is a tie upon our hearts. Till we are acquainted with better things we take up with the world, but when we are once acquainted with the sweetness of the promises, we look no further; when a man hath embraced the promises, and taken them for his portion, and resolved to adhere and stick to them, that ties up his heart from other things. Garlic and onions may be pleasing to him that hath tasted no better food, but who can relish aloes that hath tasted honey? so when the heart is acquainted with better things, with the delights of another world, with the sweetness of God in Christ, it is withdrawn from outward comforts and carnal pleasures. As the woman

of Samaria left her water-pot when she was acquainted with Christ : John iv. 28, 'The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city,' &c. And Zaccheus, when he came to Christ, then saith he, 'Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor ; and if I have taken anything from any man by any false accusation, I restore him fourfold,' Luke xix. 8.

SERMON XLVII.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.—HEB. xi. 13.

Use 1. Of information in two things.

1. If these be the actings of faith, it shows what need there is of the power of the Spirit of God in the whole business of faith, to accomplish all these things. It is the apostle's expression, 2 Thes. i 11, 'Wherefore we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.' It will never be done without power from above. We can neither see, nor be persuaded of, nor embrace these things, except the grace of God come in upon the heart mightily to enable it. We cannot see afar off, nature is short sighted : so the apostle prays, Eph. i. 17, 18, 'That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. The eyes of your understandings being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' A man cannot look into the other world without the light of the Spirit. All things must be seen with a proper light,—spiritual things with a spiritual light. Now till God open our eyes we can never look through the curtain of the clouds and see the riches of the glory of our inheritance in Christ. A fond conjecture there may be of happiness to come, but no certain, steady sight. Then for persuasion ; nothing is so natural to guilty creatures as doubts and jealousies. Man's heart is prone to unbelief above all things, and therefore the heart cannot be persuaded without the Spirit : 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11, 'But God hath revealed them to us by the Spirit ; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him ? even so the things of God knoweth no man save the Spirit of God.' It is God must persuade the heart to believe, embrace, and take hold of the covenant : Gen. ix. 27, 'God shall persuade Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem.' And then for embracing, God hath reserved this power in his own hands to bring our hearts and the promise together. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit as well as an effect of faith.

2. It informeth us of the difference between faith and other things, as between faith and presumption. **Presumption hath no bottom to**

work upon, but only some general persuasion that God will be merciful and gracious; but faith hath the word of God, though it hath nothing else. Presumption is a rash bastard confidence, it never looketh to the grounds of it; but faith, though it may be without things promised, yet it cannot be without the promise; it must have some solid grounds to work upon, and not fallible conjectures: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.' It proceeds from knowledge and clear grounds, and is not a trust that is taken hand over head. Again we learn hence the difference between faith and sense; sense must have something in hand, but it is enough to faith to have a promise. Sense cannot see, nor be persuaded of, nor embrace things till they are present; faith, though it receive not the blessings, yet it sees them afar off, and is contented with a ground of hope. Again, we learn the difference hence between faith and reason; reason looketh to outward probabilities, it observeth the clouds; but faith is contented with God's word, how improbable soever things be. Reason sees things in their causes; but faith sees things in the promises, and rests upon the authority of God's word. Reason sees more than sense, but faith sees much more than reason, let the case be never so desperate, and things never so far off; to sense a star is but as a spark or spangle, but reason considereth the distance, and knows them to be vast and great bodies. Faith corrects reason, and though there be no causes, no probabilities, no appearances, faith can see things to come. Again, we see the difference between faith and conjecture; conjecture is but a blind guess, it may be so, or it may not be so; but faith is a certain persuasion, it shall be so, as the Lord hath spoken. Again, it shows the difference between faith and opinion, which is somewhat more than conjecture; a man verily thinks it is so, but there is *formido oppositi*, a fear of the contrary; but faith falls embracing and hugging the mercy, is persuaded of it, and rejoiceth and triumpheth as if the blessing were already enjoyed.

Use 2. Of examination. Have you such a faith? What kind of actings have you towards the promises? Do you see the blessings promised afar off? are you persuaded of them? do you embrace them? Are you contented with the word of promise though you have not the blessings promised?

1. Are you careful to get an interest in the promises, to thrust in for a share in them, that you may see your own name in God's bond? Negligence is a sure sign of unbelief; if you hear of so great salvation, and are careless and negligent, and do not put in for a share, it is a sign you do not believe that which God hath promised. Not only actual doubting, but carelessness gives God the lie; when you hear of precious promises, but regard them not, you do not count them true. You know what David says: Ps. cxix. 111, 'Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart.' Now have you chosen these for your portion, and made it the scope of your lives not to grow great in the world, but to have an interest in the promises? I do not say he is no believer that cannot say, I have an interest in the promises, but I dare say that he is no believer that doth not take the promises for his heritage, and doth not part with all

things that he may get an interest in them. When a good bargain is offered upon easy terms, if men do not regard it, it is a sign they do not believe it. Here is the best bargain that ever can be offered to you, eternal salvation and the enjoyment of God and Christ; if you do not put in for a share, it is a sign of unbelief.

2. Do you prize and esteem them? 2 Peter i. 4, 'To us are given exceeding great and precious promises;' so they are in the account of every believer, not small things, but great and of great consequence to us. Do I believe these things, and am I no more affected with them? If a great man that may be changeable in point of will, and defective in point of power, promises great matters to us, how do we build upon it, and are pleased with his promise! When the great God hath promised great things of such high concernment, it is an ill sign not to be moved and taken with these things. David doth often profess his respect to the word: Ps. cxix. 14, 'I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches.' Faith sees more comfort in the promises than in the dearest things we have in the world; gold and silver are nothing to them. Is there such an esteem of the promises? That you may not deceive yourselves, know this esteem of the promises is accompanied with a disesteem of earthly things. When a man embraceth a thing, all other things fall out of his hands; when the hands are full of the world, you cannot hug the promises. It will take you off from worldly admiration; the world will seem less if the promises seem great and precious, for the promises do not establish the love of the world, but the love of heaven: Prov. viii. 10, 'Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold.' It is not said, 'and not *above* silver,' but 'and not silver:' the soul by faith is diverted, and hath less esteem of these things. If you are as earthly-minded as ever, you have no faith.

3. Do you often call them to mind and comfort yourselves in the remembrance of them? He that is a stranger to the promises doth not believe them. A man looketh upon his bills, and bonds, and evidences, and views them often, and consults with them, they are all he hath to show for his estate; so a believer consults with the promises, they are the obligation he hath upon God: Ps. cxix. 24, 'Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors,' or the men of my counsel. Every strait drives him to the promises, there to consult with the mind and will of God; as David went to the sanctuary, Ps. lxxiii. 17. A man cannot have any satisfaction of his doubts, any allay of his fears, but by calling to mind the promises. In short, wants bring a man to the promises, the promises to Christ, and Christ to God. Wants bring a man to the promises; for there is a plaster for every sore; and the promises to Christ, for in him they are all yea and amen; and Christ to God, as the fountain of all blessings. Saith David, Ps. cxix. 92, 'Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction.' Do you thus call to mind the promises, and reckon upon them in all straits and afflictions, and find real support from them: Heb. x. 34, 'Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring substance,' that is, acting your thoughts upon it. It is good to see whence our supports come, and how we are borne up in all cases, it is by knowing and thinking upon what God hath promised.

4. Do they put you upon thanksgivings in the midst of wants, straits, and miseries? Faith is a bird that can sing in winter, and a believer can rejoice in his hopes when he hath little in hand. The patriarchs built altars, and offered sacrifices of praise, whenever God renewed the promises to them. Faith triumphs before the victory; though you have not the blessing, can you praise God for the promise? Ps. xiii. 5, 'But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.' You are assured mercy shall come, though never so unlikely and never so far off. Is thy heart thus carried out to triumph in God when you have but his bare word, to hug the promises with delight, to praise God not only for his blessings, but for his word, and to rejoice and give thanks before the mercy come? So Ps. lvi. 10, 'In God will I praise his word, in the Lord will I praise his word.' Can you praise him not only for his acts of mercy, but for his promises of mercy? Though there be nothing of performance, yet there is ground not only of hope but of praise that we have his word; and David redoubleth it, as a thing of undoubted experience.

5. Do the promises stir up any longing and looking for the blessings promised? There will be looking, there will be not only more frequent meditation, but a more earnest expectation. Faith will thrust out the head, and look if it can see God a-coming, there will be a constant observation how the word is made good; for faith is required not only for our comfort, but that we may be witnesses of God's faithfulness, that we may see how he makes good his promises: Joshua xxiii. 14, 'Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.' And then for longing, when shall it once be? The nearer we come to enjoy Christ, the more impatient should we grow: 2 Peter iii. 12, 'Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God.' Faith is earnest, but it doth not give over looking out for the mercy expected.

6. What influence have the promises of God upon your prayers? Can you come into God's presence with more confidence because you have the word of God on your side, and cast yourselves upon his word in the midst of doubts and fears, and in the face of discouragements? Can you put promises in suit? Ps. cxix. 25, 'My soul cleaveth unto the dust; quicken thou me according to thy word.' Can you throw in to God his hand-writing, and put him in remembrance of his promises? Lord, whose are these? As Tamar, when Judah was about to condemn her, said, Gen. xxxviii. 25, 'Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff.' Prayer is faith acted; there we come to exercise that trust that we have had in the promises: James i. 7, 'But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting;' there we show how we can bear up ourselves upon the word, and put a humble challenge upon the Lord; we come to put his bond in suit. Now can you thus draw near to God, seeking the full performance of his word? as David: Ps. cxix. 49, 'Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.' David there pleads two things; God's promise, and his hope. The grant of a promise and the gift of faith; thou hast caused me to hope, therefore make good thy promise. By two things God becomes a debtor, *Deus promittendo se fecit debitorem, et Deus donando debet*—God makes himself a debtor by pro

mising, and by giving grace. He will not disappoint faith, otherwise he would stir up such an excellent grace in vain.

7. What influence have the promises upon your practice and conversation? By that you may judge whether you have this faith: 2. Peter iii. 11, 12, 'What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hastening to the coming of the day of God.' The course of our lives doth discover the certainty of our hopes; they that are not such manner of persons do not look for such things. Can a man look for the resurrection of the body, and only use his body as a strainer for meats and drinks, and a channel for lust to run in? Can a man look to be one of the virgins that shall follow the Lamb, that defiles his soul with every base lust? Can a man look to see God, and suffer his eyes to run after vanity? to be with Christ hereafter, and walk in disobedience to his commands for the present? And as the quality of our hopes will be hereby discovered, so will the strength of our hopes also: James i. 8, 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.' He that is full of doubts will be off and on in point of obedience; he will be unstable in his way because unstable in his faith. You may know the rate and measure of your faith by your conversation: he that is firmly persuaded, and hath his heart fixed in the promises, will be more constant in the course of his obedience; his religion will not be by fits and starts, now and then a good pang, and then off again. For the promises are the great motives of obedience, we work as we are persuaded of them; but when we are up and down, at least it argues an interruption of faith. A wavering trust and a fickle carriage go together.

8. Do they engage you to any self-denial? Do you part with anything upon your hopes? as these patriarchs left their country, and lived as sojourners in a strange land, for they looked for a better country, that is a heavenly. Whoever hopes for anything from God must leave something for God; one time or another God will put him upon trial. Now what do you quit for God? Do you live upon your hopes, or upon your riches, honours, and pleasures? God doth not count that you trust his promises unless you venture something on them. Every grace makes a venture,—charity: Eccles. xi. 1, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.' So saith the Lord, Mal. iii. 10, 'Prove me if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing.' God would not have a proof of our fidelity, nor we a proof of his faithfulness, if we did not sometimes make ventures. Zeal makes adventures in a way of conscientious obedience; and mortification, it ventures upon the promises—he that loseth his life shall save it; he that parts with worldly conveniences for the interests of conscience shall have treasure in heaven. Now at what expense have you been, and what adventures have you made in a way of self-denial and obedience upon the promises? By these things you may know whether you have such a faith as these patriarchs.

Use 3. To press you to get such a faith as will wait for future blessings with such patience and contentation as if they were already enjoyed. The arguments I shall urge are these—

1. We have more cause than the patriarchs, for we live nearer to the accomplishment of God's promises. Every age downward hath great

advantages of believing. The first patriarchs were so far from the things typified that they had the types; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not enjoy Canaan, the type of heaven; nor did they see the temple, the type of Christ; nor the rites of the Levitical administration, which were the type of his sufferings; nor the numerous posterity, which was a type of the calling of the gentiles. The next age had more advantages; they had the types, but not the things typified; they were grown into a numerous multitude and a nation; they had the temple, and legal administrations and sacrifices: but Christ was not come in the flesh; the calling of the gentiles was not brought about; they had not such discoveries of heaven, and of the glory God had prepared for them that love him; the entrance into the holy place was not yet set open; they were legalised, not evangelised. Afterward when Christ was come in the flesh, the first christians were not so near salvation; heaven was still at a distance; there was τὸ κατέχον, something that hindered the discovery of antichrist. They were to look for the discovery of antichrist, we for the ruin of antichrist; they for the taking away what letted, that antichrist might be discovered, viz., the Roman Empire, we for the consuming of antichrist by the Spirit of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming. There is but a little time between us and the day of judgment, it is the last times we now live in. All things are clearer to us than to the patriarchs; that which was prophecy to them is history to us, and history is clearer than prophecy, because it is more sensible; our light is clearer, our means and helps are greater. What a shame is it that our faith should be so weak! that they should have eagle's eyes to see things at a distance, and we should be such owls and bats. We have the experience of all former ages, and we draw nearer and nearer still to our great hopes; surely then our condemnation will be greater if we should not believe and wait for the blessings promised with such patience and contentation as they did. It is said, Zech. xii. 8, 'He that is feeble at that day shall be as the house of David.' God expects much from you, that you should be as Abraham and David, for you have greater helps, higher advantages, and clearer discoveries of the will of God.

2. Unless your faith work thus, to keep heaven in sight, it will be of no use and profit to you. Looking to present things is the ground of all miscarriages, you will not be able to bear afflictions if you have not such a faith as to be contented with the promises till performance come: Heb. xii. 11, 'No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.' When you feel nothing but the smart rod, you will certainly miscarry. Nor will you be able to withstand temptations, but present profits and present pleasures will withdraw your hearts from God: 2 Tim. iv. 10, 'Demas' (a glorious professor, one of the seven deacons) 'hath forsaken us, having loved this present world.' Nor will you be able to wait for the future glory; the children of God have been always ready to confess their miscarriages when they have been in haste, when they have been all for the present: Ps. cxvi. 11, 'I said in my haste, All men are liars;' he speaks of Samuel and the prophets who had promised him the kingdom, and yet he was chased like a flea, and hunted like a partridge upon the mountains; and Ps. xxxi. 22, 'I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes.' Passion will

break out into irregular thoughts and words. If you have not this faith, you will never be able to hold out till the crown come. This bore up Paul, that he looked beyond the present life: Rom. viii. 18, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.' Without this faith you cannot abound in charity, nor do anything for God in that kind, for the reward comes after many days: Eccles. xi. 1, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, for after many days thou shalt find it.' You cannot mortify lusts, that is irksome and tedious to present sense: 1 Cor. ix. 27, 'I keep under my body, and bring it in subjection;' he had a crown in his eye, he alludes to those in the Isthmic games, that dieted themselves to run; now saith he, 'They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible,' ver. 25. How will you neglect the honours, pleasures, and profits of the present world, when you are put to a sore trial? you will surely faint if you have not such a faith as is here described.

3. It is the glory of faith to see things to come, and delight in them as if they were present. It cometh near to the vision of God, to that manner of sight that God hath of things. We say of God that he seeth all things that may be in his own all-sufficiency, and all things that shall be in his own degree, and it is all one to him, as if they were actually existing. This is somewhat like to the vision that God had of the world before it was: Prov. viii. 31, 'Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth,' before hill or mountain were created. So doth faith see all things in the all-sufficiency and truth of God long before they come to pass, as if they were already in being, and were already brought to pass. The sight of faith is a glorious sight, like God's before things appear.

4. As it is for the honour of faith, so it is for the honour of God. He gave out a promise for this end and purpose to exercise our faith, and try how far we would trust him, for else he might have kept us in the dark, and therefore such a kind of trust gives God the glory of his power, mercy, and truth—'Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God,' Rom. iv. 20. Faith is called 'a justifying God,' Luke vii. 29. Faith not only justifies a believer, but it justifies God. To justify is a relative word, and implies to clear another from accusations brought against him. Now faith clears God from the calumnies and slander of the world and our own hearts. God is not honoured by anything so much as faith; it is not your dead service, pompous worship, ceremonious duties, that honour God; but it is faith that gives him the glory of his mercy, faithfulness, and all-sufficiency. So much for the arguments.

Now for the means, what shall we do to have such a faith as is here described? Here is something supposed, and something to be done.

[1.] There is something supposed, and that is, that you get an interest in the promises, otherwise your faith is but a fancy and delusion: Job. viii. 13, 'The hypocrite's hope shall perish.' There must be an accepting of the general covenant before we can make use of the particular promises; if you have not an interest, you do but embrace a cloud, and not the promises. Did you ever choose God to be your God, and give up yourselves to be his? then may you come and sue out the

promises, and look for the blessings promised : Ps. cxix. 34, 'I am thine, save me,' 'I am thine,' that is, bound to thee in covenant ; so Ps. xxiii. 1, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.' There must be a good ground and foundation laid. Now is God yours? have you chosen him? then may you draw a conclusion, and comfort yourselves; though as to sense you want all things, yet you lack nothing, for the Lord is your shepherd. When Christ prayed for his disciples, he pleads this argument : John xvii. 6, 'Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.' Then may we expect salvation temporal and eternal when we can say, Lord! I am thine. A covenant supposeth both parties engaged; it doth not leave one party bound and the other at large. Can you say then, Lord, I would not be mine own, but thine? Then you may plead God's promises.

[2.] There is something required to be done by us; something on the heart, and something on the promises.

First. There is something required to be done upon the heart: the eye must be kept clear and the affections tender; they saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.

1. Keep the eye clear, the world is a very blinding thing: 2 Cor. iv. 4, 'In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.' Satan hath that title of 'the god of this world' because the world is the means that he useth to blind men withal; the profits of the world are as dust cast into the eyes. So 2 Peter i. 9, 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off;' these things, that is, temperance and sobriety in the pursuit and use of outward comforts. Brutish and carnal affections send up the fumes and steams of lust, and then the eye is clouded, and you cannot have a clear sight of heaven, and of the blessings to come. A carnal man may discourse of heaven, but he hath not such a lively affective sight of it.

2. Keep the heart tender. An hard heart, that is settled in the guilt and love of sin, cannot rejoice in the hope of glory, nor hug the blessings promised, nor behave itself as if it were already come to enjoyment. Take heed of benumbing the affections, of soaking and steeping the soul in carnal pleasures; these take away the heart, that is the tenderness of the heart. Carnal profits darken the eye, and carnal pleasures bring a brawn upon the heart, that we have no affections for Christ and things above. They that were given to uncleanness were past feeling: Eph. iv. 19, 'Who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.' There will be no hugging nor embracing the promises as long as we allow a carnal liberty in fleshly pleasures, for they will bring a deadness on the heart.

Secondly. Something must be done as to the promises.

1. You must understand the nature of them, and the tenure of them.

[1.] The nature of them; it is good to know our portion. Abraham walked through the land of promise; so it is good now and then to survey the land of promise, to see what God hath made over to us in Christ. In every bargain we look to the conditions, and what advantage we shall have. God's covenant-notion is God all-sufficient; there is nothing wanting in the covenant; the plaster is as broad as the sore.

In the covenant you may find protection, maintenance, peace, strength, deliverance, comfort, meat, drink, everlasting happiness. Look, as the psalmist bids us, Ps. xlviii. 12, 13, 'Walk about Sion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces,' there is nothing wanting necessary for use or ornament; so go to the covenant, there is every blessing for body, soul, goods, and good name; every blessing is adopted and taken into the covenant: 1 Cor. iii. 23, 'All things are yours, for you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.' Ordinances, providences, things present, things to come, life, death, afflictions, mercies, all things are yours. There is no scantiness in the covenant, but an overflow of mercy: Ps. xxiii. 5, 'My cup runneth over.' There are privative mercies and positive mercies: Ps. lxxxiv. 11, 'The Lord God is a sun and a shield. The Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' He will give all kind of mercies for your persons, for your relations. For your persons: man is made up of a body and soul, and there are promises for both. For the body: not only for hereafter, that God will raise it up to be a glorious body like to Christ's body; but for the present, to give it health, strength, supply, meat, and drink, and clothing. Then for the soul there are promises of pardon, life, light, grace, quickening, all things that are necessary for the soul. It is good to fetch every mercy out of the covenant both for soul and body, our bread and clothing, for 'man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,' Mark iv. 4. For your relations, and those that you care for in the world, your posterity, the grace of the covenant runneth over. God cannot satisfy himself in doing good to our persons, but he will do good to our children: Deut. v. 29, 'That it may be well with them, and with their children for ever.' God takes notice of the children of his old friends, when they are dead and gone. So for the church of God, those that mind the affairs of Sion have promises to bear them up, as promises for the conversion of the world, that nations shall come in to Christ, and the like. It is good to have store of promises by us; collect them in your reading and hearing; happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.

[2.] Know the tenure of them as well as the nature. God hath promised nothing absolutely but eternal life, and necessary grace to bring us thither; all other things are promised with a limitation, as the Lord shall see them good for us; and there the work of faith is to calm the heart to submit to God's pleasure, and refer all to him. A man that is ignorant of the tenure of the covenant cannot fix his faith aright. Now the promises are either temporal, spiritual, or eternal.

(1.) For promises of temporal mercies.

1st. They are to be understood with limitation of convenience. God knows what is best and fit for us, therefore we must trust his choosing. Agur prays, Prov. xxx. 8, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.' A garment too short will not cover our nakedness, and a garment too long will be a dirty rag to trip up our heels. God is bound in covenant only to do that is convenient for us, and that we must leave to God to judge; the sheep must not choose the pastures, but the shepherd. If a man were left to carve out his own portion, he would be his own greatest enemy; a sick man would make

his palate his physician ; children think green fruit the best diet. Many things suit with our appetite that do not suit with God's wisdom. What strange creatures should we be if we were at our own finding!

2dly. In these temporal promises God will either give us the thing specified (and then it comes sweetly when it comes from a promise), or he will give us that which is equivalent. Our Saviour says, Mat. xix. 29, 'Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold.' Julian was wont to mock the christians with that promise, that they should have a hundred fathers and a hundred mothers, &c. The meaning is, they shall have an equivalent, and what they lose in this world shall be abundantly made up to them.

3dly. All temporal mercies are promised with an exception of the cross and persecution, when it is for God's glory, or for the honour of the truth, or for the correction of our sins. When David had sinned, David must be punished : 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14, 'The Lord hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.' God hath reserved this liberty in the covenant to visit our transgressions with rods, though he will not take away his love : Ps. lxxxix. 31-33, 'If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes ; nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.' In all these temporal promises we must expect what God sees convenient and best for us, and may conduce to his glory, and that shall be made up to us another way.

(2.) For spiritual promises, understand the tenure of them. God hath promised to give necessary grace to all such as have an interest in Christ, but for the perfection of grace that God hath not promised in this life, and for the measures and degrees of grace, and the actual motions and assistances of his Spirit, here he works according to his own pleasure. Perfection we cannot have in this life.

(3.) For eternal promises, they are always sure and safe, and these things chiefly faith should keep in its eye. Though we are miserable creatures, accompanied with weakness and infirmities, yet we shall have a happy state hereafter in another world.

2. Acquaint yourselves with the promises, make them the men of your counsel : Ps. cxix. 24, 'Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.' We cannot think too often of them : Ps. cxix. 97, 'Oh how love I thy law ; it is my meditation all the day.' If they have gained upon heart and affections, your thoughts will be more taken up with them, that you may not have them to seek in an hour of trial. It is good to make them familiar to us.

3. Work them into the heart. The promises are given us, not only that we may plead them with God in prayer, but that we may plead with ourselves. As Paul, when he had laid down the privileges of believers : Rom. viii. 31, 'What shall we say to these things ?' so we should reflect upon ourselves if we have such great privileges, and such great hopes, Why do we not live more holily, and go about our duty more cheerfully ? Soul ! what dost thou say to these things ? So

David: Ps. xlii. 11, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?' If God, Christ, and heaven be thine, and all the blessings of the covenant thine, why art thou so dejected?

4. Make use of them in all your straits. Our wants lead us to the promises, which are as many and as particular as our wants; the promises bring us to Christ, in whom they are all yea and amen, and shall be accomplished and fulfilled to us as we are united to him, found in him, and one with him; and Christ brings us to God as the fountain of grace, and there we turn them into prayers, put the bond in suit, plead with God, and show him his handwriting. Suit the promise to your exigence, and then go to God in the name of Christ with confidence. Our addresses to God take their rise from our wants: James i. 5, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God.'

5. Observe how they are made good. You will have a double advantage hereby, for you will have a more clear ground for faith and thankfulness. It will show you what mercies come as blessings. It is not enough to observe nakedly how a mercy comes to us, but whether it comes by virtue of a promise, pleaded, trusted in, and believed by us. And it will strengthen our thankfulness; they are blessings that come out of the womb of the covenant: Ps. cxxviii. 8, 'The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion.' It is observable in the text that the blessing is called 'the promise;' it is not a blessing, nor so sweet to us, except it come by virtue of a promise. And by this means God's truth is more confirmed, which still keepeth the heart thankful and believing: Ps. ix. 10, 'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee, for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee' You can give no instance to the contrary: it increaseth our trust for the future to observe what he hath done in time past; what he hath spoken with his mouth he hath fulfilled with his hand. By this means your own faith will be confirmed, and you will invite others to trust in God; we have had experience of the truth of his promises, and we shall be witnesses of his faithfulness to others.

SERMON XLVIII.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.—HEB. xi. 13.

I OBSERVED in the whole verse the trial of faith and the victory of faith. The trial of faith—'These all died in faith, not having received the promises;' that is, they went to the grave ere the blessings God had promised were accomplished. The victory of faith is set forth—

1. By a threefold act of faith in and upon the promises—'They saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.'

2. By the effect and fruit of it in their lives and conversations—

‘And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims in the earth.’ This I come now to speak to.

‘*Strangers and pilgrims.*’ The notion of strangers and pilgrims I opened to you in the 9th. verse. But how were these holy men strangers and pilgrims? Men may be strangers and pilgrims two ways: either in regard of condition, or in regard of disposition and affection.’

1. In regard of condition, so all men are strangers. For that is our home where we live longest. Now all men live longest in another world; there they are for ever, and here but for a while. And as all men are strangers, so they are pilgrims; they are hastening homewards as they yield to the decays of nature; and draw nearer to their long home every day. Every man, both good and bad, is on a journey, travelling homewards: all the difference is in the way that they take. There are some that take the broad way that leadeth to destruction, that as they grow in years they increase in sins, and so are going down to destruction, and hastening to the chambers of eternal death; they are strangers and pilgrims, going out of this world into a worse. But others take the narrow way, and they are entering upon their everlasting happiness by degrees; here is not their home, they are going to God and Christ.

2. In regard of affection and disposition; so these latter sort, the children of God, are only strangers and pilgrims. The voice of wicked men is, ‘It is good to be here;’ let God do with heaven what he pleaseth, they are contented with their present portion; they would not give their portion in this world for a portion in paradise. But the children of God are strangers in affection; they count themselves so and they confess themselves so, for that is implied in their confession, that it is not only their inward thoughts, but their outward profession before all the world.

But how do they count themselves so?

[1.] By considering the shortness of their present abode, which wicked men do not. There is no truth more obvious and common, and yet none less thought of by wicked and carnal men, than the frailty of our present condition. Wicked men have no firm dwelling upon earth, but that is against their intention, their inward thought and desire is that they may abide here for ever: Ps. xlix. 11, ‘Their inward thought is that their houses shall abide for ever, and their dwelling-place to all generations.’ They are strangers against their wills; their abode is uncertain in this world, and they cannot help it, and they govern their lives as if they should abide here for ever, and were never come to a reckoning. David begs of God in Ps. xc. ver. 12, ‘So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.’ It is a lesson we learn by grace to know the shortness and frailty of our present life; therefore they that have grace in their hearts, and are taught of God, count themselves strangers in this sense because they are sensible, and reckon upon it, that here they shall abide but for a while.

[2.] By being unsatisfied with their present comforts. The children of God would not abide here for ever if God would give them leave. It is good to be here, saith a worldling; here is not our rest, saith a

child of God: Micah ii. 10, 'Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest.' They cannot sit down contented; if the Lord should give them the world for ever without the enjoyment of himself, this cannot satisfy them; they are strangers in disposition and affection, they desire and groan to be elsewhere. It is a grief to a wicked man to think of a departure, and to be taken off from present things, from sucking the dugs of worldly consolation.

[3.] Because they have another inheritance to expect, they have a home to go to. He that hath no home is nowhere a stranger, wherever he is. Wicked men are only strangers in regard of their unsettled abode in this world; they have a long home, but they have no inheritance to expect; they are sure to go out of the world, but they are not sure to go to heaven, and so they are strangers, but not pilgrims. But the children of God have a home which they expect, something beyond the present life, therefore they are strangers and pilgrims; they know and are sensible that these things are but short in continuance, and they cannot satisfy; that there are better things to be had, a better portion in another world, which will satisfy: Ps xvii. 15, 'I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.' They must live here a while, and then go down into the grave and sleep for a while; but when they awake, then they shall have enough.

Three points I shall observe from the words.

Doct. 1. That true believers confess themselves to be strangers and pilgrims in the world.

They count heaven their home, and the world a strange country. Faith makes them to count themselves strangers and pilgrims in the present world. I showed you in the other verse how christians are pilgrims in the world. Here I shall show two things—(1.) The reasons why believers account themselves so; (2.) The influence that faith hath upon this work.

First, The reasons why believers account themselves so. Partly as they look upon heaven, and partly as they look upon the world.

1. In respect of heaven, they count that their home, and that for these reasons—(1.) Because thence they are born; (2.) There lies their inheritance; (3.) There are all their kindred; (4.) There they abide longest.'

2. In respect of the world. As they consider what heaven is, so they consider what the world is, and therefore they cannot count it their home. The world is Satan's walk, the devil's circuit, where their father's enemy reigns: Job ii. 2, 'And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.' It is a place that is defiled with sin: Isa. xxiv. 5, 'The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.' It is a hard thing to walk up and down and keep ourselves unspotted in such a place as the world is. The earth is given to the children of men: Ps. cxv. 16, 'The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men.' It is the slaughter-house and shambles of the saints: Rev. xviii. 24, 'In her was found the blood of

¹ See Sermons on Ps. cxix.

prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.' It is a receptacle not only for God's enemies and reprobate men, but for the very beasts, a place that beareth the marks of man's sin, therefore surely they cannot count it their home. They find ill entertainment in the world; God in his providence orders it so that the world should be the more unkind to the saints that they might look after a better place. If the world did not vex them as it doth, possibly it might ensnare them, so that the world's hostility becomes their security; as Paul found the world crucified to him, and therefore he was crucified to the world: Gal. vi. 14, 'The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.' The injuries they receive here turn to their gain and mortification. God's children usually have the worst of it here in the world, and therefore they account themselves but strangers and pilgrims in the world.

Secondly, The influence that faith hath upon this work.

1. Faith shows the truth and worth of things to come. It presents another home, and a better home.

[1.] Faith presents another home: Heb. xi. 1, 'Faith is the evidence of things not seen.' We can see nothing but clouds, stars, and earth round about us; faith looks into the invisible world where God is, and Christ at his right hand, and saints and angels round about him. Reason hath but a dark guess at these things; faith openeth a light into the unknown world, where is our father's house, where is our elder brother, and the best of our kindred: Eph. i. 18, 'The eyes of your understandings being opened, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' Unless our eyes are opened we cannot look into these things; faith gives a knowledge of what is above the clouds, there it seeth him that is invisible.

[2.] Faith shows a better home. Faith values all things according to the presence of God; it values all states and conditions as we enjoy God in them. Here in the world there is but little enjoyment of God: 2 Cor. v. 6, 'Whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.' A christian is nowhere a stranger but where he is without God. Faith sees God in the world, but it sees that there is another manner of enjoyment of God without sin, and without sorrow, where there is no absence of God, and no clouding of his presence. A gracious heart is everywhere at home but where it wants God; we could not be so much strangers here if we were not in a great part strangers to the comforts of his presence. If we could have our whole portion here, we should look no further; we have, it may be, enough to support us, but not to satisfy us, but there we shall have all at full: Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.' For the present we may behold God's face while we are engaged in acts of grace, and in the duties and exercises of religion, this is for our support; but when awake, when we are got into the other world, we shall be satisfied. Here there are many clouds upon the face of God, and we provoke him to withdraw from us; there we shall see him without a cloud in his face. Here we are weary even of gracious enjoyments; there we shall enjoy him without satiety and weariness.

2. Faith gives us a right and title to what it sees : John i. 12, ' But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' Faith is not only a spy to show us the land of promise, but it giveth us an interest in it ; a man cannot count anything his own till his interest be cleared ; mad-man call all their own that they see. Now faith gives us a joint-interest with Christ. A believer hath the whole privileges of the sons of God ; not only support and maintenance here, as an heir is maintained by his father in a foreign country, but he hath an interest in the inheritance : Rom. viii. 17, ' If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.' Faith does not only see that heaven is, and that it is better than earth, but that it is ours, and expects it as an inheritance. So James ii. 5, ' Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?' A believer may be a poor man in the world, but he is a prince in disguise.

3. In regard of the fruit of it ; ' Faith works by love,' Gal. v. 6. Now true love carries the soul thither where the thing beloved is. Love is the poise of the soul, as everything tends to its centre. What is inclination in the creatures, instinct in the beasts, that is love in man. *Amor meus pondus meum.*

Use 1. For trial of your faith, dost thou behave thyself as a stranger and pilgrim ? You may know it by these marks.

1. There will be a greater weanedness from the comforts of this life. Men that are altogether for present enjoyments, that labour, strive, contend and gape for earthly things, surely they do not look after heaven as their home. A christian is a stranger at home in his own family, where he hath many comforts about him : 1 Cor. vii. 31, ' And they that use the world, as not abusing it,' using all comforts as expecting a greater happiness, using them as a type, and as a motive, and as an help. As a type, that may put you in mind of a better and greater happiness. The enjoyment of temporal blessings should stir us up to a more serious consideration of heavenly things, as the prodigal's husks, when he was abroad, put him in mind of the bread in his father's house ; so if there be such comfort and sweetness in the world, the place of our trial, what is there in heaven, our father's house ? If the company of our relations be so pleasing and acceptable to us, what is it to be in our father's house for ever in the company of God and Christ ? As Fulgentius said when they showed him the beauty and splendour of Rome, If an earthly city be so glorious, what is the heavenly ? The cities of the Amorites put Abraham in mind of the city that had foundations : Heb. xi. 9, 10, ' By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange land, for he looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' These are but the comforts of a strange place. You abuse the world when you forget home, use these things as typing out better ; if the creature be sweet, heaven is better. Use them as a motive to quicken you to glorify God, ' who hath given you all things richly to enjoy,' 1 Tim. vi. 17. The moon is never eclipsed but when at full. It is naught to kick with the heel, when we wax fat to be the worse for kindness. And then use them as a help, not a hindrance, as instruments of piety and charity, as a *viaticum* in our journey, and helps to a better life.

2. You will be taken off from worldly admiration. This is a thing we are very prone to, to say, 'Happy is the people that is in such a case;' but if you are strangers and pilgrims, you will say, 'Happy is the people whose God is the Lord,' Ps. cxiv. 15. If the heart were above, the world would not seem such a glorious thing. The stars are great and vast bodies of light, but they seem to be but little spangles, because we here upon earth are at a great distance from them; so if the heart were taken up with heaven, worldly admiration would cease, the honours, pleasures, and profits of the world would not tickle and affect us so much as they do.

3. You would not desire long life if you had the disposition of strangers and pilgrims. A traveller would pass over his journey as soon as he can and hasten home. A heathen could say, *Ex hac vita discedo tanquam ex hospitio, non tanquam ex domo, &c.*; I go out of this world as out of an inn, not as out of a dwelling-house; this world is the place of our abode for a time, not of our constant habitation. They are sots that lie guzzling in an inn, and delight to be there, when they should hasten home; so to desire long life because of carnal enjoyments is brutish. To desire to stay here to do God service is gracious; but to set up our rest here, and not to look after our home, this shows that we do not count ourselves to be strangers and pilgrims.

4. You will be making provision for another world, and laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold of eternal life, 1 Tim. vi. 19.

5. You will be hastening homewards more and more, by growing in holiness. Every degree of holiness is a step towards heaven: Ps. lxxxiv. 7, 'They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.' It is an allusion to those that went up to the temple to worship, whither the males were to go three times in a year; in the Hebrew it is from troop to troop, they strove how to overtake one another. So he that is in the heavenly journey is growing in grace, and increasing every day more and more, till he comes to appear before God in the glorious temple that is above. So the apostle, Phil. iii. 11, 12, 'If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.' And if they step out of the way they cannot rest till they get into their path again; as a mariner at sea, that is driven back with winds, yet strives to make to his port again; so is a christian every day getting homewards, getting some advantage over his corruptions, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

6. You will be often thinking of home. Christ says, 'Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also,' Mat. vi. 21. A believer to whom heaven is his home, will be longing, Oh! when shall I come to my country, to my elder brother, my kindred, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Oh, wo is me that I dwell in Meshech! here I am travelling, when shall I be at home? Do you send your desires and thoughts as harbingers to prepare a place for you? When the soul thus longs for the sight of God and Christ, we do as it were tell God we long to be at home. As Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' He was reckoning what a happy time it would be when the crown of righteousness should be set upon his head,

when he shall get home to his father's house, and enjoy his inheritance and the happiness God hath provided for him. By these marks you may inquire whether you have this faith, to count yourselves strangers and pilgrims here.¹

Use 2. To stir us up to be strangers and pilgrims, put in your names among them that profess themselves to be so. Here—(1.) I shall offer you some motives to quicken you; (2.) I will give you some directions.

1. To quicken you to this work consider these things.

[1.] It is the greatest judgment that can be inflicted upon you, to suffer you to take up your rest here, to be condemned to worldly happiness, and to look for no more. That is a sad doom: Luke xvi. 25, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things.' That that is their choice, is their judgment: Ps. xvii. 14, 'From men of the world, who have their portion in this life, whose belly thou fillest with hid treasures;' if you look for no other wages, you shall have no other. It is a punishment laid on them that depart from God, and leave the fountain of living waters for the puddles of this world: Jer. xvii. 13, 'All that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters.' This is their judgment, to be written in the earth, that is, they shall be men great and famous, taken notice and accounted of here, but this is their portion. It were better for them to be followed with afflictions, to be driven to beg their bread, than to be written in the earth in a way of judgment; better never have a day of rest and ease in the world, but still to be tossed to and fro in trouble, than to be condemned to worldly felicity. God's children many times, by a just and merciful providence, have least of the world, because they have their portion elsewhere; the world entertains them as a stepmother, that they may look after their own mother Jerusalem, that is above. But when God suffers men to be great and prosperous in the world, and to enjoy worldly comforts to the full, and this is all they are like to have, it is the heaviest judgment that can befall them. Therefore what reason have you to put in your names among them that profess themselves strangers and pilgrims, though you are in your best estate, and live in the midst of peace and tranquillity, and worldly delights flow in with great abundance, yet remember, I am but a stranger and pilgrim here.

[2.] If you had the world at will, you have no reason to take up your rest here, because the happiness of this world is short, unsatisfactory, and not perfective. It is short, we are mortal, and all things about us have their mortality, and many times these things are more fading than we are. Many a man outlives his happiness, as the stalk may remain when the flower is gone; but if not, we are mortal, and must flit into the other world, whether we will or no. The world thrusteth us from itself by miseries, and at last by death; then there is a violent ejection; we hang upon it though we are thrust from it, as Lot was loth to go out of pleasant Sodom till the angel pulled him out, Gen. xix. 15. When we stick in the earth, God comes to pluck us up. Why should we set our hearts on this world, and like foolish birds build a nest, when to-morrow we must be gone? And it is not satis-

¹ See sermon on Ps. cxix.

factory, our souls were made for God, and cannot be satisfied without God. When we enjoy most still we want something; as Noah's dove could not find a place for the sole of her foot, till she came back to the ark. One thing or other is still wanting, how little do we find of what we expected; when we come to enjoy the world, we see the error of our esteem. If we would make use of our own disappointments, certainly it would wean us more from worldly comforts; especially if we would but consider how unsatisfactory they are in death: what will all this world then profit us? Job xxvii. 8, 'What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?' And then they are not perfective, they can add no value to the soul. Who would dig for iron with mattocks of gold? The soul is better than all the world, we were not made for the world but the world for us. The world may make us worse, but it cannot make us better; and it is a very hard matter to keep ourselves from being worse by the world. All the riches, honours, and profits of the world cannot endue thy person with any true good. That is good which maketh us good, so doth grace whereby there is a conformity between us and the chiefest good: James i. 27, 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' It is the hardest matter to use the world and not to be defiled by it, and therefore let us seek out another home.

[3.] You have higher and better things revealed to you. If we had no other things to look for, then we might take up our abode here, and satisfy ourselves, and take our fill of what the world yields; but there are higher things, and they are revealed to us. Let thine eye convince thy soul; look upon the aspectable heavens, they are the most glorious part of the creation, and if the under part of the pavement is so glorious, what is the inner court, the holy of holies! And these are revealed to us as hereafter to be 'revealed in us,' Rom. viii. 18, and that both in body and soul. Now they are revealed to you as kept for you in heaven; if we had no other things to look for, it were good to be here; and they are not only revealed to our ears, but we have received our advance-money; a pawn, a pledge, an earnest, and first-fruits, all to make us say, 'Arise and let us depart, for this is not our rest,' Micah ii. 10

[4.] These higher things are not only revealed to you, but you are fitted for them. We read not only of heavens being prepared for the saints, but of the saints being prepared for heaven. There is a divine nature given to us, and the new nature can never be satisfied, where we may sin and grieve God. Afflictions are contrary to our old nature and make the world a troublesome place; so sin is contrary to our new nature, for the new man seeketh a perfect state.

[5.] Consider Christ's choice: John xvii. 16, 'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.' Christ passed through the world to sanctify our place of service, but he left the world as a place not fit for him, if we would choose as Christ chose, we should be strangers here. Christ's judgment is better than ours; if the world had been worth anything, he would have chosen that kind of life. But he that was Lord of all, and had the fairest title to all that was in the

world, yet behaved himself as a stranger, and had neither house nor home: Ps. lxxix. 8. 'I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.' The world frowned upon Christ as one that was not fit for their turn.

[6.] Consider, nature teacheth us this lesson, to look upward for our home. Look to the frame of man's body, not only to the constitution of his soul, but to the frame of his body; we do not go grovelling on the ground as beasts, nor are we stuck into the earth as trees. God hath given man an upright stature; his head, which is the seat of the senses, is placed next to heaven, to teach us that man should look up thither; and his feet are on the earth: Ps. viii. 6, 'Thou hast put all things under his feet.' A worldly man is like a man standing upon his head, spurning at heaven with his heels, and his head and heart fixed to the earth; or like worms that come out of the earth, they are bred there and creep on the ground, and then creep into it; so they are dwellers upon the earth, as the antichristian state is always called.

[7.] Consider the profit of being strangers and pilgrims on the earth.¹

2. To direct you how you should do so.

[1.] As to the pleasures of the world, avoid fleshly lusts. Brutish affections are all for a present good; these weaken our desires of heaven, they cloud the eye, and deaden the heart, as the flesh-pots of Egypt made Israel to despise Canaan. Carnal lusts are a great hindrance. Men diet themselves for a race: 2 Cor. ix. 25, 'Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things;' and ver. 27, 'I keep down my body, and bring it into subjection.'

[2.] As to the profits of the world take these directions—

(1.) Take heed of a resolution to be rich, of fixing this as your end and scope, making gain the business of your lives: 1 Tim. vi. 9, 'They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare.' He doth not say he that is rich, for a godly man may through the blessing of God increase in this world's goods; but he that will be rich, the devil has you upon the hip when you make that your business and scope.

(2.) Grasp not at too much in the way of your calling; take heed of enlarging worldly desires: Isa. v. 8, 'Woe unto them that join house to house, and field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.' When men fill the head with cares, and the heart with sins, when they grasp at too much, and jostle out better things, then they offend. Some business is necessary to drain the spirits; whilst we are in the body, we cannot wholly mind spiritual employments; in great condescension God hath appointed diligence in our callings as a part of our work. Our journey to heaven lies not only through duties of religion, but through the duties of our callings; moderate labour is a help, not a hindrance; but then take heed that you be not immoderate to waste the vigour of your spirits, and jostle out better things.

(3.) If gain come in but slowly, be content with God's allowance. A little will serve the turn for a *viaticum* for our journey to help us to heaven: 1 Tim. vi. 7, 8, 'For we brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; and having food and raiment, let us be therewith content;' it is enough for our passage, we are

¹ See sermon on verse 9.

travelling to heaven, and when we come there the soul shall be filled up as full as it can hold. When we came into the world we were contented with a cradle, and when we go out we must be contented with a grave; and whilst we are here, worldly goods serve only for a more plentiful life. David sums up worldly felicity: Ps. xvii. 14, 'Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure; they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.' They that have the greatest portion in this life may have more variety of God's creatures upon their tables and backs, and what they do not thus spend, the rest of their substance they leave to their children. Now a more plentiful estate is but fuller of snares; and for our posterity, our children are under a providence as well as we; they have but a journey to go, and a little will serve their turn as well as ours, and when we die we leave a God behind us to provide for them. It is carnal confidence,—nay, worse, it is blasphemy and idolatry,—to think we can better provide for them than God. And therefore be contented with God's allowance, such as comes in with moderate labour in your callings.

(4.) If God give abundance, take heed of carnal complacency: Ps. lxii. 10, 'If riches increase, set not your heart upon them;' when you rejoice in them, and grow proud of them, as if there were any real addition to your worth, it is a sign you have them for your whole portion. Remember you are to use them as God's stewards; if God give you abundance, you must give an account of it how you lay it out. If you think you are lords and not stewards, you are at home. The abundance that God hath given you is but a larger trust: Luke xvi. 9, 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' The more you have, the greater advantages you have of doing good; and when you die, you will be welcomed to heaven with the applauses and suffrages of the poor saints.

[3.] Meditate often on the promises, they are our cordials in our journey: Ps. cxix. 54, 'Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.' They are cordials to cheer us and strengthen us in our way; and it is good to feed and strengthen the soul. And they are our antidotes against the infection of the world: 2 Peter i. 4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' The world is an infectious air, but the promises preserve us against the corruptions that are in the world through lust; and they refresh the divine nature, and keep our hopes alive.

[4.] Enjoy as much of heaven as you can on the earth.

[5.] Go to God to circumcise the foreskin of your heart.

[6.] Get a clearer and more sensible interest in Christ.

[7.] Meditate on the happiness you shall have at home.

[8.] Prize the communion of saints.¹

'They confessed.' Abraham told the people of the land of Canaan, Gen. xxiii. 4, 'I am a stranger and a sojourner with you;' Jacob told Pharaoh: Gen. xlvii. 9, 'The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years. Few and evil have the days of the years of

¹ See these directions handled on Verse 9.

my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.' It seems it was their general and open profession wherever they came; before idolaters they declared what they were and whither their hopes tended, though it laid them open to the scorn and hatred of those among whom they lived. So David: Ps. xxxix. 12, 'I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.' From hence we observe—

Doct. 2. That the making an open confession of the truth is a necessary duty: Rom. x. 9, 10, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.' It is not enough that our hearts be right with God, but there must be a confession with the mouth.

Quest. But are we bound always to make this confession? Is it not said, Rom. xiv. 22, 'Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.'

Ans. 1. Profession of the main things of godliness is always necessary in those that have given up their names to Christ: Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' Now baptism is to be attended with an open profession of our faith: so Rom. x. 9, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe with thy heart that God raised him from the dead,' &c., which is the foundation of the christian faith, and the great article then in question. It is for the glory of God that his servants should own him, and for the profit of others.

2. When we are called thereunto, then we must witness a good confession. But when are we called thereunto? I answer, We are called by God and by men. (1.) By God: partly by his providence, and partly by a special impulse. Partly by his providence; when a good cause is like to be deserted for want of followers, then God seems by the voice of his providence to say, Who is on my side? Who? When the non-profession of the truth is equivalent with the denial of it. This was Daniel's case: Dan. vi. 10, 'Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.' You will think he might have omitted the opening of his windows: but to have shut his windows would have been implicitly to have yielded to the unjust decree not to call on the God of Israel. Partly by the impulse of the spirit, for that doth determine the circumstances of a known duty; as Paul at Athens: Acts xvii. 16, 'His spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry;' and Acts xviii. 5, 'Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.' (2.) We are called thereunto by men, when they desire an account of our faith for their instruction: 1 Peter iii. 15, 'Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.'

3. In many cases we must have faith to ourselves, and we are not bound to make possession of it; as for instance, when the cause we maintain may receive detriment by an unseasonable agitation, for every

thing hath its season ; or when others may receive detriment, and we are like to give offence to our weaker brethren : Rom. xiv. 1, ‘ Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.’ Our liberty in indifferent things is not to be urged to the prejudice of our brethren. Again we are not to make a profession till we have matured and ripened our persuasion ; rash men that profess suddenly whatever they conceive to be right put themselves upon a double inconvenience, either of continuing in the defence of an error when their opinion is declared, or lie under the scandal of changeableness if they submit to the truth, which doth much weaken their testimony.

Doct. 3. Christians should more plainly discover that their journey lies heavenward.

Here I shall show you why they should do so, and how they should do it.

1. Why they should do so. And that for these reasons—

[1.] It is for the glory of God that we should profess our hopes, that the world may know that we have wages that we expect in another world. God would be ashamed to be called our God if we did not seek a country : Heb. iii. 6, ‘ Whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end.’ We should not only comfort ourselves in our hopes but boast of them, and glory in our hopes that we have such a good master ; we may boast of our wages.

[2.] It is for the comfort and quickening of others. A man is glad to meet with his own countrymen in a foreign land ; so when others see you ready to go with them to heaven, it is a great comfort and support to them, especially when we are talking and discoursing of heaven : 1 Thes. iv. 18, ‘ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.’ Good discourse conveys a warmth ; Saul in the company of prophets prophesieth.

[3.] It is for the reproof of the world, for the more explicit our profession is, the more are wicked men condemned ; the blind careless world is awed by these means. Noah by building the ark, ‘ condemned the world,’ Heb. xi. 7. So when they see you so busy for heaven, it is a real reproof of their carelessness and wickedness.

2 How we should make this discovery.

[1.] By often speaking to one another : Mat. xxvi. 73, ‘ Surely thou art one of them, for thy speech bewrayeth thee.’ So the speech of God’s people bewrays them. Christ is often speaking of heaven, and of his Father’s house. The primitive christians were impeached of treason because they were often speaking of the happiness of that kingdom which they expected : John iii. 31, ‘ He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth.’ Worldly men will be talking of worldly things ; so they that are for heaven will be confessing and declaring that they seek a country, and they will be speaking to one another of these things.

[2.] By practice and conversation ; hereby you should make your confession more explicit. Show what you are by your lives : Phil. iii. 20, ‘ For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.’ A christian’s heart is not only above, but his life is above. But how should we show forth this heavenly conversation ? I answer—

(1.) By a contempt of worldly things. A self-denying christian showeth whither his journey lieth; they dare not take all advantages of growing great; they do not make it their business to be high in the world: Heb. xiii. 5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have.' Covetousness is a sin in the heart, but many times it is seen in the life, and when it breaketh out, men shame their profession.

(2.) By our garb and behaviour; thus should you make a distinction between yourselves and the men of the world: Rom. xii. 2, 'Be not conformed to this world.' A christian is a man of another garb, he doth not put himself into the world's dress. He lives a distinct life from the world, and doth not do as the most do, so as the world wonders at them as we do at a foreigner that goes in a distinct garb and habit: 2 Peter iv. 4, 'Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot.'

(3.) By special holiness and strictness, that your lives and conversations should carry an express conformity and likeness to your hopes. 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.' You should discover what manner of hopes you have by the holiness, raisedness, and heavenliness of your lives and conversations.

Use 1. This may reprove those that are Nicodemites, christians too much in the dark. In times of persecution fear takes off from an open profession, but in times of profaneness shame is an hindrance; men are ashamed to own Christ, *coguntur esse viles, ne mali habeantur*. Men are ashamed of strict carriage and good discourse, they had rather be wicked than base and vile in the esteem of the world. No, rather say, If this be to be vile, I will be more vile; as David, 2 Sam. vi. 23, 'I will be yet more vile than thus'; and Paul, Rom. i. 16, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.' If you are ashamed of Christ, he will be ashamed of you: Luke ix. 26, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and in the Father's, and of his holy angels.' Who would endure a servant that will be ashamed to own his master? We should not be ashamed to be forward in godliness and religion, it is a sign we esteem as basely as the world doth of godliness. It argues a mighty depravation when our shame is there, where our confidence and our glorying should be; you condemn hereby your profession, and justify the reproaches and slanders that wicked men cast on it. Christ despised the shame: Heb. xii. 2, 'Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, and despised the shame.' It argueth too great a desire of the love and praise of men: John xii. 42, 43, 'Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' Wicked men declare their sin openly: Isa. iii. 9, 'The show of their countenance doth witness against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not.' God is not ashamed of us though we be vile, base, and despicable: Heb. xi. 16, 'God is not ashamed to be called their God;' and shall we be ashamed of God, and of his recompenses? If dogs bark at you, they will do so at strangers, it is their kind.

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